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Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

Submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [74/163](#), the present report provides an overview of the activities of the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region from August 2019 to July 2021.

The present report highlights the achievements of the Centre and outlines the steps taken to strengthen its effectiveness and efficiency in responding to the increasing need and demand for support and technical assistance for the promotion of human rights in the countries covered by the Centre.

* [A/76/150](#).

** The present report was submitted after the deadline in order to reflect the most recent developments.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [74/163](#), in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit at its seventy-sixth session a report on the implementation of the resolution. It provides an overview of the activities and achievements of the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region from August 2019 to July 2021.

2. The Centre was established in 2009 by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Doha. Mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution [60/153](#) to undertake activities on human rights training and documentation, the Centre aims to promote human rights in the Arab region¹ and South-West Asia.² In collaboration with Governments, specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations, national human rights institutions and civil society organizations, the Centre provides educational resources and human rights training in accordance with international human rights standards.

3. The Centre seeks to build knowledge and raise public awareness about human rights and to promote human rights through capacity-building and skills development. It also provides specialized resources to promote respect for human rights values and principles.

4. During the period under review, the Centre focused its main efforts in two strategic directions: (a) continuing to strengthen its effectiveness and efficiency in responding to emerging needs through tapping into available OHCHR resources and expertise beyond the Centre; and (b) reinforcing the three components of its mandate, namely, capacity-building, human rights education and documentation.

II. Main activities on key thematic priorities

5. The strategic priorities of the Centre align with the six thematic pillars of the United Nations Human Rights Management Plan for 2018–2021.³ More specifically, in the reporting period, the Centre's work focused on the following five areas:

- (a) Increasing implementation of the outcomes of the international human rights mechanisms;
- (b) Preventing violations and strengthening protection of human rights, including in situations of conflict and insecurity;
- (c) Enhancing equality and countering discrimination;
- (d) Enhancing participation and protecting civic space;
- (e) Strengthening the rule of law and accountability for human rights violations.

6. From August 2019 to July 2021, the Centre played a significant role in building the capacity of various actors to promote and protect human rights, including government officials, State institutions, regional organizations, national human rights institutions, academics, civil society organizations, human rights defenders and community and religious leaders. During the reporting period, the Centre was faced with an increased demand for training, workshops and educational programmes in relation to the international human rights mechanisms, the documentation of human

¹ Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen, as well as the State of Palestine.

² Afghanistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan.

³ See www2.ohchr.org/english/OHCHRReport2018_2021/OHCHRManagementPlan2018-2021.pdf.

rights violations and abuses, the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and non-discrimination and gender equality. There was also a growing demand for references and training materials on human rights in Arabic.

7. Despite the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on programme implementation, the Centre was able to organize a large number of significant activities under its mandate, including 23 online and 14 face-to-face training activities. Some 1,225 participants, including 660 women, benefited from the activities conducted by the Centre.

8. During the reporting period, the Centre also improved its use of social media activities and reinforced its documentation mandate.

A. Increasing implementation of the outcomes of the international human rights mechanisms

9. On 16 and 17 September 2019, the Centre held a training course in Doha on drafting and submitting reports to the human rights mechanisms, with the objective of promoting understanding of the United Nations human rights system. The training course was attended by 16 participants, including eight women, from the Qatari national human rights institutions.

10. From 11 to 13 December, the Centre held, jointly with the Regional Centre for Training and Development of Civil Society, a training course in Khartoum on the United Nations human rights system and human rights-based approach, aimed at enhancing the knowledge of the participants regarding the international human rights system and the functioning of human rights mechanisms. A total of 40 participants from Sudanese civil society organizations and representatives of the Ministry of Youth and Sport, half of whom were women, attended the course.

11. From 3 to 5 March 2020, the Centre and the OHCHR Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa held a training course in Doha on national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up, which was co-organized with the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The objective of the training was to enhance the knowledge of the participants on the role of the national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up and present good practices in that regard, encouraging the Government to establish such a permanent mechanism in Qatar. The course was attended by 35 participants, half of whom were women, from relevant Qatari ministries, the National Human Rights Committee and civil society organizations.

