



## **Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission**



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## Abbreviation Key

ACSF	Afghan Civil Society Forum
ACTED	Agency for Technical Cooperation & Development
AIHRC	Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
AIL	Afghan Institute of Learning
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
ANP	Afghan National Police
APF	Asia Pacific Forum
AUAF	American University of Afghanistan Foundation
AWD	Afghan Women for Development
AWSE	Afghan Woman Services and Educational
AWEC	Afghan Women Educational Centre
AWN	Afghan Women Network
AWSD	Afghan Women Skills Development Centre
CCA	Cooperation Centre for Afghanistan
CCC	Child Correction Centre
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
CHA	Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
CFM	Child Field Monitoring
CIJ	Centre for International Journalism
CoAR	Coordination of Afghan Relief
CPAN	Child Protection Action Network
CRA	Coordination for Reconstruction of Afghanistan
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRFM	Child Rights Field Monitoring
CRU	Child Rights Unit
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CSHRN	Civil Society and Human Rights Network
DC	Detention Centre
DED	Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst
DMU	Database Management Unit
EU	European Union
DWA	Development of Women's Abilities Organization
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
GPS	Global Positioning System
FEFA	Free & Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan
HBF	Heinrich Boll Foundation
HR	Human Rights
HREU	Human Rights Education Unit
HRFMU	Human Rights Field Monitoring Unit
HRRAC	Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium
HRV	Human Rights Violation
ICC	International Criminal Court /International Co-ordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights
ICTJ	International Committee on Transitional Justice
IDLO	International Development Law Organization

IFES	International Foundation of Election System
ISAF	International Security Assistance Forces
JCMB	Joint Coordination Management Body
JRR	Justice Rapid Response
MMCC	Mobile Mini Circus for Children
M&IU	Monitoring and Investigation Unit
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mol	Ministry of Interior
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoLSAMD	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs Martyrs and Disabled
MoRR	Ministry of Refuge and Report ration
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NEC	Noor Educational Centre
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NRO	National Reporting Office
NDS	National Development Strategy
NSD	National Security Department
OHCHR	Office of the High Commission for Human Rights
PRF	Polghoo Reconstruction Foundation
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PWD	People with Disabilities
PWDU	People With Disabilities Unit
SAFMA	South Asian Free Media Association
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SCA	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan
SCSN	Save the Children Sweden- Norway
SDF	Sanayee Development Foundation
SIT	Special Investigation Team
SUMA	Society Unit for Woman in Afghanistan
SVF	Social Volunteers Foundation
TDH	Terre Dess Hommes
TJU	Transitional Justice Unit
ToT	Training of the Trainer
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Emergency Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNODC	United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAW	Violence against Women
VoA	Voice of America
WRU	Women's Rights Unit

## Words from the Chair:

This annual report marks the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission's (AIHRC) sixth year of existence. The Commission's influence and impact has been felt nation-wide and has become a model of capacity building and institutional strengthening for other Afghan national institutions, with the full confidence of the Afghan people. The success of the Commission's capacity building, at the national level, is reflected through the appointment of its former staff in high ranking positions in the country.

At the International level, the Commission is noted for its work. The United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon at the "Conference on Justice and Rule of Law in Afghanistan" in Italy (July 2007) referred to Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission as one of Afghanistan's youngest national Institutions and said, *"this constitutionally protected body has rapidly become Afghanistan's voice of conscience. Its documentation of human rights abuses ensures that past crimes will not be forgotten. Its promotion of human rights norms brings us ever closer to a day when the law is Afghanistan's one and only authority. The donors who continue to support the Commission deserve our gratitude. And the courage and independence of its Commissioners have earned them our profound admiration"*.

The AIHRC benchmarks for the development of Afghanistan are similar to those defined by the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and the Afghanistan Compact, with an emphasis on the concept of human rights to fight against poverty in Afghanistan over the next five to ten years. The AIHRC contributed to the Afghanistan ANDS for setting its benchmarks on human rights and has made considerable progress on achieving those benchmarks. This year, the commission submitted its five-year development strategy to the ANDS secretariat to incorporate it in the Sector Strategy on Governance, Public Administration and Human Rights.

The success of the AIHRC lays in its ability to remain independent but strongly in touch with all actors involved in the rebuilding of Afghanistan with common goals to establish democracy, stability, the rule of law and good governance in Afghanistan. The goals can be attained by the promotion and protection of human rights of all Afghan citizens nation-wide. This is why I would like to call again for the prioritization of the mainstreaming of human rights in donor and government development agenda and for leading the fight against corruption and sustaining efforts to establish a more effective accountable and transparent administration.

Finally, I would like to thank the donor community, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, and individuals who supported and helped the AIHRC in fulfilling its challenging mandate of promoting, monitoring and protecting human rights in Afghanistan.

Dr. Sima Samar, Chairperson

Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission

## Executive Summary

This Annual Report marks the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission's (AIHRC) sixth year of existence. During the year 2007, the AIHRC continued the implementation of its Three-Year Action Plan (2006-2008) in the context of its mandate related to the promotion, protection and monitoring of human rights in Afghanistan, and in accordance with the requirements of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and the Afghanistan Compact. The AIHRC continued to ensure an efficient financial management of the grants generously provided by the international community and to represent a model of capacity building for other national institutions.

The Commission continued to advocate for the promotion of human rights and strengthened partnerships with the Government and civil society organizations, donors and the United Nations through regular coordination meetings such as the quarterly meetings of the Project Committee. The Project Committee includes donor representatives, the United Nations and the Ministry of Finance. Its purpose is to ensure close and effective communication between partners and AIHRC, and to provide feedback and advice on progress towards achieving the Commission's Three-Year Action Plan.

A significant achievement for the AIHRC was encouraging the civil society organisations to prepare a Shadow Report to the convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) treaty body, at which 45 non-government organizations made a reporting coalition. A total of 8 organizations including AIHRC are Core Group members. Since March 2007, six thematic groups have started their work on CRC articles. The AIHRC Child Rights Unit participated in the preparation of the Shadow Report and worked with three thematic groups under the CRC reporting program since the second quarter of 2007; the CRU is also included in the coalition and Core Group on CRC reporting. In order to ensure quality of both the process and the content of the CRC reporting, AIHRC with the support of Save Children Sweden Norway hired a consultant to build capacity of CRU and guide the coalition in the process of CRC reporting.

The AIHRC monitored the situation of Afghan civilians affected by the armed conflict, calling on all parties to fully comply with the international humanitarian law. To strengthen its capacity in monitoring and to effectively address the challenges presented by the most severe, complex and high profile violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, the Commission established a new Headquarters-based team of four special investigators.

Another important achievement for the commission was the Transitional Justice Unit's initiative of a debate through e-mail correspondence with the civil society actors in May. As a result of which, three meetings of civil society organizations were held to discuss the challenges and opportunities for the implementation of the Government Action Plan on Peace, Justice and Reconciliation. A number of civil society activists wrote articles around the dilemma of justice and peace which appeared in newspapers and websites in Dari and Pashto. As a result of these meetings, the civil society groups decided to work with the electronic media to promote transitional justice. In all of these meetings, there was a high level of

dissatisfaction from some of the Television channels with their unbalanced production in favour of warlords and against any democratic and civil society agendas.

One of the serious challenges faced by the Commission during 2007 was caused by the security situation, which has increasingly deteriorated in Afghanistan. Despite the threats caused by the insecurity, the implementation of activities made a fair progress in accordance with the Commission's Action Plan. For the purpose of this report, a results framework has been designed that is able to indicate progress.

**Promotion:** Activities related to the promotion of human rights have progressed well, during 2007, and were primarily implemented by the Human Rights Education, the Women's Rights, the Child Rights, the People with Disabilities and the Transitional Justice units.

The AIHRC continued partnerships with civil society organizations throughout the year. The Commission implemented a strategic approach with government institutions and focused on advocating for human rights and raising awareness amongst government officials from the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Defence (the Afghan National Army), Ministry of Interior (the Afghan National Police), the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs Martyrs and Disabled, the Attorney General's Office and Prisons Authorities. Staff members of governmental institutions were educated on human rights concepts. During the past year, the National Police Academy and the Afghan National Army provided human rights training to their officers.

During the past year, the Commission informed thousands of people on human rights concepts through workshops, media broadcasts and meetings, and distributed 153,000 copies of its Human Rights magazine throughout Afghanistan. Besides the government officials, the Afghan National Army, the Afghan National Police, and the judiciary system, the Commission's advocacy efforts targeted, religious scholars, students, and the general public.

As a result of the commission's advocacy efforts, the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing built access ramps for people with disabilities on the sidewalks around the Kabul Municipality and in all public bathrooms in the Kabul city. The Ministry promised to grant construction permits only to those public buildings that have planned elevators and access ramps for people with disabilities.

In addition, the Commission in order to promote Women's Rights in Afghanistan signed four memoranda of understanding with four non-governmental organizations of Afghan Women Services and Educational Centre (AWSE), Society Unit for Women in Afghanistan (SUWA), *Mosasesa-e-aali Naswan* and Afghan Institute of Learning, with the aim of increasing the awareness of people in rural areas on women's social, political and cultural rights, UDHR, international conventions especially the Convention of Elimination of Violence against Women, Political rights of Women in Islam, laws related to women's rights and violence against women. These organizations conducted a total of 10 awareness-raising workshops for 320 participants (155 women) in Kabul (Qara Bagh and Istalf districts) Ghazni, Kapisa

Logar and Wardak provinces. The participants were mullahs, members of provincial councils, teachers and other officials.

An indicator of success for the promotion of human rights was the Commission's cooperation with the Ministry of Education on the revising and reprinting its Five-Year Strategic Plan for Education to incorporate the AIHRC comments and recommendation and the signing of an agreement for the incorporation of human rights messages in the cover pages of the secondary school linguistic textbooks of grades 7-12. Dr. Sima Samar signed the agreement between the AIHRC and Ministry of Education to finance (a contribution of USD 400,000) the publication cover pages for secondary school textbooks. The AIHRC, based on the agreement, designs the back cover of two linguistic subjects with the declaration of human rights messages in reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Islamic Declaration of Human Rights, and International conventions to which Afghanistan is party. The Ministry of Education will print the messages with the AIHRC logo in the coming seven months as promised by Minister of Education, Mr. Haneef Atmar.

The AIHRC, in order to increase the awareness of Afghans on international days, prepared a calendar marking all International human rights days. This calendar will be published in January 2008.

In the context of Awareness raising Campaign launched for human rights (16 November- 10 December), the AIHRC celebrated the *International Day of Prevention of Violence against Women* (25 November) in its 8 regional and 4 provincial offices; where the core message was "Don't *destroy the future of your children by forced marriages.*" There was an extra emphasis on this message that "*forced marriage is not allowed in Islam*". This Day was celebrated through the conduction of conferences, meetings, gatherings and media broadcasts. On this occasion, 500 banners with messages on forced marriages and its outcomes were printed and two television spots were produced with messages from Chief Justice, Speaker of the Parliament, Attorney General, Chief of Peace and Stability Commission and people from the general public condemning forced marriages. The spots were broadcast by the national and private television channels in Kabul for one night. Two brochures (20,000 copies) on women's right to education and on the impact of culture on women's life were printed; five billboards with messages on forced marriages were printed and installed in five main squares of Kabul, conveying messages on forced and underage marriages.

Two major obstacles in promoting human rights for the commission, during the past year, were the lack of cooperation of the Education Department (the Ministry of Education) and the Justice Department (the Ministry of Justice) in the province of Kunduz. Both departments did not allow the Human Rights Education Unit to convening awareness - raising workshops for the school teachers and for the judges in Kunduz. The issues were shared with both ministries in Kabul. As a result both ministries circulated letters to their departments country-wide instructing them to cooperate with the AIHRC, resolving the challenge the AIHRC had faced.

**Monitoring:** Monitoring activities were carried out by the Monitoring and Investigation, Child Rights, and Women's Rights units and Human Rights Field



Monitoring and Child Rights Field Monitoring Teams, in accordance with the Commission's Action Plan. During the year 2007, monitoring activities progressed well, despite the deteriorating security situation in the southern and eastern provinces of Afghanistan. The AIHRC monitoring teams had to cancel, delay their missions, or change their plans in some regional offices such as those located in Gardez, Herat, Jalalabad, Kabul and Kandahar. Nevertheless, some of the AIHRC significant achievements related to monitoring in past year are highlighted below:

Prisons, detention centres and child correction centres were regularly and systematically monitored throughout the year. As shown in the results framework in the following section, 1,079 monitoring missions of prisons and detention centres were conducted in 32 provinces. Hospitals and orphanages were systematically monitored—a total of 30 hospitals in 30 provinces were monitored for violence against women and 48 orphanages and 28 child correction centres across the nation were monitored for cases of abuse and unsuitable living conditions. As a result, the commission's interventions, improvements in the living conditions of men's and women's prisons were observed.

The AIHRC Human Rights Field Monitoring Teams, funded by the UNHCR, merged with the Monitoring and Investigation Unit in July. The teams monitored human rights situation nation-wide, through the conduction of 11,153 interviews in 134 districts of 31 provinces. The results were analyzed in a report on "The Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, II" which was released in a press conference in August.

The AIHRC, in partnership with UNICEF, signed an agreement for the Child Rights Field Monitoring team to monitor the rights of the children in Afghanistan. The team conducted a total of 8,484 interviews (4,382 with girls and 4,102 with boys) in 133 districts of 29 provinces of Afghanistan. A total of 34 human rights violations related to children were identified which are under the legal process.

The Commission revised its monitoring and protection tools for children. During the reporting period, an extensive monitoring questionnaire form was prepared for effective monitoring of children in detention (correctional facilities and police detentions); the form was finalized by the technical support from UNICEF and UNODC, and a special database for the Child Rights Field Monitoring was established, which is operational in all regional and provincial offices, to record information on the situation of children in correctional facilities and to follow up the cases systematically.

The AIHRC Monitoring and Investigation Unit, in close co-operation with Ministry of Justice, prepared a list of 2,392 people who were in prisons after the completion of their sentences or were illegally detained and their destinies were not determined. The AIHRC gave the list to the President who appointed a commission headed by Mawlawi Fazl Hadi Shenway to investigate the issue. Recently, this commission released a report on the situation of those people, releasing 819 people, who were illegally detained or imprisoned in Kabul and determining the sentences of an estimated 1,573 people after the investigation.

**Protection:** Activities related to the protection of human rights in Afghanistan progressed well during the past year, despite the continuing weakness of the judiciary system and the absence of the rule of law. As shown in the results framework in the following section, of the 1,079 complaints received, during 2007, involving 1,561 violations, 904 complaints were investigated and 458 interventions led to resolution. A total of 111 family disputes, including violence against women cases, were mediated with the indications of resolution or improvement in the situation. The release of 130 illegally arrested (126 men and 4 women), 126 illegally detained (114 men and 12 women), and 87 illegally imprisoned (84 men 3 women) and 101 illegally detained children (83 boys and 18 girls) were secured from detention centres and child correctional facilities.

For the protection of women's rights, the AIHRC closely cooperated with the civil society organizations to revise the draft marriage certificate, which had a number of points that were not aligned with the human rights principles. The AIHRC in partnership with civil society organizations made recommendation to the Supreme Court which were incorporated to the revised human rights based marriage certificate. If the Government of Afghanistan enforce the new marriage certificate nation-wide, it will positively reduce the number of forced marriages such as child marriage, *bad* and *badal* (exchange), which are the main causes of violence against women in the county.

Likewise, the AIHRC, in close cooperation of civil society organizations, prepared draft law on the prevention of violence against women, based on the new Afghan constitution. The draft law on violence against women is drafted to protect women's rights in the country, which was submitted to the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Woman Affairs and the Parliament for revision, in late December 2007.

As for the prevention and protection of children's addiction to narcotics, the Commission established a joint Committee with non-governmental organizations and the Ministry of Counter Narcotics. The AIHRC is heading the committee to prepare a study on "The Afghan Children Addicted to Narcotics" which will be presented to the Child Protection Act network's monthly meeting.

## Background

Since its establishment in 2002, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) has endeavoured to fulfil its Constitutional human rights mandate for advancement and betterment of human rights in Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup>

The overarching missions of the AIHRC are promotion, protection, monitoring of human rights as well as investigation of human rights cases throughout the country.

The AIHRC's constitutional and independent status is highlighted in article 58 of the Afghan Constitution as below:

*" The State for the purpose of monitoring and protecting human rights in Afghanistan shall establish an Independent Human Rights Commission of Afghanistan. Every person in case of violation of his or her human rights can refer persons whose human rights have been violated, to legal authorities and assist the victims in defending their rights. The structure and functions of the Commission shall be regulated by law."*

The law on AIHRC's structure, duties, and mandate was approved through the Afghan cabinet and endorsed by H.E. Mr. Karzai, through a presidential decree, in May 2005<sup>2</sup>. The law sets out regulations regarding the structure, duties, authorities, responsibilities and mandate of the Commission, and also addressed the independence of the Commission in its financial and administrative affairs.

The AIHRC has followed a policy of gradual evolution and now operates through 12 satellite and provincial offices. In 2007, the AIHRC opened a new provincial office in Ghor Province, as well as a new programme unit for the investigation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), namely, Special Investigation Team (SIT).

