

ANNUAL REPORT

2009



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MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIR

South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR) is pleased to present its annual report on the initiatives it took in 2009 to promote and protect human rights, and to lay the foundation of a democratic society based on peace and justice in the region.

A common history and tradition of pluralism has nurtured diverse cultures in South Asia. Yet we find our countries divided by hostility, mired in poverty and gross inequalities and our communities discriminated by class, caste, religion, ethnicity and gender. The political disputes and hostilities between neighbouring countries over land and water have made us waste our resources. Instead of working together for progress, people's deprivations have been exacerbated by militarization, patriarchy and globalization.

South Asia needs to establish peace with justice, in each of our countries and between countries. This is possible through a collective understanding of human rights values and standards. As a membership organisation SAHR cooperates with a large number of national human rights defenders - individuals and organisations - who share a commitment to building a human rights culture in the region. SAHR carries forward the work of its members by creating a wider awareness of political, social, economic and cultural rights in the region. It seeks to strengthen regional responses and activate regional instruments that can promote and protect human rights.

The foundation for a human rights culture rests on the essentials of a participatory democracy, that respects diversity and affirms social and gender justice. SAHR has affirmed its commitment to peace with justice as essential to the practice of democracy and human rights.

Towards these objectives SAHR has followed diverse strategies of monitoring human rights violations by state and non-state actors, creating awareness of rights, and promoting institutional accountability for the protection of human rights. In 2003, SAHR set up the South Asian People's Commission on Rights of Minorities (SAPCROM) whose report entitled *Including the Excluded* drew attention to the discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities in seven countries of the region. A forthcoming report examines how majoritarian religion is prioritised in policies and official practices to sustain discrimination. The findings of both reports call for a reversal of sectarian biases in policy formulation.

In recent years South Asia has become vulnerable to terrorist violence, across borders and within each country, resulting in counter violence by the state. SAHR's investigative reports such as "Bomb and Grenade Explosions: and other forms of violence by religious militants in Bangladesh" have revealed how the tentacles of such violence have spread across the region. On the other hand, use of torture, disappearances and extra-judicial deaths as methods of law enforcement by state agencies have contributed to political instability. Its negative effects on human rights has prompted SAHR to conduct an investigation into custodial torture by state agencies in five countries, that draws urgent attention to the need for reform of laws and enforcement of laws.

SAHR believes that a democratic framework is a means for transforming society. Since elections are an initial step towards building this framework, SAHR has engaged in consultations that have resulted in proposals for electoral reforms, based on best practices in different countries. But to make a transition towards a participatory system of governance requires citizens' active engagement and institutional responsiveness. Towards this end SAHR has started to monitor the likely outcome of legislation enacted by Parliament, and judicial decisions that restrain abuse of power. These examples can be used by human rights defenders and policy makers to assess state responsiveness to citizens' demands.

SAHR is grateful to all members who have worked with us to reach a common goal and to our donor partners for their continued funding support which has enabled us to move forward the promotion of human rights and democratic governance.

We commend the Secretariat and the national coordinators for having worked diligently in supporting the national bureaux to carry out SAHR activities

Dr. Hameeda Hossain
Co-Chair

SAHR AT A GLANCE

South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR) is a democratic regional network of human rights defenders with a large membership base of individuals and organisations committed to the promotion and protection of human rights at both national and regional levels.

VISION: A South Asian region that guarantees political, economic, social and cultural conditions for all peoples to realize their rights and live in dignity, justice and peace.

PURPOSE: To promote and defend the human rights of all peoples in South Asia in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres, at both the regional and national levels, by activating regional responses through regional instruments, monitoring mechanisms, legal frameworks, policies and practices.

Building on the mandate of the Neemrana Declaration, SAHR's vision captures the importance of protecting and preserving the rights of all citizens in the region. Its objectives can be summarized as seeking to:

- foster the concept of multiple South Asian identities by enabling citizens to realise their aspirations for peace, democracy, secularism, justice, and human security, while promoting pluralism in approaches towards social, political, economic and cultural development of different communities based on ethnicity, language, religion and gender.
- contribute to the realisation of a participatory democracy, by enabling citizens to be involved in decision making and by strengthening regional responses regional instruments, monitoring human rights violations; reviewing laws, policies and practices that have an adverse impact on human rights; and conducting campaigns and programmes on issues of major concern in the region.
- advocate for just and responsive states to take initiatives for peace and cooperation that will enable citizens to benefit from the sharing of resources, and build a just society based on non-discrimination.

SAHR's strength and legitimacy comes from its democratic structure and broad-based membership of recognised human rights defenders in the region. SAHR members, both institutional and individual, form the network's general body. There are presently 413 members from amongst the seven South Asian countries and a 20 member elected bureau functions as the organisation's executive body.

As a regional network of human rights defenders, SAHR visualised its role in monitoring the status of human rights in the countries of the region and promoting mechanisms for protection of human rights. Essential to this goal was the need to strengthen democratic institutions to make them functional, transparent and accountable to the citizen's of South Asia.