12. On 29 and 30 June, the Centre held, jointly with the League of Arab States, an online training workshop on economic, social and cultural rights. The workshop focused on the international human rights standards related to economic, social and cultural rights and the working methods of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the special procedures of the Human Rights Council. It also addressed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. The workshop was attended by 13 participants, including eight women, from the relevant departments of the League of Arab States and the Office of the Secretary-General.

13. From 10 to 20 August, the Centre held, jointly with the OHCHR Middle East and North Africa Section, an online training course for junior diplomats from States of the Arab region. The objective of the training was to strengthen understanding of international human rights mechanisms, as part of the efforts of OHCHR to strengthen engagement by States with the international human rights system. The course was attended by 21 participants, including 13 women, from Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti,

Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Qatar, Somalia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and the State of Palestine.

14. From 7 to 10 September, the Centre and the OHCHR office in Khartoum held, jointly with the Geneva Institute for Human Rights, the first edition of an online regional training course on the international human rights system for civil society organizations from the Arab region, with the objective of reinforcing their understanding of international human rights mechanisms and enhancing their engagement with the international human rights system. The course was attended by 27 participants, including 18 women, from Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Yemen and the State of Palestine.

15. On 22 October, the Centre and the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions held an online workshop on the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations under the theme “Evolution of the human rights system: milestones and prospects”, with the purpose of bringing together representatives from national human rights institutions, civil society organizations, activists and human rights defenders from the Arab region. The workshop was attended by 70 participants, including 27 women, from Algeria, Bahrain, the Comoros, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Yemen and the State of Palestine.

16. From 22 to 24 December, the Centre held, jointly with the Kuwaiti National Human Rights Institution, an online workshop on international human rights mechanisms, which focused on the obligations of Kuwait under international human rights treaties. It was attended by 28 participants, including 10 women, from the Kuwaiti National Human Rights Institution and relevant ministries.

17. On 26 and 27 January 2021, the Centre and the OHCHR Middle East and North Africa Section held an online training course on engagement with international human rights mechanisms, with the objective of enhancing the capacity of senior officials to promote and protect human rights in Kuwait using human rights tools. The workshop was also aimed at enhancing their capacity to develop the Kuwaiti national action plan on human rights and their skills and knowledge in implementing the recommendations emanating from international human rights mechanisms. The course was attended by 20 participants from the national reporting committee and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including seven women.

18. From 15 to 17 March, the Centre held, jointly with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, a training course on the engagement of Qatar with international human rights mechanisms. The course was attended by 24 participants, including 14 women, from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior, Justice and Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs, as well as representatives of the National Human Rights Committee and the Qatar Social Work Foundation.

19. In March, the Centre supported the OHCHR Syria Office in delivering four online training workshops to foster the engagement of civil society during the universal periodic review of the Syrian Arab Republic. The workshops were held on 10 and 11, 23 and 24 and 31 March and from 28 to 30 June and were attended by 61 participants, including 29 women, from various civil society organizations operating in the Syrian Arab Republic, including women’s rights groups. They were provided with relevant reference material, including a compilation of human rights recommendations previously addressed to the Syrian Arab Republic.

20. On 5 and 6 April, the Centre held, in partnership with the Qatar Social Work Foundation, an online workshop on the rights of persons with disabilities. The guiding principles on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities were

presented, as were the obligation of Qatar under the Convention and the upcoming periodic report of Qatar to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ahead of its review in 2022. The workshop also focused on ways and means for the Foundation to engage with the international human rights system and on its role in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society. It was attended by participants from the Qatar Social Work Foundation, including 11 women.

21. From 6 to 8 July, the Centre held, with the OHCHR Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa and the OHCHR Human Rights Treaty Branch (treaty body capacity-building programme), an online regional workshop on reporting to human rights mechanisms and follow-up of recommendations. The objective of the workshop was to enhance the knowledge of the participants in terms of preparing and drafting official State reports to all human rights mechanisms. The workshop also focused on the role and functions of national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up and provided participants with tools and good practices in terms of follow-up of recommendations, including an introduction to the Universal Human Rights Index⁴ and national recommendations tracking database. The workshop was attended by 30 participants, including 18 women, from national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up and relevant ministries from Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen and the State of Palestine.

