



النهضة العربية للديمقراطية والتنمية  
Arab Renaissance for Democracy & Development

# Renaissance, Resilience, and Upholding Humanitarian Principles

ARDD Annual Report

**2023**

## Table of Contents

A Letter from the Chief Executive Director	3
2023 in Numbers	4
<b>THE RENAISSANCE STRATEGIC CENTER</b>	<b>5</b>
Arab Transformations	5
Women and Youth Empowerment Programs	6
Social Protection and Economic Development (SPED)	7
The Question of Palestine	10
Migration, Forced Displacement, and Statelessness in the Arab world	11
<b>Programs</b>	<b>11</b>
Women's Access to Justice (WAJ)	11
Good Governance	12
Education	12
Protection and Relief:	12
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>12</b>

# A Letter from the Chief Executive Director



“The year 2023 was a year in which our principles, values, and will-power as civil society, academia, the private sector, and the media were tested, proving our ability to work together and with the public sector on key strategic issues in the Arab world, and to address the developments of the Question of Palestine and their impact on pressing issues such as social protection, the rule of law, and access to justice. In 2023, we tackled the details of economic and human development and discussed areas of fighting poverty and unemployment, promoting domestic investment, and supporting the principles of goodwill, as well as seeking to ensure accountability through the provision of legal services in addition to direct relief programs for many families in Jordan, our main area of operations.

Moreover, we worked to harness culture and arts to promote community solidarity, and to help children, youth, women, and refugees increase their participation, noting that the war on Palestine rendered us momentarily unable to express fear, pain, and loss that befall our region and affected all of us. However, this year in particular proved to us that we are part of a team and an organization that do not deviate from their positions and ambitions. The messages of experts and specialists in the corridors of our center and networks, and the aspirations of our young trainees were a compass that confirmed we were on the right track. In the face of fear and media blackout, our organization was adamant to stand for what is right and amplify the voices of all of us.

This year specifically highlighted the important role of civil society, networks, and coalitions, and the localization of humanitarian action in responding to many needs on the ground, in addition to demanding a greater role for shared international responsibility in the absence of global justice, and the enforcement of international human rights laws. We were humbled to see the amazing drive of our networks, and their impact on the community and national levels.

The role of government and official agencies and donor partners must also be commended, as effective coordination and communication with the Ministries of Planning, Social Development, Interior Affairs, Justice, Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research, Labor, Entrepreneurship, and Digital Economy, the Municipality of Amman and other municipalities, the Jordan Enterprise Development Corporation, the Jordanian Businessmen Association, the partnership with the University of Jordan, and over forty local member associations of the Jordan National NGO Forum (JONAF), to enable ARDD to provide support, development programs, services, and events to reach more than **140,000 beneficiaries** including children, youth, women and girls, most vulnerable groups of refuge

# 2023 in Numbers

Nearly **100** events and meetings in various governorates of Jordan, abroad, online and offline.

**Holding an international conference, two regional conferences, two national workshops, a national meeting, and multiple international and regional online dialogue events.**

Honoring **24** leading companies in the Kingdom and announcing the signing of the “Memorandum of Goodwill: towards a common Goal”.

**Dozens of statements, six reports, policy papers, and research work within the work of the Renaissance Strategic Center.**

Preparation of **4** regional books.

More than **100** articles written by thought leaders in line with the themes of renaissance and transformations.

More than **5,000** participants of all ages in our various events and activities.

**Providing legal aid to more than 130,000 beneficiaries of refugees, migrants, and host communities across the Kingdom.**

**Three thousand beneficiaries in four governorates received relief aid.**

# The Renaissance Strategic Center

The Renaissance Strategic Center (RSC) is an independent think tank based in Jordan that operates within the organizational framework of the Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD). It was established by ARDD in 2018 to promote new thinking and policy initiatives to address the multiple challenges confronting the contemporary Arab world. The center is a house of knowledge that enables and hosts inclusive dialogue on various issues pertinent to the Arab world to stimulate innovative social solutions.

