

Salient Challenges of National Council for Human Rights Complaints System

There are numerous reasons for the public fear of dealing with the National Council for Human Rights (NCHR) and its field task forces, during their active presence on the ground and through communication with the public, namely:

A - Suspicion and doubts.

B- Insufficient knowledge of NCHR role and capabilities.

C- Confusion of NCHR role with that of other entities, such as civil society organizations and the nascent human rights units of the State administrative bodies.

Furthermore, the Council seeks to boost its financial resources in order to reach the public. Since, its limited financial resources hindered it from undertaking its necessary activities and its complaints team from achieving their optimal role, if compared with the early phases of the Complaint System stages, which had seen strong communication with the public and greatly contributed to correcting misconceptions on human rights issues and its workers. Such was clearly reflected in the NCHR publication of prominent and influential reports on the internal level, for instance, "Dispersal of Raba Al-Adawiya Square Sit in Strike", "Maspero Incidents" and several reports on "Sectarian Unrest" in several governorates, as well as, reports on social and economic conditions, including the recent report of the Council on "Dowaiqa Rock slide" that collapsed on residents' homes etc.

The allegations leveled by the Council of Ministers' Unified Complaint system and other human right units against the

complaint mechanism of the NCHR. The Council of Ministers' Unified Complaint System and the other human rights units possess better material means and logistic capabilities and are close to the decision makers; they are better positioned to intervene to settle any complaint. Meanwhile the NCHR has limited resources and does not get enough formal media coverage thus keeping all its accomplishments and the work of its taskforces in the shadow.

Despite all the aforementioned difficulties, the NCHR continues to play its role within the framework of the mandate specified by the law incorporating it. The NCHR, in doing so, protects: the confidentiality of the names of the whistle blowers and witnesses in any case before the court and offers legal assistance through researchers working in specialised units, mostly lawyers or researchers with a wide ranging legal and Sharia-law background. The heads of the branches of the NCHR operating in the governorates, moreover, more effectively than in the capital, communicate directly with the citizens in their respective governorates where the relationships forged by the branches and the complaints that are amicably solved by the NCHR serve as the gateway to win the confidence of citizens.

In the same vein, the NCHR is endeavouring to promote its E-complaint System; bolster the capacities of the specialised researchers by participating in all relevant workshops, similar to the current workshop; and obtain all the training manuals on the ombudsman and intermediaries.

The NCHR is seeking to train its staff on interviewing techniques to encourage those who are apprehensive or recalcitrant of answering questions to positively participate in boosting and

promoting the respect and the system of basic human rights and fundamental freedom.