22. During the reporting period, the Centre published three volumes in Arabic on the general recommendations adopted by the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families⁵ and the general comments of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.⁶ The volumes provide guidance on the scope of the relevant human rights treaty and the interpretation of specific human rights issues, outline actions that would be considered potential human rights violations and provide advice to States on how best to comply with their obligations under the relevant treaty. They are aimed at Governments, national human rights institutions, legal professionals, academics, civil society organizations, human rights defenders and journalists, among others. The publications will be used in the training programmes delivered by the Centre and other OHCHR field presences in the Arab region.

23. In 2019, the Centre edited the Arabic translation of the second part of the OHCHR professional training series No. 20 entitled *Reporting to the United Nations Human Rights Treaty Bodies Training Guide: Part II – Notes for Facilitators*.⁷

24. In 2020, the Centre printed and distributed the Arabic version of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas,⁸ the principles on human rights and the protection of workers from exposure to toxic substances⁹ and the guiding principles on human rights impact assessments of economic reforms on human rights.¹⁰

25. In 2021, the Centre translated and edited the Arabic version of the key indicators for monitoring the human rights implications of COVID-19 and other education-

⁴ See <https://uhri.ohchr.org/en/>.

⁵ See https://untrainingcentre.ohchr.org/ar-ae/Documents/Publications/2021/GC_CPMW.pdf.

⁶ See https://untrainingcentre.ohchr.org/ar-ae/Documents/Publications/2021/GC_CRPD.pdf.

⁷ Available at www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/PTS20_HRTB_Training_Guide_NotesforFacilitators_PartII.pdf.

⁸ See https://untrainingcentre.ohchr.org/ar-ae/Documents/Publications/2021/UND_Rural.pdf.

⁹ See https://untrainingcentre.ohchr.org/ar-ae/Documents/Publications/2021/HRP_toxic_substances.pdf.

¹⁰ See https://untrainingcentre.ohchr.org/ar-ae/Documents/Publications/2021/Guidelines_reforms.pdf.

related materials; the human rights treaty bodies toolkit of treaty law perspectives and jurisprudence in the context of COVID-19;¹¹ and guidance on civic space and COVID-19.¹²

26. In July 2021, the Centre produced a compilation of the recommendations made by the universal periodic review to Mauritania and two reference publications for the National Human Rights Institution in Kuwait on the status of ratifications, reporting status and declarations on and reservations and objections to the main treaties ratified by Kuwait, with a compilation of the recommendations made to Kuwait. The Centre also prepared a reference publication on the obligations of Qatar under international human rights law for the Human Rights Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar. In addition, the Centre provided support to the National Human Rights Committee in Qatar by assisting in developing an information and documentation system regarding all the recommendations made to Qatar by human rights treaty bodies.

B. Preventing violations and strengthening the protection of human rights, including in situations of conflict and insecurity

27. On 22 June 2020, the Centre held, jointly with the National Human Rights Committee in Qatar, an online workshop on integrating a human rights-based approach in the response to COVID-19, to enhance the knowledge of the participants on the role of the national human rights institution and share good practices in respecting human rights principles in response to the pandemic. The workshop was attended by 38 participants, half of whom were women, from relevant Qatari ministries, the National Human Rights Committee and civil society organizations.

28. On 2 November, the Centre held an online round-table discussion on the safety of journalists and end of impunity in conflict situations. The round table focused on the obligation of the State to protect journalists and to prevent attacks against them under international human rights law and international humanitarian law and on the efforts of OHCHR in protecting journalists and ending impunity for crimes against them. The discussion was attended by 30 participants, 15 of whom were women, including journalists, representatives of national human rights institutions, civil society organizations and activists from Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Yemen and the State of Palestine.

29. On 16 November, the Centre held, jointly with the Arab Network for Tolerance, an online round-table discussion entitled “Towards encouraging tolerance and acceptance of differences in matters related to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief”. A total of 25 participants, including 10 women, attended the round-table discussion, which involved journalists, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations and activists from Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and the State of Palestine.

30. On 18 November, the Centre held, with the College of Law at Qatar University, an online round-table discussion on human rights guarantees in the context of COVID-19. The objective of the discussion was to present the jurisprudence of human rights treaty bodies regarding the protection of human rights in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants discussed the impact of COVID-19 on the enjoyment of human rights and highlighted the challenges in building back better

¹¹ Available at www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/TB/COVID19/HRTB_toolkit_COVID_19.pdf.