SAHR believes that peace and cooperation between all states in South Asia is essential to realizing a just society. Following the explosions in Mumbai, which took so many lives and disrupted negotiations between India and Pakistan, SAHR arranged an exchange of peace delegations to cross the borders carrying messages of peace. Also, SAHR's interaction with policy makers, political leaders, cultural activists and others is part of a journey towards defusing hostilities.

In working towards our goal to build a more inclusive democratic order, SAHR has advocated for the citizens' Right to Transparent Governance. Its research, dialogues and exchanges have deepened understanding between participants representing public policy organisations, academia, the judiciary, the legal profession, media and citizens' groups. A consensus document which has emerged from these exchanges will guide SAHR to monitor the effectiveness of parliaments in South Asia in enacting legislation that protects and promotes human rights.

SAHR held a series of consultations on the need for an Inclusive Electoral Process in 2008 which brought together leading experts from national election commissions, elected leaders, human rights' defenders, election monitors and others to identify indicators and guidelines for making the electoral process more meaningful. The outcome of these consultations was the publication of a report entitled "An Inclusive Electoral Process". Building on its regional work, SAHR in 2009 organised a discussion on "Best Practices in the South Asian Region on Free and Fair Elections" which brought together a group of Sri Lankan experts to discuss the means to an inclusive electoral process in the country and measures that could be taken towards electoral reforms to ensure free and fair elections.

SAHR firmly believes in the need to promote a culture of tolerance and peace, and respect for plural traditions in South Asia, as a basis for strengthening citizens' struggles for empowerment over their own lives and for defence of their rights. SAHR's fact finding missions to investigate the situation of IDPs, of minority rights, of violence of religious extremists have pointed to the need for corrective action by states, governments and for stronger activism at the national and regional level. SAHR's reports on IDPs in Baluchistan and Sri Lanka, on the state of minorities in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have raised awareness at different levels and contributed to a greater understanding amongst national bodies. SAHR has also embarked on a study examining how religion is used by governments or majority groups to discriminate against others.

Press releases issued by SAHR have flagged issues and incidents that required action at varying levels and the SAHR website continues to provide constant alerts on human rights violations across the region.

PROGRAMMES

SAHR's strategies were developed to meet two broad objectives: Strengthening Human Rights, Deepening Democracy and Promoting Right to Transparent Governance and Inclusive Electoral Process in South Asia

1. **Strengthening Human Rights and Deepening Democracy**

SAHR believes that a democratic framework must be based on respect and tolerance for all, where the state accepts responsibility for ensuring equal rights of all citizens irrespective of religion, caste, ethnicity, gender, where representative institutions must be transparent and accountable to citizens in all decision making and not merely at the polls, where independent institutions that safeguard democracy can function independently, free from threats or undue interference, where the media and the judiciary can freely exercise their responsibilities and duties without misusing them.

The programme aimed to strengthen human rights and contribute to a more inclusive democracy within the South Asian region. The three components of this programme aimed to promote and protect human rights in South Asia, contribute to an inclusive democracy and strengthen governance.

These strategies were carried out through SAHR's previous consultations, research and fact finding. A regional consultation on "Deepening Democracy, Strengthening Human Rights, and Celebrating Diversity" in 2007 provided the background for further research and consultations on the state of Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal in 2008, fact-finding missions on IDPs in Sri Lanka in 2007 and in Baluchistan in 2008. The publications on these consultations were used as tools for advocacy. Through periodical reports from members in each country SAHR was able to project the state of human rights and democratic practice in the region. A publication on the state of minorities in South Asia, and periodic briefing papers on key issues were disseminated widely. A Rapid Response Alert service highlighted violations of rights on SAHR's web site and evoked responses. SAHR interacted with the media, strengthened regional responses and mobilised public opinion on a regional level by issuing press statements and memorandums to relevant authorities.

Study on Custodial Torture in South Asia

SAHR's research on Custodial Torture came at a crucial time in South Asia, with the increase in militarization and the use of draconian anti-terror laws which encourage impunity and provided armed forces with broad powers. The report draws upon the incidence of custodial torture by law enforcement agencies, in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and examines the sources of their impunity in the laws and practices in each country. Towards facilitating an effective advocacy against custodial torture, this compilation sets each nation within its constitutional history, explores in each case, international commitments, legal provisions, responses of courts and other institutions and lists case studies that show the gap between norm and practice.

It concludes with a campaign plan suggesting measures for legislative, administrative, institutional reforms which will guide SAHR's future work to create public awareness of such violations, to raise public voices against impunity and to advocate for changes in laws, policies and methods of law enforcement. The report is expected to be published in 2010.

Fact- Finding on the Use of Religion by the Majority

The national reports are being edited for publication and dissemination. Research in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka has shown how religion has been used in educational texts, curricula, different education media (religious schools), employment policies and other practices to prioritise majoritarian interest at the cost of other communities. This has contributed to discrimination against minority religious groups, sometimes surfacing into violence. Reports from these countries have examined the factors that have increased the marginalisation of the minorities in society and how state policies and laws have contributed to the unequal treatment of the minorities and increased hostility or intolerance towards them. The reports have attempted to examine institutions, legislation and institutional biases in a historical context and to identify state policies on education and development that have become the cause of disparity/discrimination and affected the rights to use of land, and other opportunities.