The Center is not affiliated with any government or political movement. It stands for systems of government committed to the elimination of poverty and inequality, for governance that is inclusive and free of discrimination, and that promotes the rights of marginalized and vulnerable groups. The Center is committed to a region free of external domination, a just resolution of the Question of Palestine, which remains a central concern of the Arab world, the peaceful resolution of all other conflicts, and policies that effectively address the climate emergency. The Center envisages an Arab world in which the rule of law is fully respected and applied to all who reside within it, with an emphasis on the individual rights of citizenship and participation, and the collective right to self-determination

## Arab Transformations

In response to the intellectual need related to Transformations and Arab Renaissance, and to explore possible Arab horizons, a new media platform called “Tamooda” was launched, named after a historic city in Morocco, [as an Arab intellectual media initiative launched to make the voice of the Arab world heard as it demands a renewed renaissance.](#) by a group of Arab thinkers partnering with ARDD, to be a platform for free opinion interested in understanding renewed and upcoming regional and global Arab issues and transformations, and to present a modern proposal on the visions and hopes of the renaissance, in both Arabic and English. As part of the “Renaissance writers” series, more than 100 articles were shared by thought leaders who are members of ARDD’s Board of Trustees, which included a myriad of intellectual and epistemological contributions in the framework of the quest to establish the new Arab renaissance project.

Meanwhile, ARDD’s Cultural Forum held several meetings that looked at the Jordanian and Arab cultural status, reviewing the Jordanian contribution to Arab drama during the month of Ramadan amid criticism, admiration, and analysis of the renaissance of drama, the diaspora in Palestinian novels, the transformations in the Arab world, and the renaissance project. The forum also witnessed the launch of the book “Messengers under the Buzz of Bullets: The Position of Contemporary Islamic Groups on International Organizations” by researcher Marwan Shehadeh.

As for activating the principles of localization of humanitarian action and following up on the achievements made in this field, ARDD, within the frame of JONAF and in partnership with UN Women and the Jordan Forum for International Organizations, launched [the base-line report for the localization of humanitarian action in Jordan](#), which provides an overview of the current state of local humanitarian efforts in Jordan in line with Jordan’s monitoring, assessment, accountability, and learning framework, and the commitments of the Global Grand Bargain.

## Women and Youth Empowerment Programs

The year 2023 witnessed unremitting efforts to activate the role of women and youth, their civic and political participation, and their role in addressing the relevant challenges among them, including environmental, societal, and economic challenges facing them and their communities. ARDD, in cooperation with the members of JONAF, and through its various networks and forums continues its efforts in advocating for fundamental issues that affect the renaissance and development of our societies, by holding meetings and conferences with official and international stakeholders, in addition to preparing studies and activating the role of civil society in supporting official authorities in developing the social and legal protection system, facilitating access to justice, and promoting the localization of humanitarian work and the participation of women in leading decision-making roles.

With regard to the civic and political participation of youth and women, the organization continued its efforts within the “New Generation” project, through the sessions of the Civic and Political Participation Policy Lab in Jordan, in partnership with the University of Jordan and its Studies Center and the participation of political science students, where [the outcomes of the sessions of the Youth Civic and Political Participation Policy Lab for the past year were reviewed, and the second phase of the lab](#) was launched. ARDD's young activists [also underwent a series of trainings to develop their skills and activate their civil and political participation](#) through researching the most important topics of interest to them, which included the war on Gaza, civil and political participation, freedom of expression, among others. In the same vein, the youth of Al-Nahda Network employed their efforts in advocacy to strengthen civic spaces by launching [a position paper on the cybercrime law](#). In addition to the youth coordination meetings, which examined the participation of youth between civil society programs and national trends and discussed the role of civil society in crisis management and response to natural disasters.