¹² See www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/CivicSpace/CivicSpaceandCovid_AR.pdf.

after the pandemic. The discussion was attended by 50 participants, academics and students from Qatar, including 22 women.

31. From 24 to 26 November, the Centre and the OHCHR Middle East and North Africa Section held an online training course on the role of the media in promoting and protecting human rights in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic for young journalists from States of the Arab region. The objective was to introduce participants to the notion of human rights and the contents of the international human rights standards and mechanisms and guide them on how to use a human rights-based approach in their media coverage of human rights in relation to the pandemic. A total of 15 participants, including seven women, from Jordan, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Yemen and the State of Palestine, attended the course.

32. In 2019, the Centre produced and published, jointly with the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, a judicial training manual on freedom of opinion and expression and the prohibition of incitement to hatred.¹³ Its development is the result of a series of meetings bringing in magistrates and experts from the Middle East and North Africa region over the period between 2016 and 2019.

33. In 2020, the Centre printed and distributed a reference publication on the Faith for Rights framework, which included the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence (A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, appendix) and the Beirut Declaration and its 18 Commitments on Faith for Rights (A/HRC/40/58, annexes I and II).¹⁴ In addition, the Centre printed and distributed the Arabic version of the updated set of principles for the protection and promotion of human rights through action to combat impunity.¹⁵

C. Enhancing equality and countering discrimination

34. From 3 to 6 November 2019, the Centre held a training course in Doha on the international human rights system and a human rights-based approach for the Qatar Social Work Foundation. The objective of the training was to enhance the knowledge of the participants on the international human rights system, the functioning of human rights mechanisms and ways to apply a human rights-based approach in their projects related to the rights of persons with disabilities. The course was attended by 15 participants, almost half of whom were women.

35. On 1 December 2020, on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the Centre held, also in Doha, a workshop on the rights of persons with disabilities, to promote the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities and their inclusion in all aspects of society. The workshop also focused on the obligations of Qatar under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It was attended by 15 participants, including 13 women, from the Qatari Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs.

36. On 3 December, as part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence, the Centre held an online panel discussion on the role of national bodies and mechanisms concerned with preventing and combating violence against women in the Arab region, with a view to exchanging experiences and best practices. The panel discussion was attended by 47 participants, including 37 women. They included government representatives and national human rights institutions, civil society organizations and activists from Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon,

¹³ See https://untrainingcentre.ohchr.org/ar-ae/Documents/Publications/2021/Manual_Judiciary.pdf.

¹⁴ See https://untrainingcentre.ohchr.org/ar-ae/Documents/Publications/Faith_for_Rights.pdf.

¹⁵ See https://untrainingcentre.ohchr.org/ar-ae/Documents/Publications/2021/Combat_impunity.pdf.

Libya, Morocco, Qatar, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Yemen and the State of Palestine.

37. On 18 February 2021, the Centre and the OHCHR Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa held a round table on gender stereotypes in educational curricula, to exchange experiences and to develop a road map for the integration of a gender perspective in educational curricula and textbooks as part of a broader process of combating gender stereotypes and fostering human rights education in primary and secondary school systems. The round table was attended by 36 participants, more than half of whom were women, from Algeria, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Qatar, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Yemen. The participants included experts from the relevant United Nations agencies; regional human rights organizations; civil society organizations and national human rights institutions; women's studies and research institutes, and organizations involved in children's education and human rights education; and researchers and academics in the field of education.

38. On 8 April, the Centre and the OHCHR Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa held a second round table on the same topic for representatives of ministries of education from the Arab region. The objective of the round table was to discuss and evaluate educational curricula from a gender perspective and to propose practical recommendations regarding methods and mechanisms of action to change gender stereotypes in the curricula. By the end of the event, a road map for the integration of a gender perspective in educational curricula had been drawn to eliminate gender stereotypes and attain gender-neutral curricula. The round table was attended by 47 participants, more than half of whom were women, including representatives of the ministries of education and directors of curricula from the Comoros, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and the State of Palestine, and experts representing the relevant United Nations and regional agencies.

