

## ***LERC celebrating Human Rights Day 2010 at the Lebanese Parliament***

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On the occasion of Human Rights Day, the Lebanese Human Rights Parliamentary Committee, in partnership with the United Nations Development Program and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Middle East launched on Monday December 13, 2010 “The Draft of the National Human Rights Action Plan”, under the Patronage of the President of the Parliament Mr. Nabih Berri at the Library of the new building of the Lebanese Parliament.

MP Michel Moussa, chair of the HR Parliamentary Committee and representative of Speaker Nabih Berri at the conference, started his speech with a brief review of the continuous Israeli violations on Human Rights in Palestine and Lebanon. On the local level, he mentioned the different human rights breaches the Lebanese citizens are facing on a daily basis and urged the Cabinet to establish a National Independent Committee on Human Rights, which encompasses all contraventions. MP Moussa ended his speech with a citation by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon saying: “When the voices of human rights advocates are silenced, justice itself is drowned out.”

The Regional Director of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Fateh Azzam, representing as well Ms. Marta Ruedas- UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Lebanon, hailed the efforts of the Lebanese Parliamentary Committee, stating that “...despite successive political crises in the past five years, the Lebanese Parliament has been able to finalize a draft National Plan on Human Rights.” Furthermore, Mr. Azzam praised the work of the Lebanese civil society in the realm of Human Rights. He added that the plan should be put into effect in the course of 2011 for many reasons, mainly the duty “of the Lebanese government to adopt policies and take necessary legislative and administrative measures to honor its commitments regarding the different international protocols and treaties signed and ratified.”

MP Ghassan Moukhaiber, Rapporteur of the Human Rights Parliamentary Committee, after summarizing the National Action Plan and its process, declared: “We also need to identify the state of Human Right conditions in Lebanon in relation to laws, practice, the Constitution, and the Human Rights Charter.” Moukhaiber explained that, the National Action Plan being a collective effort, specialized working groups had finished reading and discussing background papers on each of the different topics, mainly prison conditions, fair trials, media freedoms, privacy policies, wiretapping, women and children’s rights and the rights of refugees.

The final part of the conference gave the opportunity for a positive debate and recommendations from Non-Governmental Organizations and Civil Society representatives.

At the end, it should be noted that LERC played a vital role in the drafting and consultation process, being part of the NGOs consultative structure since September 23, 2010 on one hand and as a member in the specialized working group related to the Refugees Rights on the other.