



**Al Mezan Center for Human Rights**



**Annual Narrative Report**

**Core Program: Promotion and Protection of Human Rights**

**1 January – 31 December 2013**

**Gaza – February 2014**



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### **Board Members**

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**Mr. Talal Aukal** (Vice Chairperson), Journalist and political analyst

**Mr. Jamil Serehan** (Treasurer) lawyer and Director of ICHR Office in Gaza

**Mrs. Andaleeb Shehadeh** (Member), Women rights activist

**Mr. Nafez Al Madhoun** (Member) Lawyer

**Dr. Ali Abu Zuhri** (Member), President of the Al Aqsa University

**Dr. Azmi Shuaibi** (Member) General Coordinator **AMAN** Coalition.

### **Al Mezan Donor Partners in 2010**

#### **Core Programme Donors:**

The NGO Development Center (NDC).

The Representative Office of Norway to the Palestinian Authority.

ICCO & Kerk in Actie.

Open Society Foundations (OSF).

Medico International – Germany.

Save the Children International (SCI)

#### **Projects Donors:**

UNDP/PAPP: Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Gaza.

The Sigrid Rausing Trust: Promotion of Human Rights and IHL in the Gaza Strip.

The European Commission: Promoting freedom of thought, association and movement in Gaza through support to civil society.

The European Commission: Combating Torture and Ill treatment of Palestinian Prisoners and Civilians by Israel (Joint Project with Adalah and PHR-I)

Save the Children International: Promotion of CRC and UPR Mechanisms in oPt

Diakonia: Promotion of IHL in Gaza by Education/Information.

Open Society Foundations (OSF): Protection of women in countries of Armed Conflict – the case of Palestine.

The (UN) Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

### **Membership**

- Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN)\*
  - The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
  - The Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Council (PHROC).
  - Habitat International Coalition - Housing and Land Rights Network
  - Coalition for Accountability and Integrity (AMAN)
  - The World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)
  - Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Network (ESCR Network)
- The UN Protection Cluster (inc. Working Group on SC Res. 1612)

\* Al Mezan was elected to the Executive Committee of EMHRN during the Network's last General Assembly in June 2012.



## 1. Introduction

This report is for the second year of the strategic plan 2012-2014 of the Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights (Al Mezan), with the same strategic goals as specified in the 2012 narrative report. . The reporting period was challenging from the defending of human rights point of view. During this period, several developments impacted the human rights situation in the oPt, but particularly the Gaza Strip (Gaza).

While the annual plan 2013 was implemented almost in full, certain activities were increased and other reduced. Due to the lack of core funding in 2013, Al Mezan implemented the narrative part of the plan, but delayed the implementation of the budget attached to it. A modified budget based on the previous salary scale was developed and shared with donors. This change affected the implementation of the salary-scale, but not the activities, which were prioritized.

Al Mezan has continued to play a leading role in promoting and defending human rights in Palestine; with a focus on the Gaza Strip. As the human rights deteriorated further, responses were even more necessary to deal with the situation. Using our experience in monitoring/documenting human rights and IHL violations, we continued to report on violations, provide legal assistance, research and analyse situations and trends, and conduct advocacy within Palestine and outside it. We have also increased our awareness and capacity-building activities during this year. Al Mezan also invested more time and resources into networking; including with the human rights community within Palestine/Israel, but also internationally.

### **CONTEXT: HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS IN GAZA DURING 2011**

The reporting period saw a new setback in the human rights conditions in Gaza. Both Israel and the Palestinian authorities failed to respect the Palestinian population's human rights. Israel's closure of Gaza continued to harm the civilian population and the economy. Israel's violations of international human rights (LHRL) and humanitarian law (LHL) also continued, under an on-going reality of impunity and almost total inability by the victims to access justice in Israel. Internally, the intra-Palestinian political schism continued to victimize Palestinians in both Gaza and the West Bank, also under impunity. The fact that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) made a successful pledge at the United Nations General Assembly, which recognized the State of Palestine as a non-member state has not led to Palestine joining the major human rights treaties yet. In 2013, the developments in Egypt have also impacted severely on the human rights situation; especially with regards to movement and access.

The on-going human rights situation in Gaza, and the oPt generally, is influenced by the following factors.

- Israel's occupation of the oPt, including its effective control over Gaza. As mentioned above, the Israeli full closure of Gaza and frequent armed attacks and incursions victimise the entire civilian population. The occupation remains the primary source of human rights violations and the principal cause of the generalized human rights crisis. The closure results in dire socioeconomic conditions, constraining access to goods essential for human well-being and dignity. Displacement, restricting access to land and other resources and Jewish-only settlement construction render pursuit of self-determination for the Palestinians impossible. Israel's failure to ensure respect of the basic principles of IHL continues to claim lives, destroy civilian property, and prevent the population from creating any sort of healthy livelihood.



- The failure of peace efforts, which are hindered by Israel's violations of international law; especially the illegal settlement activities, fragmentation of the oPt, and displacement. Israel continues to insist annexing occupied land and preventing sound Palestinian self-determination. While the peace efforts are of utmost importance for the situation in the oPt, they must 1) be founded on the rules of international law and 2) do not make an excuse to overlook serious human rights violations. In fact, lifting the closure Israel imposes on Gaza and respecting the human rights of population are essential to create an environment conducive of peace.
- The impunity crisis and the lack of remedies for the victims of rights violations, which is being entrenched by design; i.e. through Israeli legislation reform that disallows Palestinians from access to any sort of justice or remedy. This culture of impunity among both the IOF and Palestinian non-state actors must be challenged if human rights respect is to have any chance in the oPt context
- The intra-Palestinian political divide, which has unfortunately persisted for the seventh year during the reporting period. With the most recent developments in Egypt, which is expected to further postpone any involvement in Palestinian reconciliation, this situation continues to create serious violations of human rights by the Palestinian non-state actors in Gaza and the West Bank. Seeking respect for human rights necessarily requires making good efforts to encourage the Palestinian parties to bring this schism to an end; preferably through a process of transitional justice that can involve the victims and survivors.
- The developments in Egypt have a direct impact on the situation in Gaza. While the primary responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of the occupied population lies with Israel, Egypt is a neighbouring country and has minimal obligations towards the civilian population in Gaza. Acting of these minimum responsibilities, Egypt can be called to ensure humanitarian access of people and humanitarian goods into Gaza, and ensure the safety and wellbeing of Palestinian civilians in its territory.

The developments in 2013 exacerbated the impacts of the strict Israeli closure of Gaza. The number of people allowed to move through the border with Egypt, and the full removal of smuggling tunnels which used to bring basic materials into Gaza created a new situation with a serious decrease in access. In the meantime, Israel's measures to allow more Palestinians to move fell largely short of meeting the needs. As a result, patients, students and other people are still facing restrictions and difficulties accessing basic services. As construction and raw materials are not allowed into Gaza, the levels of unemployment and poverty rose sharply and quickly in the second half of 2013. The electricity supply was also reduced to very low level, which affected various aspects of life; including humanitarian aspects, such as public health. Storm Alexa, which hit the region in December, indicated the vulnerability of the infrastructure in Gaza, with floods causing displacement to thousands of families across the Strip.

These violations occur as violators are shielded from accountability and victims and survivors have limited, if any, access to justice and reparation. Al Mezan expects a challenging 2014, where efforts must be done to document a large number of human rights and IHL violations in Gaza, whose population is expected to be poorer and more vulnerable under greater risks of escalating conflicts. Efforts to challenge violations by the Palestinian authorities are also expected to be needed; including those related to arbitrary detention, abuse, and violating freedom of expression and assembly. The resistance by Palestinian civil society of death penalty and impunity in Gaza are also of paramount importance next year.



## 2. Organizational Profile

### 2.1. Al Mezan's Vision:

*Al Mezan is determined to play a leading role in the development, respect, protection and promotion of the human rights in the Palestinian society in the occupied Palestinian territory, especially in the Gaza Strip where all women, men and children enjoy the benefits of social justice, human rights, the merit of the rule of law and good governance fully and equally.*

### 2.2. Al Mezan's Mission Statement:

Al Mezan is an independent non-partisan non-profit organization that aims to contribute to promoting and protecting internationally recognized human right standards and values in the Palestinian society, especially in the Gaza Strip, through securing the rule of law. Guided by these principles of equal human worth, equal respect of all human rights, individual and collective, as enshrined in international law and jurisprudence, Al Mezan aims to realize the strategic goals below.

### 2.3. Strategic Goals:

AL Mezan aims to realize the following strategic goals:

- *Strengthening and increasing the capacity of Al Mezan*
- *Contributing to the promotion of a culture of human rights and democracy in Palestinian society, especially in the Gaza Strip.*
- *Contributing to the respect and protection of human rights (particularly ESCR) in the Palestinian society, especially in the Gaza Strip.*

### 2.4. Future outlook

The following potential strategic programs were discussed with Al Mezan's BoD, management, staff and relevant stakeholders. The developed strategic goals are:

#### SG1: Capacity Building

**Strategic Goal:** *Strengthening and increasing the capacity of Al Mezan*

##### Objectives:

- To develop Al Mezan's strategies, policies and procedures;
- To enhance the capacity of Al Mezan's staff;
- To develop Al Mezan's information systems;
- To enhance Al Mezan's visibility, communication and networking;
- To upgrade Al Mezan's computing and office equipment and furniture.

#### SG2: Human Rights Promotion

**Strategic Goal:** *Contributing to the promotion of a culture of human rights and democracy in Palestinian society, especially in the Gaza Strip*

##### Objectives:

- To disseminate human rights and democracy resources, information and knowledge;
- To promote a culture of human rights and democracy among, lawyers, students, professionals, and the community;
- To strengthen the human rights related skills among lawyers, professionals, activists and civil society.



**SG3: Human Rights Protection**

**Strategic Goal:** *Contributing to the respect and protection of human rights (particularly ESCR) in Palestinian society, especially in the Gaza Strip.*

**Objectives:**

- To disseminate information on human rights violations locally and internationally;
- To contribute to the protection of human rights through effective monitoring and legal intervention;
- To enhance local and national advocacy and networking for human rights.

**2.5. Structure**

Al Mezan has continued to function with its same general structure with its Board of Director effectively involved in developing and overseeing policy and management, and a five-unit structure: the Administrative Unit, Field Work Unit, Legal Assistance Unit, Training and Mass Communications Unit, and Research and Technical Assistance Unit. The Planning and Follow-Up Committee, comprises the Director and four heads of units, conducts the day-to-day management and follow-up, public relations and fund-raising, monitoring and evaluation. The new organizational structure responds to an administrative gap, which was highlighted by the Board of Directors and the consultants team. The structure has created three new middle-management positions, where there are now three directors managing 1) Communications & International Relations; 2) Monitoring and Awareness; and 3) Research and Legal Assistance. All of the three positions were filled by existing staff and no new recruitment was needed.



### 3. Program progress: 1 January – 30 June 2013

#### 3.1 Overall achievement

During this period, monitoring and documentation of human rights violations in the Gaza Strip were carried out continuously. Gathered information was used in reporting, legal interventions, and advocacy. Information was also passed to UN agencies and other organizations working on human rights. Al Mezan also continued its awareness and training activities and research programs.

Cooperation with human rights organizations in oPt, Israel and internationally also continued, with Al Mezan successfully joining the international Federation of Human Rights (FIDH). Work with United Nations agencies and other international humanitarian and development organizations was also developed during the reporting period.