*The Afghanistan Compact emphasizes, while highlighting, the following human benchmarks and indicators (Annex I, p.8):*

*"By end-2010: The Government's capacity to comply with and report on its human rights treaty obligations will be strengthened; Government security and law enforcement agencies will adopt corrective measures including codes of conduct and procedures aimed at preventing arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, extortion and illegal expropriation of property with a view to the elimination of these practices; the exercise of freedom of expression, including freedom of media, will be strengthened; human rights awareness will be included in education curricula and promoted among legislators, judicial personnel and other Government agencies, communities and the public; human rights monitoring will be carried out by the Government and independently by the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), and*

<sup>1</sup> The AIHRC was initially established, based on the provision of the Bonn Agreement, by a presidential decree signed by Mr. Karzai highlighting its mission and mandate in June 2002 (<http://www.aihrc.org.af/decreeofp.htm>). The AIHRC has become a national and independent human rights commission in the New Constitution approved through Constitutional Loya Jirga (grand assembly) in January 2004.

<sup>2</sup> The AIHRC's Law has 4 chapters and 35 articles. Please visit [www.aihrc.org.af/law\\_of\\_aihrc.pdf](http://www.aihrc.org.af/law_of_aihrc.pdf) for details.

*the UN will track the effectiveness of measures aimed at the protection of human rights; the AIHRC will be supported in the fulfilment of its objectives with regard to monitoring, investigation, protection and promotion of human rights, the implementation of the Afghan government Action Plan on Peace, Justice and reconciliation, fully completed by end of 2008 ."*

The Afghanistan Compact urges not only the international community, but the Afghan Government, to provide further support to Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission in accomplishing its objectives in respect to promotion, protection and monitoring of human rights.

The AIHRC has so far produced and submitted various reports on human rights situation to the President's Office and relevant government institutions, Supreme Courts, Afghan Parliament, and International Community.

"Let me make particular note of the work of one of Afghanistan's youngest national institutions, the Independent Human Rights Commission. Set up by the Bonn Agreement, this constitutionally protected body has rapidly become Afghanistan's voice of conscience. Its documentation of human rights abuses ensures that past crimes will not be forgotten. Its promotion of human rights norms brings us ever closer to a day when the law is Afghanistan's one and only authority. The donors who continue to support the Commission deserve our gratitude. And the courage and independence of its Commissioners have earned them our profound admiration."

*Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's address to the Conference on Justice and Rule of Law in Afghanistan, Rome, Italy, July 2007*

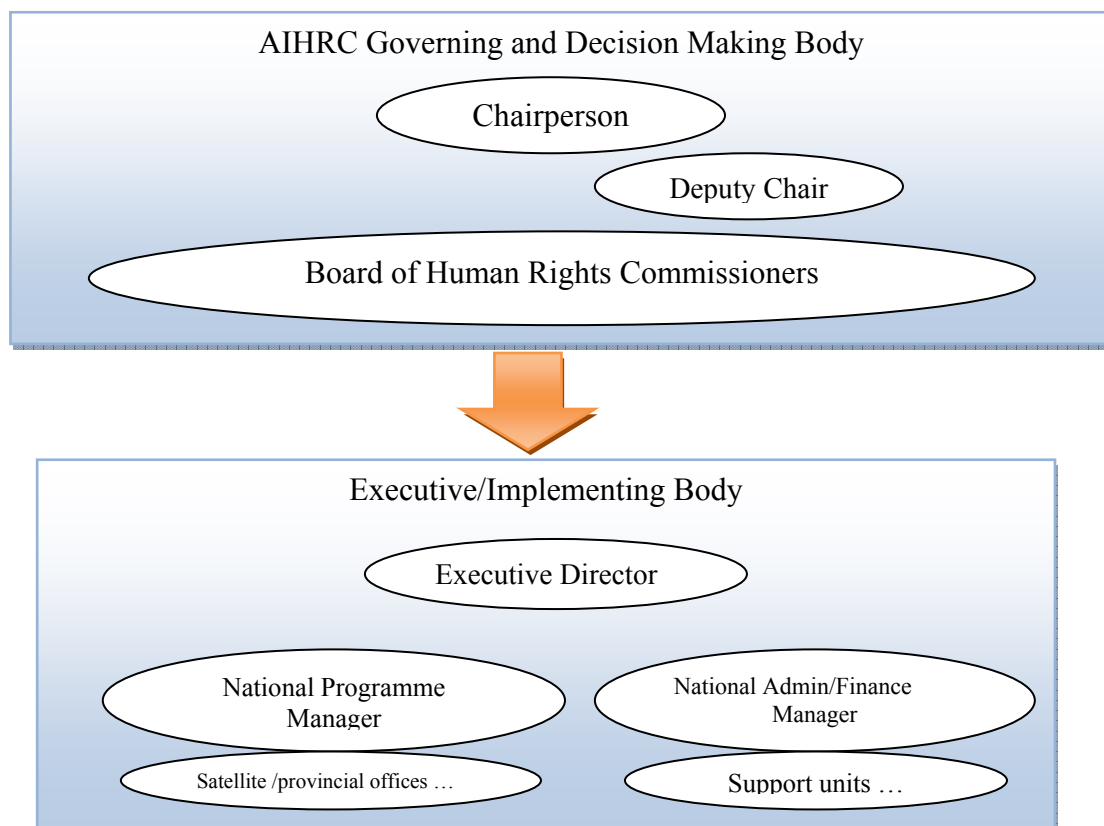
## Human Rights Commissioners

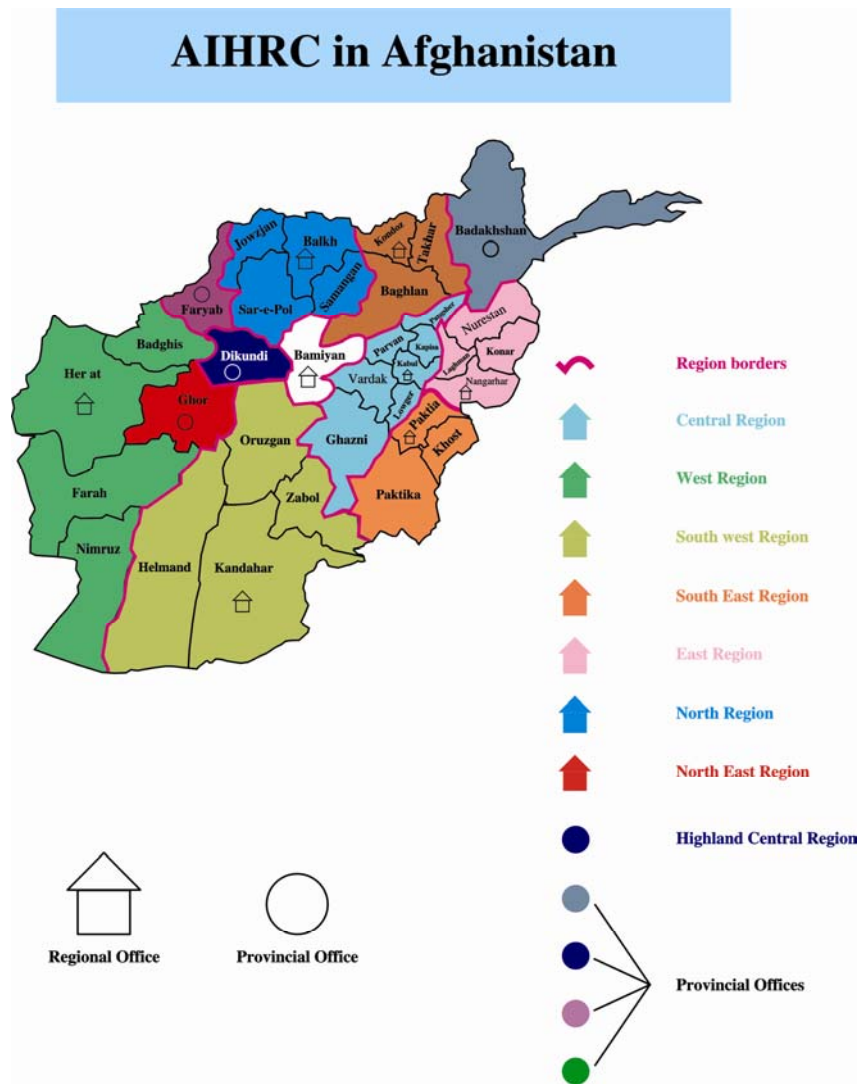
The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission has, based on its law on the structure, duties, and mandate, nine human rights commissioners.

The Board of Human Rights Commissioners includes Dr. Sima Samar, the chairperson, Mr. Ahmad Fahim Hakim, Deputy Chair, Ms. Hangama Anwari, in charge of Child Rights Unit, Dr. Soraya Sobhrang, in charge of Women's Rights Unit, Mr. Abdul Karim Azizi, in charge of Human Rights Education Unit, Mr. Farid Hamidi, in charge of Monitoring and Investigation Unit, Field Monitoring Team and Special Investigation Team, Mr. S. Zia Langari, in charge of People with Disabilities Unit, Mr. Nader Nadery, in charge of Transitional Justice Unit, and Mr. Mawlawi Ghulam Mohamad Gharib, member of Authors Board.

Towards end of 2006 three new human rights commissioners were appointed to the AIHRC, who are Dr. Soraya Sobhrang, Mr. Mawlawi Ghulam Mohamad Gharib, and Mr. Abdul Karim Azizi. The remaining six fellow human rights commissioners are working with AIHRC since its establishment in 2002.

The Board of Human Rights Commissioners is the governing body responsible for decision making and overall policy work of the AIHRC, while the Executive Body is to implement the action plan and decisions approved by the Board of Commissioners. The following diagram illustrates the relationship:





The Commission has one head office, 8 regional and 4 provincial offices throughout Afghanistan located in Badakhshan, Bamiyan, Daikundi, Gardez, Ghor, Herat, Jalalabad, Kabul, Kandahar, Kunduz, Maimana, and Mazar. The Commission employs 578 staff members and support staff. This includes 192 staff members in the Kabul Headquarters, 310 staff members in its regional offices, and 76 staff members in its provincial offices.

The AIHRC has six program units to fulfil its mandate related to the promotion, protection and monitoring of human rights:

1. **The Human Rights Education Unit (HREU)** is primarily responsible for the promotion of human rights and for bringing about attitudinal and behavioural changes in the Afghan society to support the institutionalization of human rights. The vision of the program is a transformation from the prevailing culture of war and violence, to a culture of human rights and peace nationwide, supporting dialogue, tolerance, co-existence and diversity.

2. **The Women's Rights Unit (WRU)** promotes and protects women's rights through advocacy, training and education, and monitors the status and well-being of women in Afghanistan with the aim of addressing the underlying causes of violations of women's rights, thereby contributing to effective policy analysis and submissions.
3. **The Child Rights Unit (CRU)** supports protection of child rights through providing coordination and support to stakeholders through its focus on awareness raising, promotion and monitoring of the status and well-being of children in Afghanistan. Like the WRU, its aim is to understand and address the underlying causes of the abuses of children's rights and advocate for laws and policies that protect children from such abuse.
4. **The Monitoring and Investigation Unit (M&IU)** monitors human rights, receives complaints of abuses from the public, investigates those abuses and addresses them with the relevant authorities. While the WRU and CRU monitor the general well-being and status of women and children respectively, the M&IU addresses individual cases of violations of the rights of all citizens including women and children. The unit also feeds data to other units to inform submissions to the President and relevant authorities, as well as the Afghan Parliament and the international community. In July 2007, the Human Rights Field Monitoring Team who conducts missions to the field and actively gathers information on human rights issues through individual interviews, with an emphasis on accessing remote areas and a focus on refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), joined the M&IU. This enables the Commission to reach populations which may not otherwise be able to access the AIHRC regional and provincial offices.
5. **The Transitional Justice Unit (TJU)** develops strategies and policies to confront past human rights abuses of war crimes and crimes against humanity, and for collecting documentation and information about the nature, causes and perpetrators of these crimes in Afghanistan. The unit increases the awareness of the public on the Government Action Plan of Peace, Justice and Reconciliation.
6. **The People with Disabilities Unit (PWDU)** is responsible for the promotion and protection of the rights of people with disabilities in Afghanistan. The core activities of this unit have consisted so far in advocacy, affirmative actions, and awareness-raising of the people with special needs and obstacles they face. In the future, the unit will receive individual complaints of violations which will be investigated by the Monitoring and Investigation Unit.

Six support and complementary units have been established with the objective of supporting the Commission's programmes: the Research Unit, the Reporting Unit, the Media and Publications unit, the Database Unit, the Resource Centre, the Broad of Translation and the Printing press.

On the first of January 2006, the AIHRC entered in a new phase and started the implementation of the project in support of its three-year action plan 2006 -2008. The

purpose of this project is to establish and sustain an effective partnership between the AIHRC and international development actors, government representatives and Civil Society Organizations to support the Commission in achieving the following objectives in Afghanistan in accordance with the Afghanistan Compact, its own legislation and the themes of its action plan:

- Institutionalization of human rights,
- Effective partnership with civil society, Government, and non-government institutions,
- Nation-wide coverage of AIHRC's human rights activities,
- Capacity building/development of the AIHRC's counterparts,
- Institutional development of AIHRC



## Major Activities and Achievements

The major activities and achievements of the AIHRC in 2007 towards achieving its objectives as stated in the Commission's Three-Year Action Plan (2006-2007) are set out in the results framework in the following sections, which are arranged to reflect the Commission's three main areas of focus in the field of human rights that are the promotion, monitoring, and protection of human rights, as well as an additional priority area for the Commission related to the institutional strengthening and capacity building of the AIHRC. The following activities were carried out during the past year:

### The Human Rights Education Unit

The Human Rights Education Unit (HREU) mainly focused its activities on the promotion of human rights and bringing about attitudinal and behavioural changes in Afghan society to support the institutionalization of human rights. The HREU conducted 257 workshops and 572 awareness-raising meetings, at which 24,472 people (7,219 women) learned about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), conflict resolution, human rights violations, forced marriages, and the Convention against Torture, their results, underlying principles, and relevance to Afghanistan, through out the country. The Unit prepared a calendar of 2008 which marks all international human rights significant days, which will be published in January 2008.

Advocacy by the AIHRC has been an ongoing process in the Afghan National Police (ANP) and Afghan National Army (ANA) academies. The HREU continued regular meetings with and visits to educational institutions (ANA Training Centre, ANP Training Centre, Education Department of the Ministry of Defence, ANP Academy, National Security Education Centre, and Training Centre for Prison Wardens) and monitored the teaching of human rights standards in these institutions.

The HREU conducted a workshop on the methodologies of teaching human rights education in the ANA and the ANP training centres. The representatives from ANA Training Centre, ANP Academy and Human Rights Department of the Ministry of Interior (MoI) had a fruitful discussion with the AIHRC trainers. In August 2007, this unit conducted a three-day human rights workshop for 30 National Army Officers in the Kapisa province.

The AIHRC celebrated the International Day of Tolerance on 16 November 2007 in all its offices. On this occasion the HREU published a poster (10,000 copies) and prepared messages on tolerance and human rights which were broadcast for ten days on five radio stations of Sada-e-Azadi, Kileed, Nawa, Solh and Sada-e-Zan.

The AIHRC signed a number of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with various Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and received requests throughout the past year to promote human rights in Afghanistan

The AIHRC has signed two Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with the Ministry of Education (MoE). Based on the first MoU and as a result of regular meetings with MoE (in 2007) to speed up the process of developing teaching curricula, the AIHRC seconded two experts to closely work with the technical staff of MoE Department of Textbooks Development and Publication. Despite many challenges, the AIHRC worked in partnership with the MoE to include Human rights principles in the five year strategic plan for education, to collaborate in the revision and improvement of the primary and secondary school curricula and to gain access to schools for the AIHRC staff members, who were mainly involved in human rights education. The co-designed human rights materials in the secondary school curricula were mainly included in the textbooks of languages (Dari and Pashto), history, geography, social studies and Islamic teachings. All the materials on the inclusion of the human rights principles to the primary and secondary school curricula were finalized and submitted to MoE. Further to providing technical support to MoE, the AIHRC published a few thousands posters on “Characteristics of a Good Teacher”, “A good Administration for a school”, and “Who is a good Student?”. The AIHRC also conducted a training workshop on human rights education, based on the matrix developed by the AIHRC for grades 1 - 12.

The MoU of July 2007 between the AIHRC and MoE specified the inclusion and publication of human rights messages on the back cover of the secondary school (grades 7 – 12) textbooks<sup>3</sup> in both national languages of Dari and Pashto. The cost was funded by the AIHRC, and a total fund of USD 400,000 was transferred to the account of MoE in Da Afghanistan Bank, Kabul.

Concerns about the lack of cooperation of the MoE with the AIHRC in Kunduz province for convening awareness raising workshops in schools for teachers were shared with Minister Hanif Hatmar of MoE in a meeting. As a result of the meeting, the MoE circulated a letter instructing all MoE Education Departments country-wide to cooperate with the AIHRC, thus resolving the challenge the AIHRC had faced.

