

July 2009

Title: Pilot Study Tour on the British Criminal Justice System for Iranian Judges and Lawyers

Date: 19-23 January 2009

Location: Nottingham, London

Unit: Short Courses and Training

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Project Summary

Between 19-23 January 2009, HRLC organised a one-week study tour for Iranian judges and lawyers covering different aspects of the British Criminal Justice System and related human rights issues, through a combination of seminars, study visits and practitioner dialogues. Participants spent four days at the University of Nottingham, and one day in London.

Objectives

The study tour aimed to advance participant's understanding of the British criminal justice system and to provide them with specialized knowledge of British best practice and experience with respect to:

- The framework to protect human rights, particularly the rights of people undergoing investigation, prosecution and sentencing within the UK;
- Police powers and the rights of the accused;
- The right to a fair trial, miscarriages of justice and victim support;
- Sentencing and human rights.

Participants

The study tour was attended by 8 participants, including the Deputy General Prosecutor of Tehran Province, the head of the Legal Counsellors Department of the Judiciary and judges at the Public Administration Court of Tehran.

Activities

The programme included four thematic modules: 1) British framework to protect human rights; 2) Police powers and the rights of the accused; 3) The right to a fair trial, miscarriages of justice and victim support; 4) Sentencing and human rights, with each module composed of seminars and study visits. In addition, the programme included a number of practitioner dialogues, which gave participants the opportunity to engage with members of the judiciary and legal professionals.

Method

The seminars provided an in-depth theoretical grounding in the subject area, while also highlighting the realities of practice, key challenges and solutions adopted to uphold the human rights of those undergoing investigation, prosecution and sentencing within the UK. The training method in the seminars was highly participatory and interactive, making extensive use of relevant case studies, discussion and comparative analysis.

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Reciprocal learning occurred throughout sessions with the participants and trainers exchanging information, experiences and professional skills with one another. Through study visits and meetings with Practitioners participants complemented their theoretical knowledge with practical insight into the working practices of key institutions of the British criminal justice system.

Speakers

Seminars and study visits were conducted by experienced academics and senior representatives of criminal justice institutions, including members of the judiciary, a barrister, a police inspector and representatives of the Criminal Cases Review Commission, the Crown Prosecution Service and Her Majesty's Prison Service.

Visits

Study visits took place on site at the following institutions:

- HMP Lowdham Grange;
- Nottingham Magistrate Court;
- Nottingham Crown Court;
- Nottingham Victim and Witness Support Service;
- Nottinghamshire Crown Prosecution Service;
- Court of Appeal, London;
- Judicial Studies Board, London.

Outcomes

The outcomes of the study tour included:

- Seven study visits to relevant British Criminal Justice organs;
- Seven class-room based seminars on the British criminal justice system led by Senior experts and Practitioners in UK criminal justice;
- Four practitioner dialogues with members of the judiciary and legal professionals;
- Comprehensive compilation of course materials of all activities of the study tour, including study tour programme, speaker profiles, seminar handouts, in paper form and on USB memory stick;
- Audio recordings of the seminars;
- Debrief and feedback session with the HRLC Co-Director, HRLC Research and Programmes Coordinator and the participants;
- A satisfaction questionnaire.