During the reporting period, Al Mezan achieved the following:

- Documentation of 3,301 rights violation incidents in its databases,
- Participation of 7,909 people in its training and awareness raising activities in Gaza and abroad. Of those, 2,818 were women, 2,388 children, and 2,703 men.
- Contributing to building society capacity to challenge human rights violations by training lawyers, students and civil society groups; including women's groups in Gaza and the Arab World, on human rights-related skills. During 2013, 1,044 awareness/training hours were delivered; of which 760 hours by Al Mezan's staff and 220 hours by volunteers.
- Publication of 207 short releases; including 73 individual press releases, 104 news briefings, 1 press statement, and 29 joint releases/letters.
- Participation in seven international advocacy missions and held meetings with UN officials and agencies, INGOs, diplomatic missions and EU officials 341 times.
- Legal advice to 394 victims of human rights violations committed by Israel or the Palestinian authorities,
- Making 262 legal interventions in response to violations; benefiting 2,102 victims and their families. Of those, 98 interventions were with the Israeli authorities and 164 with the Palestinian authorities.
- Campaigning on seven major human rights issues: accountability/access to justice, closure of Gaza, and basic freedoms in Gaza.
- Al Mezan faced various challenges during this period. Israeli attacks on Gaza occurred frequently and disrupted regular work. The electricity crisis worsened and affected all aspects of life in the Gaza Strip; including the Center's ability to function normally. Weather conditions and stricter closures impacted seriously on human rights and required more interventions. And the weak response of the duty-bearers to interventions, which is impacted by the prevalent culture of impunity, continued to undermine the targeted impact.

#### 3.2 Progress in implementing the activities (1 Jan – 30 Jun 2012)

### Strategic Goal 1: Strengthening and increasing the capacity of Al Mezan

#### Result 1: To develop Al Mezan's strategies, policies and procedures

##### 1.1. *Al Mezan's new 3-year strategy, annual plan of action revised, and master budget developed*

Strategic Plan, Annual Plan of Action for 2013 and a Master Consolidated Budget were developed, approved by the BoD and shared with donors and stakeholders.

Action Plan and Budget for 2014 prepared.



**1.2. Fundraising and Human Resources strategy developed**

- 15 meetings were held by the Planning and Follow-Up Committee to discuss the strategies for human resources and fund-raising during the reporting period. Concerning human resources, the Committee decided:
- Assign a senior lawyer as an coordinator for the Legal Aid Unit until a qualified coordinator is recruited,
- Fill gaps in the structure through project staff where possible,
- Pursue membership at the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), and
- With the main office renovated and expanded, move part of Jabalia office to the main office.

Regarding fund-raising, the Committee decided to:

- Identify new core partners in 2013;
- Apply for funding for projects, focusing on calls for funding by the European Union, in coordination with other partners in 2013.

These meetings and decisions do not make up a fund-raising strategy; however, they have laid the ground for the work that needs to be done to develop the strategy in 2014.

6 core donors were approached, and one new donor joined; Save the Children International. Funding was successfully raised for 10 projects; including a project that covers 100% of the awareness/training component in the core program from February 2013.

Unfortunately, the total funds raised in 2013 were insufficient to cover the total budget. Therefore, the budget was modified in a way to avoid any impacts on the activities. The modification therefore was limited to reducing salary and running costs, with very limited reduction of activities costs.

During 2013 the sum of \$830,019 were raised. 59% of this total was core funding and 41% for projects. Some of the projects contributed to funding activities from the core program and permanent staff, which reduced the pressure of the core budget.

**Result 2: To enhance the capacity of Al Mezan's staff.**

**2.1. Training for 5 members of staff and/or BoD**

Staff members received specialized training in human rights, IHL, and relevant skills ten times during the reporting period. 21 staff members attended these training. In some cases, similar staff members received different trainings.

- One field worker received advanced training on effective communication in Gaza.
- One field worker received training on the role of the media in conflict situation, held in Gaza.
- Two staff members attended a training workshop on project management, held in Gaza by the European Commission.
- Three staff members received advanced training in IHL in a course and a workshop organized by PHAP in Gaza.
- Three lawyers received training in litigating human rights and IHL cases in oPt, organized by the NRC.
- Three staff members attended a training workshop on UN Special Procedures, held in Gaza by OHCHR.
- Two staff members attended a training course on monitoring and evaluation, held in Gaza by Diakonia and Catholic Relief Services.
- Two staff members (Reena & Khalil) attended a training workshop on the use of media in human rights advocacy, held in Gaza by OHCHR.





- One staff member (Samir) attended a training on spokespeople and the media, held in Gaza by Oxfam.
- One staff member (Samir) attended a training on advocacy campaigning, held in Gaza by Oxfam.

**2.2. *Al Mezan BoD, management and staff attend 12 conferences, seminars, workshops and forums annually locally, regional and internationally***

- The General Director attended 13 events during the reporting period; including a conference on human dignity in the Palestinian context in Gaza; a conference on the reform of the Arab League's human rights mechanism in Bahrain; a conference on the human rights situation in the Arab region in Tunisia; a conference on access to justice in Malaga, Spain; a workshop on accountability in Palestine in Brussels; the closing conference of the Euro-Mediterranean Civil Society Forum in Tunisia; a workshop on the role of donors in Palestine in Gaza; and a roundtable on accountability in Brussels. He also attended the EMHRN's PIP WG meeting, a workshop on accountability, and an advocacy mission in Rome. He opened the workshop and made two presentations in it.
- The Communications and International Relations Director attended the EMHRN's Executive Committee meetings in Istanbul, Turkey, and Beirut. He also attended the Palestine, Israel and the Palestinians' Working Group meeting in Warsaw, Poland.<sup>1</sup> He also spoke at seven events in the United Kingdom about the human rights conditions in the oPt.
- The Director of Monitoring and Awareness delivered trainings on monitoring human rights violations in Libya and the Sudan.

**Result 3: To develop Al Mezan's information systems**

**3.1. *MIS developed (including Databases, system architecture, networking and integration with other systems)***

During the reporting period, the following MIS activities were implemented:

- Improved the audio-visual materials and film materials, with a film (produced jointly) and 18 interviews and activities uploaded on the Center's YouTube page. One of the posts hit over 1,700 views.
- Updated, built and developed database forms, applications, archives to accommodate new additions to the databases.
- Developing a database and an archive for photographs to classify and store photographs from the Field Work Unit and from the Center's activities.
- Updating the Torture and Ill-Treatment and prisoners/detainees database.
- Updating and improving the database used by the Legal Aid Unit.
- Improving the search engine for all the databases to accommodate new additions to the databases

**3.2. *In-house resource Center (library) upgraded physically; archiving system established; at least 10% increase in external visitors.***

- The resource library was slightly expanded during the reporting period. The new branch at the Gaza city office enabled more university students, activists, and researchers to use the library.

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<sup>1</sup> Due to delays in issuing visas, the Communications Director was unable to attend the EMHRN's PIP WG meeting, a workshop on accountability, and an advocacy mission in Rome, which were attended by the General Director, who opened the workshop and made two presentations.



- 19 new members subscribed- to the library during the reporting period.
- 263 new books and over 100 e-books were added to the library during the reporting period. A group of children books were also added in order to give as gifts to visiting children. Five beneficiaries gave the library their Masters theses after graduation.
- 856 people benefited from the library services. Of those 189 were children. 27% of the users were in Jabalia branch and 73% in Gaza city branch. The library opened for two days weekly in Jabalia office and three days weekly in Gaza office for ten months because only one librarian was available to operate both branches during the reporting period.
- Over 1,276 resources were borrowed by the beneficiaries during the reporting period; a decrease from 2012 owing to the closures, staff shortage and renovation.
- The librarian provided technical support for four libraries in north Gaza district during the reporting period. She also organized an awareness workshop on the role of libraries in culture and supporting human rights (see Result 2, section 2.3, for more details). She also lectured university students on human rights libraries.

**Result 4: To enhance Al Mezan's visibility, communication and networking.**

**4.1. Website upgraded and maintained; 10% hit increase.**

The website visits counted 53,635 in the reported six months, including 150,299 page views.

**4.2. Al Mezan's visibility improved. Al Mezan's brochure (4000 copies) published; at least 24 TV & radio interviews; increased appearances for publications and staff members in the media.**

- Al Mezan's brochure was not developed in 2013.
- Over 304 interviews with the media; including 98 live interviews with radio and TV stations.
- Widespread media coverage for publications and events. The media covered Al Mezan's work 573 times during the reporting period. Of those, 482 were in Arabic and 91 in English language media.

**4.3. Celebrating human rights events nationally, regionally and internationally; especially UDHR, CAT, and Human Rights Day.**

- The Palestinian prisoners' Day, the Palestinian Nakba Day, the World Water Day, the Palestinian Woman's Day, the international day against torture, and the International Cancer Day were celebrated by means of issuing statements and making media interviews. The Human Rights Day was also celebrated on 9 December by an event for the two human rights prizes and an exhibition for children human rights paintings.

**Result 5: To upgrade Al Mezan's computing and office equipment and furniture.**

**5.1. Computing equipment upgraded; including server; PCs/laptops; internet line; and other equipment**

Both internet connections upgraded to 4 MB business Fiber line (previously 1 MB business line, then 3 MB business line) and 4 MB home line (previously 2 MB home line). 2 new laptops and 1 PC were acquired. A new server was installed in the main office and Jabalia office.

Under the chronic electricity crisis, which worsened in the second half of 2013, the power generator was replaced with a generator with larger capacity so that the office can work in better capacity; especially as the office was enlarged and the power outages increased significantly.



## **5.2. Office furniture upgraded**

Desks, desk chairs, cupboards and other items were purchased for staff member during the reporting period. This is especially for the additional offices in the main office in Gaza city, which was expanded in 2012. The expansion allowed for giving more space for the meeting/training room and the library in this office.

**Strategic Goal 2:** Contributing to the promotion of a culture of human rights and democracy in Palestinian society, especially in the Gaza Strip

### **Result 1: To disseminate human rights and democracy resources, information and knowledge;**

#### **1.1. Human rights publications produced and published (6 ad hoc publication pamphlets, booklets, brochures on human rights and at 2 posters).**

Al Mezan's Training and Mass Communication Unit produced the following:

- Two training manuals on documenting violations against women in armed conflict (regional) and building students' capacity to raise peers awareness in human rights and IHL in Gaza.
- Three brochures on the International Bill of Human Rights, CRC, and CEDAW were printed and handed to participant in awareness activities.
- A poster on freedom of expression.
- A poster on child rights.
- One poster on women and armed conflict.
- One factsheet on women and armed conflict.
- Two factsheets on ESCR issues, see the next section for details.
- 17 films (one produced jointly on women under conflict) were uploaded on the Center's YouTube page. One of the posts hit over 1,700 views.

#### **1.2. Research studies conducted (2 studies/reports on ESCR issues published**

Al Mezan's Research and Technical Assistance Unit drafted three reports/studies and three factsheets on economic and social rights during the reporting period:

- One special report on the use of 'rook-knocking' tactic by the Israeli army during hostilities and its impact on the right to life, health and housing. In this report, Al Mezan describes the tactic, which involves firing relatively small missiles onto inhabited houses as a warning message so they evacuate. A second attack with big bombs or missiles follows shortly. This tactic has caused dozens of killings and injuries among civilians in Gaza and destroyed dozens of houses; especially during the Operation Pillar of Defence in November 2012.
- One report on 'Kidney failure patients in Gaza: challenges and hopes', in which Al Mezan reveals serious challenges facing the provision of adequate healthcare for this group of patients in Gaza hospitals due to the restrictions on movement, the Palestinian internal political schism, and the regression of the health system in Gaza under these conditions. Taking two major hospitals as a model, the report indicates that the services provided to this category of patients are very low, frequently interrupted, and fragile. The report concludes that the right to health of these patients is constantly at risk and frequently violated, which requires urgent action from the authorities and international community to put long-term solutions rather than responding to acute crises several times every year when they happen.
- One study about the 'Reality of health laboratory services in public hospitals in the Gaza Strip'. This study looks at the ability of this sector to support diagnosis of disease effectively, as part of the delivery of the right to health. The findings of the study



indicate that this sector suffers acute lack of materials and equipment that hinders its ability to support the provision of adequate healthcare for the population. As is the case with the health sector generally, the problems faced by this sector are directly linked to the Israeli closure of Gaza and the intra-Palestinian political schism.

