

# **Al-MARSAD's Narrative Report for 2010**

**Presented January 2011**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Al-Marsad was established six years ago, and with each passing year we look back to see what we have contributed to the issue of human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan. What have we succeeded to achieve as a legal organisation? Establishing a new organisation to deal with human rights issues in the occupied Golan was a courageous step which was confronted by numerous factual challenges. Al-Marsad has succeeded in the most part to solve and/or overcome these challenges.

The commitment of the founders, staff and the volunteers (local and international) over the previous years despite the difficult funding situation was the main reason behind the survival and continuation of Al-Marsad. This created a sense of credibility within the local population as activities became more visible and networks with other international human rights organisations grew stronger. Such organisations expressed their constant willingness to cooperate and help and since we are the only human rights organisation in the occupied Golan, this is of special importance as we are the only resort for people who have had violations committed against them or their private properties.

During 2010 Al- Marsad continued to strive to acquire adequate funding to bolster the organization and achieve a level of stability. This would serve to strengthen the legal credibility of the organisation, pave the way for professional advocacy campaigns, assist the research projects that are being conducted, as well as developing the training of local staff in order to improve their overall legal knowledge.

This report aims to provide a comprehensive review of the significant impact of Al-Marsad's activities for 2010 as well as an in-depth assessment of the organisations shortcomings.

### **1.1.1 Organisation Background**

Al-Marsad - The Arab Center for Human Rights in the occupied Golan is an independent non-profit legal human rights organisation, located in Majdal Shams, in the occupied Syrian Golan. The center was founded in October 2003 by a group of lawyers and professionals in the fields of health, education, journalism and engineering - mostly town-planners - as well as human rights defenders and other interested community members. Al-Marsad is a member of a coalition of NGO's with OPGAI (Occupied Palestinian and Golan Advocacy Initiative) and we are also a member of Convenio Palestina 2015.

Our initiative has drawn thus far on local and individual resources and we commenced work on voluntary basis. We continue to work in strengthening ties with a number of local human rights organisations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and with international human rights organisations. We believe these relationships are

indispensable to our work, especially given the rich experience these organisations have in many fields of expertise, as well as their established international connections.

### **1.1.2 The focus of Al-Marsad**

Since the beginning of the occupation political decisions are being taken every day by the Israeli authorities in order to create a *fait accompli* situation by changing the landscape and impose new realities on the ground. Different tools are being used in this context. Hundreds of military orders were issued during the period prior to the annexation of the Golan on December 14, 1981. Such orders served to uproot the native inhabitants and prevent them from returning to their cities and villages, which were subsequently eradicated. Israeli authorities built settlements on the remains of those towns and villages, into which Jewish settlers were transferred. These settlers then took control of the land and water, marginalising the Syrian Arabs who remained in the Golan and making life unbearable for them at all levels.

In the aftermath of the annexation of the Golan, Israeli authorities continued to practice these same policies under the guise of implementing the Israeli law that was now applicable therein. Israel continued its settlement policies and exploited all the natural resources of the area for the benefit of the settlements and the Israeli economy. Authorities also continue to restrict the rights of the Syrian inhabitants in contravention of the principles of international human rights and humanitarian law.

This situation, in the view of Al-Marsad necessitates the constant monitoring and documentation of human rights and humanitarian law violations. Al-Marsad attempts to consider the possible implications of Israeli policies on the legal status of the occupied Golan and the fundamental rights of its indigenous Syrian population and as such has designed an ambitious but viable action plan.

In contrast to other societies, there is an absence of civil society institutions, in particular those addressing human rights concerns in the Golan. Al-Marsad seeks to address this absence, monitoring and documenting the serious violations taking place in our community, and filling this gap so that the international community will have a greater awareness of the human rights situation in the Golan.

### **1.1.3 Al-Marsad's Mission**

Al-Marsad's mission remains as clear as ever working to protect and promote human rights and respect for the rule of law in the occupied Golan with a commitment to the overall application of international law; international humanitarian and human rights law.

Since its establishment, Al-Marsad has been attempting to document human rights violations perpetrated by Israel (the occupying power) against civilians and their private properties. Special focus is given to civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, as well as humanitarian law principles: expulsion of native Syrian population (ethnic cleansing), the control of land and water by Israel, separated families, settlement expansion, annexation, landmine problems, housing rights and planning restrictions. Through its work Al-Marsad tries to monitor and document human rights and humanitarian law violations and urge the international community

to pressure Israel to respect international law, stop its violations and end its occupation of the Syrian Golan.