Likewise, the AIHRC faced a challenge while cooperating with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) when the Kunduz Justice Department did not allow the judges to participate in the AIHRC awareness raising workshop. The Commission sent a letter to the MoJ to address this issue. Fortunately, the MoJ sent an instructional letter to Kunduz Justice Department to cooperate with AIHRC, resolving the issue.

The HREU worked in close partnership with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and NGOs to promote human rights in Afghanistan, and signed MoUs with various NGOs in 2007. The HREU and the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) cooperated on the training of SCA trainers for a Human Rights delegate’s pilot project for Kunduz and Takhar provinces. The HREU in Kunduz conducted four workshops for 46 SCA trainers in the past year. The HREU conducted a one-day workshop for the international staff of SCA on the Afghanistan new Constitution and its implication of human rights in Kabul.

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<sup>3</sup> The MoE has already completed compilation of textbooks for grades 1 – 6; therefore, it was not possible for the AIHRC to revise those textbooks but was promised by MoE that the views and comments of the Commission would be considered for the second edition of the elementary school textbooks.

In partnership with HREU, the Coordination for Reconstruction of Afghanistan (CRA) conducted three capacity-building workshops for 90 local *Shoras* members in the Kabul Province. The HREU provided the training materials for CRA.

Likewise, the Centre for International Journalism (CIJ) conducted two capacity-building workshops for 62 Journalists (20 women) from Kabul, Parwan, Logar, Kapisa, Herat, Nimroz, Badgheese provinces. The AIHRC provided the CIJ the training materials and financial assistance.

Based on requests (2007), the HREU conducted one-day Human Rights Education workshops for 12 representatives of the cultural council of Kapisa, Panjsher, and Parwan provinces (based on USAID request), 21 staff members of ACTED, SCA and NRC in Badakhshan Province, and 30 teachers and youths in Kabul Province (in cooperation with Relief International).

The HREU, based on the Ahmad Shah Massood Foundation's request, organized a three-day human rights awareness-raising workshop for 25 staff members of the foundation in Kabul. The Unit also conducted a training of the trainers (TOT) workshop for the educators of the Shohada Organization in Ghazni Province.

As for producing educational awareness-raising materials, the unit, internally, cooperated with the AIHRC Media and Publication Unit (MPU) to produce a total of 2,947 broadcast minutes for television and 10,752 broadcast minutes for radio on a variety of human rights issues including, victims rights, the rule of law, women's rights in Islam, violence against women from Islam perspective, participation of women in social, economical and political activities, past human rights abuses, and justice for children.

Externally, the unit cooperated with Aina Television to continue to produce and broadcast twice monthly a total of 870 broadcast minutes of human rights programmes. The unit continued to broadcast regular human rights related programmes throughout year, through the television and radio stations in Badakhshan, Bamyan, Daikundi, Faryab, Gardiz, Herat, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Kunduz, and Mazar-e-Sharif.

The HREU provided technical assistance and human rights materials-- such as books, posters, brochures, magazines and films --and worked in close collaboration with the civil society organizations listed below:

1. Afghan Artists Association
2. Afghan Civil Society Forum (ACSF)
3. Afghan Human Rights Activists Foundation (AHRAF)
4. Afghan Human Rights Volunteers Foundation (AHRVF)
5. Afghan Women for Development (AWD)
6. Afghan Women Network (AWN)
7. Centre of International Journalism (CIJ)
8. Civil Society and Human Rights Network (CSHRN)
9. Co-ordination for Reconstruction of Afghanistan (CRA)
10. Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA)
11. Development of Women's Abilities Organization (DWA)

12. Equal Access (EA)
13. Foundation for Culture and Civil society (FCCS)
14. Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium (HRRAC)
15. Jamal Foundation (JF)
16. Noor Educational Centre
17. Relief International
18. Saday-e Azadi Foundation
19. Sanayee Development Foundation (SDF)
20. Shohada Organization
21. Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA)
22. Youth Foundation (YF)

## The Women's Rights Unit

The Women's Rights Unit (WRU) primarily focused its activities on the promotion of human rights, more precisely women's rights during the past year. The unit organized 142 educational workshops and 453 awareness-raising meetings for 19,760 people (6,383 men) on violence against women in Afghanistan, women's rights in Islam and CEDAW, and the work of the AIHRC in reference to women's rights. Particular attention was paid to reaching community leaders such as *mullahs*, elders, teachers, students, civil society representatives, and government officials, as well as women.

The AIHRC celebrated the international days to raise-awareness on women's human rights. The International Women's Day (8 March 2007) was celebrated in AIHRC regional and provincial offices to raise awareness on human rights through conferences, meetings, gatherings and media broadcasts.

The WRU in cooperation with the CRU, on the occasions of the *International Day of Children* (20 November) and *International Day of Prevention of Violence against Women* (25 November) organized two photo exhibitions in Kabul (at Istiqlal High School and Kabul Medical University), with the aim of explaining the situation of children and women in Afghanistan through photos. A total of 200 photos were on show and 1,500 persons visited this exhibition. The photos were taken in the course of four years from various provinces by Mr. Basir Sirat, an Afghan Amateur photographer.

On this occasion, the AIHRC organized nation-wide multimedia promotion activities: A research report on "*Self-Immolations among Women in South-west of Afghanistan*" was released in a press conference (March 2007). The report on women's self-immolations, their possible causes and recommendation on the prevention of women's suicide incidents was published in Dari, translated in English and will be translated in Pashto. A special issue magazine for Women's Day (15,000 copies) and 500 banners with a message about the place of woman in family were printed and distributed throughout the country. Two documentary films on the condition of women in Afghanistan, *Frishta* (15 minutes) and *Zan, Zahmat and Zendagi* (20 minutes) were produced and broadcast through Tolo, Ariana and Aina televisions, assumingly, estimated 40 percent of Afghan population might have watched the

documentaries. Similarly five television spots, in cooperation with the MPU, were produced (two to five minutes each) on various forms of forced marriages. The spots contained verses of the Holy Quran about the woman's rights and Hadith on the rights of women in society.

The AIHRC celebrated the *International Day of Prevention of Violence against Women* (25 November) in its regional and provincial offices; the core message of this occasion was "Don't *destroy the future of your children by forced marriages.*" There was an extra emphasis on this message that "*forced marriage is not allowed in Islam*". This Day was celebrated through conduction of conferences, meetings, gatherings and media broadcasts.



On this occasion, 500 banners with messages on forced marriages and its outcomes were printed and two television spots were produced with messages from Chief Justice, Head of Parliament Houses, Attorney General, Head of Peace and stability commission and ordinary people condemning forced marriages. The spots were broadcast by the national and private television channels in Kabul for one night. Two brochures (20,000 copies) on women's right to education and on the impact of culture on women's life were printed; five billboards with messages on forced marriages were printed and installed in five main squares of Kabul, conveying messages on forced and underage marriages.

For furthering the promotion of women's right in rural areas of Afghanistan, the commission signed four MoUs with four Non-Governmental Organizations, Afghan Woman Services and Educational Centre (AWSE), Society Unit for Woman in Afghanistan (SUWA), Moasesa Hali Naswan and Afghan Institute of Learning. These organizations conducted a total 10 awareness raising workshops for 320 people (155 women) in the Kabul (Qarabagh and Istalf districts), Logar, Ghazni, Wardak and Kapisa provinces. The participants were Mullahs, members of provincial councils, teachers and other government officials. The objectives were to increase the awareness of people in rural area on women's social, political and culture rights, UDHR, international conventions especially the Convention of Elimination of

Violence against Woman, Political Rights of Woman in Islam, laws related to woman's rights and Violence against Women.

For the protection of women's rights, the WRU closely cooperated with the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). The WRU revised the Supreme Court's drafted marriage certificate. The certificate had number points that were against the human rights principles. The AIHRC in partnership with CSOs made recommendation to the Supreme Court of Afghanistan which were incorporated to the approved human rights based marriage certificate. If the government of Afghanistan enforce the new marriage certificate nation-wide, it will positively reduce the number of forced marriages such as child marriage, *bad* and *badal* (exchange), which are the main causes of violence against women in the county.

The unit prepared a draft law of preventing violence against women in the country based on the new Afghan constitution. The draft law was submitted to Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) and the Parliament for revision in late December 2007.

In cooperation with MoWA Women's Affairs Departments of Nengarhar and Kunar provinces, the WRU established five Women's Rights Protection Councils to enable women to promote the understanding of human rights principles and defending their rights in the five villages of Yargul and Dushakhil in Kunar and Chayha and Bahsod in Nengarhar and the centre of Kandahar province. Each council had an estimated 30 women as members.

*A woman came to the WRU Nengarhar office and complained on the abusive behaviour of her husband with her. This unit held several meetings with the woman's husband and informed him on woman's rights in Islam, and of national and international laws regarding women's rights. The husband made a commitment to stop his abusing behaviour with his wife and respect her rights. As follow up the WRU visited the woman, the family relationship had improved..*

The unit provided protection primarily through interventions made at the request of women. A total of 651 women received legal advice in family disputes, involving violence against women. A total of 127 cases were mediated with the indication of resolution or improvement in the situation.

During the past year, the WRU initiated two research projects. One project was on "The causes of Sexual Harassment of Women and Girls in Work and Educational Environment in Afghanistan". This research was conducted in close cooperation with national and international organizations (AWAT, AWN NEC, GTZ and WCLRF). In this project, first 450 students from Kabul University were trained as interviewers and then 1,000 people were interviewed. The report on the findings of this research and the AIHRC recommendations will be released in a report in March 2008. The second research project was on "Women's Addicted to Drugs in Afghanistan". For this research 1,000 women addicted to drugs were interviewed. The research findings and the AIHRC recommendations will be published in a report in 2008.

The Monitoring activities of the WRU were mostly carried out in women's prisons, detention centres and women's shelters. During the past year, 30 women's prisons and 30 hospitals were monitored for cases of violence against women in 30 provinces. A total of 2,060 cases of violence against women were registered in 2007, and the cases were shared with the relevant authorities. Standards of women's prisons in Badakhshan, Balkh, Bamyan, Herat, Kabul, Kandahar, Kunduz, Laghman and Nengarhar were found to have improved

*Commissioner Soraya Sobhrang and Commissioner Hangama Anwari monitored the women's prison in Pul-e-Charkhi, Kabul, for cases of human rights violations and children living with their imprisoned mothers as well as for the United Nations Minimum Standard Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. In this regard, several meetings were held with the MoLSAMD and MJ in order to find ways to protect the children. As the result of the AIHRC Commissioners visit to the prisons, a protocol was drafted to move the children to a safer place--optionally their family homes or orphanages. The MoU is not yet finalized as MoLSAMD was not ready to take the responsibility. It was planned to hold a stakeholders meeting to come up with options and then to take the issue back to MoJ and MoLSAMD. The issue of children living with their mothers in prison is also one of the hot topics under discussion in the TAG (Technical Advisory Group on Women and Children) for a long time; this issue also needs to be discussed with the Prison Working Group under ANSD for finding sustainable solutions.*

During year 2007, the WRU had close cooperation with the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Family Court. Also the unit strengthened partnership, through signing MoUs and providing technical support, with Civil Society Organizations, such as:

1. Afghan Civil Society Foundation (ACSF)
2. Afghan Institute of Learning (ALI)
3. Afghan Woman Services and Educational Centre (AWSE)
4. Afghan Woman Educational Centre (AWEC)
5. Afghan Woman Network (AWN)
6. Afghan Women Skills Development Centre (AWSD)
7. German Development Organization (DED)
8. Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)
9. HKAW (Shelter for women)
10. Hawak Shelter for Women (HSW)
11. International Development Law Organization (IDLO)
12. Kofa Shelter of Women (KSW)
13. Medical Medial
14. Momsaesa Hali Naswan
15. Noor Learning Centre (NLC)
16. Rights and Democracy (RD)
17. Society Unit for Woman in Afghanistan (SUWA)
18. United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)
19. United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

## The Child Rights Unit

The Child Rights Unit (CRU) carried out activities mainly related to the promotion of child rights, monitoring Child Correction Centres (CCC), and protection interventions on behalf of children. During the year, 11,424 people (4,686 women) including the police, elders, prosecutors, court officials and students learned about child rights, more specifically about the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC), violence against children in the family, schools, society and its impact on children, and child labour through 130 workshops and 277 awareness-raising meetings.

The International Day of Children (20 November) was celebrated in all AIHRC regional and provincial offices through gatherings, meetings and contests; in the Kabul Regional Office, on this occasion the CRU conducted a contest on child rights convention (CRC) among 400 children from orphanages and working children in close cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations (HIFA, MMCC and SVF).

Ten children participated in the contest and 15 children took part in role playing, circus and musical performance.

In November 2007, the AIHRC CRU wrote a speech for President Karzai on the role of Government in the promotion and protection of child rights in Afghanistan, which was delivered by the President in one of his weekly radio speech program.

The AIHRC and Save the Children Sweden and Norway office launched a joint press release urging Government of Afghanistan on fulfilling its commitment towards Child Right Convention in which the Afghanistan Government is a party (November 2007).

The CRU organized training programmes for the AIHRC staff members, volunteers and general public. The unit conducted a three-day capacity building workshop for 38 Child Rights Field Monitors, Child Rights officers, Human Rights Field Monitoring Team Leaders. In the workshop, the revised questionnaire form on Child Field Monitoring (developed with the support of the UNICEF), child rights, right to health, right to education, child labour, child marriage and the security council resolution 1612, draft questionnaire form for children detention monitoring, and draft forms of orphanage monitoring were discussed. Sessions of the workshop were facilitated by UNAMA, UNICEF, UNODC and AIHRC.

The CRU began child to child programme in August 2007, and the CRU Kabul regional office conducted a ToT workshop for ten children (5 boys 5 girls) on child rights, child sexual abuse, harms of drugs and child trafficking. These child rights trainers conducted 264 awareness-rising meetings for a total of 3,860 children in orphanages and child rights correction centres (September 2007) to disseminate this information to other children.

The CRU trained as Child Rights Volunteers 190 participants (20 in each of regional offices and 10 in the provincial offices), who were selected from among the school teachers. Each of the 190 volunteers was responsible to train children in three schools. As a result, the total number of schools covered by this project was 570 high schools in 11 provinces. Target participants in this project were students of grades 10 to 12 and a total of 203,775 students received awareness on child rights



issues including, child marriages, sexual exploitation, trafficking, and right to education. In this relation, a manual, with the initiative of the AIHRC Bamiyan office, was prepared and finalized in the Headquarters. This manual will be printed and distributed to other civil society groups for further use.

For strengthening partnership with NGOs in awareness-raising on the child rights, the CRU signed MoUs with the two local NGOs: One with Bakhter in promoting child rights to women (house wives) in the greater Kabul on CRC, and child rights in the family and society. Bakhter conducted 24 training workshops for 600 women focusing mainly on topics such as right to education, right to health, right to security, right to participate in social activities and to provide safe environment for children. The other MoU was signed with *Behzest-e- Khanawada* to increase the awareness of parents, *mullahs* and children on sexual abuse of children, child trafficking, forced marriages, violence against children and inappropriate education for children. This NGO conducted 3 workshops for 65 people including parents, *mullahs* and influential people in the 11 district of Kabul.

A significant achievement for the CRU was encouraging the CSOs to prepare a shadow report to the CRC treaty body, at which 45 NGOs made a reporting coalition. A total of 8 organizations including AIHRC are core group members. Since March 2007, six thematic groups have started their work on CRC articles. The CRU worked with the three thematic groups under the CRC reporting program and was also a member the coalition and core group on CRC reporting. In order to ensure quality of both the process and the content of the CRC reporting AIHRC with the support of SCSN hired a consultant to build capacity of the coalition in the process of CRC reporting.

For the protection of children, an indicator of success for the CRU was the establishment of a joint Committee with NGOs and the Ministry of Counter Narcotics for the prevention and protection of children addicted to narcotics in Afghanistan. The AIHRC is heading the committee to prepare a study on Afghan children addicted to narcotics.

The CRU monitored 48 orphanages and 28 Children Correctional Centres (CCCs) in 28 provinces for cases of abuse and unsuitable living conditions in 2007. As a result of the AIHRC interventions, standards of CCCs in Baghlan, Balkh, Gardez, Jawzjan, Kandahar, Kunduz, Samangan and Sar-e-Pul were found to have improved. A total of 101 illegally detained children (83 boys and 18 girls) were released following the AIHRC interventions. The CRU's advocacy efforts for the better treatment of the juvenile offenders resulted in the establishment of a child correction centre Daikundi Province. In cooperation with UNICEF, the CRU conducted an assessment of the condition of CCC across the country. The drafted report is under preparation by an international consultant and will be released by mid January 2008.

The CRU, in according with the MoLSAMD Action Plan for Children at risk, prepared a strategy on the rights of children with disabilities. The strategy was finalized and sent to MoLSAMD for adoption and implementation in July 2007.