- Factsheet on the reality of education in the Gaza Strip, which points out the main education indicators and the serious challenges facing the fulfilment of the right to education; especially the conditions of conflict. It looks at the impacts of Israel's violence against, and closure of, Gaza on the education system. It also points out the challenges posed by the internal Palestinian schism to education. The paper presents a number of recommendations for the various duty-bearers towards better achievement of the right to education in Gaza.
- Factsheet on the 'housing in Gaza: a crisis amplified by Israel's closure'. The paper points to the growing housing crisis in the Gaza Strip under a swift population growth and a sharp shortage of construction, which is mainly caused by the Israeli closure of Gaza during the past decade and the widespread poverty among the population. Besides the lack of construction of new houses, the paper points to the serious deterioration of the main determinants of the right to adequate housing; including the water and sanitation systems and the electricity crisis, which undermine the housing standards to a serious low in Gaza. Owing to this crisis, houses are increasingly more crowded and less healthy; therefore, the duty-bearers must act swiftly to bring to an end the root causes of this crisis.
- Factsheet on the impacts of the electricity crisis on human rights in the Gaza Strip. As the power shortages in Gaza are growing, the crisis is expected to continue over the coming years; however, the implication it poses on human rights are dire. In 2013, Gaza saw times when the population had blackouts for up to 20 hours per day. This crisis is possible to deal with immediately with simple steps that require a political will from the various duty-bearers. Gaza must be supplied with sufficient power through allowing uninterrupted, sufficient supply of fuel for its power station and linking the population with power lines with further capacity from Israel and Egypt. International community must provide urgent support and invest greater political assets into bringing this crisis to a swift end.

**1.3. Human rights training manual developed & training manual for the 'Pass the Word' program on HR, IHL & democracy developed.**

The Pass-the-Word Program manual, which guides volunteer students on how to organize and lead discussion sessions with their peers was updated and handed to the students. See 1.1. above.

**1.4. Al Mezan's website activated and online resources disseminated (20 new items added monthly)**

1,079 headlines and news items were added (601 in Arabic and 478 in English) about human rights violations and situations during the reporting period. See [http://www.mezan.org/ar/center.php?id\\_dept=3&p=center](http://www.mezan.org/ar/center.php?id_dept=3&p=center) for Arabic and [http://www.mezan.org/en/center.php?id\\_dept=3&p=center](http://www.mezan.org/en/center.php?id_dept=3&p=center) for English.

**1.5. Al Mezan's outreach increased via staff and affiliates articles & presentations; increased copies of publications distributed; increased contacts on mailing list; & increased number of journalist contacts.**

- Al Mezan staff made numerous presentations at events organized by other organizations on human rights issues. They spoke and/or made presentations and



delivered trainings at 329 events during the reporting period; including eight major presentations.

- The mailing lists, both the general list and the journalists list, were expanded significantly during the reporting period; including by online subscription.

**Result 2: To promote a culture of human rights and democracy among, lawyers, students, professionals, and the community.**

**2.1. *University and community college students sensitized & educated in human rights, democracy & IH (25 students receive two trainings by Al Mezan courses; 300 students attend awareness sessions held by trained students; awareness materials for students distributed.***

- On 11 February, a meeting was held for 31 candidates who were selected to participate in the program in 2013 by the staff and the 2012 volunteer students in the same program. 22 students were invited for the first training course on human rights and IHL.
- The two trainings for volunteer students were held between 11 and 18 March. The first training provided the target group with information on human rights, IHL and democracy; information they need to lead the awareness discussion sessions. The second training focused on the skills of moderating discussion sessions on human rights, democracy and IHL. This training enables the target group to lead discussion sessions with their peers. The skills they received training on include planning, time management, active listening, and moderation techniques.
- During the reporting period, 110 awareness sessions, distributed over 22 awareness courses with five sessions each, were implemented by the volunteer students in different universities during the reporting period. 2,154 students participated in these awareness sessions (1201 women).

**2.2. *Group of Al Mezan friends established and activated (30 members from those who receive ToT; 4 meetings conducted; 2 members' initiatives conducted)***

Two facebook groups are overseen and supported by Al Mezan for young lawyers and activists.

**2.3. *Lawyers sensitized & educated in IHL (60 lawyers attend courses on HR & IHL)***

Two trainings were implemented as follows:

- On 11-13 November, a group of 23 senior law students at Palestine University in Gaza attended a training course on human rights, which provided them with information on the International Bill of Human Rights, CRC, CEDAW, Economic and Social Rights, and IHL.
- On 12-14 November, a training course was organized for 33 students in Gaza city. It provided them with information on the International Bill of Human Rights, CRC, CEDAW, Economic and Social Rights, and IHL.
- Other trainings for lawyers were implemented under Result 3, please see 3.1. below.

**2.4. *Various community groups sensitized & educated on human rights (250 people attend IHL workshops; 1000 people in marginalized areas attend awareness sessions; specialized human rights materials prepared and distributed.***

Two awareness courses were held for groups of refugee women and university students as follows:

- On 26 -28 February an awareness course was organized for a group of 28 women who work at the Women Activities Centre in the Daraj neighbourhood in Gaza city. The course included sessions on human rights and IHL basic concepts, with a focus on women's rights and child rights and juvenile justice.



- On 22-26 November, an awareness course was organized for a group of 33 university students. The course included sessions an introduction to human rights, the International Bill of Human Rights, CRC, the right to education, CEDAW and IHL.

In addition, 56 awareness workshops were conducted during the reporting period. 2,713 persons benefited from these awareness activities around the Gaza Strip; including 849 women and 713 children. The following table provides more details about these workshops:

No	Date	Location	Title/subject	Target group
1.	4 March	Gaza city	Human rights, child rights	19 school students (13-15 years old, boys)
2.	19 February	Rafah	Work rights and safety condition; the case of Rafah tunnels	40 residents of Rafah
3.	6 March	Rafah	Child rights, Juvenile justice	25 students from Dar Al-Da'wa College for Humanities
4.	6 March	Rafah	School violence in human rights and Palestinian law	45 female teachers
5.	6 March	Rafah	School violence in human rights and Palestinian law	35 male school students and 5 male teachers
6.	2 April	Jabalia	The right to peaceful assembly and forming civil society organizations in Palestinian law	26 civil society activists <sup>2</sup>
7.	4 April	Gaza city, Al Qattan Centre	Convention on the rights if the child	30 girls and boys
8.	4 April	Gaza city, Al Qattan Centre	Convention on the rights if the child	30 girls and boys
9.	3 April	Khan Younis	School violence in human rights and Palestinian law	18 school boys and 2 male teachers
10.	9 April	Beit Hanoun	Convention on the rights if the child	13 school children
11.	22 April	Jabalia	Convention on the rights if the child	35 female teachers
12.	22 April	Jabalia	Convention on the rights if the child	57 female school students
13.	7 May	Jabalia	Convention on the rights if the child	45 female school students
14.	21 April	Bani Suheila, Khan Younis	Convention on the rights if the child	35 male school students
15.	23 April	Jabalia	Convention on the rights if the child and the right to education	40 male school students and 3 teachers
16.	2 May	Rafah	Human Rights basic concepts	25 lawyers linked with the Women's Activities Centre in Rafah
17.	7 May	Khan Younis	Women's rights in Palestinian legislation	20 women
18.	20 May	Rafah	Women's rights in Palestinian legislation, property rights	50 men and women from Khirbet Al-Adas village in Rafah
19.	2 May	Deir Al-Balah	Convention on the rights if the child	35 female school students
20.	June	The Gaza Strip	Palestinian labour law Palestinian family law	445 People hosted by 12 CBOs around the Gaza Strip in 18 separate workshops <sup>3</sup>
21.	30 April	Jabalia	Libraries, culture and human rights	25 persons representing North Gaza district

<sup>2</sup> This workshop was organized in coordination with Oxfam-GB under an EU funded project.

<sup>3</sup> These workshops were organized under a UNDP project in support of the rule of law through capacity building and awareness in the Gaza Strip.



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				municipalities, the Ministry of Culture, Education Directorate, public libraries, and civil society organizations in the district.
22.	15 September	Rafah	Child rights	40 school girls
23.	23 September	Gaza city	Supporting the rights of the disabled	39 people, including disabled persons and persons working with rehabilitation CBOs
24.	24 September	Beit Hanoun	Role of Civil Society in Ensuring Access to Justice for People with Disability	17 people, including disabled persons and persons working with rehabilitation CBOs
25.	3 October	Rafah	Introduction to human rights	A group of 51 parents and 32 school girls
26.	4 October	Rafah	IHL and the protection of children	31 school girls
27.	9 October	Rafah	IHL and the protection of children	A group of 1 teacher and 17 school girls, members of a school parliament
28.	21 October	Rafah	Child rights in Palestinian and international laws	A group of 2 teachers and 23 school boys, members of a school parliament
29.	27 October	Rafah	Child rights in Palestinian and international laws	A group of 1 teacher and 19 school boys, members of a school parliament
30.	23 October	Gaza city	Forensic Medicine in Palestine and its impacts on human rights	A group of 22 media workers, lawyers and civil society activists
31.	30 October	Jabalia refugee camp	Child rights in Palestinian and international laws	A group of 22 school girls, members of a school parliament
32.	4 November	Jabalia refugee camp	Child rights in Palestinian and international laws	A group of 31 school boys, members of a school parliament
33.	12 November	Jabalia refugee camp	Introduction to human rights	25 people from the local community in Rafah
34.	13 November	Rarfah refugee camp	The rights of people with disability	20 people from the local community in the refugee camp
35.	24 November	Rafah refugee camp	Child rights in Palestinian and international laws	A group of 34 parents and 25 school girls
36.	23 November	Jabalia refugee camp	Child rights in Palestinian and international laws	A group of 20 school boys
37.	24 November	Jabalia refugee camp	Child rights in Palestinian and international laws	A group of 29 school boys
38.	24	Gaza city	Children in armed conflict and the 1612	A group of 42 persons from the local community in





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	November		MRM Mechanisms	Shiekh Radwan neighbourhood
39.	25 November	Deir Al Balah	Children in armed conflict and the 1612 MRM Mechanisms	A group of 37 persons from the local community in the al-Berka neighbourhood
40.	25 November	Al Bureij refugee camp	Children in armed conflict and the 1612 MRM Mechanisms	A group of 29 persons from the local community in the east of the camp
41.	19 November	Jabalia refugee camp	Human rights mechanisms and UPR (joint with OHCHR)	34 people from the local community in the refugee camp
42.	13 November	Jabalia refugee camp	Human rights mechanisms and UPR (joint with OHCHR)	33 people from the local community in the refugee camp
43.	31 October	Gaza city	Child rights monitoring, CRC and UPR mechanisms	30 planning directors at the Ministry of Education
44.	30 December	Rafah	Child rights monitoring, CRC and UPR mechanisms	21 civil society activists in Rafah
45.	31 December	Rafah	Child rights monitoring, CRC and UPR mechanisms	18 media students, volunteers at a women's media CBO in Rafah
46.	31 December	Gaza city	Child rights monitoring, CRC and UPR mechanisms	19 journalists
47.	31 December	Jabalia refugee camp	Child rights monitoring, CRC and UPR mechanisms	32 children at Jabalia Society for development and Empowerment
48.	31 December	Gaza city	CRC Concluding Observations on Israel 2013	18 civil society activists
49.	December	Gaza city, Beir Al Balah, Rafah, Beit Lahiya, Khan Younis, Jabalia	CRC Concluding Observations on Israel 2013	Ten groups of school children at ten different schools
50.	28 August	Beit Lahiya	IHL and the protection of women in armed conflict	47 women farmers who live near the buffer zone
51.	10 September	Gaza city	Introduction to IHL and IHL basic principles	19 UNRWA human rights school teachers
52.	11 September	Gaza city	The protection of civilians in IHL	19 UNRWA human rights school teachers
53.	12 September	Gaza city	Introduction to IHL and IHL basic principles	23 UNRWA human rights school teachers





54.	23 December	Gaza city	IHL and the protection of journalists	27 journalists
55.	19 September	Beit Hanoun	The protection of civilians in IHL	25 women farmers who live near the buffer zone
56.	9 July	Gaza city	Refreshing workshop on monitoring and documenting IHRL and IHL violations against women	12 monitoring officers in women's rights organizations in Gaza

**2.5. School students sensitized & educated in human rights (500 school students attend awareness sessions; awareness documents for school students prepared and distributed)**

During the reporting period, Al Mezan held 61 lectures and awareness sessions for school children, parents, and teachers in different districts in the Gaza Strip. All of these events were held in schools. 1,544 people; including 42 female teachers, 38 male teachers and 1,464 school children attended these sessions, which focused on the notion of human rights, child rights, the right to education, and child protection.

