

## Lawyers & Doctors for Human Rights

### Who we are:

LDHR is a grass-roots NGO dedicated to civilians in crisis with the intent to stop human rights violations and assist those who require services to seek justice and rehabilitation.

We originally started as a group of lawyers and physicians devoting efforts to document the atrocities taking place in crises with an emphasis on ex-detainees and torture survivors. Through targeted trainings and mentoring by international experts, we were able to deepen and diversify our own expertise in medical-legal documentation of torture and SGBV. Multiple phases of this project produced committees, attracted new members, and we have developed a more organized way of collaborating to obtain justice and fulfill the mission of preserving human rights for all.

LDHR is growing fast and expanding its activities, while continuing to build and share knowledge and expertise.

### Lawyers & Doctors: Working Together:

In order to have a strong case, the physician documenter must first obtain informed consent from the survivor. The documenter must then gather the medical history, document his/her allegations of what endured during the detention, conduct a physical evaluation and psychological assessment, set up the appropriate rehabilitation mechanisms, and determine a final determination.

It is also important that the lawyer counterpart has basic knowledge of medical terminology and forensic medicine in order to understand the context of the medical documentation process. The lawyer will use this documentation as evidence in court for prosecutions of perpetrators and to obtain redress for survivors, hence emphasizing the importance of cooperation and teamwork amongst the physicians and lawyers in order to create strong cases to achieve justice.

# LDHR

## **Our Values**

Humanity is the core value, while Justice, Freedom, and Non-discrimination spin around it.

## **Our Vision:**

To be a pioneer in preventing and documenting violence and torture incidents, and working for justice reaching a society that is aware of its roles, position, its rights and duties.

## **Our Mission:**

We persist in lifting our capabilities up and developing our systems to meet international standards.

We also follow the best practices to document abuses and support survivors.

We cooperate with effective actors seeking to fulfill justice in all its dimensions and axes

Furthermore, we always work in pursuit of promoting and disseminating universally adopted concepts of human rights, anti-violence and anti-torture.

## **Our Goals**

We aim to:

1. Improve accessibility to survivors and develop a system for referral
2. Enhance the effective engagement of NGOs for common interest in the field of transitional justice.
3. Upskill and develop the capacity of our network to keep improving the efficiency.
4. Advocate on the mutual principles and goals between LDHR and
5. Raise awareness of the community on Human Rights violations.
6. Break down stigma and taboos, ensuring special care to survivors and help them to recover.
7. Augment the justice process through creating strong evidences based on medical and legal documentation.

## **Our Programs:**

### **HR Violations Documentation for Survivors of Torture:**

According to international laws, States should be prosecuting perpetrators of torture, sexual violence, and other atrocities. The role of human rights CSOs is to document these crimes in order to demand accountability.

LDHR continues its core mission of high-quality documentation of torture and sexual violence against adults and children, developing the cohorts as mentors and trainers, and expanding its influence and reach through partnerships and knowledge exchange with local and regional players.

LDHR conducts documentation through a holistic documentation form developed by experts in forensic medicine according to Istanbul Protocol.

The documentation is being used to raise awareness and draw attention to particular abuses taking place in conflict zones, advocate for reform and ensure that survivors have access to necessary rehabilitative treatment. LDHR has developed a referral and case management system to help survivors access the appropriate services.

### **Program for Raising Awareness on Human Rights Issues:**

LDHR is aware of culturally-imposed stigma and taboos, specifically regarding sexual violence against adults and children. Therefore, it is designing and developing curricula to train first responders with complete understanding of the cultural context.

LDHR aims to augment the number of first responders. This will play a crucial role in not only broaching the victims, ensuring confidentiality, assisting them through the documentation process, but also in raising awareness in the community about HR issues and the importance of speaking up when an atrocity has occurred.

It is our role as well as the role of active civil society members to promote understanding of the plight of the brutal psychological morbidity on the survivor, and dampen the deep impact of the trauma survivor's experience.

Based on the data we have collected and what has been published by other bodies working in the same field, we disseminate human rights principles within the community and design and publish public reports regarding human rights issues.

### **Transitional Justice Program:**

The next step will be to enable the lawyers to build judicial prosecution files for the courts based on acquired knowledge and expertise from intensive training on legal procedures.

LDHR allocates much of its efforts to fill the gaps in the axes of transitional justice by gathering effective parties working to coordinate roundtables and distribute roles among activists and CSOs based on interest and expertise.

With participation of partners and mentorship of international experts, we conduct realistic analysis of what has been done by the active parties in this field and precedence from other States' experiences (especially other Arab countries) in order to a build a general plan for Syria built on contributions from diverse stakeholders.

### **Our Partners:**

We have a vast network of relationships and partnerships with local and international organizations.

Our partners list includes – but not limited to:

- ✓ UNCOI for Syria – Synergy for Justice (a British NGO) and other international partners.
- ✓ UOSSM – Human Rights Guardians – Adalah (Syrian Human Rights Association) – AID (Association of Integrity and Development) – Youth of Change foundation – Civilians for Justice and Peace.

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