

Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV)

Turkey

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Council

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About ODVV

1. The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) is a non-governmental, non-profit, non-partisan organization in Special Consultative Status to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). The ODVV was established in 1988 in Tehran and has been active in the field of human rights and humanitarian activities.

2. The ODVV is also associated to the United Nations Department of Public Information (UNDPI), a participatory of the NGOs Coalition for an International Court (based in New York), and national coordinator of the Global March Against Child Labour (based in New Delhi) which cooperated in a variety of issues with international organizations and has working relations with many NGOs in Iran and around the globe.

3. The ODVV is also a member of the International Organization against Small and Light Weapons, and the UN Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (CONGO), and the International Movement for a Just World (JUST), AMAN Network of Rehabilitation Centres in the Middle East and North Africa, International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT).

4. During the last 2 decades, we have done so many activities, mainly informative in regards with human rights and supportive in regards with the victims of violence. Various human rights education courses, workshops, seminars, conferences have been held or co-held by the ODVV for various sectors of society: civil society institutions and governmental organizations.

5. Other Activities:

- Participation in UN Commission on Human Rights annual sessions, and the new Human Rights Council sessions in Geneva. Written and oral statements on various items of the agenda are issued by the ODVV.
- Internship for foreign students
- Publication of different books and booklets on human rights such as Rights of the Child, Racism, Racial Discrimination and Xenophobia. Publication of Defenders Newsletter

(English), human rights news and developments bulletin (Farsi), Rights of the Child bulletin (Farsi)
- Daily electronic human rights newsletter in English and Farsi

Background

6. Turkey is a party to several international human rights treaties, including:
- a) Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
 - b) Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Signature only).
 - c) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
 - d) Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
 - e) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
 - f) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
 - g) International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.
 - h) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
 - i) International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
 - j) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
 - k) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (signature only).
 - l) Convention on the Rights of the Child.
 - m) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.
 - n) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children child prostitution and child pornography.

7. Politically Turkey is a republic and ideologically is secular. The Constitution states the country to be a democracy, and members of parliament may not ratify laws that contradict the contents of the Constitution. Despite Turkey's efforts in resolving its human rights issues for setting the stage to join the EU, human rights violations continue to take place in the country.

Freedom of expression

8. Human rights defenders, writers, journalists and other members of the opposition are illegally pursued and arbitrarily detained, and because of their beliefs they are faced with threats and violence by the police and other groups. Article 301 of Turkey's Criminal Code which was amended by the parliament imposes illegal restrictions on freedom of expression. Other Turkish laws for their part restrict freedom of expression. By issuing unjust verdicts, the courts in the country play a very important role in this restriction.

Torture and other inhuman treatment or behaviour

9. Reports from detention centres, police cells and illegal prisons all indicate that acts of torture and inhuman treatments are committed. People that are accused of political crimes and or ordinary crimes are tortured. The European Court of Human Rights has voted in favour of several cases that have been referred to it, and forced the torturers to compensate.

Recommendations

10. As a human rights NGO, the ODVV recommends the Turkish government to observe the following:

a) Despite the relative freedom of the press and the media, Turkey must observe Article 19 of the UDHR and Article 19(2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as part of its commitments, and remove laws that contradict these articles and to realise and guarantee the right to freedom of expression.

b) The Turkish government must consider the presumption of innocence before proven guilty. And no matter what the circumstances all governments must refrain from committing acts of torture.

c) The Turkish government must be committed to Article 5 of the UDHR and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

d) By ratifying the Convention Against Torture and the sending of a report to the Committee against Torture the Turkish government is obliged and must fully monitor the performance of the police and the conditions in prisons and detention centres. The Turkish parliament must also swiftly ratify the optional protocol on the Convention Against Torture.

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