**2.6. Two human rights prizes awarded.**

- The award was announced in 354 schools around Gaza in coordination with the Ministry of Education and UNRWA. Children were asked to paint a painting that represents human rights and protection for them. Over 3,000 paintings from children were received. A committee of human rights defenders and a famous artist reviewed the painting and selected 36 winners.
- On 9 December 2013, a celebration was organized to award the prizes. 315 people attended it. Children were granted golden, silver or bronze shields with an encyclopaedia and a certificate of honour.
- Another 70 paintings were selected by the committee to be part of an exhibition on children's human rights paintings, which was opened on the same day and was attended by hundreds of people.

Interestingly, this year's paintings from children introduced new ideas. Some of them raised the issues of torture and abuse, death penalty, and children and armed conflict.

**Result 3: To strengthen the human rights related skills among lawyers, professionals, activists and civil society.**

**3.1. Lawyers strengthened their human rights related skills. 25 lawyers attend six-month training course on human rights related skills; 50 lawyers attended human rights mechanisms training courses; specialized human rights awareness materials for lawyers prepared and distributed.**

The annually organized six-month lawyer training, which aims to strengthen the legal skills of Gaza's young lawyers, was initiated during the reporting period as per the details below:

- Advertisement and selection: in January 2013 the specialized lawyer training was advertised on Al Mezan's website and the Bar Association in Gaza. About 80 applications were received from lawyers. Thirty young lawyers were selected by an internal panel at Al Mezan according with certain criteria; including age, gender, location, and interest in advancing human rights in their work.
- During the reporting period, the group received 145 training hours in 36 training sessions. Sessions took place weekly, especially on days where courts are not working.
- The training sessions covered the following topics: orientation session; human rights basic concepts and origins; economic, social and cultural rights; the rule of law, separation of powers in democratic systems; legislation in Palestine; the Palestinian



Legislative Council law-making process; Palestinian elections law, the elections court; the structure of Palestinian judiciary; the minimum standards of fair trial; the powers and role of the public prosecution in Palestinian law; Palestinian military law; Palestinian penal law; the due process in Palestinian law; Palestinian publication and press law; the standards of the right to work; and the protection from torture and abuse; Palestinian Civil Service Law; Palestinian Pensions Law; Palestinian Insurance Law; women and children in Palestinian law and Human Rights Law; Juvenile Justice in Palestinian and International Laws; monitoring and documenting Human Rights Violations; Prison Monitoring; Litigating Human Rights Cases in Palestinian Jurisdiction; UN Human Rights Mechanisms; ICRC; Introduction to IHL; IHL Basic Principles; Protection of Civilians in IHL; The Responsibilities of the Occupying Power; IHL Mechanisms; International Criminal Law; and field visits to Gaza's main prison and juvenile facility.

- Training materials for the trainings were developed and handed to the target group.

In addition to this annual training for lawyers, Al Mezan held seven other trainings for lawyers during the reporting period. These trainings provided both information and skills for the target group, so we preferred to report them under this result, although they are also relevant to Result 2 above (see 2.3. above).

- Between 6 January and 27 February six trainings were held for young lawyers, each for the period of four consecutive days. These trainings sought to support the law profession in Gaza by training young lawyers' legal skills; including on human rights. 264 lawyers (91 women) took part in these trainings, which covered the following areas: integrating human rights in the profession of law; the due process in Palestinian law; search and arrest procedures in Palestinian law, standards of fair trial, the legal protection for people under custody, the ethics of law profession. Municipal tax law, medical negligence and accountability, international crimes in the ICC statute. Each group received a total of 16 training hours under this activity, which was supported by UNDP under a project to support the rule of law in the oPt.
- A training course was held between 6 and 10 June for young lawyers to strengthen their training and awareness-raising skills. A group of 33 lawyers received 30 training hours that included ToT as well as basic human rights subjects.

**3.2. CBOs staff strengthened their human rights related skills. 60 CBOs staff attended human rights mechanism training course; 60 CBOs staff attend training course (two 24 hrs training courses: 1 local & 1 regional) in monitoring and documentation of women and child human rights violations.**

During the reporting period, Al Mezan held five trainings for CBOs who work on human rights issues; especially children and women. The following list describes each course:

- A regional training course for Community-Based Organizations in the Arab World was organized in cooperation with Al-Haq, the Open Society Foundation (OSF), and the Arab Institute for Human Rights. It took place in Tunisia between 31 May and 8 June and targeted 30 activists who work with women's rights and human rights groups in the Arab World; especially in countries affected by armed conflict. The training course focused on the skills of monitoring and documentation of human rights and IHL violations, especially those directed to women in a context of armed conflict. This training was held with support from the OSF under an on-going project on women and armed conflict in the region.
- On 23-26 September a training course was organized for a group of 21 CBO workers in Gaza city. The participants represented 17 CBOs and received training on human rights, human rights mechanisms, CRC and CEDAW.



- On 29 September – 3 October a training course was held for a group of 34 persons who work with local CBOs in Gaza city. They received training on human rights, monitoring and documenting violations, human rights mechanisms, CRC and CEDAW.
- On 29 September – 3 October a training course was held for a group of 20 persons who work with local CBOs in Jabalia refugee camp in North Gaza district. They received training on human rights, an introduction to IHL, monitoring and documenting violations, human rights mechanisms, CRC and CEDAW.
- On 28– 30 October a training course was held for a group of 23 persons who work with the National Association for Rehabilitation in Gaza city. They received training on human rights, an introduction to IHL, monitoring and documenting violations, human rights mechanisms, CRC and CEDAW.

**Strategic Goal 3: Contributing to the respect and protection of human rights (particularly ESCR) in Palestinian society, especially in the Gaza Strip.**

**Result 1: To disseminate information on human rights violations locally and internationally**

**1.1. Database on human rights violations maintained (2000 cases documented; database reports produced and shared, 10 field meetings with victims & people at risk)**

The following chart provides the key figures regarding the monitoring and documentation and referral activities during the reported period:

Activity	Number of times	Notes
Documenting incidents involving violations	1,335	One incident may include more than one violation and/or multiple victims.
Number of questionnaire forms filled in and supported with documents	1,966 <sup>4</sup>	Questionnaire forms are filled for individual cases.
Number of cases inputted in the database	3,301	This includes the questionnaires above and brief documentation of incidents not covered by questionnaires
Field visits	1,723	Visits by field workers to locations of violations, government and NGO offices, and interviewing victims and witnesses for the purpose of documenting violations.
Documentation of detention cases	124	Including 58 detained by the Israeli forces and the rest by the Palestinian authorities in Gaza
Referrals to Al Mezan Legal Assistance Unit	271	
Referrals externally	113	
Written affidavits/witness testimonies	292	
Provision of information	1,303	Including regular updates to OCHA & diplomatic missions, and regular updates to UNICEF and OHCHR to feed into UN databases overseen by the Protection Cluster, or for verification purposes.
Meetings with victims/people at risk in the field	116	To collect information about a violation or a risk and discuss interventions with the

<sup>4</sup> At the internal level, this includes 212 cases of internal violence, 10 cases of death penalty rulings/executions, and 7 cases of violent dispersal of peaceful assemblies.



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		people interactively.
Design new questionnaire forms	0	
Tours for visiting delegations	21	
Field meetings	11	Meetings with victims and/or people at risk of violation. *
Database reports	9	Monthly database reports on children in armed conflict, the Access Restricted Areas, and intra-Palestinian split.

### \* Field meetings:

- A meeting was organized on 15 April with a group of farmers in Khuza'a in Khan Younis district to discuss the violations they are exposed to due to IOF attacks on them as their land is close to the border fence between Gaza and Israel.
- A series of meetings were held by the field worker in North Gaza district with small groups of farmers who have land agricultural land close to the border fence in five areas in Beit Lahiya, in North Gaza district. The meetings aimed to assess the risks on farmers and their ability to access their land safely following the Israeli announcement of easing the movement near the border and in the sea.
- A Meeting was held on 16 December with 22 people who were affected by Storm Alexa in Jabalia refugee camp; mostly after their homes were flooded from storm rain. The meeting aimed to collect information about the problems faced by those affected and their urgent needs. Al Mezan and a group of youth volunteers liaised with the affected population and the local authorities and INGOs to provide support for them and work towards preventing similar risks in the future.
- A similar meeting was held with another group of people victimized by the impacts of the storm. The field worker in North Gaza district met with 14 people in Jabalia refugee camp on 17 December, and discussed their needs following the damages left by the storm. Information was shared with INGOs and the local authorities to make suitable intervention in their aid.
- On 23 December, the field worker in Middle Gaza district met with a group of people who live in the eastern parts on Al Bureij refugee camp. The meeting discussed the difficulties faced by the marginalized communities in this area under the lack of municipal services and the constant risk of IOF attacks.
- On 28 August, the field worker in North Gaza district organized a meeting with a group of 26 women from the farmer communities in Beit Lahiya. Most of them live close to the Buffer Zone and own land there. The meeting discussed the risks the women and their families face and the IOF violations of IHL that affect them and their livelihoods.

### 1.2. *Periodical reports on human rights violations published and distributed (12 monthly reports; 1 semi-annual report; 1 annual report; 3 reports on women & children in armed conflict)*

38 documentation and special field reports were published during the reporting period by the Field Work Unit as follows:

- 1 annual documentation report on the IOF violations of human rights and IHL during 2012;
- 1 annual statistical report on the violations of children under armed conflict in the Gaza Strip, covering 2012;
- 1 semi-annual report on violations by the Palestinian non-state actors and the impacts of the internal Palestinian schism on human rights in Gaza;
- 1 semi-annual report on IOF violations of human rights and IHL in the Gaza Strip;



- 3 quarterly reports on IOF violations of human rights and IHL during the period 1 January to 31 March 2013;
- 3 quarterly reports on the IOF violations in the Access Restricted Areas (Buffer Zone and the sea);
- 3 quarterly reports on the violations against children under armed conflict;
- 11 monthly reports on IOF violations of human rights and IHL in the Gaza Strip;
- 11 monthly statistical reports on violations by the Palestinian non-state actors and the impacts of the internal Palestinian schism on human rights in Gaza;
- 1 special statistical report on the IOF violations of IHRL and IHL during Operation Pillar of Defence;
- 1 follow up report on OF violations of IHRL and IHL during Operation Pillar of Defence and their impacts a year after the operation;
- 1 special report on the IOF use of the roof-knocking tactic during Operation Pillar of Defence.