#### **1.1.4 Al-Marsad's Vision**

Al-Marsad seeks to establish a modern and efficient institution that struggles against war, colonialism and occupation and helps to develop a culture of respect for human rights and humanitarian law principles. We seek to achieve this by observing and documenting human rights and humanitarian law violations, working to influence policies and pushing to hold accountable those responsible for committing or condoning human rights violations and international crimes.

Al-Marsad also aims at developing itself so as to become a basic reference source for those seeking information on human rights violations in the occupied Golan.

Al-Marsad will furthermore attempt to fortify both its presence and build awareness of human rights and humanitarian law on local, regional and international levels.

#### **1.1.5 Al-Marsad's overall goals**

In the course of its strategic planning work Al-Marsad has discussed and now adheres to three overall goals. These goals have guided all the organisations strategies and activities in the past years and will also in the coming periods. Al-Marsad concentrates on

- 1) Building a solid non-governmental, civilian and independent institution, whose members, contributors and staff have a clear picture of their role within, and can develop their and their volunteer's capacity and abide to a shared internal governance structure.
- 2) Becoming the No. 1 resource for research and legal advice on human rights violations (since 1967) in the occupied Golan.
- 3) Working and thriving within a regional and international network, which disseminates knowledge and expertise, raises awareness about basic human rights (locally) and the humanitarian situation (internationally) as well as markets its research and ideas according to an internally and commonly developed advocacy strategy.

#### **1.1.6 Opportunities and Threats of the current organisational status**

Al-Marsad is a small and still relatively new organization, which has several opportunities but still faces threats that need to be addressed in the course of a strategic planning exercise. In the latest planning the following SWOTS were identified and updated:

##### ***Strengths and Opportunities***

- The commitment and passion of the volunteers in the organisation, both local and international, remains one of the biggest strengths of Al-Marsad.
- The endurance of staff and volunteers over the last few years despite the difficult funding situation.

- The credibility within the local population grows as activities became more visible.
- The rich networks with other international human rights organisations.
- The assistance and support of other Palestinian and international organisations who express their constant willingness to help.
- Al-Marsad is the only human rights organisation in the occupied Golan, which is of special importance as we are the only resort for people to deal with violations committed against them or their private properties.
- As the only human rights organisation in the occupied Golan funding opportunities may be more accessible.
- Huge opportunity for building legal credibility through the initial research that has been conducted since its inception.
- Positive development within local staff in terms of received training and legal knowledge.
- An increasing number of international volunteers have conducted professional legal reports and greatly enhanced the opportunity for funding resources because of commitment, professional legal knowledge and English language skills. This internship programme has gone from strength to strength, with 7 interns conducting research on a variety of important topics in the last 12 months. Al-Marsad aspires to continue to develop and strengthen the programme on an ongoing basis.

### ***Threats and Weaknesses***

- There is a danger that certain donors may attempt to impose their own agenda in return for funding.
- There may be double-standard policy used by the international community to deal with violations of the international law.
- There may be an absence of guarantees for future funding.
- There may be the failure of the international community to speak out and to act against ongoing human rights abuses.
- Most of the work is done on voluntary basis (due to visa and financial restrictions volunteers cannot stay all the time to do this job) therefore the personnel of the organisation are always at risk
- There is a risk of losing credibility locally because funding will not allow for employing a qualified lawyer to give pro bono legal services to the people (as promised)
- Frustration of staff, when funding will not suffice.

### **Al-Marsad carried out the following major activities in 2010:**

- Continuous monitoring and documenting of specific human rights violations in a professional way, through the gathering of first-hand accounts by eyewitnesses and victims.
- Based on that, Al-Marsad legal researchers (both employees and volunteers) conducted the following reports:
  - ‘Breaking Down the Fence: Addressing the Illegality of Family Separation in the Occupied Syrian Golan’ by Hannah Russell (Published).