During the year 2007, the CRU strengthened partnership with the following Civil Society Organizations:

1. Afghan Human Rights Organization
2. Afghan Women Carpet Network (AWCN)
3. Ashiana
4. Bahzesti Khanwada (Family Welfare Foundation)
5. Bakhter (local NGO)
6. Best Education and Employable Skills Training
7. Charity for Afghanistan (local NGO)
8. Children in Crisis (CIC)
9. Foundation for Cultural and Civil Society
10. Mobile Mini Circus for Children (MMCC)
11. Reconstruction Service for Afghanistan
12. Relief International
13. Save the Children Sweden-Norway
14. Save the Children UK
15. Save the Children USA
16. Social Vocational Foundation (SVF)
17. Terre Des Hommes (TDH)
18. United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF)
19. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
20. Women for Afghan Women (WAW)

### **The Monitoring and Investigation Unit**

The Monitoring and Investigation Unit (M&IU) focused its major activities on investigating human rights violations and systematic monitoring of prisons and detention centres, according to the United Nations Minimum Standard Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, and human rights protection through complaints handling and interventions with authorities. During the past year, 1,079 monitoring missions of prisons and detention centres were conducted in 32 provinces. As a result of the M&IU's interventions, 130 illegally arrested persons (126 men and 4 women), 126 illegally detained persons (114 men and 12 women), and 87 illegally imprisoned persons (84 men 3 women) were released. A total of 5,259 people (10,081 women) came to the AIHRC seeking assistance and were either processed as complainants, or given legal advice and referrals to appropriate authorities or organisations. Of the 1,079 complaints received in 2007 (involving 1,561 human rights violations), 904 complaints were investigated and 458 interventions led to resolutions.

**Table: Complaints and violations received, investigated and settled by the AIHRC in 2007**

Period	Complaints and Violations		Investigated	Settled (closed)
	Complaints	Violations		
First quarter	299	425	276	127
Second quarter	283	447	226	107
Third quarter	298	428	225	122
Fourth quarter	199	261	177	102
<b>Total</b>	<b>1079</b>	<b>1,561</b>	<b>904</b>	<b>458</b>

Standards of prisons, as a result of the AIHRC interventions, were found to have improved in the prisons in Bamiyan, Faryab, Jawzjan, Kunduz, Kandahar, Logar, Nengarhar, Nimroz, Parwan, Sar-e-Pul and Takhar and detention centres in Daikundi, Herat, Nengarhar and Nuristan. Improvements included positive changes in the behaviour of prison wardens, faster processing of cases, access to defence lawyers, better lighting in prison rooms, provision of clean drinking water, improvements in health situation due to the establishment of health centres, and the establishment of vocational training centres for prisoners.

In addition to the planned activities of the M&IU, the AIHRC assigned a team of monitors and investigators from AIHRC offices of Gardez, Jalalabad, Mazar and Maimana to investigate the shooting of demonstrators in Sheberghan, where the Afghan security forces killed 9 people and injured 42 when they opened fire directly onto a group of unarmed protesters in Sheberghan, Jawzjan province on 28 May 2007. The team interviewed 60 people including the injured, their relatives the eyewitness, the Governor, the police, PRT representatives and hospital doctors. The Commission prepared a report with clear recommendations regarding the incident, submitted it to the President, and announced its position in a press release.

The M&IU monitored the implementation of President Karzi's four decrees for the amnesty or reduced sentence of detainees and prisoners on the occasions such as Meladul Nabi (Prophet's Birthday), fifteenth anniversary of the Islamic Revolution of Afghanistan, the Eidul Feter and International Women's Day (8 March).

The AIHRC continued its work on monitoring the situation of Afghan civilians affected by the armed conflict and calling on all parties to fully comply with the international humanitarian law. To strengthen its capacity in carrying out this function and to effectively address the challenges presented by the most severe, complex and high profile violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, the Commission established a new headquarters-based team of four special investigators (SIT) in October. The SIT

In March 2007, a monitoring mission in Logar Men's Prison, a man was in the prison without any legal documents except for one letter from the Logar provincial court that sentenced him to prison. After M&IU investigated the case and gathered all related documents, it was found out that the prisoner had spent more time than his sentence, and with the AIHRC intervention, he was released from the prison.

conducted two short investigations into suicide attacks that took place in Paghman (24 November) and Wazirakbar Khan (27 November) and conducted an in depth investigation of ISAF air strike (26 November) in Nagarach district of Noorstan Province that allegedly killed 12 construction workers and initiated investigation of the alleged violations by international and national forces during a raid in Garmser district, Helmand Province. Reports of the investigations were produced.

The SIT, in close coordination with DMU, designed of an appropriate MS Access Database which named the IHL Case-tracking Database which will allow the SIT to track non-combatant casualty numbers, analyze countrywide cases to identify patterns, trends and issues of concern as well as emblematic cases for follow-up and to supervise and guide the M&IU in regional office in the handling of individual conflict-related cases.

The AIHRC, in partnership with UNAMA, conducted a survey of prisons for illegal detentions, 700 prisoners were interviewed, and 700 forms were filled out which were processed in the AIHRC Database Unit. The report of this survey was postponed due to technical problems.

**In 2007**, The AIHRC Monitoring and Investigation Unit, in close co-operation with Ministry of Justice, prepared a list of 2,392 people who were in prisons after the completion of their sentences or were illegally detained and their destinies were not determined. The AIHRC gave the list to the President who appointed a commission headed by Mawlawi Fazl Hadi Shenwary to investigate the issue. Recently, this commission released a report on the situation of those people, releasing 819 people, who were illegally detained or imprisoned in Kabul and determining the sentences of an estimated 1,573 people after the investigation.

The newly appointed Human Rights Border Monitors (two men and two women) in Islam Qala and Zarange reported (September-December 2007) on the situation of deportees from Iran. According to their reports, the deportees were treated with no human dignity by the Iranian police--some of the women deportees were arrested and deported without their children and families; some children were without their parents and most of them were arrested from the roads and their work places. They were beaten, looted and deported without their families, while the Afghan Government had no preparation to accept these refugees. The deportees live in very bad conditions in the only camps of Zarange and Islam Qala of Herat province. Two national reports were published on the situation of the afghan deportees.

The close cooperation of high level officials in judicial and police sectors with the AIHRC shows that the AIHRC increased the awareness of judicial and police official on human rights principles and issues. Indictors are when the commission informs the police and judicial official on human rights violations through correspondence; the replied letters, show positive actions and are signed by Ministry of Interior and the Attorney General, for examples.

The unit conducted 6 awareness rising workshops and 4 meetings for judges, prosecutors and prison guards. A total of 222 participants (7 women) benefited from these activities in Kabul, Kunduz, Nengarhar, and Faryab provinces.

### **National Human Rights Violations (NHRV) Legal Analyser in AIHRC Headquarters**

The NHRV Legal Analyser provided technical and legal assistance on case management and complaints registration forms to all AIHRC staff. In 2007, significant achievements included the preparation of case management forms according to the manual, training of the AIHRC staff on how to use the case management forms, and checking and controlling of the monitoring forms of prisons and detention centres.

The NHRV Legal Analyser conducted three capacity-building workshops for M&IU on how to use case management forms and the new database and a four-day capacity-building workshop, in cooperation with UNAMA, for training the AIHRC and UNAMA staff on how to monitor the prisons and detention centres and fill out the forms. In October 2007, the NHRV Legal Analyser joined UNAMA and the commission recruited a new NHRV Legal Analyser.

**The NHRV Focal Point, based in Kabul**, is responsible for following-up cases of human rights violations received from AIHRC provincial and regional offices with ministries and government authorities in the capital in order to provide support to regional and provincial offices. In the past year, 47 human rights violation cases, which were identified by AIHRC offices in Badakhshan, Bamiyan, Daikundi, Faryab, Gardez, Herat, Kandahar, Kunduz, and Mazar-e-Sharif, were submitted to the NHRV Focal Point, who ensured a consistent follow-up with the Attorney General Office, the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice and solved 20 human rights violation cases through out the year. The processing of the 27 remaining human rights violation cases was in progress.

### **The Human Rights Field Monitoring (HRFM) Team**

The Human Rights Field Monitoring (HRFM) Team started their monitoring activities, based on an MoU signed between the AIHRC and UNHCR, in January 2007. Each regional and provincial office monitored the human rights situation in the field in their area of responsibility. Despite the worsening security situation in most provinces of the country, Human Rights Field Monitoring Teams conducted 447 missions (1,080 days spent on missions) to monitor human rights situation all over the country; they conducted 11,153 interviews (with 6,081 men and 5,072 women) in 134 districts of 31 provinces. Human rights violations and abuses were identified. Interviewees were informed about the mandate and activities of the AIHRC. The high number of interviews shows that human rights field monitoring teams conducted a higher number of interviews than the planned 9, 820 interviews.

The HRFM prepared the "Economic and Social Rights Reports". Based on their findings the report assesses the government's obligation to protect and fulfill selected economic and social rights under international treaties that Afghanistan ratified. Statistic-based narrative analysis in the report indicates human rights trends

and issues for submission to government authorities. The report, published in Dari and English, was launched in a press release in August 2007.

A total of 144 joint coordination/intervention meetings were held between UNHCR and AIHRC including relevant units of the commission in particular M&I teams. Minutes of regular meetings between field teams and UNHCR show increase in communication and co-ordination. A total of 144 cases of human rights violations including 155 human rights violations and abuses such as the violations of the right to property, the right to marry and found a family, the right to live, the right to liberty and security of person, the right to education, the right to health, the right to personal integrity, the right to an adequate standards of living, the right to due process, the right to nationality, the right to work, the right to freedom of movement and residence, the right to adequate housing, the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and the right to participation and freedom of association, were identified and referred for follow up and intervention. Among the 143 human rights cases opened, 113 were followed up, of which 24 cases were documented and closed, 41 cases were solved, and 78 cases were pending.

### **The Child Rights Field Monitoring (CRFM) Team**

Based on the MoU signed between the AIHRC and the office of UNICEF, monitored the rights of the children countrywide to ensure that children are able to participate in the Commission's monitoring of the human rights situation in Afghanistan, particularly in assessing the implementation of the standards set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Despite the worsening of security situation the CRFM team, in cooperation with HRFM teams in the AIHRC regional and provincial offices maintained a significant field presence and conducted a total number of 451 missions (906 days spent on mission). The teams interviewed 8,484 children, of whom 4,102 (48.30 percent) were boys and 4,382 (51.70 percent) girls, in 133 districts of 29 provinces around the country. A total number of 30 cases of human rights including 34 human rights violations related to children were identified, of which 16 cases were followed up, 6 cases were documented and closed, 5 cases were solved and 19 cases were pending.

A total of 82 co-ordination / intervention meetings, involving relevant AIHRC units, in particular Child Rights and Monitoring & Investigation, were held within the AIHRC regional and provincial offices where child rights violations were identified. Minutes of regular coordination/intervention meetings among the relevant units show a good communication, co-ordination and follow up on cases of child rights at the regional and provincial level.

Based on findings of CRFM, the report on "Situation of Children in Afghanistan" was produced and printed. This report assesses the government obligation to protect and fulfill the child right under the International Convention on the Right of the Child, which was ratified by Afghanistan.

## The Transitional Justice Unit



Peaceful demonstration by the families and supporters of victims of the past wars (10 December 2007)

The Transitional Justice Unit (TJU) develops strategies and policies to confront past human rights abuses of war crimes and crimes against humanity, and collecting documentation and information about the nature, causes and perpetrators of these crimes in Afghanistan from 1978 to 2001.

The major activities of the unit, during the year 2007, were the implementation of the Government's Three-Year Action Plan for Peace, Justice and Reconciliation on recording, documenting, and investigating past human rights abuses before 2001, through conducting 4,151 interviews (886 women). The unit organised 44 awareness-raising gatherings and conducted 327 awareness-raising meetings. A total of 9,615 people (2,761 women) from civil service, civil society and community elders gained knowledge and skills on the topics of the Truth Seeking Commission, Transitional Justice History, International Criminal Court and Conflict Mapping.

In late March 2007, the TJU in cooperation with the MPU, for increasing the awareness of Afghans on Transitional Justice, dubbed six documentary films (536 minutes in total) on transitional justice which were produced in Bosnia, Sir Leon, Peru, and the United States in cooperation with national film production companies. These films are available in both national languages of Dari and Pashto at the AIHRC Resource Centres and are planned to be aired through national TV stations.

The TJU carried out, (May-June 2007), the documentation/conflict mapping project, while working closely with the civil society organizations. The unit led a series of consultation with the community elders, victim's group, provincial council representatives, civil society organizations and women's groups in

On The National Human Rights Victim's Day (10 December), the AIHRC witnessed a peaceful demonstration by the families and supporters of victims of the past wars, who gathered in front of the AIHRC Headquarters in Kabul. The protester demanded that the past human rights violators should be brought to justice.

Badakhshan to seek their views about the establishment of a museum where the items discovered from the mass grave recently to be displayed along with the pictures of the victims and a chronology of the human rights violations related to the mass grave documented by the commission. The initiative educated the community who promised not to excavate the mass grave sites without the presence of a group of professional experts. As a result, the community agreed for the establishment of a museum, and promised to take part in the process of collecting objects and photos of victims. Preparation for the establishment of the museum was initiated and the consent of the community on the site of museum was obtained. A piece of land attached to the mass grave site was donated by the community to build the first ever victim and war crimes museum in Afghanistan.

The TJU initiated a debate through e-mail correspondence with the civil society actors in May, which resulted in holding three meetings of civil society organizations were held to discuss the challenges and opportunities for the implementation of the action plan. A number of civil society activists wrote articles on the dilemma of justice and peace, which appeared in the local newspapers and websites in Dari and Pashto. As a result of these meetings, the civil society groups decided to work with the electronic media to promote transitional justice. In all of these meetings, there was a high level of dissatisfaction from some TV channel because of there unbalanced production in favour of warlords and against any democratic and civil society agendas.

The TJU helped a civil society organization, Afghan National Participation Association, in their development of a public information and awareness project on Transitional Justice and the Government Action Plan on Peace, Justice and Reconciliation. The organization with the help of the commission and the support of the Government of Canada developed radio of programs on transitional justice processes, other countries experiences and Government of Afghanistan's Action Plan on Peace Justice and Reconciliation. The program while monitored by the commission's TJU, it informed more than a million people of the action plan for transitional justice throughout the country. The organization also raised the awareness of 76 government officials in Parwan, Panjsher and Kapisa, in 2007.

The AIHRC was able to engage a number of other civil society organizations in support of victims of the human rights violations. The Commission built the capacity of Saqa civil society organization to collect stories of victims and AIHRC supporting the Saqa organization financially to prepare a 100-page book and a documentary film of people's memories about the past human rights violations. These materials will help the AIHRC in future activities.

The TJU identified and conducted preliminary investigation and documentation Global Positioning System (GPS) of estimated 86 mass graves, which were related to past human rights violations, found in Badakhshan, Bamiyan, Herat, Kabul, Kapisa, Parwan and Paktia provinces.

In line with the Action Plan on Peace Justice and Reconciliation, the commission's activities encouraged the Government of Afghanistan to join in celebration and commemoration of the National Day of Victims (10 December), which is named the National Day of Human Rights Victims in Afghanistan. The occasion was



commemorated by the TJU throughout the country in which President Karzai for the first time faced the victims and heard their stories. The commemoration events created an excellent opportunity for the victims of the past human rights abuses to tell their stories to public through media.

An assessment of the conflict mapping project of the TJU by Brussels based No Peace without Justice Organization resulted in a capacity building training and modification to the methodology of the documentation and statement taking processes of conflict mapping.

International advocacy of the TJU on transitional Justice Action Plan brought more attention and support to the establishment of the Senior Advisory Panel of Appointment by the President and received the attention of the United Nations Security Council. In its Resolution of March 2007 on Afghanistan in item No. 18, the United Nations Security Council gave a direct reference to the implementation of the Action Plan on Peace Justice and Reconciliation as a result of the TJU's advocacy and lobbying internationally.

### **The People with Disabilities Unit (PWDU)**



Celebration the International Day of People with Disabilities  
(3 December)

The People with Disabilities Unit (PWDU) focused its activities mainly on promoting the rights of people with disabilities through organizing 54 workshops and 202 awareness-raising meetings in which 9,410 people (2,895 women) in 30 provinces, including community elders and governmental officials learned about the rights of people with disabilities in society. The unit held meetings with government officials and NGOs working with the PWD in order to establish partnership to facilitate the implementation of the PWD Action Plan for 2007.

The AIHRC Headquarters and all regional offices, in cooperation with the NPAD and MoLSAMD, celebrated the International Day of People with Disabilities (3 December), inviting people with disabilities, managers, officers and workers from disability organizations and government officials. Dissemination on the rights of PWD centred on this year's theme of the International Day of Disability, "*Decent Work for People with Disability*", was addressed in these gatherings.

The Ministry of Urban Development and Housing built access ramps for PWD on the sidewalks around the Kabul Municipality and in all public bathrooms in Kabul city. The Ministry promised to grant construction permit only to those public buildings that have planned elevators and access ramps for PWD.