**Result 2: To contribute to the protection of human rights through effective monitoring and legal intervention**

**2.1. Communications/complaints to Israeli & Palestinian authorities about violations (120 complaints; 150 cases referred internally and externally)**

The reporting period saw a significant increase in legal interventions with both the Israeli and Palestinian authorities. This is mainly owed to the need to act on cases from Operation Pillar of Defence (OPD) in November 2012, which had been documented in November and December 2012 and required intervention. Another reason for the increasing demand on legal aid is the closure of the border with Egypt, which led more people to seek access to healthcare in the West Bank and Israel.

In a significant development, Al Mezan decided to take a test case with the High Court of Justice in Gaza, despite the boycott of the legal system which has been in place since November 2007. The case aimed to raise a significant human rights issue, but also to test the extent of the independence of the judiciary in Gaza since the internal political schism started in June 2007. The case is reported below in this section.

- Overall, the Legal Aid Unit communicated 262 complaints to the Israeli and Palestinian authorities in response to violations of human rights in the Gaza Strip. The Unit made 98 complaints to the Israeli authorities; most of which were related to OPD and access to vital services outside of Gaza. Another 164 were communicated to the Palestinian authorities; including 51 regarding arbitrary detention of Palestinians by the authorities in Gaza. The number of complaints heavily exceeds those planned for the year.
- The Unit received 18 new requests to represent Palestinians from Gaza who had been detained by the Israeli forces, and started to represent them. This represents a decrease in the cases dealt with by Al Mezan of detention of Palestinians from Gaza by the Israeli authorities compared with the same period in 2012 (18 cases in the first half alone). Moreover, the LAU and the lawyers in Israel made 151 appearances before Israeli courts and meetings with the prosecution in the course of representing these detainees.
- Out of the 98 complaints in Israel, 25 were about access to medical care outside Gaza, 1 case of access to healthcare for a person detained in Israel, 18 about access to justice by victims of IHL and IHRL violations during and after OPD, 17 about free movement and access to family, and 5 about disappearance. Another 6 cases were



about IOF confiscation of fishing boats and 3 about denying traders' access. The interventions were successful in 24 cases; including 10 cases of patients, 7 cases of movement, 5 cases of disappearance. The Israeli authorities responded to requests of investigation (access to justice) in 7 cases.

- Moreover, the Legal Aid Unit took two cases with Israeli courts during the reporting period, as follows:
  - a) Salha Family case (Operation Cast Lead): this case started on 9 January 2011, when Al Mezan filed a compensation request for the family on the ground that their house was unlawfully attacked during OCL and the state of Israel should compensate them for the killing of six women and children and the destruction of their house. On 2 February, the court ruled that the request was dismissed without hearing evidence because the attack occurred during a military operation. The court also ordered the complainants to pay ILS 20,000 in fees to the state.<sup>5</sup>
  - b) Another compensation case in Israel from 2012 was followed by the Unit during the reporting period. This case involves seeking compensation for a family following two separate military attacks by the Israeli military which killed a mother and injured three children. The case is still pending.
- The Unit also took one case to the Palestinian High Court of Justice in Gaza; a first since November 2007. The case was taken after the authorities in Gaza closed MAAN News Agency, which was viewed as an arbitrary measure according to Palestinian law. This test case aimed to raise a major case regarding the freedom of the press and test whether the judiciary enjoys a degree of independence vis-a-vis the executive. Al Mezan argued that the forced closure of media offices was arbitrary and unlawful according to Palestinian law. The petition appealed to the Court to demand the Attorney General's office to explain the reasons behind their decision to close these offices, and to order them re-opened as Palestinian law dictates that media firms can only be closed by a court order, which was not the case. The Court accepted the petition and ordered an explanation from the prosecutors. On 22 September, the Court issued an order to the Attorney General to respond to the petition and provide its reasoning as to the closure orders by 22 October. However, the Attorney General's office did not appear before the court with a response. On 29 October the Court ordered that a response be presented to the Court in one hearing on 17 November. Nevertheless, no response was provided on that date. The Court, then, ruled that the case be resolved through an agreed settlement. On 26 November, the Attorney General issued an order re-opening the media offices. Al Mezan withdrew the case, but called on the authorities in Gaza to respect the freedom of the press and Palestinian law. Based on this case, Al Mezan's findings concluded that the independence of the judiciary is seriously impaired in Gaza.
- Out of the 164 cases brought up with the Palestinian authorities, 57 were related to arbitrary detention or detention that violated the due process on political grounds. Al Mezan lawyers secured the release of 27 cases. Fourteen other cases received visits from Al Mezan's lawyers while in detention; however, in the rest of the cases access to lawyer was denied. In one case, six brothers were detained when the police was in pursuit of fugitives. A policeman opened fire and shot one of the brothers in the knee and they were arrested. Al Mezan's intervention secured the release of the four persons. In another case, the disappearance of a PA security employee was

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<sup>5</sup> See Al Mezan's Press Release: 'Israeli Court Rejects Salha Family's Lawsuit and Fees Victim Family, Al Mezan Strongly Condemns Ruling and Calls for Lifting Immunity and Punishing Perpetrators', 17 February 2013, available at: [http://mezan.org/en/details.php?id=16366&ddname=court&id\\_dept=9&id2=9&p=center](http://mezan.org/en/details.php?id=16366&ddname=court&id_dept=9&id2=9&p=center).





challenged and the Center's lawyers were able to locate him and secure his release. In 3 cases, the lawyers secured swift referral of minors to the juvenile facility in Gaza city. In three other cases juveniles were detained in adults facilities in Rafah, which was challenged and their removal to a juvenile facility or release was secured. Arbitrary detentions of male siblings following family feuds or to put pressure on families so that a family member surrenders to the police was also strongly challenged and releases were also secured swiftly. In 7 cases disappearance, with alleged abuse and torture, was challenged quickly and effectively. Three of the cases ended with the release of the person and four with locating them and securing contact with the Centre's lawyers and their families. Four of the cases involved the detention or harassment of journalists and in all cases release was secured or harassment stopped. Lastly, in several cases Fateh members were subject to frequent summoning by the security in Gaza and/or their travel was banned. The intervention with the authorities ended the summoning and enabled travel.

- Another 104 cases were also taken with the Palestinian authorities in Gaza. 31 of these cases were from persons who were subjected to arbitrary detention on alleged criminal suspicion (as compared with the 57 political/opinion detentions above). In 19 of these cases, suspicion of abuse and torture was a subject of the complaints. Some of these cases were related to the 'virtue campaign' in Gaza, which involved the police force detaining and abusing people; including minors, because of how they dressed or cut their hair. The interventions secured release of people and investigations into their abuse in 16 cases. 15 of the cases were about access to medical care or complaints against medical negligence leading to death or suffering, and the interventions secured access in five cases and investigations into negligence into four other cases. Nineteen of the complaints involved violations of the right to housing and property in Gaza. Fifteen of these cases involved forcible evacuation for safety reasons in a legal manner; however, the interventions ensured that the evacuees have alternative housing for the duration of the treatment of the safety issues. In another five cases, confiscation of property of houses without compensation according to the law was successfully challenged by Al Mezan's lawyers. Seven of the cases were against access to a fair trial or legal process, of which three ended successfully. Eight of the cases involved prevention from travel; six of which ended successfully. Two other complaints were about the use of excessive force by the police. In one case, the police in Rafah dispersed peaceful gatherings violently; killing one person and injuring three. In the second case, the drug trafficking police used excessive force during the arrest of a suspect; killing one person and injuring 11 and using violence against the suspect. One of the cases was against unlawful closing of an NGO and one against denying access to public support for a disabled child; both ended successfully. The rest of the cases involved interventions to secure access to education, arbitrary search of property, and child protection.
- Concerning referrals, 261 were made during the reporting period; 183 of which were external and 78 internal.
- During the reporting period, the Center provided legal advice in 394 cases for victims of various violations in the Gaza Strip. 109 of the beneficiaries were women.

**2.2. Interventions and follow up human rights mechanisms strengthened (20 lawyers trained on using human rights mechanisms; 500 legal advices; 20 visits to Palestinian prisons.**



- During the reporting period, Al Mezan interacted with various UN human rights mechanisms. 19 communications were made to UN Special rapporteurs, reporting serious human rights violations in the Gaza Strip.
- 394 legal advices made.
- A joint statement dealt with Israeli's non-cooperation with the Human Rights Council.
- During the reporting period, the Center's lawyers carried out 11 visits to Palestinian prisons in the Gaza Strip. They looked at the general prisons' conditions and interviewed hundreds of prisoners in order to take any complaints, ensure they are/were treated in accordance with the legal and human rights standards, and that they are being held in accordance with the due process. Al Mezan's lawyers met with the prisons' administrations and discussed urgent issues and complaints with them. Then, they made communications with the prisons' administrations and the Ministry of Interior regarding dozens of complaints from prisoners and detainees.
- The training for human rights and women's rights groups in the Arab World included training sessions on using UN human rights mechanisms.

**2.3. International advocacy and networking against violations of human rights strengthened (assistance to building one case/intervention before international human rights mechanisms and/or courts; interventions for policy changes; issuing information/advocacy documents (statements, letters, appeals, factsheets...etc.) sent to intergovernmental bodies (e.g. UN, EU, Arab League).**

- **Networking:** Al Mezan joined the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) during the reporting period. FIDH is one of the most prominent global human rights networks. Active membership was maintained in the Euro-Med Human Rights Network (EMHRN) and the Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Council (PHROC). In July, PHROC's membership expanded to include PCHR; making it a body covering all Palestinian human rights NGOs. Al Mezan's active participation in the Protection Cluster, the 1612 Working Group, and the ARA Core Group; all of which UN formations, also continued. Membership in the Habitat International Coalition, based in Cairo, was also active during the reporting period through communications and joint actions with the UN Human Rights Council. Networking and coordination also occurred among Palestinian and regional human rights organizations in response to certain situations; including the developing situation in Egypt as it relates to Palestinians' human rights. Networking also focused on activities at the regional level; including efforts to build Arab NGOs capacity, which was pursued through cooperation with Al-Haq and the Arab Institute for Human Rights in Tunisia. During the reporting period, Al Mezan took part in two EMHRN Executive Committee meetings, two meetings for the EMHRN Palestine, Israel and the Palestinians (PIP) Working Group,<sup>6</sup> and a roundtable on accountability held by EMHRN in Brussels to discuss issues around access to justice for Palestinians in Israel. Al Mezan participated in seven cluster meetings and contributed to their work with information. Despite the preparations to attend the FIDH Congress, a sudden closure of the border with Egypt did not allow it.
- **Networking/ Advocacy:** Overall, Al Mezan organized or was part of seven advocacy missions in 2013. In cooperation with EMHRN, Al Mezan participated in five advocacy missions in Europe. The first mission was a high-level mission to the Netherlands and Brussels in January, in which a delegation of the directors of Al Mezan, Al-Haq, PCATI, and Adalah's Naqab office met with the Dutch Foreign Minister, parliamentarians, and

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<sup>6</sup> Al Mezan holds the position of the Political Referent of this Working Group.





civil society in the Hague, and the Belgian Foreign Ministry in Brussels. The delegation spoke in two public events and met with the Palestinian ambassador to the Netherlands, too. The second mission was an advocacy and solidarity mission organized by EMHRN to Turkey in February, focusing on association rights and in solidarity of an imprisoned Kurdish unionist who is a member of the Network's Executive Committee. The third mission; organized by EMHRN and Amnesty International, in Brussels focusing on accountability and access to justice in Israel. In another mission, the Director travelled to Brussels and met with EU and Belgian officials and civil society to raise the human rights impacts emanating from the developments in Gaza and Egypt. In November, the Director also took part in an advocacy mission and a workshop on accountability; both of which were organized by the EMHRN in Italy. Meetings with Italian officials and civil society focused on the need to secure greater accountability and access to justice for victims. He also opened the workshop and made two presentations on the issues of impunity and denial of access to justice for victims of IHRL and IHL violations in Gaza. A sixth mission was organized in cooperation with the Thelos Group, Gisha in cooperation with Amnesty International US. It took place in the United States and focused on the Israeli illegal closure of the Gaza Strip; including the access for patients and students from Gaza to education and health facilities in the West Bank. One other mission was organized by Al Mezan without networking with other groups to the United Kingdom. Finally, a mission was planned to take place in Geneva on the margin of the HRC's Universal Periodic Review of Israel; however, due to the full closure of Gaza at that time it was impossible to implement it. Instead, Al Mezan coordinated with members of PHROC, who distributed UPR reports and an update on the situation of children under armed conflict in Gaza.

