Background on the Arab Charter on Human Rights

and the Arab Human Rights Committee

In its ordinary session No. 16 the Council of the League of Arab States at the Summit level adopted the “Arab Charter on Human Rights (ACHR)” by its resolution No. 270 dated 23/5/2004.

The ACHR has entered into force on 15/3/2008 after the elapse of two months from depositing the 7th document of ratification to the General Secretariat (GS) of the League of Arab States (LAS), pursuant to Para. 2 of Article 49 of the Charter. These States are: Jordan, Arab United Emirates, Bahrain, Syria, Palestine, Libya and Algeria.

The ACHR consists of a preamble and 4 sections that include 53 articles that cover all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights as well as the Charter mechanism represented in the “Arab Human Rights Committee (AHRC)”.

The AHRC was established to consider the reports of the State parties to the ACHR on the measures undertaken to enforce the rights and freedoms set forth in the Charter. The Committee is composed of 7 members (in their personal capacity) who are elected through secret ballot by the State parties. The elected members must be highly experienced and efficient and should work impartially and conscientiously. The AHRC shall not include more than

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The ACHR stipulates that the State parties shall ensure that members of AHRC enjoy immunity which is required and necessary to protect them against any form of harassment or moral or material pressures or prosecution due to their stances or statements they make while exercising their mandate as members in the AHRC.

Each State party shall submit its first report to the AHRC within one year from the date on which the ACHR enters into force and a periodic report every three years. The AHRC may request from State parties additional information relating to the implementation of the ACHR.

The AHRC shall provide State parties with the guidelines on the form and content of the reports in order to ensure that they are prepared in a unified and comprehensive manner that would sufficiently explain the human rights situation in State parties and the extent to which it is consistent with the provisions of the ACHR.
After receiving the reports from the States parties, the Secretary-General of LAS shall refer them to the AHRC in order to study and examine these reports and to prepare its observations thereon prior to its discussion with the concerned State party.

The discussion with the concerned State party shall be with its official delegation that represents it, the AHRC shall express its observations and recommendations in accordance with the provisions and goals of the ACHR.

The AHRC’s reports, concluding observations and recommendations are considered public documents that the AHRC shall widely disseminate. The ACHR shall refer, through the Secretary-General of the LAS, an annual report containing its observations and recommendations to the Council of LAS.

The ACHR shall hold its meetings periodically to follow-up the human rights situation in the State parties and to consider their reports. The Committee may also hold extraordinary meetings in order to discuss any developments.

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