On this occasion, the PWDU prepared posters and brochures, which were printed (4000 copies of each) and distributed by AIHRC regional and provincial offices. The unit in cooperation with NPAD, on this occasion, prepared posters and billboards: 7,000 posters were printed in the AIHRC's printing house and distributed by AIHRC offices. Twenty billboards were installed on the four entrances and main squares of Kabul, conveying messages on Rights of People With Disabilities. Two films, one documentary (*Rawayet Tawanayee* 30 minutes) and one 35-minute artistic film produced. The films show the problems of people with disability and also their abilities, in Afghanistan. The purpose of these films were to draw a picture of the situation of PWD, raising awareness among the public to respect the rights and dignity of PWD, and to attract the Government's attention to the problems of PWD and to its obligation to promote and protect the PWD rights. These films were shown on the occasion of the International Day of the People with Disabilities by Arana and national TV channels. A copy of the documentary film "*Rewayat Tawana-yee*" was distributed to all local TV channels, as well as, to Aljazira and VoA televisions.

The AIHRC, in partnership with Social Research Foundation, conducted a field research in 8 provinces<sup>4</sup> on "The Status of the PWD in the Family and Society". The purpose of the research was to assess the effects of the situation of PWD in family and community on their social, economic and other rights. The report of the research will be finalized in 2008.

The AIHRC translated the UN Convention on the Rights of PWD (adapted on 13 December 2006 by the UN General Assembly), from English to Dari, and officially encouraged the Government of Afghanistan through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) to sign the Convention. However, no action has yet taken place.

The AIHRC actively participated in the advocacy campaign, run by a number of NGOs working with PWD for signing and ratification of the Convention by the Government of Afghanistan. The Advocacy Committee of the Rights of PWD, with the AIHRC representative as a key member of the Committee, visited the President and the Chairmen of the upper and lower houses of the Afghanistan Parliament, requested them to encourage the Government of Afghanistan to sign and ratify the Convention of the Rights of PWD.

<sup>4</sup> Badgheese, Bamian, Herat, Helmand, Jalalabad, Jawzjan, Kabul, Kandahar, Kunduz, Laghman, Mazar, Paktia, Parwan, Takhar

The Officers of PWDU visited the Deputy Minister and the managers of provincial departments of the Ministry Urban Development and Housing for consideration of the accessibility rights of PWD to public and private infrastructures. As a result, the Ministry officials promised to instruct their offices to consider the accessibility of PWD in the public infrastructure.

The AIHRC Legal Advisor also cooperated with the MoJ and the MoLSMD to reflect the human rights perspectives on the draft law of Credits to Martyr's decedents and PWD.

## **Support Units**

### **The Research Unit**

The research unit enables the Commission to submit opinions, recommendations and report to local, regional and national authorities related to the promotion and protection of human rights.

In 2007, the Research Unit completed five research studies on "Self-Immolations among Women in South West of Afghanistan", "The Implementation of Juvenile Code", "The General Condition of Children in Afghanistan" and "the Condition of Afghan Deportees from Iran". The unit in partnership with an NGO, Social Research Foundation (*Nehad Tahqeqat Ejtemayee*), conducted a study on "The Status of People with Disabilities in the Family and Society" which will be published in January 2008.

The Research Unit's work on the following projects continues:

1. The study on the "Women Addicted to Narcotics" progressed 70 percent.
2. The study on the "Torture in Legal Institutions" progressed 75 percent and will be finished in March 2008.
3. The study on the "Children's Equal Access to Education" progressed 60 percent and will be completed in March 2008.
4. The study on the "Status of Young Married Women in the Family" progressed 40 percent and will be completed in September 2008.

## **The Database Management Unit (DMU)**

The Database Management Unit (DMU), maintained, in 2007, six data bases of Human Rights Case Management, Complain Registration, Conflict Mapping, Human Rights Field Monitoring, Children Rights Field Monitoring and Violation of International Humanitarian Law. The DMU filed human rights violations complaints, conflict mapping cases, and HRFM and CRFM interviews received from the AIHRC regional and provincial offices as well as data for the research projects carried out by the Research Unit.

A total of 2,197 complaints and 955 human rights violation cases were received from all the regional offices in 2007, of which an estimated 40 percent of the data were quality checked, at time of reporting, by a legal team, who were assigned to review all the cases carefully for missing and incomplete data. A detailed statistical report will be produced on the status of human rights violations in Afghanistan.

A total of 5, 612 Transitional justice Conflict Mapping cases were collected from all the regional and provincial offices since the start of the campaign in 2006 and the information was recorded into the database. A reporting template was produced for the preparation of a statistical report.

About 12,000 HRFM interviews conducted by AIHRC and UNHCR in 2006 were compiled and analyzed. The analyses were used in the report of the "Economic and Social Rights in Afghanistan, II" which was released in August 2007. Moreover, a total of 8,685 interviews were conducted by HRFM and 8,981 Interviews by CRFM in all regional offices which were under process. The unit also revised CRFM forms and prepared a new database, including reporting template and guidelines and installed them in all AIHRC CRFM offices.

The DMU worked on the analysis of the Arbitrary Detention Monitoring Checklist data which were jointly collected by the AIHRC and UNAMA. A comparative analysis of the 1,120 interviews was carried out and the report will be released in 2008.

The DMU designed five new databases: One database for the SIT on "International Humanitarian Law" that collects data and study human rights violations which occur due to the military operations of ISAF, NATO, US forces and the Afghan National Army. The other databases were designed to help the Research Unit in preparing and analyzing data collected for the research studies on Women Addicted to Narcotics (820 interviews), Children's Access to Education (5,300 interviews), and Torture in Legal Institutions (500 interviews). The reports are due in 2008.

The DMU visited the AIHRC regional and provincial offices to assist with the general troubleshooting of database and to check the reports on Child Rights, Case Management and Transitional Justice forms filed, entered and exported, in 2007.

## Other achievements

### Capacity building

One of the Commission's main objectives in the context of the implementation of its Three-Year Action Plan 2006 -2008 consists of strengthening itself and building the capacity of its staff.

During 2007, the AIHRC Commissioners visited regional and provincial offices to build the capacity on the AIHRC Three-Year Action Plan 2006 -2008 and its implementation, and to evaluate the staff on the activities implemented so far. Several missions were undertaken by AIHRC Commissioners and Senior Management throughout the year to Badakhshan, Daikundi, Gardiz, Ghor, Herat, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Kunduz and Mazar.

*In-House Training:* The Commission conducted a week-long orientation workshop to build capacity and to provide an opportunity for the regional and provincial managers to learn the work processes, the role of research and (writing) reports in their daily work and their responsibilities towards contributing to achieve the commission's goals as outlined in the AIHRC Three-Year Action Plan. The participants included all 11 regional and provincial managers, research and policy staff and national unit officers.

The Commission hired a Donor Relations and Reporting Consultant to build the capacity of AIHRC staff on reporting and donor relations tasks. During the reporting period, the capacity of 100 regional and provincial programme managers and staff members were raised in essential communication skills with a focus on reporting through four three-day workshops on "Getting Results in a Diverse Organization". The workshops were prepared and facilitated by the Consultant and organized by the National Reporting Office (NRO). The national reporting officers led a session on the reporting format in each workshop. The first three workshops were held in the Kabul regional office and the last workshop in the Herat Regional Office.

A Peace-Building and Human Rights Advisor was seconded (2006) to the Commission by the German Development Service (DED) for a period of two years to build the capacity of AIHRC programme staff on peace building and conflict transformation. Ali Rahman Jawed, who had previously attended a three-month course "Working with Conflict" in Birmingham, UK, joined the Advisor in March 2007 as Assistant for the AIHRC peacebuilding and conflict transformation program. Through training and holding workshops together with the Advisor, the Assistant became very competent to conduct workshops on peacebuilding and conflict transformation on his own.

During the reporting period, the Advisor together with the Assistant raised the capacity of AIHRC programme staff members through four three-day Mediation workshops<sup>5</sup> and three six-day Conflict Resolution and Mediation workshops<sup>6</sup> in

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<sup>5</sup> For Bamyan, Jalalabad, Kabul, , Kandahar, Kunduz, and Mazar regional and Badakhshan, Daikundi and Maymana provincial offices

<sup>6</sup> For Bamiyan and Herat regional and Badakhshan, Daikundi and Ghor provincial offices

Bamiyan, Daikundi and Herat. Two Communication workshops were held for the Kabul Regional office staff and its partner organizations in Kabul. The Advisor also facilitated various learning sessions on conflict transformation and peacebuilding by regularly holding learning sessions with the TJU and HREU of the Kabul Regional Office and by conducting sessions on peacebuilding within workshops on human rights held in the Kabul Regional Office. The staff members learned about peacebuilding, conflict transformation, including national reconciliation and the importance about truth telling, conflict resolution tools, particularly mediation as well as communication skills. The Adviser also developed a training manual for AIHRC trainers on peacebuilding and conflict transformation. The manual is translated into Dari and will be translated in Pashto.

In the framework of transitional justice, the Advisor together with UNAMA Human Rights Unit developed a project on participatory theatre. The main goal of the project is to give a forum for the discussion on past human rights violations through participatory theatre. A pilot workshop for the staff of the AIHRC Kabul Regional Office and national and international staff of the UNAMA Human Rights Unit and Political Unit was conducted. The reception of the participatory theatre approach was very positive and after an evaluation of the pilot project, it was found that participatory theatre could be a suitable means to engage people, particularly victims, to talk about past human rights violations. In 2008, the project will be implemented in different regions of Afghanistan.

The AIHRC hired a Consultant with the financial support of Save the Children Sweden-Norway in order to build the capacity within the CRU, provide technical support to the CRC Coalition in preparing an alternative CRC report on Afghanistan and support building the child protection mechanisms through CRFM and CPAN partnerships at the provincial level.

The AIHRC various units conducted four training workshops during the year 2007. The HREU conducted a ten-day training of the trainers workshop for all HREU staff in order to build the capacity of the unit in methods of teaching human rights principles more effectively. The Kabul CRU, in cooperation with the HRFM, organized a six-day capacity-building workshop for the regional and provincial staff of CRFM, CRU and M&IU on how to monitor the situation of children in the area of Juvenile Offenders (27 February - 03 March 2007). The DMU, in cooperation with the Legal Analyzer, organized two six-day capacity-building workshops to train the AIHRC staff on technical and legal issues, Management Information System, and database in preparation for the unification of the two units of HRFMU and M&IU in Herat and Mazar Regional Offices. The participating monitors learned how to use the new monitoring and investigation tools and field-monitoring database. And the WRU, in partnership with a Women's Rights Activist, conducted a five-day workshop on "Feminism and Islam" to raise the capacity of 34 WRU and M&IU staff members from all regional and provincial offices.

Sponsorship and Training Staff in Afghanistan: AIHRC has sponsored 5 staff members who are enrolled at the universities in Kabul to train in the areas of Finance and Information Technology. Six staff members from the offices of Daikundi, Herat, Kandahar and Kabul received training in leadership in Afghanistan-Memphis

leadership Summit in Kabul; one staff member from Kunduz office attended a report writing workshop by Barak in Kabul.

Internship: Three interns one man from Global Rights and two women from the University of Massachusetts (USA) and York University (UK) joined AIHRC for internship during the past quarter.

Training Staff Abroad: The AIHRC Commissioners and staff members have attended conferences and training programs, upon the invitations of various international organizations. For the more information, please see Annex I.

### **International relations and awareness-raising on human rights**

The AIHRC leadership and fellow commissioners attended various international and regional events and conferences as key contributors and speakers. The AIHRC is thankful to those organizations that hosted the events and extended an invitation to AIHRC (See Annex II). Dr. Sima Samar, AIHRC Chairperson, received, a prestigious award, the Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Global Women's Rights Feminist Majority Foundation in the United States of America (14 May 2007).

At international level, the work of the commission was recognized. Dr. Sima Samar was appointed as the United Nations Secretary General's Special Rapportuer and member of a high level mission to contribute to the report on the assessment of human rights situation in Darfur and the needs of the Sudan in this regard. During 2007, Dr. Sima Samar participated actively and contributed substantially. She presided over the group of six experts to put together a report to promote the Human Rights in Darfur and to report the findings and recommendations on the Human Rights Situation in Darfur to the Human Rights Council.

At the national level, the AIHRC enhanced promotion efforts on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (10 December), celebrated in the Afghanistan National Television Hall in Kabul. The ceremony benefited from the presence of President Karzai, diplomats, Members of Parliament, civil society organizations representatives and journalists. Three victims of the past human rights violations gave brief speeches, which moved the entire audience including the President of Afghanistan. During the ceremony, three awards were dedicated to human rights activists, who worked hard to promote and protect human rights in Afghanistan, namely, to Ajmal Naqshbandi, a journalist assassinated by Taliban; Mr. Haji Mula Jan Shenwari, Chief of Nengarhar provincial *showra* (council); and Mrs. Horia Musadiq, Human Rights Activist.

On the occasion of 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the AIHRC also rehabilitated Kabul Medical University Clock Tower and added verses of holy Quran which conveyed the protection of human rights and respect to human dignity. These messages were printed in four sides of the tower on white stones. The AIHRC also printed the message, *No peace without Justice*, on 10,000 pens and 10,000 key chains, which were distributed to the general public.



President Karzai, giving Human Rights Award  
(Ceremony celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Universal Declaration  
of Human Rights, 10 December 2007, Kabul)

At the national level, AIHRC raised awareness on human right issues through nine press releases, in 2007, on different issues, and occasions such as Universal Day of Children (20 November); the incidents in Sheberghan; conflict caused by Kochis in Behsood district of Wardak Province and civilian casualties; discovery of a mass grave in Badakhshan; the horrific crime of murdering of Ajmal Naqushbandi, an Afghan journalist by Taliban; incidents and civilian casualties in Negarhar and Kapisa as a result of the shooting and bombardment of Coalition Forces combating Terrorism; the incident in Baghlan province, which resulted in martyring and injuring of tens of people including six Members of Parliament and many school children; the Economic and Social Rights in Afghanistan II, and the two suicide attacks in Kabul.

Since 16 November, which is International Day of Tolerance, the AIHRC started advocacy initiatives and campaigns for various human rights issues until 10 December 2007, the International Human Rights Day, which is also named as National Day for Victims of Human Rights Violation in Afghanistan.

The AIHRC collaborated through technical and financial assistance with Pen Association for the celebration of 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Mawlan Jalaluddin Balkhi in with the theme of 'Human Dignity in Mawlana's Poetry'. Over 200 participants were invited nation-wide. The two-day conference was held in Insaf Hotel, Kabul (November 2007), and various AIHRC publications were displayed for the participants.

During 2007, the Commission submitted the second report to the Parliament on "The Human Rights Situation and AIHRC's Activities in Afghanistan" which contained the AIHRC recommendations for the Afghan Government.

During the last year, the AIHRC appreciated the dedication and commitment of Ms. Roya Rahmani, a well known human rights and women's rights activist, working as Director of Rights and Democracy, through presenting her the National Human Rights Award in a farewell party organized by ACSF (3 July 2007).



### **Human Rights Awareness Campaign**

International Day of Tolerance (16 November)  
International Day of Children (20 November)  
International Day on the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November)  
International Day of People with Disabilities (3 December)  
Universal Declaration of Human Rights (10 December)

### **AIHRC commissioners and senior management's advocacy efforts on human rights**

The AIHRC Commissioners and Senior Management played a significant role in advocating for human rights and providing support and recommendations to the Government in policy-making during the year. These efforts mainly consisted in establishing a coordination network with government representatives, Members of Parliament, and civil society as well as representatives from the international community.

The AIHRC Chairperson, Dr. Sima Samar held 4 meetings with President Karzai during the past year to discuss the Government's financial contribution to the AIHRC budget (based on Paris Principles), the reconfirmation of the six commissioners, and general security issues and the human rights situation in Afghanistan.

For access to the National Security Directorate's (NSD) detention centres, Dr. Sima Samar and Commissioner Fahim Hakim met with Mr. Amrullah Saleh, the NSD Chief, in Kabul to discuss the Commission's access to monitor the detainees. The AIHRC gave a copy of the MoUs signed with five countries<sup>7</sup> highlighting the Commission's monitoring roles to Mr. Saleh, in January 2007. The NSD issued two letters to all its sub-offices instructing them to provide access for AIHRC and nominated a legal advisor, Mr. Zuhur, as NSD focal point to AIHRC. The letters were immediately scanned and sent to AIHRC Eastern and Southern satellite offices. As a result, the AIHRC Jalalabad, Kabul, and Kandahar regional offices were finally allowed to monitor the NSD detention centres. Mr. Saleh also promised to share a copy of NSD's law with Dr. Sima Samar. However, the AIHRC has not yet received a copy of the law. Follow up meetings and advocacy was carried out, and NSD yet to furnish a copy of the law. Overall, the level of cooperation between NSD and the AIHRC monitoring teams improved in 2007.

Dr. Sima Samar and Commissioner Abdul Karim Azizi met with the MoE Minister, Mr. Hanif Atmar to discuss the challenges the commission was facing while collaborating with the ministry. Mr. Atmar promised corrective measures and better cooperation with the AIHRC. As a sign of good cooperation, he decided to have human rights messages published on the cover pages of two linguistic subjects of

<sup>7</sup> Canada, Denmark, Holland, Norway, and the United Kingdom

grades 7-12, and the commission promised financial support in implementing his decision regarding the textbook covers (19 June 2007).

