

CAIRO DECLARATION

On the Role of NHRIs in Conflict and Post Conflict Situations

The participants of the meeting on Strengthening the Capacities of NHRIs in North Africa in Conflict and Post Conflict Situations, including representatives from the NHRIs in Algeria, Egypt and Morocco, as well as civil society organisations in Egypt, Libya, and Morocco, organised by the Human Rights Implementation Centre of the University of Bristol, the Egyptian National Council for Human Rights and the Network for African National Human Rights Institutions, on 3-4 December 2011 in Cairo, Egypt:

Adopt the following Declaration:

Recognising the pivotal role that NHRIs can play in times of conflict, in post conflict situations and in periods of transition;

Underscoring and recalling the need for all NHRIs to function independently and in accordance fully with the Paris Principles;

Reiterating the need for states in the region establish NHRIs that are fully compliant with the Paris Principles and that this is reflected in the constitution;

Noting the commonalities between NHRIs but the differences that exist between them in terms of their establishment and background and the social and political context in their home states;

Acknowledging the importance of engaging with all stakeholders in society;

Stressing the need for governments and relevant authorities to implement the recommendations of the NHRI promptly and to commit to respond to those recommendations in good faith;

Underscoring the universality and indivisibility of all human rights;

Emphasising the importance of women's rights and gender equality specifically during conflict and post conflict situations;

Acknowledging the role of youth in the future of implementation of human rights in the region;

In order to implement this Declaration, the NHRI participants resolve:

A. For NHRIs

1. To commit to upholding the independence of an NHRI, especially during times of conflict and in post conflict situations.
2. To promote and protect international human rights standards at all times but particularly during times of conflict and in post conflict situations.
3. To take an active role in the drafting of constitutions.
4. To be strategic during times of conflict and in post conflict situations and to identify and regularly review their priorities.
5. To document and fact-find on human rights abuses and make public their findings and to follow up their recommendations.
6. To devote due attention to various groups of victims that may be found in home states and formulate their role in internal reconciliation processes, including the right to reparation.
7. To make full use of their existing mandate to follow up the implementation of their recommendations and findings.
8. To advocate for additional powers such as the mandate to undertake unannounced visits to places of deprivation of liberty, have standing before national courts and provide support for victims to pursue their cases effectively.

9. To promote and protect the rights of women, children and vulnerable groups, as defined in international human rights law.
10. To actively engage with the youth and promoting their involvement in upholding international human rights standards in their home states.

B. On building partnerships with other stakeholders

1. At the national level, NHRIs must engage with all actors including: those currently in government, all political parties, parliamentarians, religious organisations and leaders and the broad range of civil society organisations.
2. Among themselves NHRIs agree to share experiences on how to operate in times of conflict and post conflict situations, including, for example, through the holding of joint workshops; sharing best practices on education, training and awareness raising; adopting common strategies on thematic issues such as transitional justice.
3. NHRIs should consider making more effective use of support available from the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions, and the International Coordinating Committee of NHRIs as well as the National

Institutions and Regional Mechanisms
Section of the OHCHR.

4. NHRIs should strengthen cooperation with regional and international organisations that play a crucial role in supporting their work. In particular, consideration needs to be given to the role that should be played by the League of Arab States.
5. While the principal responsibility lies with the state to adequately fund the NHRI, each NHRI should be encouraged to engage with donors in order to develop a coherent funding strategy and action plans.
6. International support and capacity building for NHRIs could include: financial support; technical expertise; and provision of training for staff.

The participants would like to thank the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the UK for funding this meeting and the Egyptian National Council for Human Rights for kindly hosting the event.

Done at Cairo, Egypt, 4th December 2011