



Association Arc pour la défense des droits de l'homme et des revendications démocratiques/
culturelles du peuple azerbaïdjanais – Iran - « ArcDH »



Annual Report 2014



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ABOUT US

The ArcDH is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), as well as a non-profit making organization, was founded in France on 24 March 2010 in accordance to the “Law of Associations” 1901 conferred in 16 August 1901 and it was registered in the official journal of the country – Registration Number 00938. Though started as the French-Azeri ArcDH Association, collaboration is wide and is actively interacts with like-minded organizations throughout the world, including:

- USA,
- Germany
- UK,
- Sweden - Norway
- Suisse.

The ArcDH is active in relation to the defense of human rights and cultural relationships under the umbrella of democratic aspirations of Azeri communities. The ArcDH has to its heart the fate of Urmia Lake undergoing through a distressful manmade catastrophe. Urmia Lake triggered the formation of the ArcDH in 2010 to the extent that representatives of the French & Azeri community approached academics to provide a scientific background to explaining this manmade catastrophe. The conference was very constructive and provided the basis to the ArcDH to refer the case to UNESCO for collaboration. It is true that these efforts are ongoing but the ArcDH is inspired to campaign for the restoration of Urmia Lake.

The ArcDH has a rich culture by organizing various seminars and conferences in association with the various groups and special rapporteurs of the UN Council for Human Rights. Now the goal of the ArcDH is to seek an office from the Council and it is hoped that a new culture will be cultivated through this office towards creating for the so called minority nationalities. At the same time, human rights and Urmia Lake is not defining the limits of the ArcDH but our campaigns are equally focused on a host of activities including: preservation and development of mother language, the right to education in mother language, the women and children rights, the rights of religious minorities and **sustainable development**.

The ArcDH follows the best practice procedure in the conduct of its responsibilities as laid down by the appropriate French laws and to this end it adopted its Constitution in 2010. **Today, the Association is growing both in quantitative and qualitative terms and its Management Committee comprises:**



- a president,
- a deputy president
- a treasurer,
- a secretary,
- several advisers or experts
- several Public Relation (PR) officers

The Association is also in contact with Dr Shaheed, the UN Special Rapporteur on Iran, Special Rapporteur of Minority Ethnic, National and Religions

1. AIMS OF THE ASSOCIATION

The following activities are likely to remain the core activities of the ArcDH

1. Plan for capacity building for the defence of human rights, rights of women and children, environmental protection, improved
2. Defend prisoners of conscience & political prisoners
3. Provide advice on policymaking related to mother language, to education in mother language or impacts of its absence, to the environment, to impacts of environmental degradation, to environmental restoration, e.g. hoping to restore Urmia Lake
4. Expose human rights violations, endemic in Iran, particularly exercised against the so called ethnic “minorities.”
5. Defend the right to education in mother language in every sector of cultural activities
6. Campaign for the revival of the cultures and languages that have suffered decline from deliberate discrimination policies.
7. Expose the violation of human rights against religious diversity.
8. Women movement and encouraging women activism among so called ethnic “minorities,” In this way, facilitate the women to participate in forums and conferences and contribute to the issuing of statements together with NGOs.
9. Defend the environment.
10. Campaign for the revival of Urmia Lake, which is living its last moments of existence.
11. Campaign for the provision of wholesome clean drinking water in villages.
12. Uncompromising campaign against the heinous act of execution for whatever reason.
13. Campaign for sports without racism and discrimination.



2. ACTIVITIES OF THE ASSOCIATION

Driven by the above aims, the track record of the ArcDH on activism encompasses the following:

1. The ArcDH played a key role in organizing meetings with Dr Ahmed Shaheed, the special envoy of the UN Council on Human Rights, for briefing on the following issues:
 - Prisoners of conscience
 - Exposing widely-practiced racism in sport stadiums in Iran
 - The ongoing escalation of executions in Iran, particularly in ethnic provinces, where the so called minority nationalities live in their native lands
2. The ArcDH contributed to several plenary conferences (from 18th session of HR Council to 28th session) at where the participation of the ArcDH was facilitated by NGO organizations. These emerged as platforms for briefing the UN specials rapporteurs and working groups related to issues to Azeris, Arabs, Turkmens Kurds, Qashqays in Iran. The ArcDH regarded this as opportunity to interact with international experts, environmentalists, lawyers, politicians, ambassadors, linguists and sociologists. This was also a valuable opportunity for exchanging views and lobbying for the cause of Minority in Iran
3. The ArcDH has kept contact with the special rapporteur on the environment in relation to the regions including Iran and at-risk ethnic peoples and their regions in Iran. To this end the catastrophe rolling out in Azerbaijan-Iran, including Urmia Lake have been topical in the transactions of the **ArcDH**. We hope that the responsible authorities have come to the realization that Urmia Lake is living its last moment and this will undermine a large at-risk population, not less than 14 million. Our aim is the restoration of Urmia Lake and to this end we plan to be more active.
4. The ArcDH activities also included communications with the UNESCO in relation to education in mother language.
5. The ArcDH participated very actively in UPR Iran (Universal Periodic Review) and the reports by the ArcDH were submitted to the UN through facilitating NGOs. The reports by the ArcDH covered prisoners of conscience, violations of the right to mother language and education in mother language, blatant racial discriminations on sports, environmental catastrophes, women situation and other issues.
6. Fruitful meetings were held with the ambassadors and UNESCO officials.



7. The ArcDH members hold meetings through e-communications with other like-minded organisations for exchanging information on human rights, where our discussions also include the procedures and conventions adopted by the United Nations.
8. Our activities include women rights and children rights and our report to the United Nations through the NGOs on the relevant issues.

3. A PLAN FOR FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The ArcDH has been relying on other NGOs to take part in the conferences of the UN Council on Human Rights but this is not easy and there are unwilling organizations. So the ArcDH strives to achieve its aims through a range of initiatives including:

1. Be registered as an affiliate NGO in the UN Council on Human Rights and take part in the various meetings in Geneva and New York,
2. Contribute to the meetings organized by the UN High Commission for Human Rights
3. Participate in forums organized by the Special Rapporteur for ethnicity in Iran (Azeris, Arabs, Turkmens, Kurds, Baluchis, Qashqais and others) and strive to form such meetings by the ArcDH
4. ArcDH organizes conferences for ethnic minorities through NGO
5. Support all cultural activities and defend the right in education in mother language in all spheres of modern life.
6. Seek international focus for the reinstatement of Urmia Lake, whilst the official Iranian policies have proven to be non-compliant with international norms and best practice procedures.
7. Seek the RAMSAR Commission for the release of the Iranian account on reporting the catastrophe of Urmia Lake.
8. Campaign awareness against endemic pollution incidents in Iran particularly in Western Azerbaijan.
9. Defend the right to belong to any creed and opinion including the recognition of the strength of societies with religious diversity, e.g. the Alavies, Baha'is, Christians, Jews, and Sunnite in suffering from the persecution of the Iranian authorities.

4. FINANCE

The ArcDH is non-governmental and independent. According to its constitution, it does not belong to any party or any political organization. Its financial expenditure is met by its membership fees, as well as donations. This society strives solely for the defense of human



rights in every possible sphere of human concern of ethnic minorities by a democratic worldview and the ArcDH is determined to form a financially viable organization to play an effective role towards these aspirations. The ArcDH is active for five years and maintained its financial viability and hopes to do even better in the future.

5. GOVERNANCE AND MEMBERSHIP

The ArcDH has a constitution, membership and a program of activities. Its membership comprises: management committee, founding members, active members, honorary members and legal teams.