The role of the media in promoting majoritarian rule is also noted.

A Meeting with the Social Workers of Sri Lankan IDP Camps

SAHR arranged for a discussion meeting between a team of human rights defenders and social workers who had first hand information and access to the IDPs in the Sri Lankan camps in the North after the cessation of hostilities following the strategic planning workshop. The team presented a realistic and unbiased report, describing the experiences of some families and individuals in the camps, and highlighting some of their grave concerns. Mr. I A Rehman, SAHR Bureau Member from Pakistan, wrote an article after the meeting, which highlighted Colombo's new tasks, drawing attention to increasing militarization, and the plight of IDPs in camps in Sri Lanka's northern region. SAHR circulated the article with endorsements from numerous human rights defenders in all six countries. This was disseminated to a wide group of civil society organisations, news papers and authorities in South Asia. Also SAHR's publication on Sri Lanka's IDPs was reprinted with permission by the Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India (ICFAI) University Press, in their Professional Reference book titled "IDPs in South Asia: Dilemma and Protection".

Advocacy through internet working groups

Regular updates on information and articles related to human rights and democracy are uploaded on the SAHR website. The alerts seek to create awareness and to engage human rights defenders in supporting the victims of human rights abuses and calling upon the state for action against such abuses. This helps to advance regional capacities to prevent human rights abuse.

2. Creating Just and Responsive States: Promoting Right to Transparent Governance and Inclusive Electoral Process in South Asia

One of the major challenges facing our societies today is to build effective, accountable and transparent systems of democratic governance which can deliver economic and social progress and encourage popular participation. In South Asia institutional structures are not always transparent, and the process of governance is not conducive to democratic decision making.

Thus, this programme was designed to celebrate diversity, strengthen human rights and contribute to a more inclusive democracy within the South Asian region through transparent governance. While individual countries will evolve their own methods of governance to safeguard citizen's rights the two immediate objectives of this programme were to promote right to transparent governance and an inclusive electoral process in South Asia.

The following activities scheduled for 2009 followed from SAHR's previous work under this programme which included a regional workshop of experts on inclusive electoral process and national and regional consultations on the right to transparent governance in 2007 and 2008.

Workshop on Right to Transparent Governance

The immediate objective of the workshop was to develop a draft regional convention on the “right to transparent governance” and advocate effectively at national and regional levels in order to provide solutions to the issues of democratic governance, and enable collective regional inputs into the system.

The two day workshop held in Bangladesh from 21st- 22nd April, brought together experts and practitioners of freedom of information laws and other civil rights activists from the countries of the region to share their experiences and develop a minimum common regional agenda and set of standards in light of regional and local needs, international experiences of best practices, and develop a means to implement international/regional instruments such as the SAARC Social Charter of 2004.



Experts discussed the draft guidelines for transparency in the judiciary, executive, and parliament which had been drafted earlier. After engaging in constructive and informative discussions, guidelines on transparency in the Judiciary, Executive and Parliament were further elaborated. The guidelines on parliamentary practices were published this year and will be an integral part of SAHR's Parliamentary Watch programme scheduled to begin in 2010



Discussion on the Best Practices in the South Asian Region on Free and Fair Elections

SAHR organised a discussion on “Best Practices in the South Asian Region for Free and Fair Elections” on 17 December 2009 at the Kobbakkaduwa Centre, Sri Lanka. Participants included members from international, regional and local non-governmental organizations, media personnel and undergraduate students. The panel of speakers consisted of Mr. J C Weliamuna from Transparency International Sri Lanka, Mr. Rohana Hettiarachchi from PAFFREL and Dr. Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu from Centre for Policy Alternatives, Sri Lanka. Ms. Sharmin Murshid from Bangladesh spoke about the election held in Bangladesh in December 2008, and compared it with previous elections held in the country. Her presentation further focused on the measures taken by the relevant authorities to bring about this change and the contribution brought about by citizens' activism. An overview of the Best Election Practices in the South Asian Region was given by Mr. Asanga Welikala after which Mr. J C Weliamuna discussed the state of Sri Lanka's current situation, shortcomings of the current Sri Lankan electoral system and how Sri Lanka can learn from its South Asian counterparts. A brainstorming session on the Role of Civil Society in the short and long term, moderated by Mr. K S Ratnavel, raised ideas and areas to be focused on towards free and fair elections in Sri Lanka. A documentary on this event was telecast on Young Asia Television.



SAHR's Contribution to Peace in South Asia

Since the terrorist attack in Mumbai, in late November 2008, ties between India and Pakistan became strained, leading to the breakdown of the composite dialogue which had started between the two countries. The situation turned dangerously volatile, with war hysteria projected by the media and some political leaders, which served to make the situation worse. The voices of civil society in India and Pakistan were being overtaken by the hysteria and frenzy.

SAHR believes that peace and cooperation between all states of South Asia is a precondition for progress in the region. Thus SAHR played a vanguard role to arrange peace missions from Pakistan to India and from India to Pakistan soon after the bomb attacks in Mumbai.

Peace Delegation from Pakistan to India (21-23 January 2009)

South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR), and the South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA) joined hands and organised a visit by prominent civil society members from Pakistan to New Delhi to exchange views with political leaders, professionals, cultural activists and members of the media, both print and electronic, at organised meetings, round table discussions and briefings.