39. In 2021, the Centre printed and distributed the Arabic version of the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law.¹⁶

D. Enhancing participation and protecting civic space

40. From 5 to 8 October 2019, the Centre, the OHCHR Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa and the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls held a workshop in Casablanca, Morocco, under the theme "Towards legal protection for women's human rights defenders: Safety and protection". The workshop was attended by some 30 participants, including human rights defenders, activists and lawyers from the Arab region, more than half of whom were women.

41. From 8 to 10 June 2020, the Centre supported the OHCHR Syria Office in delivering an online workshop on fostering the engagement of civil society organizations with human rights mechanisms to combat human rights violations related to enforced disappearances. The objective of the workshop was to present the international human rights system, including the working methods of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, and the international standards in relation to the rights to truth, reparation and remedy. The workshop helped to identify concrete leads on how to empower victims of enforced disappearances to claim their human rights and how to promote the rule of law in relation to missing persons in the

¹⁶ See https://untrainingcentre.ohchr.org/ar-ae/Documents/Publications/2021/BP_Guidelines_IHRL_IHL.pdf.

Syrian Arab Republic. The workshop was attended by 21 participants, 10 of whom were women, and included representatives of Syrian family victims' associations and human rights groups.

42. On 27 June 2021, the Centre held an online round-table discussion on the challenges facing the right to information and ways to provide more guarantees, in which international human rights law guarantees and standards regarding the right to information were discussed. Other subjects of discussion were the right to participate in public affairs, the status of the right to information in the Arab region and ways to provide related safeguards. The 75 participants, including 35 women, also discussed the challenges facing the right to information during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as hate speech and access to information during an armed conflict. The participants, from most of the Arab region countries, included journalists, legal professionals, representatives of national human rights institutions, civil society organizations, human rights activists and students.

43. From 28 to 30 June, the Centre supported the OHCHR Syria Office in organizing and delivering an online workshop on a human rights-based approach to advocacy, for Syrian civil society organizations working on women's and gender-related issues. The objective of the workshop was to enhance the knowledge of the participants on the human rights-based approach. The participants worked on developing a results framework with a focus on advocacy and on planning and designing an advocacy campaign. The workshop was attended by 18 participants representing eight Syrian organizations, including 15 women.

44. On 20 April, the Centre and the OHCHR Rule of Law and Democracy Section held an online training-of-trainers course on the guidelines for States on the effective realization of the right to participate in public affairs for some of the Arab-speaking OHCHR field presences. The objective of the training was to enable 25 participants, half of whom were women, to replicate participation workshops in order to build national actors' capacities on the right to participate and its implementation.

45. In 2021, the Centre printed and distributed the Arabic version of the guidelines for States on the effective realization of the right to participate in public affairs.¹⁷ In addition, the Centre translated and edited the Arabic version of the training materials for training of trainers.¹⁸

E. Strengthening the rule of law and accountability for human rights violations

46. From 28 to 30 October 2019, the Centre held an expert meeting in Doha to finalize the aforementioned draft judicial training manual on freedom of opinion and expression and the prohibition of incitement to hatred. The meeting brought together experts from different legal frameworks to contribute to the finalization of the draft manual by providing national laws and jurisprudence related to the freedom of opinion and expression and the prohibition of hate speech. Seven experts and judges from Kuwait, Qatar, Tunisia and the State of Palestine attended the meeting.

47. From 18 to 21 November, the Centre and the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions held a training course in Amman on the role of national human rights institutions in human rights monitoring and reporting. The course was attended by 18 participants, half of whom were women, from the national human rights

¹⁷ See https://untrainingcentre.ohchr.org/ar-ae/Documents/Publications/2021/Guidelines_public_affairs.pdf.

¹⁸ See www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/training6ar.pdf.

institutions of Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Oman, the Sudan and the State of Palestine

48. On 20 and 21 July 2020, the Centre held, jointly with the Qatari National Human Rights Committee, an online workshop on the same subject. The workshop was attended by 25 participants, including nine women, from the National Human Rights Committee and relevant Qatari ministries.