To identify the challenges that hinder civil workspaces and mitigate the impact of these obstacles, representatives of government agencies, civil society institutions and associations, as well as lawyers and media professionals sought to assess the reality of civil society and provide a new perspective on it, through a two-day strategic workshop organized by ARDD and JONAF, under the title [“A Partnership with a New Concept: Activating Trust and Good Governance”](#). The workshop was followed by several sessions and meetings and the creation of a working group to follow up on short, medium, and long-term goals through a special action plan for the coming years. A memorandum of understanding was also signed with Radio Al-Balad to start broadcasting joint programs that raise the voice of civil society and highlight its role, as well as highlighting the importance of civic and political participation for youth.

Meanwhile, ARDD continued its efforts to activate the localization of humanitarian action through cooperation with local associations within JONAF, through the Project to Enhance Women's Participation in Activating Security Council resolution 1325 (AMANI), which is implemented in partnership with UN Women within the framework of the Jordanian national plan to support resolution 1325 on the role of women in peace and security, and with the support of the governments of Cyprus, Canada, Finland, Norway, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The project saw the holding of the international conference [“Towards a New Approach to the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda in the Arab World”](#) in the presence of representatives of national, regional, and international civil society, as well as officers from the General Security Department and representatives of government sectors. The conference, which included many panel discussions and open dialogue sessions, addressed the most important issues and lessons learned from the region's experiences in implementing national plans for the women, security, and peace agenda, the extent to which they represent women, their role in community cohesion, the challenges facing the activation of local decision-making, and the capabilities necessary to respond to upcoming crises and climate challenges. Within the framework of the same project, two roundtable meetings were held to look into the role of civil society organizations in promoting the localization of Resolution 1325 and the role of civil society in the south in promoting community cohesion, in addition to holding field visits to more than twenty entities in all governorates of the Kingdom. There was also the Tawasul initiative, which was led by Al Nahda Women's Network, through which they visited Al-Amal Association for Development/Baqaa camp, and commemorated the 75th anniversary of the Nakba by visiting the Naya Association in Zarqa and meeting with the residents of the Hitteen, Zarqa, and Sukhna camps, in addition to a visit to the Jordanian Society for Family Welfare in Al-Hussein camp and the Whidat Camp Charitable Association, and a visit to the Women's Police Command.

In the same regard, Al Nahda Women's Network continued to hold its Bi-weekly Wednesday meetings, which covered several topics through which they highlighted how the Women Leaders Program could inspire change, the legal impact of women's freedom on society, the role of women's unions in Jordan as a key partner in sustainable development and the activation of civil society, the quota controversy and the dilemma of women's representation, in addition to considering the role of military women and strategic planning in developing the agenda for the protection of women in Jordan. Through the articles of Naqsh, the network also shed light on women's political participation in light of the vision of modernization, debtor imprisonment issues, in addition to lending programs and entrepreneurial projects. The network also held several visits, the most important of which was to Damascus to exchange experiences with Syrian women entrepreneurs and support them in reconstruction.

## Social Protection and Economic Development (SPED)

In order to empower young people, enhance their job opportunities, and support the work and investment environment in Jordan, and out of believing in the principle of partnership between civil society and the private sector, ARDD, in partnership with the Jordanian Businessmen Association, through an initiative that is the first of its kind in Jordan, [which included the signing of the Memorandum of Goodwill "Towards a Common Goal: Equitable Economic Growth in Jordan"](#), in which it honored 24 businessmen and businesswomen in the Kingdom for their and their companies' role in establishing a successful, fruitful, and inducive business environment for work and investment in Jordan at the local and international levels, and for their contributions to building the pillars of ethical leadership in the business sector in Jordan, which contributed to its modern economy. Moreover, under the umbrella of the Human and Economic Development Forum (HEDF) at ARDD, panel discussions and round tables were held to strengthen the dialogue and concerted efforts to consider the issues of youth unemployment, entrepreneurship, green economy, future jobs, enhancing youth professional opportunities, as well as the human rights and business agenda to contribute to the development of the investment and employment system in Jordan. An in-depth study was also launched that looked at youth unemployment in Jordan, between stalled strategies and deferred promises, within the "Design and Determine" project, which is implemented with the support of the European Regional Development and Protection Program to support Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq, a joint European initiative by the Czech Republic, Denmark, the European Union, Ireland, and Switzerland, in addition to launching a policy memorandum that sought to identify the obstacles facing the establishment of micro, small, and medium enterprises in Jordan and ways to overcome them. To highlight the role of youth in mitigating the consequences of climate change, the [Green Voices Challenge report for young men and women in the Arab world was launched as a call for joint action and innovation to respond to the threats and opportunities of climate change.](#)