The delegation from Pakistan, consisting of 20 social activists, journalists and intellectuals under the banner 'Aman Karvan' i.e. 'Peace Delegation,' symbolically crossed the Wagah border on 21 January 2009 and travelled to New Delhi from Amritsar.

The Aman Karvan met several important political leaders, such as Comrade A.B. Bardhan National Secretary of Communist Party of India, Mr. Karan Singh Foreign Affairs Minister of Congress, Jayanti Natrajan Spokesperson of Congress, Comrade Prakash Karat General Secretary Communist Party of India (Marxist), and Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav, National President of Samajwadi Party and officials, including the foreign secretary of India Mr. Shiv Shankar Menon.

A round table discussion with some influential political strategists and media personalities was organized by SAHR. This was followed by a public meeting, a discussion with the Editor's Guild and a press conference.

Reaching the maximum number of intellectuals, political leaders, media personalities, students, and cultural activists was a priority objective. The wider media coverage, public meetings, engagements with political personalities, government officials and individuals helped the delegation to convey the message of peace to a large number of people. A major outcome of the Aman Karvan was that it presented an alternative perspective of ordinary citizens from Pakistan to the Indians, and sought to counter the war hysteria created on both sides.





Peace Delegation from India to Pakistan (22-25 February 2009)

The delegation from India visited Lahore and Islamabad reciprocating the visit of the Pakistani delegation. The delegation met a cross section of Pakistani society, including Cabinet ministers, leaders of major political parties, representatives of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry and civil society members.

The thirteen member Indian peace delegation comprising of professionals, met for a round table conference with the Pakistani representatives, to discuss how to reduce the tensions between both countries, to encourage people-to-people contact and to engage political leaders in creating a cooperative environment. The economic paradigm leading to inequality and insecurity was also discussed and short and long term strategies elaborated.

SAHR Activities

SAHR Strategic Planning and Evaluation Meeting

The goal of the strategic planning process was to assist in realigning SAHR's programme in the light of changing regional and national contexts. The workshop also helped to operationalise the organisation's programme for the next three years in keeping with SAHR's goal and objectives.

The three day workshop was attended by SAHR Bureau members, a few former Bureau members, management staff, and SAHR members. The workshop commenced with a discussion of the findings and recommendations of the evaluation team, and was followed by an in-depth analysis of the internal and external context in which SAHR operates. Key result areas and feasible outcomes were identified, and a detailed analysis of the organisation's stakeholders was carried out through group sessions.



Lawyer Training Programme in Afghanistan

South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR) and the Afghan Peace and Democracy Act (APDA) organized and conducted a three-day training programme from 11-13 July, 2009 for the lawyers of the Independent Bar Association of Afghanistan and human rights activists from Afghan civil society organizations. The Afghan Organization for Human Rights & Environmental Protection (AOHREP) collaborated in the organization of the training. The objectives of this event were to train Afghan lawyers in basic advocacy and court procedures, constitutional law, international human rights law, special procedures of the United Nations, public interest litigation, liaison with related agencies in the justice system and dealing with civil society and the press.



A total of 35 participants including six participants from provinces participated as trainees and trainers during the three day workshop. Advocate Kamran Arif and Advocate Riaz Ahmad Khan from Pakistan were among the trainers at this workshop. Some of the subjects focused on during the training were the constitutional and legal opportunities in Afghanistan, basic human rights and the Afghan judicial system, the role of the Afghan informal justice system in dispute resolution, etc. Also general awareness issues on gender discrimination and Afghan traditionalism, Afghan women's constitutional rights, the role of Afghan civil society organizations in awareness raising campaigns, Afghan women lawyers and their future role, especially for Afghan women, etc. were raised and discussed at the workshop.



Human Rights Mainstreaming Workshop in the Maldives

In response to a request from the Human Rights Ambassador for Maldives Mohammed Latheef, SAHR conducted a workshop with members of government, parliament and civil society to identify the needs and priorities for the protection and promotion of human rights in the Maldives.

The workshop was conducted on 26 - 27 May 2009 with the purpose of outlining an implementation strategy for the Maldives National Human Rights Mainstreaming project. The consultation sought to assess the provisions and deficiencies in human rights protection and promotion in the Maldives, as well as the objectives and indicators for any interventions through an exercise with key stakeholders. The consultation was also attended by Dr. Purna Sen, Head of Human Rights for the Commonwealth Secretariat. The consultation focused on three main areas - Political Conduct; Governance and the Legal System; Awareness; and Institutional Capacity. It explored the issue of sensitising policy makers and legislators on human rights, empowering the human rights ambassador, and promoting ownership of the mainstreaming process by key political party leaders.

Commitment was made at the workshop by all the participants to work towards the successful initiation of a national human rights mainstreaming strategy in the Maldives and this led to the development of preliminary action plans.

ADVOCACY & MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

SAHR issued press releases, memorandums to relevant authorities and alerts on its website to flag issues illustrating human rights violations that prompted collective action at varying levels, national, regional and international.