- ‘A Consideration of the Legality and Consequences of Israeli Exploitation of the Water Resources of the Occupied Syrian Golan’ by Kathy Keary (Not published)
  - ‘Forced Eviction and Internal Displacement in the Occupied Syrian Golan’ by Karen Hanlon (not published)
  - A Report on Human Rights and Education in the Golan currently being researched and written by Matthieu Le Grand (Not published)
- On 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2010 Al-Marsad hosted a visit from Nobel Peace Prize Winner Jerry White and the observatory 'Survivor Corps Mine-Free Mission'. This involved making presentations to raise awareness of issues facing the Golan including landmines and separation of families. The end product of this visit was a joint 'Call to Action for a Mine-Free Golan' from Al-Marsad and the Survivor Corps Mine-Free Mission.
  - At the end of March Russian TV reporters from ‘Russia Today’, reporters from a German newspaper and journalists from Haaretz came to research a report on mines in the Golan and interviewed survivors of mine explosions.
  - In April and May two separate representatives from Corporate Watch UK visited the Golan. Al-Marsad assisted them in their work tracking and documenting corporate complicity in the illegal Occupation.
  - On 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of April 2010 Al-Marsad welcomed a number of United Nations Representatives including Eva Tomic, Head of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in the occupied Palestinian territory, and Croatian and Austrian diplomats to the Golan. During this visit the opportunity was created to assist in making these influential visitors more aware of the international law violations that face the indigenous people of the Golan on a daily basis.
  - The organisation has developed and solidified its relations with regional and international human rights organisations for example Al-Haq, the OPGAI, and Solidaridad International (Spain), IEPALA (Spain). On the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of May Al-Marsad received a delegation from Solidaridad Internationale who were brought on tours of the region and introduced to the human rights situation.
  - On the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2010 Al-Marsad arranged a delegation of five local Arab people both men and women to testify before the ‘Special Committee to investigate Israeli practices affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories’, Field Mission 2010, to highlight the human rights violations perpetrated in the Occupied Golan. Five testimonies were brought before the Committee in Amman.
  - In June a number of our staff members and interns took part in interviews conducted by Aljazeera T.V for five reports they are producing about the daily lives of the indigenous Syrian population under occupation,

- AT the end of June Al-Marsad welcomed visiting volunteers from the West Bank and also Canadian Academic David Leach who was carrying out research on mines, the fence, and Al-Marsads activities in the area.
- Continuous intervention with Israeli authorities, as well as communication with the international community to draw attention to specific human rights violations through oral and written interventions: (September 2010 Follow up the high school students strike in Majdal Shams for replacing the school manager - Correspondence with Israeli Ministry of Education and human rights organization to solve the problem and guarantee the right for education, September- October 2010 Correspondence with Israeli Ministry of Interior concerning the issue of family separation requesting to disclose the criteria's and conditions that the Israeli authorities demanding from the families to visit their relatives in Syria).
- Arranged dozens of speaking tours around the destroyed villages, settlements and minefields. (Solidarity delegation from Belgium in order to express their solidarity with the people of the Golan who live under the occupation, delegation –ph.D students from Berkeley university USA, Lutheran delegation, delegation of Spanish students from Barcelona).
- Provided legal advice and counseling to victims of human rights violations, and intervened on their behalf to the relevant authorities
- Participation in a seminar: “**Orientation towards effects in the cooperation between MISERIOR and its Partners**”, held in Haifa City from 07.11 - 09.11-2010.
- Conducted local and regional media interviews to increase awareness of Al-Marsad's work and the human rights discourse.
- A touring around the Occupied Golan with a group from the Jerusalem University- Studies Centre.
- Lutheran Delegation\_ An alternative tourism in Occupied Golan for delegations from abroad, explaining the situation under the Occupation.
- Undertook legal research and developed study reports, briefs, press releases, interventions, and alerts for action on different human rights issues of concern, to raise awareness of the human rights situation. For example
  - 'Al-Marsad's Position Paper on the Israeli Government's Decision to Relieve Illegal Jewish Settlers in the Occupied Syrian Golan from Paying Tax' (February 2010)
  - Al-Marsad and the observatory Survivor Corps Mine-Free Mission's joint 'Call to Action for a Mine-Free Golan' (March 2010).
  - 'Israel's Violation of the Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of the Indigenous Syrian Population of the Occupied Syrian Golan: Submission to the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous People' – concerning separation of families (April 2010).

- 'Israel's Violation of the Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of the Indigenous Syrian Population of the Occupied Syrian Golan: Submission to the Human Rights Council under the 1503 Complaints Procedure' – concerning separation of families (April 2010).
- Submission to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights regarding the issue of women and the ongoing effects of family separation pursuant to Resolution 12/17 of the Human Rights Council.

## **1.2 INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN AL-MARSAD**

### **A. Staff**

Mr. Salman Fakher-Eldeen continued his employment with Al-Marsad as a coordinator and public relations officer. He has played a vital role organizing and hosting all visitors and delegates to Al-Marsad and informing them of the human rights situation in the Occupied Golan. This on the ground personal introduction to the situation in the Golan is important for illustrating how the occupation has affected the region.