Dr. Sima Samar met with Dr. Sharif Fayez, Head of the Mission, the American University of Afghanistan Foundation (AUAF), who was seeking cooperation in organizing an international conference as a base for establishing an independent international research and policy centre on conflict studies in Afghanistan. A team (Commissioner Fahim Hakim, Anna Deborah Nonhoff and Abeda Osman) worked to provide technical assistance to AUAF for organizing the "International Conference on Conflict Resolution in Afghanistan". The team cooperated in identifying speakers, participants, and other partners (DED and UNIFEM who provided financial assistance). The AIHRC speakers<sup>8</sup> gave four presentations and Commissioner Hakim had opening remarks and moderated the concluding session of the conference which was held in Herat (25-27 November 2007). The International Centre in Conflict Studies will be inaugurated at AUAF, in 2008.

Commissioner Fahim Hakim had various advocacy initiatives on human rights. He facilitated two workshops (March 2007) with civil society institutions, namely the Afghan Civil Society Forum (ACSF) and CoAR; closely consulted HRRAC on their report on better election, better future; and met with five-member delegates of CCA leadership from Mazar to discuss the possibilities of mutual co-operation with AIHRC. Meanwhile, Commissioner Hakim had various advocacy initiatives with civil society institutions on the amnesty text of the Parliament to condemn Members of Parliaments' political motivation as a severe blow to justice and implementation of the transitional justice action plan.

In order to establish a reliable working contact with Coalition Forces and NATO, Commissioner Hakim along with Commissioner Ahmad Farid Hamidi and the recently established AIHRC Special Investigation Team (SIT) met Col. Joseph Votel, Deputy to Gen. McNeil in Bagram Base (2 December 2007). At the meeting possibilities of professional collaboration on assessment missions of IHL violations were discussed. Commissioner Hakim, on behalf of the AIHRC, asked NATO and Coalition Forces to initiate a pro-active media policy, as otherwise the Taliban would manipulate the media through exaggerated and false information and figures on civilian casualties. It was agreed to have a regular monthly meeting with SIT, with next meeting scheduled on 7 January 2008.

Commissioner Hakim met with the Deputy Minister of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) to discuss the issues of deportees from Iran (17 May 2007). It was highlighted that the Afghan Government was lacking reliable and up to date information on the situation of deportees. As an Afghan delegation was visiting Iran, Commissioner Hakim provided the deputy minister, who was heading the delegation, with a brief report and recommendations for the protection and assistance to those Afghans who were forcibly deported from Iran.

During the past year, Commissioner Hakim held several meetings with Mr. Khaled, the MoI First Deputy Minister on the abuses of human rights violations, in which the

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<sup>8</sup> Commissioner Soraya Sobhrang presented, "the Role of Gender in Conflict Resolution in Afghanistan", Ms. Anna D. Nanhoff presented, "Peace Building Activities in Afghanistan" and Ms. Abeda Osman had a presentation on "The Role of Women in Conflict Resolution".

border police were involved. While acknowledging such abuses by the police, Mr. Khalid promised his full support to the AIHRC. Commission Hakim also met with the Chief of MoI Human Rights Department on monitoring of human rights situation in prisons and detentions centres. The MoI officials appreciated the support of the commission to the Police Academy on human rights education and asked the Commission to conduct training workshops for the heads of detention centres and prisons. They expressed their thanks for the translation of the Handbook on Prisons Reforms and receiving 500 copies of the Handbook and asked for more copies.

Commissioner Hakim, while attending a gathering of Civil Society and Human Rights Network (CSHRN) activists, had opening remarks on crucial roles of human rights activists and civil society representatives on rule of law, justice, and good governance through their advocacy and concerted lobbying efforts. The gathering was organized by CSHRN on 9 June 2007. Moreover, Commissioner Hakim, as a member of the core group, attended various meetings with UNAMA for protection of civilians in armed conflicts. The AIHRC, through commissioner Fahim, actively collaborated with UNAMA in the facilitation of the proposed conference and in the identification of potential participants.

Commissioner Hakim had close collaboration with human rights education unit and ministry of education (MoE) for finalizing human rights messages for the secondary schools linguistic subjects. The messages express individual rights and freedoms, freedom of expression, rights to marriage, rights to vote and political participation, avoidance from torture and discrimination, and rights to education and social services. All rights were mentioned in references to the Afghanistan Constitution, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and Islamic Human Rights Declaration. Commissioner Azizi was closely in contact with MoE.

Commissioner Hakim, based on a request by Medica Mondale, facilitated and moderated the second day of the 4-day conference on “The Elimination of Violence against Women and Reproductive Health”, at Serena on 4 December. Commissioners Soraya Sobhrang and Hangama Anwari were also key speakers at this conference.

Commissioner Hakim facilitated a one-day workshop for SCA international staff in Kabul on “Civilians’ Rights and Human Rights Provisions in the Afghan Constitution” on 25 October. A power point presentation was shared with the SCA Staff. Commissioner Hakim visited the Technical Unit for Human Rights in the Danish Foreign Ministry in Kabul on (11 November 2007). The main talking points were on challenges facing the AIHRC and possible ways for the international community to support the AIHRC by exerting required political pressure to the Afghan Government to fulfill its national and international human rights obligations.

During the past year, Commissioner Hangama Anwari had numerous advocacy initiatives. In partnership with UNAMA and MoLSAMD, she initiated a research project, “The Protection of Children against Child Trafficking”, which will be carried out jointly. With the European Union (EU) representative, she discussed “The Current Problems of all Orphanage Centres in Afghanistan”, which resulted in EU considering this in their priority to fund the MoLSAMD for the improvement of the Orphanages. Commissioner Anwari worked closely with MoLSAMD on finalizing the

strategy of children with disabilities. The strategy was officially submitted to MoLSAMD for adoption and implementation. She also cooperated with MoLSAMD on finding a durable solution to the problem of children living with mothers in female prisons. In this regards, a draft MoU between MoLSAMD and MoJ was prepared and the negotiations in terms of division of responsibilities between both ministries was on going at the time of preparing this report.

For the protection of children arrested and imprisoned, in Iran, in relation to drug trafficking, Commissioner Anwari was extensively involved in preparing and submitting a report on the situation of these children to MoLSAMD, MoFA, UNICEF and other involved organizations. As a result of meetings and follow up with UNICEF, the reports and list of arrested children were recently submitted to UNICEF in Iran for monitoring and follow up.

Commissioner Anwari met with Save the Children Sweden-Norway (SCSN) on the possibility of funding some of CRU projects. The SCSN showed interest in the proposed projects on 'the protection of intellectually challenged children, creating a safe environment for children, and hiring a technical advisor for the CRU). An agreement was signed between SCSN and the commission (November 2007) for SCSN to support hiring a consultant to build the capacity of CRU, to provide technical support to CRFM Project and to CRC reporting process. Commissioner Anwari, as a member of the Civil Society Network on CRC reporting, worked with the civil society representatives, in cooperation with SCSN technical advisor, to build the capacity of civil society organizations in reporting on CRC.

Commissioner Anwari continued to co-chair the meetings of the Technical Advisory Group on Women and Children (TAG) under the structure of ANDS during the year, with focus on the implementation of indicators of providing legal protection for women and children in Afghanistan. Major issues discussed and followed up were the review of the justice sector strategy, situation of children in female prisons, and new legislations including prison regulations, legal awareness, and legal aid.

Commissioner Anwari through regular weekly meetings with representatives of UNICEF and UNODC on promoting children's rights designed the child right border monitoring program with the support from UNICEF and finalized a project on monitoring children situation in boarder areas by hiring 4 Border Based Child Right Monitors in borders with Iran and Pakistan to monitor the situation of children. The project will be start from in January 2008.

Commissioner Soraya Sobhrang's advocacy efforts, in partnership with the Members of Parliament, civil society organizations, Right and Democracy, due to several lobbying with Supreme Court, resulted in a new Marriage Certificate (Nikah Nama) which was prepared and approved by Supreme Court. The Marriage Certificate is to serve as a means to reduce the violence against women in the family and protect the women's rights in accordance with the human rights principles.

Commissioner Soraya Sobhrang regularly attended the Coordination Committee<sup>9</sup> meetings on issues related to women's shelters. A protocol on facilitating the women in crisis to safe shelters, in cooperation with the Ministry of Women Affairs, was prepared and signed. As a result 20 women's cases were investigated, and the committee members continued working on the second coordinated protocol regarding the protection of women's rights with the law enforcement agencies. In cooperation with the UNIFEM, Commissioner Sobhrang initiated a project, "Gender and Violence Issues in Afghanistan". An MoU was signed between the AIHRC and UNIFEM; the data on violence against women will be collected nation-wide and the report will be jointly released in a press conference in 2008.

Commissioner Sobhrang contributed to the negotiations of the Working Group<sup>10</sup> on the "Juvenile Offenders Law", which was sent by the Parliament to President Karzia for endorsement. The law needed revision from the human rights perspectives. As a result of the Working Group's efforts, the law was returned to the Parliament for revision. As a member of the Report Writing Group<sup>11</sup>, Commissioner Sobhrang met with the United Nations Chief Representative on Treaty Reports in relation to the Afghanistan treaty reports, which would be prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) Human Rights Office.

Commissioner Nadery carried out a series of advocacy efforts on the implementation of the Action Plan for Peace Justice and Reconciliation. His international lobbying both in the United States and Europe resulted in international attention and support to the implementation of the action plan. He lobbied the United Nations Security Council for endorsement of the Action plan that resulted in a reference in item 18 of Resolution Number 1747 adopted on 23 March 2007.

On the third week of March 2007, Mr. Nadery conducted series of advocacy and lobbying at the US State Department and Congress. He meet with assistant to Under Secretary of State on South Asia and Afghanistan Desk Officer and Director of Afghanistan Disk at the National Security Council to lobby them in support of the Action Plan for Peace, Justice and Reconciliation. He also briefed a number of congressmen and women and their staffers on the amnesty law and encouraged them to speak against it. He also brought to their attention the potential set backs on the media law and freedom of press and sought their support for a decent media law in Afghanistan.

The core group on Transitional Justice was an important vehicle for Commissioner Nadery to lobby both the Government of Afghanistan and international community on proper implementation of the action plan and to keep the transitional justice agenda in Afghanistan alive at the table of both the Government of Afghanistan and international actors.

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<sup>9</sup> Coordination Committee members are from the Ministry of Women's Affairs, AIHRC, civil society organizations and NGOs.

<sup>10</sup> Working Group: Ministry of Women's Affairs, Family court, AIHRC, Parliament Women's Group, and civil society organizations

<sup>11</sup> Report Writing Group: Members are from AIHRC (Commissioner Soraya Sobhrang and Commissioner A. Farid Hamidy) and representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In his advocacy efforts for media law, he encouraged media organizations for consistent lobbying of the Parliaments. He met with the Speaker of the Lower House in order to provide him with the view of the Commission and to provide him with a one-page briefing note highlighting the parts of the media law that both the Commission and the civil society wanted to see unchanged with no restriction.

He also advocated for the commission's access to the Bagram detention facilities and lobbying the government of U.S both directly through face to face meetings with the US government's and military officials and through AIHRC's international partners. Commissioner Nadery had regular media briefing to national and international media and convenes numerous press conferences on important thematic reports for the wider advocacy efforts, throughout the year 2007.

Commissioner Ahmad Farid Hamidi and Commissioner Hakim had collaboration and advocacy initiatives with civil society institutions and parliamentarians. They actively lobbied for the Media Law to guarantee freedom of expression and free media. The Commission was very concerned about the amendments made by the Upper House in respect to the Media Law, which was in a very promising text as it was passed in the Lower House. Although Commissioners Hakim and Hamidi had various meetings and discussions with many Senators, who promised to pass the law with the same text as it was passed by the Lower House, the outcome did not seem very encouraging for the freedom of expression and operation of public media. Fortunately, the newly set up reconciliatory commission, formed from both Upper House and Lower House, promised to consider the concerns of the AIHRC, as many of these concerns are in support of the freedom of expression. In this respect the commissioners also had close consultation with the civil society organizations for joint efforts and advocacy for the Media Law.

Commissioner Ahmad Frid Hamidi met regularly with the Human Rights and Civil Society council of Wolosi-Jerga on issues concerning laws on the structure, duties and mandate of the commission in relation to the Afghanistan Constitution and Paris principles. He also met with the Free & Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan (FEFA), on the Afghanistan election law in order to support a better law for election.

Commissioner Ahmad Farid Hamidi worked closely with the recently established Special Investigation Team, and supervised the designing of a new database for monitoring the situation of Afghan civilians affected by the armed conflict. He called on all parties to fully comply with the international humanitarian law in a press release.

Commissioner Hamidi was interviewed by various national and international media groups, on the AIHRC mandate and human rights events in the country during 2007. Commissioner Hamidi, as a member of the Special Consultancy Board of President Karzia for the Recruitment of High Ranking Government Positions, attended all the board meetings in the past year.

Commissioners Mawlawi Gharib and Fahim Hakim met with tribal leaders and community elders at UNAMA office in Kandahar on the protection of civilians in armed conflicts (22 May 2007). Meanwhile, both Commissioners visited the AIHRC staff in the Kandahar office, highlighting the growing challenges facing the

Commission, which required effectiveness and efficiency on the staff part to deliver services and assistance to needy Afghans.

### **The AIHRC Legal Advisor**

During the year 2007, the AIHRC Legal Advisor provided legal advice to both the governing body and staff members of the Commission. He prepared 54 Contracts for the Commission for services with civil society originations and private sectors. He worked with the Human Rights and Law Reform Sub-Working Group of ANDS led by the Ministry of Justice. The following laws and regulations were scrutinized by the Legislation Committee. The Legal Advisor made recommendation regarding human rights principles and presented to them to the committee members:

- Law of Public Health
- Law of Private Companies
- Law of Private Limited Companies
- Law of labour
- Law of Drugs and Pharmacies
- Law of Business Arbitration and Mediation
- Law of Forensic Medicine
- Law of Extradition of Convicted and Suspects
- Law of counter terrorism
- Law of Detainees, imprisons and arrestees
- Law of Election
- Law of the rights and privileges of martyrs, missing persons and the people with disabilities
- Regulation of Private Medical Laboratories
- Regulation of government compensation ( AKRAMYA) for victims of suicide bomb attacks,
- Regulation of vehicles registration
- Regulation of residential complexes

The Legal Advisor worked on the Criminal Procedures Law, which is under process and will be presented to the committee members in 2008. Likewise, he worked on the drafting of Law on the Elimination of Violence against Women, which is under process in the MoJ relevant departments. He also worked with MoJ on the first draft of President Karzai's Decree for the amnesty or reduced sentence of detainees and prisoners on the occasion of Fifteenth Anniversary of the Islamic Revolution of Afghanistan.

The legal Advisor participated in a meeting of the Criminal Laws *Securitization* Committee on the discussion of the Afghanistan Anti Terrorism Law. The Committee did not agree on the draft of two laws. Therefore, the commission took the responsibility to prepare a draft, taking into consideration the contests of both laws and presented to the committee (June 2007). He also participated actively in a conference and contributed to the revision of the ANDS working Strategy for the Ministry of Justice, Supreme Court, and Attorney General's Office. The working Strategies were revised, and presented in a Conference in Italy.

Based on an agreement signed between the AIHRC and International Development Law Organization (IDLO), the Legal advisor collaborated in the preparation of a Manual on Legal Expression (Glossary on Human Rights and International Law) which includes 600 terminologies of human rights and international laws for the Justice Sector of Afghanistan Government. The IDLO published the manual and officially released it in mid December 2007.

The Legal adviser actively participated in a meeting held by National Democracy Institute (NDI) in order to strengthen the working relationship between the Parliament, AIHRC and CSOs focusing on the awareness-raising of Members of Parliament on the work of the AIHRC and SCOs. At this meeting, the Legal Adviser presented the legal status, objectives and activities of AIHRC to the Members of Parliament. The woman's rights committee of Parliament gained knowledge on the AIHRC mandate and activities.

### **The AIHRC Resource Centres**

During 2007, the AIHRC Resource Centre expanded to all its regional and provincial offices. The AIHRC has 11 resource centres across the country, all which have the same books and technical equipment. The AIHRC bought for each of its resource centres 317 books (Dari and Pashto) on various subjects and equipped them with new IT to cater for the needs of all AIHRC units and to facilitate the provision of soft and hard materials for training workshops. In addition, a total of 2,541 books of various titles on law, justice and general information were distributed to the AIHRC regional resource centres in Bamyan, Herat, Kabul, Nengarhar and Mazar.

During the year, the AIHRC resource centres served a total of 1, 392 visitors nationwide and their registers show that tribal leaders, mullahs and scholars, besides the general public visited these Centres. The Resource Centres copied 603 CDs of Human Rights related films and distributed them to CSOs.

### **The Institutional Strengthening**

Three new commissioners were appointed to the AIHRC to ensure the smooth continuation of its mandates and the implementation of the AIHRC Three-Year Action Plan (2006-2008), while the reappointment of the remaining six commissioners is still a challenge for the Commission. The AIHRC Chairperson, Dr. Sima Samar, discussed this issue with President Karzia; however, no decision has been made yet on the reconfirmation of commissioners.