A few of the statements prepared by SAHR are given below:

1. Assassination of Lasantha Wickrematunge

SAHR's statement published in national newspapers in all seven countries vehemently condemned the assassination of a leading journalist in Sri Lanka, and called for an independent, unbiased investigation, and for perpetrators to be brought to justice.

2. On the completion of free and fair multiparty elections in Maldives

SAHR released a statement applauding the people of Maldives, who together to take their country towards democratisation after three decades of one party rule. SAHR congratulated Mohamed 'Anni' Nasheed, in a letter which advocated for participatory democracy and for women's equal rights.

3. Situation in Pakistan's Swat region

SAHR expressed deep concern over the plight of civilians in the Swat region after Pakistan began major military operations against the Taliban in May when large numbers of civilians had to flee their homes in the valley, and many non-combatant civilians were trapped in the areas around Kalam.

4. Requesting the Government of Bangladesh to carry out an impartial and transparent inquiry and fair trial for all BDR personnel

SAHR called upon the Government of Bangladesh for an impartial and transparent inquiry for all BDR personnel following the violence in the Bangladesh Rifles Headquarters on 25th February 2009.

5. Sentencing of Aung San Suu Kyi

SAHR's statement condemning the sentencing of the Burmese leader and Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi on her being sentenced to 18 months house arrest. SAHR strongly deplored the sentence which was a terrible blow to a courageous woman, who remains a symbol of principled and dignified leadership.

6. Attacks on civilians and UN officials in Afghanistan

SAHR strongly condemned the Taliban attack on civilians and UN officials in Kabul in October 2009. The statement pointed out that the attack on the UN would significantly reduce the ability of aid workers to assist Afghans and called upon relevant authorities to take all necessary measures to protect aid workers.

SAHR reports and publications have been used for multiple purposes. They have been sent to relevant government departments, civil society organizations, international and national think tanks, and disseminated on several occasions such as at during the India-Pakistan peace exchange visits at workshops organized by SAHR, such as on Right to Transparency in Governance in Bangladesh and in other public forums such as discussions on best practices for free and fair elections held in Colombo. The report on Baluchistan has been shared with researchers, inputted into HRCP's website and sent to major libraries as well.

SAHR'S PROGRAMMES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

SAHR Bangladesh

SAHR organised a regional workshop on Right to Transparent Governance which was held on 21-22 April, 2009 in BRAC Centre INN, Dhaka.

SAHR Bangladesh submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister and other relevant authorities calling for an impartial and transparent inquiry into and fair trial for all BDR personnel. It compiled human rights reports and sent alerts protesting discrimination against minorities, land grabbing, ship breaking, and imprisonment of an Mro community leader. It reported on the ongoing activities of HUJI, a militant organization banned in Bangladesh, and supported the campaign for the Right to Information.

SAHR India

SAHR India in cooperation with Anhad, an Indian human rights organisation, arranged the visit of the Pakistani peace delegation to India. After the visit of this delegation, SAHR organized a similar visit of an Indian peace delegation to Pakistan. On 27th February 2009, a press conference was organized after the return of the Indian peace delegation from Pakistan. Mr. Kuldip Nayar addressed the press conference held at the Indian Women's Press Corps.

SAHR India organized a meeting of the visiting Sri Lankan delegation with faculty members of JNU in India.

A SAHR Bureau Member, Ms. Kamla Bhasin, mobilized activists and participated in a candle light vigil at Wagah border on 14-15 August which was followed by a Press Conference on the Indo-Pak relations in the Press Club of India on 18 August 2009. Ms. Bhasin also participated as a panellist in the Lok Sabha TV Programme on the Indo-Pak issue and represented SAHR in the talk show hosted by noted activist Swami Agnivesh.

SAHR India organized a Protest March against the gruesome killing of a North Eastern girl student in Delhi and mobilized the youth and students to join the march. The South Asian Women's Day celebration was organised by SAHR India along with other organizations on 30th November in Delhi.

SAHR Pakistan

SAHR Pakistan in collaboration with SAHR India prepared a number of questionnaires for the RTG workshop in Bangladesh.

A report was compiled and completed on a Study on the Use of Religion by the Majority. The study covered experiences of women and minorities with a specific focus on how laws were used to discriminate against religious minorities.

SAHR Pakistan completed and printed the Fact Finding Report on IDPs in Baluchistan. The field work was done by a team of surveyors under the guidance of the Quetta office of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. A total of 500 copies of the report have now been published and disseminated.

SAHR Pakistan also developed a concept note for the monitoring of elections and for undertaking a number of activities under this heading, which mainly involved, research, advocacy and dissemination of information.

SAHR Nepal

SAHR Nepal organised a general meeting with human rights activists and civil society members to discuss the prevailing human rights situation in the country and actions that could be taken to improve it.

SAHR Nepal regularly sent out alerts to the secretariat on the situation of human rights in Nepal.