He has been active in assisting the research carried out in Al-Marsad. Through arranging the translation of reports and the organization and translation of interviews with the local population, he plays an important supportive role assisting the research of the visiting international interns.

Salman also manages the volunteers ensuring their time in the Golan is as enjoyable and productive as possible. As well as assisting them with their research this involves arranging trips and acting as tour guide for them.

He has also represented Al-Marsad at a number of conferences including the 'BDS and Stop Normalisation' Conference in Ramallah, Conferences in Haifa concerning 'the Right of Return' and 'One Secular democratic state in Palestine' and the Ambassador conference and solidarity with El Bustan neighbourhood in Silwan, East Jerusalem and a Conference of Non Violence in Ramallah in the West Bank including a reception with Dr Martin Luther King III. Through these networking activities he has raised the awareness of Al-Marsad amongst other NGOs in the region.

Dr. Nizar Ayoub continued in his role as legal advisor and consultant with Al-Marsad. He has been active in establishing and developing the internship programme, and also reviewing, editing and assisting the interns with their research. Dr. Ayoub was also responsible for applications for funding and establishing good relationships with donors. He has been busy drafting a variety of reports including a strategic plan for 2010-2012. He has also compiled and sent a variety of funding proposal packs to potential donors. Dr. Ayoub has also been involved in networking with other NGOs. Strong relationships with other human rights organizations provides a valuable support structure and a wealth of experience to learn from.

Mrs. Majdoleen Safadi began her position as part-time administrative assistant in October 2009. Since then she has taken control of overall running of the Al-marsad office. Her main duties include office accounting and financial management, monitoring of Al-Marsads correspondences, assisting in the drafting of funding proposals and general office administration. She ensures that

the office is efficiently and professionally organised and as such her role is vital to the development of the organization.

Mrs. Areen Sabaq Halabe (BA in English and Education) took up her part-time position as secretary and programme assistant in January 2010. Since then she provided vital translating services from Arabic and Hebrew into English facilitating the interns research on a broad range of topics. This important service enables the researchers to access information that would otherwise be unavailable to them. In addition Areen has translated research documents into Arabic to make them more accessible to the local Arab population. She has also developed an informative power point presentation which documents the reality of life under occupation in the Golan.

During the first half of 2010 Abulkher Abu Jabal has continued to provide crucial legal advice to the Arab population of the Golan. He has also worked extensively on the problem of family separation for the local indigenous communities. In addition to acting as legal advisor for the extensive report on the topic carried out by Hannah Russell he has worked on the submission of numerous reports to various UN bodies. For example 13 complaints have been sent to the Special Rapporteur on indigenous Peoples concerning family separation. He also drafted a document under the 1503 complaints procedure of the Human Rights Council on this topic. Advocate Abu Jabal has also continued his networking work with donors, local and international human rights organisations.

### **C. Interns**

Al-Marsad has hosted four international interns in the first six months of 2010. Hannah Russell interned from the end of January until the end of April, Kathy Keary and Karen Hanlon arrived early April and remained until early July and Matthieu le Grand then took up the position from early June until early September.

The interns assisted the work of Al-Marsad by:

- undertaking legal research,
- conducting interviews with Majdal Shams residents,
- assisting with the drafting of various reports for the UN bodies,
- writing position papers on various topics including land mines and women's rights
- help with the creation of activity plans and strategy plans for the next five years
- monitoring the English-language press,
- assisting in the drafting of financial proposals to be submitted to various potential Al-Marsad donors
- writing and publishing detailed reports on a number of prevalent issues. To date the international interns that have worked with Al-Marsad have written on the topics of the general history of the area; economic violations regarding the creation, expansion and production of settlements in the Golan; human rights abuses surrounding family separation; problems associated with water distribution and the discriminatory policies faced by the indigenous Syrian population; internal displacement and forced evictions and lastly, situation of forced assimilation via education.



Al-Marsad believes that its programme of accepting international legal interns is of great benefit to both the organisation and the individual intern themselves. The link between Al-Marsad and the Irish Centre for Human Rights has been solidified in the first six months of 2010 with the latest arrival bringing the number of interns in the last 12 months to seven. The organization believes that there is a currently lack of information regarding the plight of the people of the Syrian Golan within the international community and that having people come directly to the area to live and work within the context of human rights is of vital importance. To date all of the interns' that have worked with the organisation state that they have found the experience beneficial on a multitude of levels.