49. On 22 and 23 November, the Centre supported the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq in delivering an online workshop for Iraqi judges. The objective was to discuss the highest standards of justice in the Iraqi judicial system, the role of the judiciary, judicial response to claims of torture and ill-treatment, evidentiary standards and human rights, judicial oversight of detention, and reasoning of judgments and criteria in respect of conviction and sentencing. A total of 16 Iraqi judges from different courts in Baghdad attended the workshop, which involved international human rights and judicial experts from Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia.

50. On 21 and 22 February 2021, the Centre supported the technical cooperation project between OHCHR and the Saudi Human Rights Commission by delivering an online training course on the role of lawyers in the protection of human rights. In addition to presenting human rights concepts and mechanisms for legal practitioners, the course also emphasized the importance of referencing international human rights conventions ratified by Saudi Arabia in addition to national laws in pleadings. The course was attended by 30 participants from the Al Waleed bin Talal Foundation, all of whom were women.

51. From 22 to 24 February, the Centre and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar held an online training course to improve the understanding of the participants of the international legal framework for the prevention of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and to increase their skills to prevent and investigate it. The course was also aimed at helping Qatar to further develop its policy and practice in the prevention of torture and ill-treatment and to strengthen accountability measures. A total of 22 participants, including 10 women, attended the online course, including judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officers, prison staff, health officials and representatives of the Ministries of Interior and of Foreign Affairs.

52. During the reporting period, the Centre edited the Arabic translation of the OHCHR publication *United Nations Human Rights Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement*.¹⁹ The Centre translated, edited and published the Arabic versions of the following OHCHR publications: *Who's Responsible? Attributing Individual Responsibility for Violations of International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law in United Nations Commissions of Inquiry, Fact-finding Missions and Other Investigations*,²⁰ *Land and Human Rights: Standards and Applications*²¹ and *Land and Human Rights: Annotated Compilation of Case Law*.²² In 2021, the Centre translated the *Training Manual on Human Rights Monitoring* into Arabic, which will be published and distributed by the end of 2021.

¹⁹ See www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/LLW_Guidance_AR.pdf.

²⁰ See www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/AttributingIndividualResponsibility_AR.pdf.

²¹ See www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Land_HR-StandardsApplications_AR.pdf.

²² See www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Land_HR-CaseLaw_AR.pdf.

F. Human rights education and promotional activities

53. On 6 and 7 December 2019, the Centre held a workshop in Tunisia on the ways and mechanisms to empower youth through human rights education. The objective of the workshop was to enhance the knowledge of the participants on the fourth phase (2020–2024) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education. The workshop was attended by 37 participants, half of whom were women, from 14 Arab countries representing the relevant ministries, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations and independent experts.

54. On 10 December, the Centre, jointly with the Regional Centre for Training and Development of Civil Society, held a conference in Khartoum under the theme “Sudanese youths: Defending human rights together”, to celebrate Human Rights Day. The conference, which was aimed at highlighting the universality of human rights and emphasizing the role of young people in defending and protecting them, took place under the auspices of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Some 120 participants from Government ministries, United Nations agencies in the Sudan, embassies and civil society organizations, as well as academics and human rights defenders, more than half of whom were women, attended the event.

55. From 17 June to 21 July 2020, the Centre held an e-learning course entitled “Building capacity on e-learning design and delivery: coaching on latest trends, methods and tools”, which was aimed at helping the participants to identify and select modern e-learning methods and tools to address a specific e-learning challenge in their professional context. The e-learning course, which included five weeks of online learning with an average weekly workload of three hours, took the form of a design lab in which participants were guided through the entire process of e-learning design. Content was unlocked on a weekly basis and was packaged through design activities, which were meant to provide participants with the necessary concepts, methods and tools to approach their own e-learning challenge. In addition to the modular highly interactive and participatory courseware, participants received project-based coaching to tackle the most pressing issues regarding their e-learning project idea. The course was offered fully online through an asynchronous modality where participants could plan their own learning at their own pace and included options for synchronous debate and discussions through targeted online webinars. A total of 25 OHCHR staff members from Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and the State of Palestine, half of whom were women, benefited from the e-learning course.

56. On 22 July, the Centre held an online workshop jointly with Equitas – International Centre for Human Rights Education and the Human Rights Academy of Amnesty International on opportunities to use communication technology for human rights education. Some 35 participants, including 22 women, attended the workshop. They included representatives of ministries of education, national human rights institutions and civil society organizations, as well as experts, journalists and students from Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Yemen and the State of Palestine.

