



ICRD Monthly Update

August 1, 2017

Talking Intolerance on the Hill

In July, ICRD's President Emeritus, Dr. Douglas Johnston, testified before the *House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade* about the intolerant content found in the public school textbooks in Saudi Arabia. Together with well-known religious freedom advocates, Nina Shea of the Hudson Center, David Weinburg at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, and the Hon. Frank Wolf, Dr. Johnston held a candid discussion with lawmakers about the state of violent and intolerant language in the Kingdom's national curriculum.



During the hearing, Dr. Johnston described the findings of our landmark 2012 evaluation of the Saudi religious and social science curriculum, including modest improvements and content requiring additional reform. The baseline established in that report will serve ICRD's upcoming efforts to assess the implementation of Riyadh's policy to remove the remaining religious intolerance and other inflammatory content, which will also allow for a pilot study of the impact of these materials on millions of Muslim students outside of the Kingdom.

A Bright Spot in the Yemeni Crisis

While many international organizations have been forced to cease their activities in Yemen due to the enduring violence, tremendous health crises and lack of institutional partners, ICRD has continued to engage at the level of civil society. Working with local organizations such as Partners Yemen and the Dar Al-Salaam Organization, our programs have empowered religious and other community peacemakers to resolve conflicts and address pressing local needs.

ICRD's new White Paper, [Empowering Yemeni Peacemakers: The Intersection of Conflict Resolution & CVE](#), details the far-reaching impact of our work in nine Governates and the capital Sana'a. Workshops initially sought to inform traditional conflict resolution mechanisms with formal methodologies, culminating in local projects to resolve issues identified by participants. These trainees, however, have extended the program's reach beyond its original scope by implementing additional workshops and community projects, directly affecting more than 1,000 Yemenis to date.

ICRD is proud to report that the program has demonstratively increased the capacity of locals to independently resolve crises. Training participants in the conflict-prone governorate of Abyan, for example, involved youth who were at risk for recruitment into al-Qaeda in building much-needed water infrastructure. This reduced an ongoing source of conflict and contributed to a sense of collaboration and local ownership. Feedback from the project is indicative of its success:

“Most Abyan youth were thinking that the militant groups were better than the government, because they provide basic services for the people...when the project team provided water to people, this proved that their thinking was wrong, and that the community participation, CSOs, and youth can achieve even what authorities did not achieve for a decade...”

Please consider supporting our work in these challenging environments.

Warm regards,



James Patton
President



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