With regard to supporting inclusive social protection, social security, public health, and the development of the justice sector, the organization, through the Human and Economic Development Forum (HEDF) and its arms the Justice Sector Development Forum and the National Alliance for Combatting Narcotics in Jordan, played an important role in launching dialogues on relevant policies, following up and discussing developments at the national and regional levels, and developing recommendations and submitting them to the relevant decision-makers, through holding several meetings and hosting guest speakers such as the President of the Chamber of Industry and the Director of the Amman Stock Exchange, and studying the impact of loans on debtors, which emphasizes the need for concerted efforts with civil society to bring about economic and human development, in addition to participating in the Regional Conference on Inclusive Social Security: “Towards an Agenda in the Middle East and North Africa”, held by the Inclusive Social Security Policy Forum (ISSPF) in Amman from 19 to 20 September 2023, in partnership with the Development Pathways Foundation, and in cooperation with ARDD, the Center for Research and Action in Social Sciences in Lebanon, and the Tunisian Economic Observatory, and called for the concerted efforts of the concerned authorities from civil society, the government sector, and the private sector, to reach a qualitative leap in designing comprehensive protection systems that meet the needs of citizens and residents. In this context, a policy memorandum that looked at the centrality of establishing a justice-based gender protection agenda in Jordan was launched. Training was also held to bridge the gap between humanitarian action and development through the application of social protection principles.

Within the framework of the project “Enhancing Public Confidence in the Justice Sector”, which is implemented with the support of the French Embassy, several meetings were held that looked at the intersectionality between the justice sector, economic modernization, and social protection, in addition to preparing a book that collects the results of the regional meetings of Arab working groups, which discussed the situation of the justice sector in the Arab region and its future after the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Justice Sector Forum also continued its efforts aimed at considering and evaluating the latest laws by evaluating the draft social development law for the year 2023, calling for regulating social work and defining its concepts. Furthermore, several meetings were held that looked into the achievements and aspirations of societal peace, and the transformations and motives of domestic crimes in Jordan, for instance.

As for the right to healthcare, the Public Health Policy Lab continued its meetings, stressing the intersectoral responsibility, as any proposed policy should include all stakeholders to ensure participatory implementation and enhance its chances of success, highlighting medical accountability and legal protection frameworks, starting with the need to rearrange the priorities of the Medical Liability Law of 2018, and emphasizing the essential role of health unions in providing inclusive social protection. The health response during humanitarian crises was also discussed in cooperation with the American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA).

In terms of supporting the fight against drugs, and according to its strategic plan, the National Alliance for Combatting Narcotics in Jordan, which is affiliated with the Justice Forum, held several meetings with the relevant authorities and paid several field visits to see the efforts exerted to combat this epidemic and raise awareness about it, where they visited the Anti-Smuggling Directorate/General Customs Department, and participated in several events to support and highlight all efforts made in this regard.