PUBLICATIONS 2009

IDPs in Baluchistan

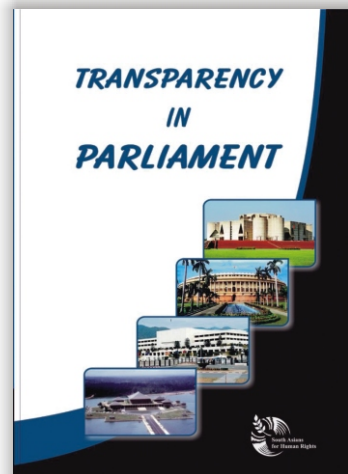
This report aims to raise awareness on the condition of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) within Pakistan, with a particular focus on Baluchistan. It assesses the progress made with regard to the implementation of Government commitments and points out gaps where further action is needed.



Transparency in Parliament

This publication examines the extent to which the debates and decisions of the parliaments of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are transparent and open.

ISBN 978-955-1489-10-6



SAHR Newsletter

SAHR's actions in defence of human rights was disseminated through a newsletter to SAHR's membership, regional NGOs, institutions and human rights defenders involved in promoting and protecting human rights and democracy in the region and other civil society organizations. The newsletter sought to keep the members, and other relevant organisations and individuals informed so that they could respond to violations of human rights and raise human rights concerns in the region.

LOOKING AHEAD

SAHR's three-year strategy reflects its commitment to take the organisation into a new phase in South Asia. SAHR's vision guides the organisation's goal to contribute to a greater realisation among the citizens of South Asia on the importance of participatory democracy, pluralism, justice and peace. Based on its vision, goal and purpose, SAHR identified three programme areas which will commence from 2010:

1. State, Democracy and Citizen's Participation

Engaging in consultations with parliamentarians, citizen's groups, policy makers and scholars, working in collaboration with other human rights defenders to monitor abuse of power, and to foster transparency within political parties, SAHR hopes to strengthen participation of citizens in free and fair elections, to promote greater accountability and transparency of governments, and make the judiciary more effective in the protection of human rights in the countries of the South Asian region.

2. Impunity and Conflict

SAHR will continue to question the impunity of state agencies through ongoing dialogues, campaigns and sustained advocacy for reform of laws, and policies that promote impunity. The organisation's activities will include consultations with stakeholders on impunity of law enforcement agencies, under emergency legislation, in armed conflict, and resulting from imposition of policies. It is hoped that these consultations will lead to a consensus on national protocols for security forces.

3. Displacement

The objective of the programme is to secure the rights of the displaced persons, to respect their dignity and providing proper care, maintenance, rehabilitation and ensuring their right to secure, sustainable return to their original homes. The organisation's work in this area will concentrate on fact finding missions and studies on IDP related issues, facilitating meetings, drafting and circulating alerts and statements and disseminating draft regional protocols among stakeholders.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The SAHR Bureau:

Twenty bureau members were elected by members present at the Annual General Meeting held in Lahore in 2007. They act as the organisation's executive body providing policy and programme guidance to SAHR staff based in the secretariat and at the national level.



AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Abdul Rahman Hotaki

Director, Afghan Organisation of Human Rights and Environmental Protection

BHUTAN

Mr. Tek Nath Rizal

Human Rights Activist

BANGLADESH

Dr. Hameeda Hossain

Chairperson of Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) and a leading women's rights activist.

Ms. Shaheen Anam

Executive Director of Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF). She is closely linked to the women's movement in Bangladesh and is a human rights and women rights activist and a strong advocate for the rights of marginalized communities.

Ms. Sara Zaker

Executive Director Asiatic Marketing Communications Limited. An actress since 1973, she is a member of Nagorik Naya Sampradaya, a leading theatre group of Bangladesh. She was the chairperson of Group Theatre Federation, Bangladesh

INDIA

Mr. I. K. Gujral

Former Prime Minister of India and Former Foreign Minister of India; human rights activist; and former Chancellor of the Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad

Ms. Kamla Bhasin

A social activist and feminist, she is also the advisor of SANGAT.

Ms. Vrinda Grover

Director of Multi-Action Research Group; a Human Rights Lawyer and Activist.

Mr. Hanif Lakdawala

A social activist and the founder of the social organization Sanchetana

NEPAL

Dr. Devendra Raj Panday

Former Finance Secretary and Former Finance Minister of Nepal. He is also the Chairperson of the Rural Self-Reliance Development Center (RSDC)

Mr. Vijay Singh

Advocate of the Supreme Court of Nepal and a human rights activist

Mr. Keshab Mathema

Former UN country representative for UNICEF

PAKISTAN

Mr. I A Rehman

Secretary General of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan Secretariat. He is a leading human rights advocate, and a prominent art critic. He is also a founding member of the Pakistan-India Peoples' Forum for Peace and Democracy. He was awarded the Ramon Magsaysay award for 2004.

Prof. Salima Hashmi

Dean of the School of Visual Arts at the Beacon House National University. She is also a council member of HRCP and an activist, a painter, art educationist, writer and curator. She is a recipient of The President's Award for Pride of Performance, Pakistan.

Mr. Salman Raja

A lawyer and human rights activist, he has also taught at the Lahore University of Management Sciences in Lahore

Ms. Zohra Yusuf

Council Member of the HRCP, of which she has been a member since 1988, she has also served as its Secretary-General and Vice Chair for Sindh. As a freelance journalist she writes on human rights and media-related issues.

