



Studies and Researches

International human rights non-governmental organizations between declared goals and politicization affliction

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Since the beginning of the twentieth century, especially since the founding of the League of Nations in the aftermath of the First World War, the international community has witnessed a number of factors and developments that have had a major impact on the transformation of fundamental human rights and freedoms within each State, which has been purely domestic, to come to the attention of the international community. That attention reached its climax with the establishment of the United Nations in the wake of the Second World War in 1945, with the Charter of the United Nations, and subsequent declarations such: as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and international conventions, such as: the International Covenants on Political and Civil Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted by the General Assembly that entered into force in 1976. These declarations and conventions are binding States by international legal obligations deriving from the conventions, which obligate them to ensure respect for human rights on their territory and within their regional scope. This is in addition to the emergence of a limited range of rights and freedoms of a general nature, considered as "peremptory norms", which all members of the international community must respect and comply with their content of whatever origin, regardless of the nationality of the individuals who enjoy them, whether they are citizens of the State or foreigners on its territory.



This study seeks to clarify the status of international non-governmental organizations concerned with human rights and to compare their stated declared objectives, or to be accurate, some of their objectives with the real and the unrevealed political objectives. This could be achieved through several elements, firstly: defining the international non-governmental organizations and their main characteristics. Secondly: discussing the role of international non-governmental organizations and the development of their targets. Thirdly: handling their role as a mechanism for the protection of human rights. Fourthly, presenting the impact of the work practiced by non-governmental organizations concerned with human rights on the sovereignty of states. In the latter, we also reveal the politicization of the activities of international non-governmental organizations in the so-called Arab Spring.

First: Definition and main characteristics of international non-governmental organizations:

International non-governmental organizations can be defined by their attributes as "declared voluntary organizations with a permanent institutional structure established by non-governmental conventions among individuals belonging to different nationalities. They are independent of governments, not engaged in politics, aim to achieving humanitarian objectives without targeting profit and operate across at least three countries".

Second: The growing role of non-governmental organizations and the development of their objectives:

The objectives pursued by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can be classified into two main categories: the first is to achieve objectives of a broad developmental nature, while the other is to defend specific issues of concern to the local or international communities, such as environmental pollution, illiteracy, human rights and others.

Third: The role of international non-governmental organizations as a mechanism for the protection of human rights:

In addition to their growing role in the development process, international non-governmental organizations are assuming a new and growing role that often goes beyond the borders of the State to other States in



defense of certain issues of concern to the entire humanitarian community.

However, since human rights issues, which may either have legitimate or illegitimate dimensions or political objectives for internal or foreign entities, have become facts that impose themselves on public opinion in all sectors and on official and public trends, both internally and externally, the role of International non-governmental organizations has become an effective mechanism to ensure the necessary national and international guarantees to protect these rights and promote their respect on the ground.

It should also be noted in this regard that the relationship between international NGOs and the governments of the countries concerned or targeted, varies in nature and forms, from one case to another and affects in one way or another the role of these organizations in the protection of human rights.

It is also clear that the relationship between these organizations and governments doesn't always follow the same pace and doesn't always have one pattern. It is a highly complex relationship, sometimes cooperative and good, sometimes an ill conflict, and sometimes variable between cooperation and conflict. It necessarily varies from one state to another, from one political system to another, from one organization to another, and even in the same organization. It varies from one time or one case to another. It depends on the nature of the community, the government, NGOs, the historical moment, the issue of concern and others.

Fourth: International non-governmental organizations working in the field of human rights and State sovereignty:

International NGOs sometimes monitor the commitment of the state authorities to respect and apply universally recognized fundamental rights and freedoms and they are often addressed by citizens to raise complaints and seek advice in this regard. In addition, they may, when necessary, form and dispatch fact-finding committees to countries that carry out serious violations of human rights and, after the completion of their investigations, issue reports on the reality of the situation in question, which - at least - contributes to exposing violations and illegal practices in this area.



International NGOs, through media and written or oral reports defending these rights, have been able to embarrass abusive governments in the eyes of their citizens, raise awareness of the dangers of violations of these rights, and promote global publicity campaigns aimed at drawing the attention of international public opinion and the international community to these violations and demanding effective action by the governments concerned. They have been able to mobilize public support for them in their activities in this area and have established networks at the internal level of the state to practice Pressure on countries and governments to push them to behave in a way that appeals to the NGO, which is without any doubt detrimental to States' sovereignty.

In this context, it is important to note that the pressure exerted by international NGOs on governments, at times, reached to the point of interfering in their internal affairs, depending on their gains of legitimacy and the special position that they occupy - or at least some of them – such as The International Committee of the Red Cross. At the level of the international community, its consultative status at the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, allows it to participate in meetings of the Council and in the works of the International Council for Human Rights for the concerned organizations . It also allows them to represent the victims of violations of rights in the relevant international forums. This pushed some countries which seek to improve international standards for the respect and promotion of human rights to make use of the expertise of these organizations in this regard, which opens way - obviously - to these organizations for further interference in the internal affairs of States.