## The Question of Palestine

Given the centrality of the Question of Palestine and its centrality to Jordan and the region as a whole, ARDD continued its efforts through the Question of Palestine program and the International Network for the Question of Palestine, and since the escalation in Gaza began after the events of the seventh of October 2023, ARDD has intensified its efforts, stressing its firm position on the Question of Palestine through several statements, analytical papers, communications to international bodies, as well as launching calls to end the war in Palestine. Since the beginning of the events, ARDD's [International Network for the Question of Palestine](#) has continued to follow up on the developments periodically through weekly meetings to discuss the situation, and through a number of interviews and communications with international organizations, relevant official and non-official institutions, and regional and international media. The organization and its network were among the first to warn [of the dangers of the crimes of the occupation, which amount to genocide in Gaza](#), the [dangers of forced displacement and a second Nakba](#), launching a [reference paper](#) in this regard, in addition to [monitoring the track of forensic evidence on war crimes and genocide](#), and emphasizing the importance of Resolution 1325 on women, security, and peace in the context of Palestinian women [beyond abstract words](#). The organization also held a series of international dialogue sessions in cooperation with the "Law for Palestine" Foundation, which discussed the most important topics of the [illegality of the Israeli occupation and subsequent international responsibility](#), in addition to launching statements in support of the Cause and its merits. Locally, the first group of a series of seminars held to follow up on, record, and document the developments of the war in Palestine has concluded, in addition to holding the second group in cooperation with the HEDF Forum. Thirteen panel discussions were held that included a group of experts in the Question of Palestine, political experts, economists, researchers, and Jordanian activists, discussing topics that ranged from the dangers of forced displacement to advocacy efforts starting from boycott to public demonstrations, leading to the existing choices and the political, economic, and social effects on Palestine, Jordan, and the region as a whole.

## Migration, Forced Displacement, and Statelessness in the Arab world

In order to contribute to the empowerment, protection, and promotion of the rights of migrant workers, and within the framework of the third phase of the “*Haquna*” project, which was implemented with the support of the Heinrich Böll-Palestine and Jordan Foundation, and with the participation of members of the Migrant Workers and Research Committee, the organization launched [Voices of the Marginalized: A Study on Migrant Workers and Refugees in Jordan](#), in which it put forward a number of recommendations and solutions that would enhance the protection of refugees and migrant workers, as well as calling for better working and living conditions for them.

## Programs

Working towards a renewed Renaissance in the Arab world finds its foundation in the values of AlNahda. Since appearing during the early Arab Renaissance, the legacy of pluralism, intellectual curiosity, and humanism has been overshadowed by regional conflict, yet ARDD prioritizes these trends as the roots of democracy and development. These values are the building stone of all our programs.

In 2023, ARDD focused on the implementation of 5 projects that tackle the issues of: Women’s Access to Justice (WAJ), Good Governance, Protection and Relief: (P & R), Education, Livelihoods and Economic Wellbeing

## Women’s Access to Justice (WAJ)

To support women’s participation in bringing about change in their communities, the organization carried on with “**Empowering Each Other: United for Change**”, in partnership with UN Women and with the support of the European Union, which are capacity building programs and community initiatives aimed at promoting women’s civic engagement alongside men to promote community peace in Azraq and Zaatari camps and host communities, in addition to holding workshops to standardize the principles of work regarding social differences, for workers on women’s issues in the Ministry of Social Development team.

With regard to women’s leadership role, and to identify the most effective ways to increase the opportunities for women’s participation at all public levels, especially in leadership positions, ARDD, in cooperation with the Tawazon - Leadership Skills and Women’s Participation Program, held 12 focus group discussions across the Kingdom, including representatives of local communities, to measure and identify barriers facing women seeking to participate in leadership training programs or aspiring to assume leadership positions. To present the methodology and results of this assessment, ARDD and Tawazon held a workshop entitled: “Women’s Leadership Pathways in Jordan: Uncovering the Needs Assessment Results “ with the aim of highlighting the challenges and most effective methods needed for women’s participation in training programs and discussing the recommendations and practices necessary to design a training program for women leadership to build on to launch the Arab Women’s Leadership Academy in 2024.

At the regional level, and within the frame of the “She Leads” program, which aims to activate the participation of girls and young women in the decision-making process and increase their representation in official and non-official institutions in the Arab world, ARDD held an interactive training program that included awareness sessions, capacity-building sessions, as well as sessions on coalition-building, influence, and advocacy skills, in addition to establishing partnerships and initiatives. Nearly 30 young women in Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt participated, including seminars with women entrepreneurs and influencers from the Arab world. Within the framework of this program, memoranda of understanding were signed with the Human Rights Forum for Family Affairs in Lebanon, the Ana Insan Foundation for the Rights of Persons with Disability in Jordan, and the Egyptian Women Lawyers Initiative Foundation in Egypt, with the aim of enhancing the leadership skills of girls and young women to access resources, research, and tools related to advocacy and leadership skills, and to participate in issues of concern to young leaders.