SRI LANKA

Mr. J. C. Weliamuna

An advocate of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka and a leading human rights lawyer he is currently the Executive Director of Transparency International, Sri Lanka

Ms. Sithie Tiruchelvam

A lawyer of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka, she is presently a Senior Partner of Tiruchelvam Associates and is also the interim chairperson of the Foundation for Peace (FFP) network.

Mr. K. S. Ratnavel

An Attorney-at-law and human rights activist.

Ms. Shreen Saroor

A development worker, she was named by the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children as a Voices of Courage Awardee.

SAHR Secretariat and National Coordinators

The SAHR Secretariat in Colombo, Sri Lanka provides overall support to the running of the organisation and also coordinates work at the national level.

Ms. Shiranthi Jayatilaka - Executive Director

Ms. Nirosha Priyankarage - Accountant

Ms. Deekshya Illangasinghe - Communications Coordinator

Ms. Brindhini Pieris - Coordinator

Mr. Roshan Manjula - Office Assistant

National Coordinators in Dhaka, Kathmandu, Lahore and New Delhi ensure contributions from their countries for SAHR regional programmes and projects, and also coordinate local-level activities

Bangladesh Ms. Irfath Iva

India Mr. Dhananjay Tripathi

Pakistan Ms. Hina Shaikh

Nepal Ms. Tulika Jha

South Asians for Human Rights

**Financial statements for the year ended
31st March 2009**

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT

TO THE MEMBERS OF SOUTH ASIANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

1. Report on the Financial Statements

We have audited the financial statements of **South Asians For Human Rights**, which comprise the Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2009, the statement of Income & Expenditure and Cash Flow Statement for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes.

2. Members Responsibility for the Financial Statements

The Bureau Members are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Sri Lanka Accounting Standards. This responsibility includes: designing, implementing and maintaining internal controls relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatements, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies, and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

3. Scope of Audit and Basis of Opinion

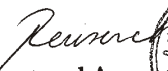
Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Sri Lanka Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.


An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of financial statements.

We have obtained all the information and explanations, which to the best of our knowledge and belief were necessary for the purposes of our audit. We therefore believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

4. Opinion

In our opinion, so far as appears from our examination, the Organization maintained proper accounting records for the year ended 31st December 2009, and the Financial Statements give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the organizations; as at 31st December 2009, and its surplus and cash flows for the year then ended, in accordance with Sri Lanka Accounting Standards.


Chartered Accountants
Date : 21/04/2010
Colombo 02.





South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR)

South Asians for Human Rights - (SAHR)
No. 345/18, Kuruppu Road, (17/7 Kuruppu Lane), Colombo - 08

Balance Sheet as at 31st December, 2009

Chairperson

I.K. Gujral (India)

Co-Chairperson

Dr. Hameeda Hossain

Bureau Members:

Bangladesh

Sara Zaker
Shaheen Anam

India

Kamla Bhasin
Vrinda Grover
Hanif Lakdawala

Nepal

Dr. Devendra Raj Panday
Keshab Mathema
Vijay Singh

Pakistan

I.A. Rehman
Zohra Yusuf
Salima Hashmi
Salman Raja

Sri Lanka

Sithie Tiruchelvam
J.C. Weliamuna
K.S. Ratnavei
Shreen Saroor

Bhutan

Tek Nath Rizal

Afganistan

Abdul Rahman Hotaki


	Notes	2009		2008	
		LKR	USD	LKR	USD
Assets					
Non Current Assets					
Property, Plant & Equipment	1	324,652	2,819	466,250	5,701
Intangible assets		50,417	438	-	-
Current Assets:					
Balance Receivables	2	278,573	2,419	535,021	4,751
Payment In Advance	3	165,500	1,437	128,250	1,140
Cash & Cash Equivalents	4	35,217,214	305,838	29,673,407	263,483
		35,661,286	309,694	30,336,678	269,374
Total Assets		36,036,356	312,951	30,802,928	275,074
Fund & Liabilities					
Fund					
Accumulated Fund					
Balance Brought Forward		30,130,865	269,107	19,722,444	182,548
Net Surplus for the Year		5,319,951	41,356	10,408,421	86,559
Effect on Retranslation		-	(2,653)	-	-
		35,450,816	307,809	30,130,865	269,107
Non Current Liabilities					
Retirement Benefit Obligations	5	324,750	2,877	292,270	2,595
Current Liabilities					
Balance Payable - India		10,586	92	10,586	94
Accrued Expenses	6	218,907	1,901	369,207	3,278
Bank Overdraft	7	31,297	272		
		260,790	2,265	379,793	3,372
Total Fund & Liabilities		36,036,356	312,951	30,802,928	275,074

The above Balance Sheet is to be read in conjunction with the accounting policies and notes to the Financial Statements appear on pages 05 to 10 which form an integral part of these financial statements

We certify that the above Balance Sheet and the related Statement of Income and Expenditure to the best of our knowledge and belief contains true accounts of the Surplus and Cash & Cash Equivalent of the Organization.

Approved and Signed for and on behalf of the organization.