Thus, it can be said that the sovereignty and internal competencies of the State have been affected to a certain extent by the activities of international NGOs working in the field of human rights. These organizations practice pressure on countries, mainly the weak and poor, interfering in the internal affairs and making use of their own mechanisms to achieve their purposes in this regard.

Fifth: politicizing the activities of international non-governmental organizations in the countries of the so-called Arab Spring:

Over the decades, the Arab region has witnessed a steady increase in



the number of local and international NGOs and in their activities. In most cases, these activities have been socio-economic in nature and have targeted relief and awareness-raising.

However, the recent events in this region, which have produced the so called "Arab spring" revolutions, have highlighted the political aspects of the activities of these organizations, and clearly showed that many of them, especially those of international character, such as: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, or others as such, or national NGOs in connection with foreign organs, receiving financial or technical support, have played a great role in these events that accompanied the wave of unrest caused by Arab Spring revolutions, to the extent that they represented not only a great threat to the national security of these countries, but also a threat to their own existence.

Indeed, it is difficult to draw a boundary between what is real humane, relief, fair and impartial like the national and international associations belonging to the Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent organizations, in situations of international or non-international warfare and in situations of natural disasters, or caused by human beings, between what is targeting illegal political purposes, and apparently exercising the role of relief, human aid, etc. However, The critical situation and the collapse of states' apparatus, totally or partially, experienced by the countries in which the events of the so-called Arab Spring took place, have removed any doubt or ambiguity about the performance of the second type of organizations, which aimed at undermining the security and stability of these states for external purposes and agendas.

The political role of these organizations in that period appeared to be very large, in some situations, obsessed with the human rights violations in some countries and the state of fragility and weakness of the organs of the State, including the security services. The ongoing armed conflict in Syria, Libya and Yemen, the attempts by extremist terrorist groups to consolidate their presence and seize power in Egypt and Tunisia, the consequent rise of government forces and rebel forces to practice war crimes against civilians and serious human rights violations, opened a wide door for external interventions that encircle the cloak of humanity, but conceal political objectives and take international NGOs and their



activities as essential means to achieving their goals.

In this context, it is important to note that during the events that accompanied this spring, the countries of the “Arab Spring” faced an invasion by international or local NGOs, financially and technically supported by foreign states, organizations or intelligence agencies, invading all aspects of political, economic, media and security life, under democratic and humanitarian mask, and that was accompanied by intensive media coverage on their activities.

This is not far away from what Egypt witnessed in this context during the events of January 25, 2011 and beyond, of suspicious roles for such local and international organizations. This prompted the Egyptian security forces to raid the headquarters of many of NGOs, which operated as cover for foreign intelligence services. Nearly 400 of these organizations were subsequently investigated.

Thus, as a result of all the above, international NGOs and their local organizations have become the subject of accusations from all countries of the Arab region, not only the "Arab Spring" countries. The accusations varied from case to case. Some of these countries have claimed that their activities were threatening to national security. Although there have been no documented official reports and information confirming their involvement in the support and financing of terrorism, many studies and informal reports indicated that a number of NGOs in Egypt have supported directly or indirectly, the Muslim Brotherhood after the revolution of 30 June 2013. In Tunisia, organizations with large financial resources faced charges of providing financial, logistical and information support to groups that perpetrate terrorist acts and establishing networks to recruit and transport youth to participate in the war with ISIS in Iraq, Syria and Libya.

Some of these countries have pointed to the link between these organizations and money laundering and the concealment of their unlawful sources through organizations' interface. This prompted the Kuwaiti authorities, for example, to take several measures to monitor NGOs funding sources, most notably the promulgation of Law No. 106 of 2013 to combat money laundering and terrorist financing as an alternative to the previous law issued in 2003 to address its shortcomings.



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All stressed that these organizations are harming through their activities and reports to the reputation of the state and its image abroad.

In short, many international human rights NGOs have lost their fundamental role of protecting and promoting these rights and have become tools in the hands of donors, States, major corporations or other inter-governmental or NGOs, which harnessed them to achieve political objectives that Human rights have nothing to do with, but rather to influence or even control the political decision of the target countries, as advanced analysis has shown. However, this doesn't negate the fact that there are some international NGOs that still maintain their integrity, impartiality and distance from their work on politicization, focusing on their nominal goal of protecting human rights. The most prominent example in this field is practiced by the participating organizations in the Union of Cross Societies and the Red Crescent, which play a great humanitarian role in situations of international and non-international warfare and in situations of disasters and crises.