57. During the reporting period, the Centre translated, edited and published the Arabic version of the OHCHR publication *From Planning to Impact: A Manual on Human Rights Training Methodology*.²³ The manual provides practical guidance on all phases of the human rights training cycle, including planning, designing, organizing and delivering training and conducting follow-up activities. It is based on OHCHR training practice and lessons learned and is aimed at further professionalizing and maximizing the impact of the human rights training work

²³ See www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/training6ar.pdf.

carried out by OHCHR, in line with its policy on human rights methodology and training. In addition, the Centre translated and edited the Arabic version of the training materials for the training of trainers on the manual.²⁴

58. In 2020, the Centre distributed more than 6,500 copies of its publications to the OHCHR Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa, the OHCHR country office in Tunisia, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and the national human rights institutions in Algeria, Djibouti, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Tunisia.

59. The Centre continued to use its social media pages to spread knowledge about human rights issues and the United Nations human rights mechanisms. In addition, the Centre organized several awareness-raising campaigns on countering discrimination against women, human rights and business, the rule of law, democracy, enforced disappearances, ending impunity for crimes against journalists, the rights of older persons and the human rights of migrants.

60. During the reporting period, the Centre hosted several students, researchers and professionals, advised them on general human rights matters and provided them with human rights documentation.

61. In February 2021, the Centre created an online roster of qualified OHCHR Arabic-speaking trainers in order to implement its regional training mandate, reinforce the collaboration with OHCHR field offices and ensure the participation of the “in-house” trainers. Some 22 OHCHR staff members with extensive human rights training experience registered for the roster.

62. In July, the Centre and the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions began organizing a national training programme for the national human rights institution in the Comoros, to be held at the end of August, and a regional training of trainers on human rights training methodology for national human rights institutions scheduled for the end of September.

63. In 2021, the Centre translated the *Evaluation Human Rights Training Activities: Workshop Guide*, published jointly with Equitas – International Centre for Human Rights Education, into Arabic.

III. Conclusions

64. The work of the Centre remains relevant to the needs of the region. The recognition of the Centre’s growing role and impact on the strengthening of human rights capacities in the region is demonstrated by the fact that it has been consistently solicited by numerous and diverse partners to provide support and to engage in cooperation.

65. During the reporting period, the Centre continued to develop its partnership with a wide range of stakeholders in the Arab region and thereby contribute to furthering the promotion of human rights and supporting human rights advocacy. It also reinforced the documentation component of its mandate, expanding its outreach to a growing number of beneficiaries, including young people. The Centre included critical issues in its capacity-building activities, such as new media and digital technology, prevention of hate speech and incitement to discrimination, combating gender discrimination and prevention of violent extremism.

66. The Centre has adapted its methodology to the challenges linked to the COVID-19 pandemic and continued organizing online activities to implement its annual workplan. In these changed circumstances, the Centre still managed to

²⁴ Ibid.

organize a large number of online activities and bring together participants from the majority of countries covered by its mandate.

67. The Centre continued to experience significant challenges in implementing its mandate owing to limited human resources compared with the wide geographic scope it covers and the increasing demands it faces. In that context, the Centre was also unable to implement a significant number of activities in non-Arabic speaking countries.

68. In the coming two years, the Centre will strengthen its efforts to accommodate the needs of the 25 States under its coverage. However, additional resources are necessary to enable it to adequately deliver on its mandate and better serve States.

69. To reinforce the three components of its mandate, the Centre will continue its efforts to develop the human rights education programme, with more emphasis on the youth sector, in line with the fourth phase (2020–2024) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education. The Centre will also continue to make every effort to further develop its training programmes for State institutions, national human rights institutions and civil society organizations. Moreover, it will pursue the strengthening of its documentation component, notably the production and dissemination of human rights resource materials in Arabic and other languages.

70. OHCHR initiated an internal review to look into ways to strengthen the Centre in order to fully leverage its role. The objective of the review is to build on and grow the potential of the Centre in order to optimally fulfil its important role in delivering human rights training and education as a centre of excellence for all relevant stakeholders in the region by strengthening the application of human rights standards through education, training and the development of best practices.