## Good Governance

In order to promote inclusive urban development efforts, and in order to involve all groups of society in planning the future of their cities, identifying needs, and investing in opportunities in their areas of residence, ARDD and the United Nations Human Settlements Program signed a memorandum of understanding in the presence of representatives of Amman Municipality, through which the two parties would cooperate to support the efforts of Inclusive and dynamic community planning in Jabal Amman, with a focus on addressing unique challenges and reaching more fair and sustainable communities in the long term for residents from different backgrounds.

## Education

Out of believing in the importance of education and its role in protecting societies, and within the framework of ARDD's education strategy, which seeks to adopt an inclusive approach to education that takes into account ensuring the right to access quality education and providing continuous learning opportunities for all as key pillars for poverty alleviation and enabling sustainable social transformation, the organization, in cooperation with Vision Hope and with the financial support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, continued the activities of the Investment in the Future project, through the implementation of inclusive education programs and academic support activities, the provision of education, protection, and legal aid services, the signing of a memorandum of understanding with Al-Khwarizmi Technical University College to provide vocational education scholarships to fifteen young men and women, as well as offering arts and aesthetic values programs and English language courses to over 40 children, in order to meet the educational needs of refugee minorities and the most vulnerable groups in the host communities and increase their protection. In order to contribute to the dissemination of knowledge and the sustainable impact of the project, training materials were provided from legal and parenting sessions, as well as psychological support and manuals for teaching English to beginners online.

The National Alliance for the Future of Education in Jordan (Nafe) was also launched to strengthen strategic cooperation between public and private educational institutions, media institutions, initiative creators, and persons concerned with the development of the education sector in the Kingdom, and to advocate for these efforts and consolidate participatory and accountable approaches in decision-making. The alliance worked on holding several meetings and panel discussions that discussed the Tawjihi exam and the need to review educational systems periodically to meet societal aspirations,

and TVET and its opportunities for refugees in Jordan, artificial intelligence and its impact on education, the requirements of raising children in wartime, and other topics that have an effect on the course of education in Jordan.

Within the framework of the efforts to contribute to the provision of quality, fair, and inclusive education, a memorandum of understanding was signed between ARDD and Ibn Rushd Academy to provide an alternative interactive education program for children.

## Protection and Relief:

ARDD, the legal partner of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), has continued to provide its free legal services, in the form of consultations, legal mediation, and representation before the courts, to more than 130,000 beneficiaries from various governorates of the Kingdom inside and outside the camps since the beginning of this year, and within its multiple projects that are implemented in cooperation with UNHCR and Vision Hope International. A memorandum of understanding was also signed to provide support services with the General Union of Workers in the Textile and Clothing Sector. With regard to financial aid, assistance was provided to 3,000 beneficiaries in cooperation with Islamic Relief-France, distributed in different parts of the Kingdom by members of JONAF.

## Conclusion

In recognition of the outstanding contributions towards promoting the localization of humanitarian action in Jordan, and the efforts made in supporting and advocating local actors and civil society, the Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD) and the Jordan National NGO Forum (JONAF) awarded the 2023 Renaissance Award for Local Humanitarian Action to the representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Dominique Bartsch, in the presence of distinguished representatives of the United Nations, the international community, local civil society, and the Jordanian government.

As ARDD acknowledges the efforts of its team and praises its determination for achievement, it thanks the various local, Arab, and international media for covering its various efforts, stressing the need for concerted efforts between national civil society and the government and private sectors to develop visions, future prospects, and concrete steps that have a greater impact on our societies, to alleviate suffering and deprivation, mitigate the impact of the war that casts its shadows on the region, as well as seeking and advancing fair and sustainable solutions for the peoples of our region.