“Completing an internship with Al-Marsad was a fantastic experience on both a personal and professional level. It provided vital experience required for individuals pursuing a career in human rights and facilitated the experience of another culture.” – Hannah Russell Legal Intern with Al Marsad April 2010.

#### **D. Composition of Al-Marsad's Board of Directors**

1. Dr. Samia Abu Jabal, President. Gynecologist.
2. Dr. Munir Fakher Eldin, Assistant Professor of Arab Studies at Birzeit University
3. Majeed Safadi, LLM Journalism. Director of Al Jazeera camera staff Israel/Palestine.
4. Jamel Abu Jabal, PhD Jurisprudence.
5. Atef Safadi, press photographer EPA.
6. Naif Fakhreldeen, LLM Veterinary.
7. Madad Kalani, LLM Communications.
8. Madad Ewidat, farmer.

#### **E. Composition of Al-Marsad's team**

1. Dr. Nizar Ayoub, Consultant/Legal researcher. PhD International Law, Institute of State and Law, Moscow. Lawyer-Member of Israel Bar.
2. Abulkher Abu Jabal, MA Jurisprudence, St. Petersburg University, Lawyer Member of Israel Bar.
3. Salman Fakherldeen, Public Relations Officer
4. Mrs Majdoleen Safadi, Administrative Officer
5. Mrs. Areen Sabaq Halabe, Secretary and Programme Assistant.

### **1.3 OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of Al-Marsad remain the same with each passing year; to develop, grow stronger and raise awareness for the human rights situation in the occupied Syrian Golan. This section will assess their outcomes.

*Objective one: Al-Marsad attempts to become a reference point regarding international human rights and humanitarian law in the occupied Golan for concerned organisations and individuals at the local and international levels*

One of the main objects of Al-Marsad's work for 2010 is to keep striving in order to make the organisation a unique source of information by monitoring and documenting certain types of violations. Fieldworker's document violations in specific cases take

surveys and affidavits and are archived in a way that allows for the preparation of legal studies, reports, position papers, submissions, open letters and press releases.

Al-Marsad has gathered a considerable number of affidavits from victims and eye-witnesses of human rights violations in the occupied Golan. These affidavits pertained to violations associated with the issues of separation of families, exploitation of the natural resources and forcible eviction and population transfer. These efforts meet Al-Marsad's objective to document and monitor human rights and humanitarian law violations by conducting fieldwork in order to establish an extensive databank by the end of 2010.

Important documents have been compiled and disseminated to officials, academics, human rights and civil society organisations, human rights activists, and other concerned parties. This makes Al-Marsad a main resource for information-sharing through meetings and contacts with UN Special committee for the investigation of Israeli practices in Palestinian and Occupied Arab Territories, and representatives of different UN human rights mechanisms like (Committee for Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), UN-OHCHR and other UN officials.

Al-Marsad also intends to achieve consultative status with ECOSOC so that the organisation can increase its access to international human rights bodies and thereby further highlight the violations of human rights and humanitarian law occurring in the occupied Syrian Golan.

Al-Marsad's internship program from its office in Majdal Shams continued in 2010 and it is envisaged will go from strength to strength in the latter half of the year and into 2011. This program has provided a great opportunity for recently graduated students to learn both about the situation of the Golan in general and also about the international humanitarian law and human rights law violations occurring in the Golan under Israel's illegal occupation in three-month blocks.

Al-Marsad has also, when possible, provided advocacy and free legal service to the Arab local community of the Syrian Golan who have been subjected to both violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law by Israel the occupying power; this is an area which the organisation would like to build on for the future.

***Objective two: To raise awareness about human rights situation in the occupied Golan at the national and international levels***

During 2010 Al-Marsad was engaged in an advocacy plan, which raises awareness in the international community, media and international organisations regarding the human rights situation in the occupied Syrian Golan and its legal status.

Al-Marsad was more active at the international level during 2010. Salman Fakherldeen, Public Relations Officer for Al-Marsad attended a number of local conferences which increased opportunities to network with other human rights groups in the region and highlight the human rights and humanitarian law violations occurring in the occupied Golan. Also Al-Marsads hosting of various different

delegations throughout the first six months of 2010 serves to imprint in the minds of individuals the effects of the violations on the people in their day to day lives

Also during 2010 Atef Safadi and Jalaal Maray documented all the political and social activities in the Golan as part of the plan to publish a photo album about the daily political life of the local people in the Golan. It is also planned to document the destroyed villages and the settlements as well as the nature of the area. It is hoped the album will be ready by the end of 2010. The idea is to get between 120 and 150 photos and text. And will include executive summaries of the research reports being carried out by the organization..