AIHRC Commissioners and the Executive Director undertook several field visits in the AIHRC satellite offices for the purpose building capacity and evaluations. Commissioner Ahmad Zia Langari and Abdul Karim Azizi had two missions to Kunduz to assess organizational needs of the staff focusing on the understanding and the implementation of the AIHRC Action Plan, assessing the present capacity of the staff and making suggestion for further improvement. They briefed the staff on planning, management and reporting. Likewise, Commissioners Azizi, Langari and Mawlawi Gharib had a mission to Badakhshan to assess the mass graves in that province and the Executive Director, Dr. Hussein Ramoz, visited Bamyan, Gardiz, Herat and Kandahar regional offices.



Commissioner Hakim visited Kunduz and Mazar satellite offices (April 2007). One of the objectives of the trip was to elaborate on the Parliament's political act and the already approved action plan on transitional justice by the Afghan Government, namely, "Peace, Justice, and Reconciliation". Another purpose of the visit to Mazar satellite office was to express the AIHRC leadership's support to the AIHRC staff in Mazar because of the explosion in the front gate of their office, which fortunately caused no casualties except for some minor damage to the building.

Commissioner Hakim closely worked with HREU in evaluation HREU regional and provincial offices. He provided back up materials and instructed HREU for the publications of human rights calendar and international human rights conventions to be ready for celebration of relevant human rights days. Meanwhile, Commissioner Hakim supervised the plans for the celebration of various human rights days, such as the International Tolerance Day, International Day of Elimination of Violence against Women, and Universal Human Rights Day, in addition to the regular supervision of the work of the PMU through out the year.

For improving the monitoring and protection efforts for children, Commissioner Hangama Anwari worked on the standardization of CRU monitoring system. During the past year, an extensive monitoring questionnaire form was prepared for effective monitoring of children in juvenile centres (correctional facilities and police detention centers); the form was finalized by technical support from UNICEF and UNODC, a special database was established to properly record the situation of children in the correctional facilities and to track follow ups. Two new databases were developed for recording the information gathered from DMF and CRFM which are operational in all AIHRC regional and provincial offices.

To strengthen the Commission institutionally, a new Media and Publication Officer was appointed. Two consultants, one appointed and one seconded by SCSN joined the AIHRC in 2007. The commission recruited a Donor Relations and Reporting Consultant to build capacity of AIHRC staff on reporting and donor relations tasks and to ensure an efficient liaison with the donor community. SCSN seconded a consultant to build capacity in CRU. Four special investigators were recruited for the head-quarter-based Special Investigating Team to address to the violations of international human rights and humanitarian law in the country. Four Human Rights Border Monitors (two men and two women) were recruited and deployed in Islam Qala and Zarange to monitor the Afghan deportee/returnee. In total, the Commission processed 83 new recruits, 28 resignations, 14 transfers, and 5 promotions throughout the year.

As for AIHRC physical plants, the construction of the new buildings in Gardez, Herat and Kunduz provinces were completed and these satellite offices were moved to the new buildings. At the beginning of this year, the AIHRC purchased an x-ray body search facility and 12 CCTV cameras for the improvement in security system of AIHRC Headquarters.

To strengthen the daily operations, the AIHRC bought a total of 23 new desktop computers, 14 laptop computers, 18 digital cameras, 32 digital video players, 40 minidisks, 15 Scanners, 6 internet switches, 13 air-conditioning units and one

motorbike. For improvement in the transportation system, the AIHRC purchased five new vehicles and the German development service, DED, donated a vehicle;

The AIHRC website was upgraded and the new website was launched at the beginning of 2007. The website was improved by creating a publication page with new features-- such as the human rights victim's stories and the human rights monthly magazines-- and upload video clips and by updating its Dari, Pashto and English sections. During the year 3,180,884 people visited the AIHRC website.

As for upgrading the Commission's information technology, the AIHRC completed the installation of a new networking system in the AIHRC new offices in Gardez, Herat and Kunduz provinces. Improvements were made in the internet speed in the AIHRC Headquarters and regional offices of Badakhshan Bamiyan, Gardez, Kabul, Nengarhar, Kandahar and Mazar-e-Sharif and the installation of repeaters in Badakhshan, Bamiyan, Daikundi, Faryab, Gardez, Herat, Kunduz, Mazar-e-Sharif and Nengarhar completed.

The AIHRC for better promotion, protection and monitoring of human rights in the rural areas of the country, established a new provincial office in Ghor, which was officially opened in July 2007. At the time of reporting, a total of 13 staff members including one female, Women Rights Officer, were working at the AIHRC Ghor provincial office.

### **Loss**

Sadly in a car accident, Mr. Shah Mahmood, the AIHRC's driver in the Bamiyan Regional Office, was killed in a car accident when his vehicle turned over in the Behsood District of Maidan Wardak province. The commission transported his body with full respect to his family who live in Quetta, Pakistan. Also in this accident three other staff members of the AIHRC Bamiyan regional office were injured, fortunately recovered soon.

### **Publications**

During the year 2007, the AIHRC published the following materials:

#### **International documents:**

- Child Rights Conventions,(30,000 copies)
- Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Woman (30,000 copies)
- Convention on the Elimination of Torture (30,000 copies)
- International Convention on the Elimination of all kind forms of Racial Discrimination (33,000 copies)
- International Convention on Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (33,000 copies)
- International covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (30,000 copies)
- Optional protocol on child right convention( 33,000 copies)

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (30,000 copies)
- Universal Declaration of Child Rights (33,000 copies)

#### **Reports/books:**

- Assessment Report on Situation of Children in Afghanistan ( 1000 copies)
- Child Labour Report (1,000 copies)
- Child Rights Education Handbook (2,100 copies)
- Dood wa Atash (5000 copies)
- Economic, Social, Cultural Rights II (300 copies)
- Forced Marriage, posters (10,000 copies)
- Handbook on Child Rights for a three-day workshop (5,000 copies)
- Law of Commissions and the Constitution of Afghanistan(10,000 copies)
- Manual on the Improvement of Prison Standards (1,000 copies)
- Mozhda Photo Book for Children (20,000 copies)
- New Afghan Constitution in Pashto (3,000)
- Report on Self-Immolations among Women in South-West Afghanistan, (3,000 copies)
- The AIHRC 2006 Annual Report (1,000 copies)
- The Human Rights Situation report, in Dari and Pashto (1,000 copies)
- The AIHRC Annual Report 2006, in Dari and Pashto (1,500 copies)
- Victims of Torture: A Research Book, (1,000 copies)
- Visual book on Child Rights (20,000 copies)

#### **Magazine:**

- Monthly AIHRC Magazine (153,000 of three issues)

#### **Posters and brochures:**

- AIHRC staff business cards (500 copies)
- A poster on Characteristics of Good Teacher (10,000 copies)
- A poster on the Characteristics of a Good Manager (10,000 copies)
- A brochure of Right to Education (10,000 copies)
- Brochure on Child Sexual Abuse (7,000 copies)
- Brochure on the Right to Education (10,000 copies)
- Brochure on PWDs Day (8000 copies)
- Invitation cards for the opening and closing (1,000 copies each) , brochures (1,000 copies) and posters (1,000 copies)The second International Documentary and Short Films Festival in Kabul:
- Poster on Criteria of Good Teacher (6,000 copies)
- Poster on Criteria of Good Manager (6,000 copies)
- Poster on International Tolerance Day (10,000 copies)
- Poster on PWDs Day 3 December (8000 copies)
- The AIHRC official pad (20,000 copies)

The contribution of the translating board, during the reporting period, consists of translating various documents from English to Dari or vice versa of 1,355 pages. The translators also provided interpreting services during workshops and conferences.

## Construction work

During the past year, the physical construction of the AIHRC regional offices across the country have progressed by 60 percent in Bamyan and 100 per cent in Kandahar which will be opened in the near future. The Herat, Kunduz and Gardez offices have already been inaugurated. The preliminaries for the construction of Kabul office building reached to an ending point and the actual construction will start in 2008. The Mazar Regional Office received a plot of land for its office building. Likewise, Daikondi and Ghor provincial offices received plots of land for offices and their documents are under process.

In Bamyan, the plastering of the basement has been completed. The electric and water system has progressed by 50 percent. The first floor of the building progressed, concrete 99 percent, walls 90 percent and the electric and water system progressed by 30 percent. The weather condition is a challenge in the construction activities of Bamyan regional office during the five months of the winter.

## Human Rights Monuments:

The Commission in partnership with the civil society and the general public initiated the construction of two monuments:

1. The Monument in Remembrance of Past Human Rights Violation in Badakhshan Province. The local people donated a plot of land adjacent to the mass grave for building a monument.
2. The Monument in Remembrance of Victims of Human Rights Violations in Herat on 24 Hout 1357 (1979). The AIHRC has contacted a well known Afghan artist, Amanullah Haiderzad, to design a monument for the victims of 24 Hout in Herat, for which a piece of land is already allocated by Herat Municipality, in the city.

The Commission renovated the Clock Tower of the Kabul Medial University which was inaugurated on 10 December 2007.



### **AIHRC Project Results and Resource Framework for Year 2007**

***Intended Outcomes***

1. Functioning of the AIHRC improved through institutional strengthening and AIHRC capacities fully developed in all programme areas. 2. Public awareness increased on human rights and full support of human rights by governmental authorities and civil society 3. The human rights of all Afghans are better protected. 4. Human rights situation assessed and analysed through regular monitoring and human rights violations, and more specifically on detention centres standards at the national level. Ability to illustrate trends and changes by this comprehensive body.

***Outcome Indicators***

Human rights increasingly incorporated in formal education and training in government agencies, particularly the judicial and security sectors. Increasingly accurate media coverage of women and child rights issues. Government ministries and departments increasingly establish and support human rights units or staff persons. Increased incidence of mullah speaking and acting in support of human rights principles. All data from complaints received through monitoring of Prisons, Detention Centres (DC) and Child Correction Centres (CCC) nationally for minimum standards and for violations of rights of prisoners and detainees are into place in a database with regular reports. Establishment and strengthening of laws to protect human rights in Afghanistan. Laws increasingly applied by police and courts. A reduction in the number of violations by government officials. Publishing of national human rights situation reports, increase in number of cases resolved, formalisation of procedures and increased efficiency.

***Partnership Strategy:*** UNAMA, UNHCR, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, Attorney General's office, civil society organisations, education and science academia, media, AREU, UNIFEM, Global Rights, Save the Children Sweden Norway, Equal Access, American University of Afghanistan

***Project Title:*** Project in Support of the Three-Year Action Plan (2006-2008) of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission

<b>Intended Outputs for 2007 (Re: Outcome 1: Institutional Strengthening)</b>	<b>Year 2007 Outputs ( related to Outcome 1)</b>	<b>Indicative Activities</b>
Outputs 1.1. Capacity of AIHRC staff is strengthened. Construction activities in AIHRC satellite offices progressed. AIHRC staff is provided with better transportation means to conduct field missions.	Capacity of AIHRC staff from 8 regional and 4 provincial offices built on communication and reporting as well as conflict resolution and mediation; the capacity of 13 AIHRC staff is raised through workshops and courses abroad, 83 staff members recruited; construction activities Kunduz, Gardiz and Herat buildings completed and progressed by 100% in Kandahar, 60% in Bamyan.	Workshops conducted in Kabul , training provided to AIHRC staff in Afghanistan and abroad
<b>Intended Outputs for 2007 (Re: Outcome 2: PROMOTION)</b>	<b>Year 2007 Outputs ( related to Outcome 2)</b>	<b>Indicative Activities &amp; Programme Units responsible for activities.</b>
Outputs 2.1 Minimum of 16,000 people (40% women) per year or 4,000 people (including decision makers) per quarter receive information about and discuss UDHR principles	24,472 people (7,219 women, including mullahs, ANA, ANP, teachers and students, made aware of UDHR principles, the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), conflict resolution, human rights violation, forced marriages and its results, and the Convention on Torture and its principles, and their relevance to Afghanistan through 257 workshops and 572 awareness-raising meetings. 2,947minutes of TV and 10,752 minutes of radio broadcast on a variety of human rights issues including past human rights abuses, women's rights according to the principles of human rights and Islam, Justice for Children, the international day of the Child and AIHRC duties and responsibilities, the tradition of <i>Bad</i> from the prospective of Islam and torture.	Afghans participating in UDHR promotion activities, public broadcasts prepared and aired from 15 provincial centres and one national TV network ( <b>Human Rights Education Unit -HREU</b> ).

<p>Outputs 2.2 8,800 people (50% women) and 2,200 people per quarter (including mullah, elders and officials) informed of women's rights in Islam and VAW; awareness raised among the Afghans on women's condition in Afghanistan</p>	<p>Women's rights in Islam and CEDAW, and VAW issues and existence and purpose of AIHRC was taught to 19,760 people (6,383 men), including mullahs, elders, government officials through 142 workshops and 453 awareness-raising meetings.</p>	<p><b>(Women's Rights Unit - WRU)</b></p>
<p>Outputs 2.3 8,800 people (50% women) and 2,200 people per quarter (including prosecutors, students and court officials), learn about child rights and the vulnerability of children in the Afghan society</p>	<p>Child Rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), child labour and its impact on Afghan children, and protection from child trafficking was taught to 11,424 people (4,686 women), including police, elders, prosecutors, court officials and students through 130 workshops and 277 awareness-raising meetings.</p>	<p>People participated in child rights promotion activities <b>(Child Rights Unit -CRU)</b>.</p>
<p>Outputs 2.4 Nationwide discussions and information provided on transitional justice and its relationship to human rights. Minimum 4,000 people reached each year.</p>	<p>10,171 people informed about the purpose and history of transitional justice, of the International Criminal Court (ICC), and <i>A Call for Justice Report</i>, Government action on Peace, Justice and Reconciliation, conflict mapping, Truth Seeking Commission (2,858 women), including civil society, governmental staff, religious scholars and community elders, through 49 workshops and 342 awareness-raising meetings around the country.</p>	<p>Meetings held around the country with civil society to raise awareness on Transitional Justice, <b>(Transitional Justice Unit – TJU)</b></p>
<p>Out put 2.5 2,000 people (40% women) and 500 people per quarter learn about the rights of people with disabilities</p>	<p>9,410 people (2,895 women) including community elders, government officials learned about rights of PWD, role of PWD in Society and responsibilities of the Government to support PWD through 54 workshops and 202 awareness-raising meetings.</p>	<p>Workshops and meetings, relevant publications and posters <b>(PWD)</b></p>

<b>Intended Outputs for 2007 (Re:Outcome 3: PROTECTION)</b>	<b>Year 2007 Outputs (Related to Outcome 3)</b>	<b>Indicative Activities &amp; Programme Units responsible for activities</b>
<p>Outputs 3.1 Prison authorities informed of failures to uphold the Minimum Standards in prisons.</p> <p>Improvements in standards of prisons and detention centres, child correctional centres and other government institutions (hospitals, orphanages, etc).</p>	<p>Improved standards of men's prisons in Bamiyan Faryab, Jawzjan, Kunduz, Kandahar, Logar, Nimroz, Nengarhar, Parwan, Sar-e-Pul and Takhar and detention centres in Daikundi, Herat, Nengarhar, and Noorstan Improved standards of women's prisons in Balkh, Badakhshan, Bamiyan, Herat, Kandahar, Kunduz ,Kabul Laghman, Nengarhar,. Improved Standards of Child Correction centres in Balkh Baghlan, Gardiz, Jawzjan, Kunduz, Kandahar, Sar-e-Pul and Samangan.</p>	<p>Interventions and meetings with authorities to address violations and the role of Government/prison authorities. <b>(M&amp;IU supported by CRU and WRU)</b></p>
<p>Outputs 3.2 Investigations initiated into all verified complaints of human rights violations. All cases opened for investigation should be investigated within one month of being opened. Within 6 months of being opened, a min. 30% of cases should be closed after finding effective remedy.</p>	<p>904 complaints investigated of the 1,079complaints (involving 1,561 violations and abuses) received and 458 cases resolved. 127 family disputes including VAW mediated, with feedback indicating resolution or improvement in the situation.651 women received legal advice. Secured release of 126 illegally detained (114 men and 12 woman), 87 illegally imprisoned (84 men and 3 women) and 130 illegally arrested (126 men and 4 women). Secured release of 101illegally detained children (83 boys and 18 girls) in prisons, child correctional centres and detention centres.</p>	<p>Interventions with authorities to address violations and the role of the Government / local authorities in providing effective remedy. <b>(M&amp;IU, WRU, CRU)</b>. Complaints/Case Forms filled out and legal advice recorded. <b>(M&amp;IU)</b>. Mediation and facilitation to address family disputes and problems of violence and abuse. <b>(WRU)</b></p>
<b>Intended Outputs for 2007 (Re:Outcome 4: MONITORING)</b>	<b>Year 2007 Outputs (Related to Outcome 4)</b>	<b>Indicative Activities &amp; Programme Units responsible for activities</b>
<p>Output 4.1 11 hospitals monitored at the regional level for VAW. Orphanages monitored for conditions and signs of abuse.</p>	<p>30 hospitals in 30 provinces monitored for VAW. 48 Orphanages monitored for conditions and signs and abuse.</p>	<p>Monitoring hospitals and orphanages <b>(WRU &amp; CRU)</b></p>



<p>Outputs 4.2 All women's prisons and all Child Correctional Centres (CCC) monitored. All male prisons and detention centres approached for monitoring.</p>	<p>15 Women's prisons in 30 provinces monitored according to UN Minimum Standard Rules for Treatment of Prisoners (Minimum Standards). 28 Child Correction Centres monitored. 1,079 monitoring missions conducted in prisons and detention centres in 30 provinces.</p>	<p>Monitoring of CCCs, DCs and prisons for adherence to Minimum Standards and for violations. Reporting incidents of violations. <b>(WRU, CRU, M&amp;IU)</b></p>
<p>Outputs 4.3 400 interviews (100 interviews per quarter) are conducted each year and evidence collected nationwide of past human rights abuses in Afghanistan, for conflict mapping exercise (identification, recording and documentation of cases of past human rights abuses)</p>	<p>Recorded data of past human rights violations and abuses pertaining to transitional justice, 4,507 including (905 women) victims, eyewitnesses and clergies interviewed.</p>	<p>Interviews undertaken to identify incidents of past human rights violations. Complaints/Case forms completed for entry to database. <b>(TJU)</b></p>

## Finance

The AIHRC had planned a core budget of US\$ 8,739,595 to implement the activities planned for the year 2007 towards achieving the objectives set in its Action Plan. The commission was successful in carrying out its activities, despite the challenges caused by the deteriorating security situation in the country.