Executive Director


Director

Date : 21/04/2010
Colombo 08

South Asians for Human Rights - (SAHR)

No. 345/18, Kuruppu Road, (17/7 Kuruppu Lane), Colombo - 08

Statement of Income & Expenditure for the year ended 31st December 2009

	Notes	2009		2008	
		LKR	USD	LKR	USD
<u>Income</u>					
Grants	8	19,494,000	171,000	18,363,675	166,413.00
Other Income	9	1,136,535	3,288	1,868,660	9,153.84
Total Income		20,630,535	174,288	20,232,335	175,567
<u>Less: Expenses</u>					
Programme Expenses	10	9,545,472	82,895.98	4,244,285	38,445.17
Staff Support expenses	11	4,213,231	36,589.07	3,979,168	36,059.53
Office Expenses	12	1,551,881	13,447.34	1,600,461	14,503.62
Total Expenditure		15,310,584	132,932	9,823,914	89,008
Net Surplus for the Year		5,319,951	41,355.66	10,408,421	86,559

South Asians for Human Rights - (SAHR)
No. 345/18, Kuruppu Road, (17/7 Kuruppu Lane), Colombo - 08
Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 31st December 2009

	2009		2008	
	LKR	USD	LKR	USD
<u>Cash Flow from Operating Activities</u>				
Net surplus for the year	5,319,951	41,356	10,408,421	86,559
<u>Adjustment for</u>				
Gratuity provision	78,480	682	102,362	928
Depreciations	224,078	1,946	227,235	2,610
Interest Income	(377,789)	(3,281)	(465,081)	(4,812)
Loss on Disposal of Fixed Assets	-	-	6,888	144
Operating surplus before changes in working capital	5,244,720	40,702	10,279,825	85,428
<u>Changes in Working Capital</u>				
(Increase) / Decrease in Receivables	219,198	2,034	129,854	1,447
Increase/ (Decrease) in Payables	(150,300)	(1,377)	(481,308)	(4,594)
	68,898	657	(351,454)	(3,148)
Net Cash Flow from Operating Activities	5,313,618	41,360	9,928,371	82,280
Gratuity Paid	(46,000)	(399)	-	-
	5,267,618	40,960	9,928,371	82,280
<u>Cash Flow from Investing Activities</u>				
Acquisition of Property, Plant & Equipment	(132,897)	(1,168)	(10,000)	(94)
Interest Received	377,789	3,281	465,081	4,812
Net Cash Flow from Investing Activities	244,892	2,113	455,081	4,718
<u>Cash Flow from Financing Activities</u>				
	-	-	-	-
Net Increase / (Decrease) in Cash & Cash Equivalents	5,512,510	43,073	10,383,452	86,998
Effect of foreign currency transaction	-	(1,622)	-	(1,346)
Cash & Cash Equivalents at the Beginning of the Year	29,673,407	264,113	19,289,957	178,462
Cash & Cash Equivalents at the End of the Year	35,185,917	305,564	29,673,407	264,113
<u>Analysis of the Cash and Cash Equivalents shown in balance sheet</u>				
USD FD A/C - 91502638005	5,102,675	44,313	4,905,413	95,090
USD FD A/C - 91502638006	-	-	1,231,465	43,557
USD FD A/C - 91502638007	9,861,052	85,637	11,642,970	103,383
LKR Savings A/C - 18 1502638 01	462,662	4,018	739,634	10,935
Cash in Hand - Foreign Currency	570,568	4,955	249,453	1,553
Current A/C	(31,297)	(272)	174,946	2,215
Dollar A/C	19,214,207	166,862	10,709,084	6,568
Petty Cash	6,049	53	20,442	182
	35,185,917	305,566	29,673,407	263,483

South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR)
No. 345/18, Kuruppu Road, (17/7 Kuruppu Lane), Colombo - 08
Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2009

1. Principle Accounting Policies

1.1 Basis of Accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles and accounting standards laid down by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka which have been applied consistently on a historical cost basis, with no adjustments being made for inflationary factors affecting the financial statements.

Previous year figures and phrases have been re-arranged wherever necessary to conform to the current presentation.

2. Assets & the Basis of Their Valuation

2.1 Property, Plant & Equipments

The Property, Plant & Equipment are stated at cost of Acquisition / Transfers less depreciation. Assets received as donations during the year have been capitalized at cost determined by the association and corresponding figures are shown in the fund account created for the purpose.

Depreciation

Provision for depreciation is calculated by using straight - line method on the cost of valuation of all property, plant & equipments in order to write off such amounts over the estimated useful economic life of such assets, from the time the assets became available for use.

The estimated useful lives of assets are as follows.

Office Equipments	Over 4 Years
Furniture & Fittings	Over 4 Years
Computers	Over 4 Years

3. Income

Donation income and interest income are recognized on cash basis.

4. **Expenditure**

All Expenditure incurred during the year has been charged to the statement of income & expenditure on accrual basis.

5. **Foreign Currency Transaction**

All foreign currency transactions are converted in to Sri Lanka Rupees at the rate of exchange prevailing at the time the transactions were effected.

All monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies have been translated into local currencies, at the rate of exchange ruling at the balance sheet date while all non monetary items are reported at the rate prevailing at the time transitions were effected.

The exchange differences arising there from have been dealt with in the statement of income & expenditure statement.