- **Information/Advocacy:** Al Mezan issued 73 press releases during the reporting period (Arabic and English). In addition 29 joint press releases, statements and letters were issued. Nine of those were issued by the Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Council; including a statement on the new EU guidelines on funding activities in Israeli settlements. Five joint press releases were also published in cooperation with the Palestinian NGOs Network, Palestinian Center for Human Rights, and Al Dameer Association for Human Rights in Gaza. Those were concerned with the Gaza authorities' legislation of a law on education, the developments in Egypt; including incitement against Gaza and the closure of Rafah Crossing, and one concerning the case of the murder of the peace activist Vittorio Arigoni. The human rights organizations working in Gaza issued a statement commenting on the Israeli High Court ruling on the use of white Phosphorus. Fourteen Palestinian and Israeli human rights organizations issued a statement to criticize the lack of accountability for the use of torture in Israel. Joint written and oral statements were also submitted to the UN Human Rights Council. Preparations for Israel's Universal Periodic Review have resumed during the reporting period, in anticipation of the UPR in October 2013. PHROC has decided to update the joint UPR reports by its 12 members individually, but with close coordination and sharing inputs. Finally, three joint seven were drafted and sent to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the UN Special Coordinator for the Peace Process, the European Parliament, the European External Action Service, and the French Minister of Foreign Affairs.

**Result 3: To enhance local and national advocacy and networking for human rights.**



**3.1. *Advocacy campaigning conducted (3 campaigns on human rights cases; 5 open meetings and/or advocacy workshops on ESCR with officials, experts and victims; 3 advocacy media appearances/ articles on human rights violations).***

- **Campaigning:** during the reporting period, Al Mezan conducted campaigning on five issues; including accountability and access to justice for Palestinian victims of IHRL and IHL in Israel; campaigning on peaceful assembly and fundamental freedoms in Gaza, death penalty, torture, and transitional justice. Campaigning against the closure of Gaza by Israel and the associated regime of enforcing access restricted areas in Gaza land and sea also continued in 2013.
- **Advocacy workshops and open meetings:** During the reporting period AL Mezan organized the following events as part of Al Mezan's campaigning around freedom of assembly, transitional justice, death penalty, and torture and ill-treatment in Gaza:
- A workshop on the Law on Education No. 1/2013, which is a new legislation passed by part of the Palestinian Legislative Council in Gaza. This law led to much controversy; therefore, the Legal Aid Unit invited experts and lawyers to discuss it. The law as subjected to serious criticism due to the timing and manner of its passing under political split, but also because of its content.
  - A second advocacy workshop was organized in by Al Mezan on the quality of health services in the Gaza Strip on 29 May. Four papers on studies conducted by Al Mezan were presented in this workshop, which criticized the deteriorating quality of health services, mainly due to the Israeli closure of Gaza, but also because of the implications of the internal Palestinian split.
- On 22 August a conference was organized on the legal monitoring on NGOs. The conference aimed to review the standards set out by Palestinian law and the requirements of the right to freedom of assembly, and compare them to the actual practice in the Gaza Strip. The conference aimed to stress the significance of formal overseeing of the work of NGOs; however, without conflicting such monitoring with the basic requirements of free assembly/ Monitoring cannot be done outside of the law and must not be abused to hinder NGOs, as is frequently noticed in Gaza.
- A workshop was organized on 28 August on the 'legal protection from arbitrary detention and ill-treatment'. It focused on the situation in the Gaza Strip, where such practices are commonplace; despite the noticed decrease of this type of violations compared with previous years. The workshop aimed to stress the legal protections against unlawful detention and abuse and raise public awareness in the relevant standards as set out by Palestinian law and IHRL.
- On 18 September a workshop was held on the guarantees to freedom of expression. The workshop aimed to shed light on the performance of the security agency in Gaza with regard to the duty to respect freedom of opinion and expression, especially following the forced closure of two media offices for MAAN News Agency and Al Arabiya in Gaza. While the workshop stressed the standards, it also aimed to mount the pressure on the authorities to re-open the media offices and respect the freedom of expression in the Gaza Strip.
- On 10 October, a joint conference was organized with a number of Palestinian NGOs; including PCHR and GCMHP, on Gaza on death penalty in the Gaza Strip. The conference declared the uncompromising rejection of the use of death penalty; especially also under the internal Palestinian political schism, which hinders any efforts to secure fair trial.
- On 21 November a conference was organized on transitional justice in Palestine. Over six years after the start of Palestinian political schism, which has led to serious and



continuing human rights violations, the transitional justice approach could offer useful advice as to ending this serious problem in a way that is respectful of human rights and responding to the suffering and needs of the victims of these years. Palestinian political powers and civil society were invited to the conference so that they have better understanding of this approach and to encourage them to adopt it.

- On 28 November a follow up workshop on the scenarios of implementing transitional justice approach in Palestine was organized. The workshop provided more flesh to the issues raised in the conference and looked at more details. It offered a chance to look at experiences in different countries and how they can be used in the Palestinian context.
- **Media appearances:** During the reporting period, Al Mezan was invited to speak with the media 304 times during the reporting period. The majority of those were with local media, which is a positive sign of the media interest as well as the availability of further channels to send human rights messages to the local community. However, dozens of these engagements were interviews with TV stations and international media, which took place 98 times.
- **Presentations:** Al Mezan staff made 37 presentations in human rights events organized by other NGOs in and outside of the Gaza Strip during the reporting period. The director, communications director, lawyers, researchers and field workers made presentations; including on Palestinian legislation under the political schism (20 June, Al-Azhar University); the new law on education (22 April, Law Centre at BirZeit University); the role of civil society in reconciliation (23 April, PNGO); conference on human dignity in the Palestinian context; the human rights situation in the oPt (29 January, Institute for Social Studies); the Access Restricted Areas in Gaza (7 March, MAAN Development Center); accountability in local government (4 June, Al-Hayat Society); legal intervention in Israel (Diakonia); the problems of cancer treatment in Gaza; the water crisis in Gaza, health in prison facilities in Gaza; women and peace; accountability in the oPt (Rome, November 2013); transparency and combating corruption in Palestine (Berlin, November).

**3.2. *Networking and consultations with relevant stakeholders/networks concerned with advocating human rights strengthened (3 meetings government and civil society officials; 20 meetings with UN and diplomatic missions in Gaza; 2 consultation workshops conducted with networks, experts and civil society in Gaza)***

- **Meetings with officials and stakeholders:** 131 meetings took place during the reporting period by the various units. Staff; including lawyers and researchers who work on human rights issues in Gaza, raised various issues with officials, judges, and security personnel; including issues around housing, access to justice, freedom of expression, the treatment of persons in detention, juvenile justice, trade union and freedom of assembly, health, and freedom of expression. In addition, the Center's Director took part in 241 meetings with government officials and civil society organizations in the Gaza Strip; all of which raised human rights issues. The Director also met with 134 international delegations visiting Gaza. In Gaza, he met with 51 national diplomatic missions, 17 EU officials, and 39 UN agencies. The Director also took part in two meetings with officials in the Arab League and one with officials in Egypt to discuss the human rights situation in Gaza. The Director of Communications and International Relations took part in 41 meetings with EU and EU Member States officials in Europe, 9 diplomatic missions, and 47 international NGOs. During these



meetings, visitors were briefed on the human rights and humanitarian conditions in Gaza and, where relevant, asked to make interventions.

- **Consultations on HR:** Al Mezan took part and/or organized five consultations. The first was in Gaza and focused on the reality of freedoms in the Gaza Strip under the internal Palestinians schism as well as the attack on personal freedoms by the authorities in the Gaza Strip. The second was on access to justice by the Palestinian victims of IHL in Gaza, especially in light of recent Israeli court rulings that dismissed compensation claims without hearing witnesses or reviewing evidence. A third consultation was concerned with the region and focused on the human rights situation in the southern Mediterranean. Another consultation took place in the UK and focused on litigating human rights and IHL cases internationally. Al Mezan also held consultations around transitional justice, free expression and death penalty in Gaza. Al Mezan's Director also took part in a conference on the reform of the Arab League. Al Mezan was also part of consultations around the EU policy regarding Israeli settlements and Israel's involvement with the UN human rights mechanisms.

**3.3. *Communication/coordination with other organizations and stakeholders concerned with advocating human rights established (100 joint and individual press releases, appeals, or letters on violations issued; at least 2 international advocacy missions to Europe conducted annually.***

- **Press Releases:** 73 Press releases were issued by Al Mezan during the reporting period; including 27 on economic, social and cultural rights issues. The most issues covered by Al Mezan's press releases during the reporting period include the closure of Gaza, accountability, and the consequences of Palestinian internal split on economic and social rights, death penalty, and public freedoms.
- **Joint PR's and statements:** 29 joint press releases and statements were issued during the reporting period; out of which Al Mezan took the lead in 11.
- **Advocacy missions:** Al Mezan took part in organizing and implementing seven advocacy missions that were organized by networks in which Al Mezan has membership during the reporting period. See section 2.3 (Networking/ Advocacy) above. In addition, Al Mezan organized two small advocacy missions to London and Geneva on accountability, and a third mission in coordination with Gisha to the United States, focusing on the closure of Gaza.

**3.4. *Legislative/judicial systems observed (3 appeals/letters sent to legislative and executive bodies on major violations; 12 visits to courts in the Gaza Strip conducted; 2 reviews/ position papers of legislative and judicial documents; 1 legal review/ guide of drafts of the domestic law)***

- **Observation of law and policy:** one law on Education was scrutinized during the reporting period, and was seriously criticized by Al Mezan and several legal experts in Gaza. In cooperation with the Palestinian NGOs Network, PNGO, Al Mezan organized a conference on this law and issued statements after consultation with civil society and legal experts.
- **Legal reviews/ position papers:** No reviews were carried out during the reporting period.

**3.5. *Legal and policy related actions by authorities observed (3 cases of legal and policy related actions by Palestinian and Israeli authorities observed)***



- A joint intervention was made on Palestinians' access to justice; including compensation for damages incurred by the IOF attacks, in Israel, and accountability for torture in Israel.
- A second intervention was made in relation to the attack by the Gaza authorities on public and personal freedoms in the Gaza Strip.
- A third intervention concerned with the EU engagement with the Israeli settlements in oPt.
- A joint intervention was made on death penalty in Gaza, in cooperation with PCHR, PNGO, and OHCHR.
- An intervention was made in the frequent violation of free expression and assembly in Gaza, with focus on transitional justice as a lasting solution to these problems as well as many other human rights problems which are affected by the internal Palestinian split.



## 4. Outcomes/Results:

### 4.1. Monitoring and documentation

Documentation: the monitoring and documentation activities resulted with **1,335** incidents of human rights and IHL violations documented during the reporting period. Of those, **124** were cases of detention (57 by the Israeli authorities and the rest by the Palestinian authorities in Gaza). **1,966** questionnaires were completed with supporting documents from victims or victims' families on human rights violations. **3,301** cases were entered into Al Mezan's databases. Documenting these cases enabled all of the legal and advocacy interventions below.

Referrals: 658 Referrals and affidavits: The fieldwork unit made **457** referrals for legal intervention or advocacy (**271** to the legal aid unit at Al Mezan and **186** externally). On at least **39** occasions, documenting violations led to successful interventions that led to alleviating violations or preventing them. **292** affidavits were collected by fieldworkers and/or lawyers, which facilitated advocacy and/or legal interventions.