The organisation's work in this area has caused Al-Marsad to become a reference point for human rights organizations and other NGO's regarding human rights situation in occupied Golan.

***Objective three: Develop the institutional capacity of Al-MARSAD***

Al-Marsad is keen to continue to build itself as a sustainable organisation by ensuring the timely submission of fundraising proposals, reports, and work plans to its donors. It held regular meetings and contacts with representatives of the donor community, and its Acting Director worked continuously to seek long-term core-funding opportunities for Al-Marsad. The result is that Al-Marsad is becoming more comfortable in its funding for the near future. A two-year strategic plan also helps attract the attention of potential donor organization as it demonstrates that Al-Marsad has a sound plan and is thus a good local partner for international organizations.

Also during 2010, Al-Marsad proceeded with efforts to develop and acquire a library space in its offices to serve its employees and volunteers dealing with legal research. For the meantime, Al-Marsad managed to obtain the main reference books related to international law, Human rights and humanitarian law and continue to seek the financial resources to undertake such a project. It is envisaged that the new office which is now completed will contain a dedicated library section in the near future.

***Objective four: Al-Marsad aims to actively engage with the local community to educate and raise awareness amongst the various sectors about their human rights.***

Al-Marsad recognises how important it is to involve all areas of the community in the promotion and expansion of human rights advocacy. Therefore we hope to create a number of different workshops aimed at various members of the Syrian Golan population.

**Children** – The creation of summer camps and after school programmes based on the principles enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child especially those concerning freedom of expression (Article 13). Particular attention will be paid to the cultural traditions of the Syrian community and its protection and promotion through song, dance and theatre with young people. Also workshops on basic human rights principles involving painting, sculpture, music and performances would also be planned with local children's organisations to ensure that children learn the fundamental principles of the UDHR from an early age. Providing children with individual rights and asking them to paint or sing or act that right out, ensures the

child's full understanding of the idea and also promotes creativity and a sense of participation for the child themselves. Such workshops would also strengthen ties between Al-Marsad and other social based grassroots groups in the community.

**Women** – The promotion and protection of women's rights is of major concern to Al-Marsad. Discriminatory policies such as those affecting women's ability to cross the checkpoint at Qunietra for religious pilgrimages, or the signing away of a woman's right to return should she marry a Syrian National, are in direct contravention to the principles espoused in ICEDAW. Al-Marsad hopes to organise workshops for the Syrian women of the Golan to promote the principles of the convention and all anti-discrimination policies. Emphasis would be placed on human rights education in relation to gender issues. Also these workshops would provide a social outlet for many women outside of the family home.

**Adult Learning** – The promotion of continued adult learning and the expansion of basic skills is implied in the ICESCR under the right to education. Al-Marsad is dedicated to the improvement of life for the Arab population of the Syrian Golan. As such the promotion of human rights education for adults through workshops dealing with the expansion and promotion of civil and political rights is considered to be paramount. This could be achieved through seminars, the creation of local documentaries or photo exhibitions; all involving the participation of the local population. Again Al-Marsad would hope to involve a number of local business' and grassroots organisations to make these workshops inclusive and successful.

- Increased awareness throughout all sections of the community in their individual and collective human rights. The strengthened connection between Al-Marsad and other organisations within the Golan with the combined aim of improving the lives and realities of the people of the Golan at a grassroots level through a policy of ongoing human rights promotion and education via workshops and social activities.

#### **1.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Al-Marsad is proud of all that it accomplished in the opening months of 2010 but the financial restraints are always evident. The conduction of legal research, monitoring and documentation, capacity building of the organisation and workload management has been a constant struggle in all levels with modest resources. This always creates an unstable environment in which Al-Marsad conducts its work.

In the coming year it is expected that the internship programme will expand further and build on the foundations of previous years. The new office space will provide a higher profile for Al-Marsad to achieve this and it is anticipated that the internship programme will thrive and develop into the future.

The year 2010 was an important and crucial for Al-Marsad and its team. The organisation continues to evolve and became more professional and well known pursuant to the essential work in the occupied Golan as strong and professional human rights organisation. The completion of three new legal reports is evidence of the high level of professional legal research being carried out due to close cooperation between the local staff and international interns.

**END**