At the closing of the second quarter or at mid year of 2007, the commission spent 42 percent of its core budget approximating closely its set goals and at the end of the year was able to spend the amount of USD 7,54,9086. Of the remaining balance of USD 1,788,971 the amount available was USD1, 380,305 as the amount USD 408,665 has not yet been released by UNDP. The Commission is not sure to receive its funds from UNDP next year.

The financial summary on tables below shows the expenditure of funds for the project over the year 2007.

### **Annual Financial Report** Period covered from 1 January to December 31, 2007

Activity ID	Total Budget for 2007	Accumulated Exp O/B	Expenditure for the Period	Accumulated exp for the period	Remaining Balance
101 Women Rights	424,867	270,894	153,665	424,559	308
102 Child Rights	383,188	237,043	142,502	379,545	3,643
103 Human Rights Education	573,582	374,395	198,583	572,979	603
104 Monitoring & Investigation	410,792	303,117	107,168	410,285	507
105 Field Monitoring	308,507	139,295	146,467	285,762	22,745
106 Transitional Justice	377,630	256,347	120,011	376,358	1,272
107 Research and Policy	58,588	42,376	11,421	53,797	4,791
108 Media and Publication	917,683	371,428	228,189	599,618	318,065
109 Disabled People Rights	167,932	107,974	74,695	182,669	(14,737)
110 Reporting	76,900	53,460	19,033	72,493	4,407
111 Resource Centre	91,738	72,686	13,944	86,629	5,109
112 Data Base	32,573	22,302	6,151	28,453	4,120
113 Running cost	2,895,515	2,214,745	584,458	2,799,203	96,312
114 Governance cost	320,100	250,100	59,845	309,945	10,155
115 Construction New Building	1,700,000	650,106	316,684.66	966,791	733,209
<b>Total:</b>	<b>8,739,595</b>	<b>5,366,268</b>	<b>2,182,818</b>	<b>7,549,086</b>	<b>1,190,509</b>

Donor	Total Fund Received for 2007	Accumulated Exp O/B	Expenditure for the Period	Accumulated exp for the Period	Remaining Balance
1002 CANADA	2,211	-		-	2,211
1003 Denmark	1,107,577	392,049	459,885	851,934	255,643
1004 Finland	1,243,818	708,680	500,000	1,208,680	35,138
1005 Norway	537,360	262,534		262,534	274,826
1006 New-Zealand	1,000,235	610,834	299,144	909,978	90,257
1007 United Kingdom	512,058	200,000	100,000	300,000	212,058
1008 USAID (Construction)	1,150,984	650,106	316,685	966,791	184,193
1008 USAID (Salaries)	1,444,734	1,444,734		1,444,734	0
1009 OHCHR	-	-		-	0
1010 Govt. of Afghanistan	-	-		-	0
1011 SDC- Switzerland	937,307	287,331	400,000	687,331	249,976
1012 Irish Aid	101,724	60,000		60,000	41,724
1013 SCA	-	-		-	0
1014 Netherland	500,000	500,000		500,000	0
1015 Australia	780,800	250,000	87,856	337,856	442,944
1016 DED Afghanistan	3,600	-	3,600	3,600	0
5000 AIHRC Income	15,649	-	15,649	15,649	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>9,338,056.09</b>	<b>5,366,268</b>	<b>2,182,818</b>	<b>7,549,086</b>	<b>1,788,970</b>

The core budget for 2007 does not include the contribution of USD 916,049 for other projects that the commission carried out in relation to its mandate. See table below:

**AIHRC Other Project Funding Status for the Year 2007**

	1	2	3 (1-2)
Donor	Balance from 2006 and Total Fund received in 2007	Total Expenditure in 2007	Balance from 2007
200 UNHCR	499,491	499,489	2.27
300 SCS-N	48,003	6,015	41,988
400 ADSI	613 <sup>12</sup>	-	613
500 UNIFEM	2,477	2,477	-
600 Global Rights	3,363	3,355	8
700 Netherlands	3,000	3,000	-
800 AREU	20,344	18,615	1,729
900 Equal Access	29,740	29,740	-
1000 NINCEF	280,668	212,956	67,712
1100 SCA	6,513	7,403	(890) <sup>13</sup>
1200 DED	21,837	21,837	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>916,049</b>	<b>804,887</b>	<b>111,162</b>

<sup>12</sup> ADSI has not sent the 20 percent of contribution to the Gardez office construction and this amount is too small to pay.

<sup>13</sup> SCA will send this payment to the commission.

The budget for the year 2008 is planned at the amount of USD 10,000,000 and the AIHRC may revise its budget after the mid-year evaluation of its activities towards achieving its mandate. At present, the available funds for the year 2008, is the remaining balance of USD1,788,971 plus the remaining pledged funds of USD 7,161,362 bring the total funds to USD 9,686,632.

Experience shows that the expenses of the commission for its planned activities are about USD 2,500,000 per quarter. The AIHRC appreciates receiving the pledged funds on time to be able to achieve its mandate overcoming various unforeseen challenges. For example, the commission received a check in the amount of Canadian dollars 500,000 (November 2007) as the first installment of the Canadian dollars 7,000,000 contribution to the Commission's budget; however, the AIHRC Charter Bank could not clear/convert the funds into US Dollars and the check was returned to CIDA/Canada.

## Challenges

Insecurity in Afghanistan was the most important challenge faced during the last year and presented a threat to the planned implementation of activities. The deteriorating situation in the country, especially in the South, hampered the number of monitoring missions to be conducted by AIHRC Monitors. The Commission recognizes the commitment and devotion of its staff, which continues to work in these tough security conditions to improve the human rights situation in Afghanistan.

Another source of concern for the Commission is the lack of commitment demonstrated by the Government towards the promotion, protection and monitoring of human rights. The Ministry of Finance has not yet approved the budget to the commission. The Government promised to fund the commission but it did not take enough measures to fulfil its commitment.

The challenges are not only due to the physical environment, which has a direct impact to the work of the Commission, but also due to the way the Legislature, Executive, and judicial branches of the Government cooperate with the AIHRC. For an example, the unconstitutional decision of the Lower House to have vote of confidence for the Head of the AIHRC, which was unanimously passed in the Lower House of Woolesi Jerga. This has a direct impact on day-to-day performance of the Commission. The AIHRC had to initiate various contacts and advocacy with diplomatic missions and the President's office. President Karzai supports the independent mandate of the AIHRC and his office accordingly had a press conference rejecting the decision of the members of the Parliament.

The new amendment in the Media Law by the Upper House is not favouring the free and public media and freedom of expression. The AIHRC has already had many consultations with civil society institutions and media groups and accordingly arranged some meetings with members of the Reconciliatory Commission formed between Lower House and Upper House. The AIHRC is advocating to have the Media Law passed in the same text as approved by the Lower House, which was the result of tremendous advocacy and consultation of the AIHRC with various Members of Parliament and media experts.

Increase in the number of civilian casualties by the international and NATO forces, particularly after the press conference of the AIHRC in March 2007, created further challenges for the AIHRC. The Commission established a Rapid Response Team to observe the implementation of the International Humanitarian law by international and NATO forces.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the Project to Support Three-Year Action Plan (2006-2008) of Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission progressed well during the past year despite the numerous challenges faced by the Commission. The 2007 witnessed great achievements in the promotion, protecting and monitoring of human rights in Afghanistan. The Commission informed thousands of people on human rights concepts, monitored and resolved cases of human rights abuses, and truly made a difference in the daily lives of the Afghan people.

A significant number of monitoring missions and human rights related workshops were conducted throughout the year. Human rights were promoted through the production of films, documentaries and human rights related material broadcast on radios and T.V. channels, as well as the publication and distribution of a monthly human rights magazine and human rights documents such as brochures, books, reports, conventions and posters.

Although the commission faced many challenges, the implementation of activities related to the Commission's three-year action plan 2006-2008 made a positive progress throughout the past year. The AIHRC is constantly concerned with strengthening and improving itself, this is why its Senior Management initiated a series of visits to the regional and provincial offices to assess organizational needs of the staff focusing on the understanding and implementation of the AIHRC Action Plan, assessing the present capacity of the staff and making suggestion for further improvement.

The Commission ended 2007 stronger institutionally, with the appointment of the three new commissioners. In addition, achievements consisted in a significant number of capacity-building opportunities, as well as the establishment of a new Headquarters-based Team of four special investigators to strengthen the M&IU. Two of the investigators received high-level international training, and they all work under the guidance of an international expert/consultant and report to the Commissioner responsible for the Monitoring and Investigations Unit.

AIHRC wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the financial support provided by Denmark, USAID, the Netherlands, Ireland, Switzerland (SDC), Finland, Norway, Great-Britain, New Zealand, Australia, Save the Children Sweden/Norway, AREU, Equal Access, UNHCR, OHCHR and UNIFEM, and the technical support provided by the United Nations, more specifically, UNHCR and UNAMA/OHCHR.

In the future, the AIHRC hopes to overcome security challenges and continue its close collaboration with Government and people of Afghanistan and its donors and partners, whose financial and technical support has been instrumental in the success of the Commission so far.

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## Annex I

*The participation of AIHRC staff in training and conferences carried out abroad is listed below:*

- Mr. Nadir Kohzad, AIHRC Database Management Officer attended a Microsoft Training Program organized by OHCHR in India (16 – 25 April 2007)
- Mr. Musa Sultani, Bamyan Regional Office Manager attended a training workshop on "Gender and Development" organized by the Korean Women Development Institute in South Korea (26 – 27 April 2007)
- Mr. Nadir Kohzad, AIHRC Database Management Officer attended an IT Training Course organized by OHCHR in Geneva (8 – 11 May 2007)
- Mr. Ibrahim Hussaini, AIHRC Database Management Assistant attended a Microsoft Training Program organized by OHCHR in India (21 – 30 May 2007)
- Mr. Basir Thahery, AIHRC ICT Assistant attended an IT Training Course organized by OHCHR in India (11 – 20 June 2007)
- Mr. Najibullah Babrakzay, Kabul Regional Office Children Rights Officer attended a workshop on Children Rights in the UN Convention on the rights of people with disability organized by Save the Children Sweden-Denmark, in Bangladesh (26 – 28 June 2007)
- Mrs. Homa Sultani, Kabul Regional Office Women's Rights Officer, and Miss. Tahmina Kabul Regional Office Secretary, attended a training course on "Conflict Prevention" organized by the United Nation System Staff College in Kenya (16-20 July 2007)
- Commissioner Farid Hamidi and Mr. Hussain Ramoz, the AIHRC Executive Director, attended a workshop on "Using Indicators to Promote and Monitor the Implementation of Human Rights" organized by The National Human Rights of India in India (26-28 July 2007)
- Commissioner, Nader Nadery, studies for a masters degree in International Policy and Practice in George Washington University in the United States (September 2007).
- Mrs. Hawa Sadiqi, Daikundi Provincial Office Women's Rights Officer, attended a course on "Gender Livelihoods and Human Rights" in Nepal Organized by SANGAT (15 August - 15 September 2007)
- Mr. Sayeed Mohammad Sameh, Mazar Regional Office Manager and Mrs. Afifa, Field Monitoring Assistant in Kandahar Regional Office attended a Human Rights Training Course organized by The National Human Rights Centre of Korea in South Korea (3-7 September 2007)



- Mr. Farid Mutaqi, Transitional Justice Assistant in Mazar Regional Office, attended the Transitional Justice course, organized by Centre for International Development and Environmental Research in Germany (18 September 2007- 1 February 2008)
- Commissioner Farid Hamidi, participated in a workshop on the “Rule of Law, Policy Tools On Amnesties” organized by OHCHR in Geneva (25 - 29 September 2007)
- Mr. Ahmad Zia Langary, AIHRC Commissioner, Mr. Homayoon Formul AIHRC HR Officer, Mrs. Jamila Field Monitoring Assistant in Jalalabad Regional Office, and Mrs. Zarmina Women Rights Officer in Gardiz Regional Office, attended the National Inquiries workshop organized by Asia Pacific Forum APF in India (29 October – 1 November 2007)
- Mr. Nasrat, Special Investigation Team Officer and Mr. Mohammad Homayoon Special Investigation Team Assistant attended the Eight International Investigation Course, organized by Institute for International Criminal Investigation in Ireland (29 October – 9 November 2007)
- Mrs. Zakia Habibi, AIHRC Finance assistant and Mr. Nasrat National Field Monitoring Officer attended the "Role of National Human Rights Institutions in Human Rights Protection", organized by Raul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law in Bangkok –Thailand (19 – 28 November 2007)

## Annex II

International Relations and awareness-raising on human rights:

The AIHRC leadership and fellow commissioners attended various international and regional events and conferences as key contributors and speakers. The AIHRC is thankful to those organizations that hosted the events and extended an invitation to AIHRC. The international Conferences and events are highlighted below:

1. *International Conference on Women's Role in Civil Society*, organized by Asia Pacific Forum in Magnolia, January 2007.
2. *International Conference on Democracy and Gender in Traditional Societies* organized by Heinrich Boll Foundation (HBF) in Islamabad, Pakistan, February 2007.
3. *International Conference on Security and Development for Afghanistan* in Belgium, February 2007.
4. *International Conference on Peace, Justice, Rule of Law and Women's Role in Afghanistan Reconstruction*, in Italy, February 2007.
5. *International Conference on Women's Equality Summit and Congressional Action Day* organised by the National Council of Women's Organizations in Washington DC, USA, March 2007.
6. *International Conference on Peace and Conflict in south Asia*, organized by the Nelson Mandela Peace Centre at the Islamic College of New Delhi, India, March 2007.
7. *International Conference on Meeting the Challenges of counter- insurgency and Stabilisation Operations*, organized by The Wilton Park UK, March 2007.
8. *International Conference on Justice Rapid Response (JRR)*, March 2007.
9. *International conference on the Elimination of Violence against Women's Commission in Afghanistan*, organized by UNIFEM in the Philippine, March 2007.
10. *International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC)* in Geneva (the Nineteenth Session of the Annual Meeting), March 2007.
11. *International Conference on Justice and the Rule of Justice in Post Conflict Countries*, organized by SAARC People Summit in Delhi, April 2007.
12. *International Conference on Drafting the Family Law*, organized by Rights and Democracy and Sisters in Islam, Malaysia, April 2007.

13. *International Conference on the Role of Women Globally in Security Situation and Providing Security* organized by The Global Women Leaders, in USA, May 2007.
14. *International Conference on Democracy, a Universal Value*, organized by the Rights and Democracy (the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development) in Casablanca, Morocco, June 2007.
15. *International Conference on Memorialization and Democracy: State Policy and Civic Actions*, jointly organized by Latin America University for Social Science (FLACSO), International Coalition of Historic Site Museums of Conscience, and ICTJ, in Santiago, Chile, June 2007.
16. *International Conference on Norway at War – the Impact of Civil and Military Operations in Afghanistan and Kosovo/Serbia, with the objective of analyzing the transitional justice and the need of Norwegian soldiers in Afghanistan*, organized by the Nansen Academy, the Nansen Dialogue and the Norwegian Peace Centre in Lillehammer, Norway, August 2007.
17. *International Conference on Afghanistan Rehabilitation and Afghan Views* organized by CIDOB Foundation in co-operation with the Spain Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Barcelona, Spain, September 2007.
18. *The 12th Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Forum*, in Sydney, Australia, September 2007.
19. *International Conference, Gothenburg Book Fair*, organized by SCA, UNIFAM, Amnesty International, and IDEA in Gothenburg, Sweden, September-October 2007.
20. *International Conference on Roles of PRTs in Supporting Civil Society and Good Governance in Afghanistan* organized by International Toledo Centre (CITpax) in Madrid, Spain, October 2007.
21. *International Conference on Women’s Role in Peace Building*, organized by Peace Mothers in Belgium and France, October 2007.