Improved capacity: staff members participated in designing, training on, and using questionnaire forms developed in 2012 to collate data about violations directed to women in the context of armed conflict in cooperation with women's rights groups in oPt and the Arab region. The new forms cover cases of killings/injuries, forced displacement, access to family life, and freedom of movement in contexts of conflict. Al Mezan's database was expanded to host information collected using these questionnaires by Al Mezan and partner NGOs; especially women's rights groups in oPt; with whose cooperation the forms and the database were developed.

Information sharing: As a result of our documentation, Al Mezan provided information to humanitarian and human rights bodies for the purposes of research and advocacy. Al Mezan's documentation was used in reports by OCHA, UNICEF and WHO, and humanitarian NGOs as well as the media. During the reporting period, the Field Work Unit responded to over 1,300 requests of provision of information to various institutions, NGOs, and the media.

### 4.2. Awareness and Training

Information and skills: A total of **7,909** people (2,703 women, 2,818 men and 2,388 children) participated in **201** awareness events on a range of human rights issues relevant to the situation in the Gaza Strip. Of those events, 179 were organized by the staff, and **22** awareness courses were organized and delivered by volunteer students under staff supervision and support. The results of pre and post-tests in training courses and workshops, which make up **117** of the staff led events, showed high levels of knowledge and skill attainment; with a minimum average of 65% and a maximum average of 90% answering questions and/or successfully using skills correctly following the training. During the reporting period, **1,044** awareness/ training hours were delivered; of which **670** by the staff and **220** by volunteer students. Awareness-raising for persons deprived from their liberty continued in 2013, although to a lesser extent when compared with 2012. Al Mezan co-organized a training for Arab women's groups and human rights NGOs in Tunisia. Conferences and workshops were also organized on death penalty and transitional justice during the year. Al Mezan's staff delivered specialized training in Libya and the Sudan.



**Lawyer training:** 20 lawyers received 145 training hours on human rights, IHL, and the Palestinian legal system under an annual lawyer training course. Moreover, another 353 young lawyers and senior law students received training on domestic law and the protection of human rights through the legal profession in short courses. Young lawyers' social media interaction, with Al Mezan's support, continued and the number of lawyers joining the group saw an increase during the reporting period.

**Building local capacities:** Awareness/training activities engaged civil society, the media, and the political powers on a range of issues in Gaza; including death penalty, economic, social, IHL and cultural rights, and fundamental liberties.

### **4.3. Legal Assistance and Advice**

**Legal assistance/advice:** The number of beneficiaries of the Legal Aid Unit's (LAU) interventions increased during the reporting period, with 2,102 victims and their families benefiting from it during the reporting period. Lawyers responded to major human rights violations both by the IOF and Palestinian non-state actors. Building on a monitoring and documentation campaign by the Field Work Unit into violations committed by the IOF during Operation Pillar of Defence (November 2012), an organized effort to seek investigations by, and lodge complaints against IHL violations with the Israeli authorities was conducted. Responses were also timely in cases of disappearance following IOF arrests of Palestinians from Gaza. Moreover, the LAU made quick interventions into cases of arbitrary detention, allegations of torture, interference with liberty and abuse, and cases faced with forced evictions in Gaza due to actions by the authorities in the Gaza Strip. This year also saw a first engagement by Al Mezan with the justice system in Gaza with a freedom of expression test case, which ended with the authorities ending the violation; however, with the conclusion that the independence of the justice system is injured. This conclusion is significant and need to be dealt with in the future. Many of these interventions were successful; however, challenges owed to the spread of impunity in Israel and Gaza continued to hamper these efforts.

The Legal Aid Unit 283 interventions with the Israeli and Palestinian authorities during the reporting period. Those include 18 new cases of representing Palestinians from Gaza who were detained by the IOF; two cases with Israeli courts, one case with the High Court in Gaza, and 262 complaints with the authorities in Israel and Gaza; 98 and 124 respectively. The lawyers in Israel made 151 appearances before Israeli courts and meetings with the prosecution in the course of representing these detainees and others whose cases continued from previous years. Five of the cases involved temporary disappearance of Palestinians, and the LAU was able to locate all of them as they were detained in Israel.

Cases that involve complaints from the IOF are predominantly related to access restrictions (38 cases; inc. 25 patients), access to justice prompted by damages incurred due to IOF attacks (18), and to detention of Palestinians; including patients (18). Interventions with the Israeli authorities were successful in 24 instances out of 98. The OPD cases included 17 files representing multiple victims. The LAU successfully filed 50 civil notifications with the Israeli Ministry of Defence (MoD). These notifications must be filed within 60 days from the date of the attack. Successful submission, which also involves passing powers of attorney and maps to the MoD, secures victims' right to claim compensation within 2 years from the date of the attack. The MoD confirmed all the notifications and, as a result, 100% of the victims benefited from the submission of these notifications; i.e. have the right to initiate civil suits





within two years if they wish to. Moreover, the LAU filed 18 complaints with the Israeli Military Advocate General (MAG), with a request to initiate investigations into the attacks on the ground that they violated the laws of war. One of these cases was raised with MAG during OPD in November 2012; however, the investigation was followed up during the reporting period. In six of the cases MAG informed Al Mezan that investigations were opened into the cases. Three of these five cases were then closed as MAG suspended the investigations. In the rest of the cases, i.e. 12 cases, MAG has not replied to the complaints as of 31 December 2013.

Al Mezan also challenged violations of human rights by the Palestinian authorities in Gaza through legal interventions (almost totally outside of courts except in one case) in the Gaza Strip. 262 such cases were handled including arbitrary detention (88), temporary disappearance (14), torture/ill treatment (19), forcible eviction (14), and restriction of movement (6). 101 of these interventions were successful.

Prison visits: The Center's lawyers carried out 11 visits to Palestinian prisons in the Gaza Strip. They looked at the general prisons' conditions and interviewed hundreds of prisoners in order to take any complaints, ensure they are/were treated in accordance with the legal and human rights standards, and that they are being held in accordance with the due process.

Al Mezan also submitted 19 complaints with different UN special procedures on behalf of the same victims during the reporting period, urging them to demand that the Israeli authorities investigate and prosecute any violations in accordance with the relevant rules of international law.

#### **4.4. Information and Advocacy**

Problems affecting health, education, housing, and electricity in Gaza were raised with the authorities and the media following issuing studies and fact-sheets. As a result, new equipment and materials were provided and helped these two categories of patients, especially children. Moreover, evictions were prevented and information was referred to humanitarian actors to deliver support for people whose homes were affected by troubles around Gaza.

Advocacy in Gaza; including legal advocacy, was also directed at protecting housing and property rights and resulted with securing housing for dozens of families who were at risk of forcible eviction. It was also directed at defending freedom of expression, the media, and against death penalty, and to push for Palestinian reconciliation using transitional justice mechanisms and with involvement of civil society.

At the international level, Al Mezan was part of seven advocacy/information missions; two of which were conducted individually and five jointly with other human rights organizations. These missions raised the issues of Gaza illegal closure, and settlements and Area C policies in relation to the peace process, and accountability. These missions focused on Europe; including the EU and four Member States) and the United States, and Al Mezan provided information, analysis and insights as to the situation, human rights violations, and the recommended responses from international community. In 2013, the criticism of Gaza closure continued to come from the international community; however, much more focus was granted to the peace process. While Al Mezan supported the promotion of the peace process, we demanded that attention be given to stopping violations of human rights and IHL, and securing accountability, which do not contradict with the peace effort, but would strengthen them. In July, after the Rafah Crossing was closed due to the developments in Egypt, an advocacy mission to the US took place to put pressure on the Israeli authorities to





allow greater movement of goods and people through crossing points controlled by Israel. Regarding the settlements, two important developments occurred during 2013: the UN Fact-Finding Mission report and the EU new guidelines disallowing any funding to companies or organizations working in the settlements. These are not direct results to the work done by Al Mezan, but the contribution of Al Mezan and other human rights organizations is recognized. Two of the advocacy missions in Europe focused on promoting these measures at the level of EU Member States and the need to lift the Gaza closure.

In the Gaza Strip, the campaigning around intra-Palestinian political schism is has continued, with political detention, pressure on civil society, defending free expression and peaceful assembly, criticizing legislative changes by the PLC in Gaza, and challenging interference with personal freedoms as major features. Moreover, campaigning was directed against death penalty, the health situation, and freedom of expression. In some of these issues success was visible; especially with regard to supporting victims of arbitrary detention, interference with liberty, attack on free expression and media work, and challenging inappropriate legislative reform by civil society.

19 communications were made with UN Special Rapporteurs, reporting serious human rights violations in the Gaza Strip. Seven of those were concerned with OPD. Moreover, Al Mezan reported to the Committee on Child Rights and to the Israel UPR during the reporting period. Al Mezan organized or took part in seven advocacy missions during the reporting period. Written and oral submissions were made jointly for the UN Human Rights Council. The Director also visited Geneva for meetings with UN officials and diplomats.

Al Mezan staff spoke and/or made presentations at hundreds of events organized by other organizations in and outside of the Gaza Strip; therefore, spreading more awareness and providing technical perspectives generated from the work of the Center. Some of these events dealt with regional issues, such as the Arab League's human rights mechanism and the regional human rights conditions. Others focused on the implications of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on human rights in the oPt. But other events dealt specifically with local and national Palestinian issues; including the internal political schism and the implications on basic services as well as the attack on personal freedoms.

The website received 53,635 hits and there were 150,298 page views on it during the reporting period

During the reporting period, Al Mezan's staff had 304 appearances in the media; including 98 interviews by TV stations. Al Mezan and its work appeared in the media **573** times; 91 of which in English language media. Al Mezan's film materials were widely viewed on the web.

#### **4.5. Beneficiaries:**

2,102 people benefited directly from the LAU's legal assistance and advice services during the reporting period. Groups of beneficiaries included prisoners/detainees in Israel and the Gaza Strip, victims of human rights violations in Gaza, students, fishermen communities, people at risk of displacement, and patients.

A total of 7,909 people (2,703 women, 2,818 men and 2,388 children) participated in 201 awareness events. A group of Arab human rights workers benefited from specialized training on women and armed conflict, and two groups benefited from Al Mezan's expertise in



monitoring and documenting human rights violations; including a group of prosecutors in Libya who received training on investigating and documenting torture.

856 people benefited from the library services; including 194 children.

Other beneficiaries included UN agencies, other libraries in various areas in Gaza and media outlets, who received information about human rights violations and humanitarian grievances relevant to their interests. Moreover, several diplomatic missions to Israel and the Palestinian Authority, EU and member States' diplomats and civil servants in Brussels, as well as those of states; including France, Italy, Germany, the US, the UK, Poland, and the Netherlands in addition to the Arab League, European Parliament members, and international NGOs. Those received briefings and written and oral information about specific human rights and IHL violations that were collected and/or analysed through the activities in 2013.

## 5. Obstacles and difficulties:

During the reporting period Al Mezan faced various obstacles, both internal and external. The following table indicates these obstacles and the response from the Center to them:

	Response
<b>Internal Obstacles:</b>	
<p><b>Staff and financial issues:</b> this problem persisted in 2013. key staff members are still missing in the structure; including a coordinator of the Legal Aid Unit. The Communications &amp; Int'l Relations Director worked from a distance for the entire duration of the reporting period. During the reporting period the financial part of the strategic plan, which implies significant raise in salaries and activities, was not implemented due to the lack of financial resources to support the core budget.</p>	<p>A senior lawyer continued to perform the role of acting coordinator of the Legal Aid Unit, and has been gaining good experience. The Director of Communications is expected to return to work from Gaza in the end of January 2014. Two temporary staff members were added to the communications and international relations team in the meantime. Efforts to raise more funds to support the entire strategic plan are continuous. While a new core donor joined in 2013, a second donor agreed to fund a project that represents a major part of the core program. Many of the activities and partial staff cost were covered by project funding. The Center will continue to seek core and project funding to try to raise the necessary funding. In the meantime, the main activities will continue to be prioritised in spending.</p>
<b>External Obstacles</b>	
<p><b>Increased Risks and violations:</b> Gaza is expected to see a rise in human rights violations in 2014, as the closures are intensifying and violence seems to be escalating. This will put greater pressure on Al Mezan in 2014. The intra-Palestinian political splits also expected to add to this pressure.</p>	<p>Al Mezan staff will be on stand-by to respond to increasing violations. Temporary project funding to support monitoring and legal assistance will be sought for contingency. Al Mezan will build on its long experience in responding to these conditions.</p>
<p><b>Restrictions on movement:</b> decreased movement and access affect staff's ability to carry out important capacity-building, liaison and advocacy activities. This is expected to worsen in 2014.</p>	<p>Accessible local and regional opportunities for capacity building will be sought to build staff capacity. Coordination with Palestinian, international and Israeli partners, and using the services of lawyers in Israel can help reduce the impacts of the lack of access to courts and advocacy opportunities.</p>

<b>Electricity crisis:</b> Power cuts increased largely during the reporting period, hampering the capacity significantly. The developments in Egypt also led to scarcity in fuel supplies, which meant lesser power generation.	Greater investment into power was necessary; including seeking a new power generator with more capacity. Al Mezan purchased a new generator with support from a core donor, Medico International – Germany, and the core budget. This is expected to improve the situation at the main office in 2014.
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## 6. Project activities

During the reporting period, the following projects were in progress:

1.	Building young lawyers' capacities in Gaza	UNDP/PAPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To strengthen the capacities of young lawyers and support the law profession in Gaza</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12 trainings courses for young lawyers on incorporating defending human rights in their work and the Palestinian legal system.</li> <li>15 initiatives from young lawyers in which they enhance and distribute a culture of human rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13 trainings courses for young lawyers on incorporating defending human rights in their work and the Palestinian legal system.</li> <li>20 awareness workshops on the Palestinian Labour law and the Family Law.</li> <li>2 films (1 on Fayeze Salha case on IHL and accountability, 1 on barriers lawyers face within court)</li> <li>2 radio programmes (1 on laws on medical negligence, 1 on struggles of new lawyers in Gaza)</li> <li>1 CD compiling laws of Gaza to facilitate new lawyer initiation of work</li> <li>20 posters and 500 stickers on women's rights and equality</li> <li>1,000 brochures and 1,000 stickers distributed on traffic management and accidents</li> <li>1,000 copies of magazine published of compilation of lawyer articles</li> <li>Calendar with legal ethics denoted</li> </ul>
2.	Promotion of IHL by Education in Gaza	Diakonia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase respect for and further implementation of IHL in the Gaza strip through education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expansion of 14 courses; including Pass the Word. (requires 4-6 training hours for all target groups)</li> <li>1 poster</li> <li>1 leaflet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15 training hours on Pass the Word for main volunteers who gave 20 training hours to university student counterparts</li> <li>10 awareness sessions on IHL</li> <li>1 training course for women on IHL (3 days)</li> </ul>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication (IHL materials)</li> <li>• Purchase 500 books for library</li> <li>• IHL competition for school children</li> </ul>	
3.	Protection of women in countries of Armed Conflict – the case of Palestine (2 years)	Open Society Foundation (Partners: Al-Haq, WCLAC, CFTS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's rights NGOs and CBOs in the oPt and regionally have the capacity to monitor and document violations of women's rights in times of armed conflict and political unrest.</li> <li>• Women's rights in oPt and the Arab regions gain more exposure at the international level and are better protected as a result of advocacy campaigns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation meeting on M&amp;D</li> <li>• Develop questionnaire forms and database on IHL violations against women</li> <li>• Training for women's groups in Gaza on M&amp;D</li> <li>• Supplement database with information gathered by all partners</li> <li>• Training for women's groups in Gaza on using UN HR mechanism</li> <li>• Coach women's groups in Gaza on reporting and UN mechanisms</li> <li>• Training for women's groups in the Arab region on documenting violations against women (2nd year)</li> <li>• Producing an annual report on IHL violations against women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two consultation meetings</li> <li>• Questionnaire forms and database used by partners to document violations</li> <li>• One training on M&amp;D for women's groups in the Arab region</li> <li>• Two training courses for women in Gaza (1 on M&amp;D violations of women rights in armed conflict, 1 on women under IHL, litigation procedures, and UN Special Procedures)</li> <li>• One short film on women and armed conflict in oPt</li> <li>• Two posters on women and armed conflict</li> <li>• One factsheet on women and armed conflict</li> <li>• One training manual on women and armed conflict</li> <li>• Eight communications for UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women</li> </ul>
4.	Promoting Freedom of Thought, Association and Movement in Gaza through Support to Civil Society	EU (Applicant: Oxfam GB, partners: MAAN, Gisha, CFTCC, Rafah Women Program Center)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support human rights defenders and strengthen their ability to respond to HR violations in Gaza</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 awareness courses, 3 awareness workshops, 6 lectures/sessions</li> <li>• Creating a referral system and organizing training on using it for civil society</li> <li>• One training for CBOs on monitoring and documenting HR violations</li> <li>• Documenting violations of IHL &amp; HR against the target group (5 cases per month)</li> <li>• Quarterly database reports on violations</li> <li>• Advocacy: 3 advocacy missions in EU and UN, producing statements &amp; letters, and meetings with officials and diplomats in Gaza</li> <li>• Provide information on the violations against target group to the UN and me-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One training workshop on freedom of expression and peaceful assembly for CBOs,</li> <li>• Referral system created and used with PNGO</li> <li>• 15 cases on average of violations against fishermen, farmers and civilians in BZ, and victims of restrictions on movement documented and shared with partners</li> <li>• 7 press releases, two quarterly database reports, and one factsheet were produced</li> <li>• One advocacy mission to the US on Gaza closure and naval blockade was organized with Gisha to feed into the US State Department's human rights report</li> <li>• Two correspondences with the authorities in Gaza on violations against the target group.</li> </ul>

				dia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal advocacy and assistance to victims</li> </ul>	
5.	Provision of Legal Assistance to Gazans Seeking accountability and/or Redress Following Operation Pillar of Defense	Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), managed by and UNOPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To protect the dignity of Palestinian civilians in Gaza by pursuing justice for losses in life and property in the context of Operation Pillar of Defence.</li> <li>Provision of legal assistance to Palestinian civilians in Gaza to enable civilians access to legal remedies and achieving accountability and/or redress in Israel and highlighting violations within UN human rights mechanisms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documentation of 30 cases of violations of IHRL/IHL</li> <li>20 case files developed for victims of potential IHL and IHRL violations during POD; including full documentation and cross-checked field investigations.</li> <li>Approximately 35 civil notifications are filed within 60 days to the Israeli Ministry of Defence (MOD) to secure victims' right to claim compensation within 2 years from the date of the attack</li> <li>Approximately 20 complaints/letters requesting criminal investigation are sent to the Military Advocate General (MAG) on behalf of the victims</li> <li>2 tort cases filed with Israeli courts within the 6-month period, to be completed within 2 years.</li> <li>7 communications are made to UN mechanisms for the purpose of investigation, or to urge investigation by Israel.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All cases documented</li> <li>17 files were put together for intervention in Israel</li> <li>50 civil notifications sent to the Israeli Ministry of Defence</li> <li>Submission of 17 complaints and requests for criminal investigations on behalf of the victims</li> <li>Submission of seven communications to UN special procedures</li> <li>Producing two reports on the violations dealt with by the project</li> <li>Three advocacy missions in the UK, Belgium and Switzerland on accountability based on the outcomes of the project.</li> </ul>
6.	Promotion of civil and political rights in Gaza	Friedrich Ebert Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support protection of civil and political rights and transitional justice in Gaza</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two awareness workshops;</li> <li>Two advocacy workshops;</li> <li>One conference on transitional justice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two awareness workshops;</li> <li>Two advocacy workshops;</li> <li>One conference on transitional justice</li> </ul>
7.	Strengthening national capacity to use UN mechanisms	Save the Children International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To Strengthen civil society engagement with the UPR and CRC mechanisms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One update report to the HRC on children and armed conflict,</li> <li>Briefing on CRC Concluding Observations on Israel;</li> <li>Two awareness workshops for CBOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One update report to the HRC on children and armed conflict,</li> <li>Briefing on CRC Concluding Observations on Israel;</li> <li>Two awareness workshops for CBOs and journalists;</li> </ul>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>and journalists;</li> <li>two media interviews on CRC CO's;</li> <li>10 awareness sessions for children on CRC CO's</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>two media interviews on CRC CO's;</li> <li>10 awareness sessions for children on CRC CO's</li> </ul>
8.	Emergency support to Monitoring and Documentation of Human Rights Violations in Gaza	Save the Children International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support monitoring and documenting violations against children in the context of armed conflict in Gaza</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring cases of violations against children under armed conflict;</li> <li>Data-entry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring cases of violations against children under armed conflict;</li> <li>Data-entry</li> </ul>
9.	Promotion of a culture of human rights and democracy in the Gaza Strip	Sigrid Rausing Trust, UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support promoting human rights and IHL in Gaza;</li> <li>To support building local capacities to promote and protect human rights in Gaza</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 training/awareness courses;</li> <li>12 awareness-raising workshops;</li> <li>1 lawyer training;</li> <li>Publication of HR awareness-raising materials;</li> <li>Human Rights Prize</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 training/awareness courses;</li> <li>12 awareness-raising workshops;</li> <li>1 lawyer training;</li> <li>Publication of HR awareness-raising materials;</li> <li>Human Rights Prize</li> </ul>

Projects that were on-going by the end of the reporting projects and to be completed in 2014 or beyond include:

- Promotion of a culture of human rights and democracy in the Gaza Strip, supported by the Sigrid Rausing Trust, UK, which ends in February 2014.
- Combating torture and ill treatment of Palestinian prisoners and civilians by Israel in the oPt, supported by the EIDHR, which will run for three years. The first year ends in October 2014.

## **7. Financial reports/issues:**

The reporting period represents the first half of the second year of Al Mezan's new 3-year program strategy 2012-2014.

During the reporting period, one donor, Save the Children, joined the group of Al Mezan's core donors. A second donor, the Sigrid Rausing Trust, funded the awareness/training component of the core program; however, in the form of a project, which is expected to be the case in 2014.

Changes on the structures as per the results of the external evaluation of the previous strategy (2009-2011) and the strategic planning (2012-2014) included creating new middle-management posts, but without significant financial implications.

The salary-scale was modified in light of the living costs in Gaza, and the average salary-scales in the sector. However, the new salary-scale was still frozen during the reporting period, pending successful raising of sufficient funding to support it.

The total funds raised in 2013 were insufficient to cover the total budget. Therefore, the budget was modified in a way to avoid any impacts on the activities. The modification therefore was limited to reducing salary and running costs, with very limited reduction of activities costs.

During 2013 the sum of \$830,019 were raised. 59% of this total was core funding and 41% for projects. Some of the projects contributed to funding activities from the core program and permanent staff, which reduced the pressure of the core budget.

Al Mezan has maintained its relationship with all of its partners (please consult the General Information sheet in the beginning of this report). Al Mezan has also continued to recruit project funding. Most of project activities are implemented by the existing staff; therefore, part of the staff and running costs have been covered by project funding. During the reporting period nine projects were partly or fully implemented. Another two projects are expected to be running 2014.

The enclosed financial statements show in detail the amounts of funding for the core program as well as for projects for the reporting period. Al Mezan takes this opportunity to thank the support of its core and project donors.