

Thanks to those who didn't participate!

Here we come to the end of the Iraqi week for fighting violence, this small funded campaign, the big in what it achieved, began as a dream, then developed to an idea, a project, and finally it came true.

The dream started early in a small training course on the strategies of (non violence) in January of this year, held in Amman. And then the first seed of "Laonf" Group was planted.

The idea started when Al-Mesalla center got back an amount of 1650\$ as a returned amount for three airplane tickets (after discounting), for its holders never joined the course for different reasons. The center "Al-Messela" tried to return the amount to the donor, but the balance of the project had been settled and closed down. Then, the idea of using this money to finance an activity that will put the theoretical "non violence" terms to fact emerged. It's not a big amount but we can think of something.

And as the sectarian violence started to rise after the bombing of "Samara'a copula", the features of the project started to be clear... we are in need of fasting, as Gandhi did when the violence becomes excessive, but we are in need of another kind of fasting! Fasting is like an abstention of a human instinct, for abstention of necessary food for his life is fasting, and the abstention of monks from responding to their sex instinct is fasting, too.. and violence in Iraq today is also a kind of an excessive beastly instinct so in need, and from here came the idea:

Call all the Iraqis to an abstention from taking up arms for a month period, and the challenge this time was to make a promise which includes all purposes for carrying weapons, including the reason of self defense, which is an instinct behavior, a natural response, yet all the laws deal with self defense as a legal right. So, how can we persuade others to prevent themselves from warding off harm? And here we got support from the Holy Quran by a verse that tells the story of the fight between the two brothers (Kane and Abel) when the killer gained the curse and torture of God, for his brother was far above violence as he told his other brother: *"If thou dost stretch thy hand against me, to slay me, it is not for me to stretch my hand against thee to slay thee: for I do fear Allah, the Lord of the worlds"*. The killer gained shame in life and torture in hell, while the victim gained mercy and honor through thousands of years, yet he neither run away nor faced his brother with violence, but he was disdainful of violence facing it bravely.

But the project is like a fetus passing through stages in his mother's womb, and without such stages the fetus cannot be qualified to live in the real world, so the first stage of this project was when we calculated the costs of it.

The damned limitations in finance controlled us in addition to our movements. How many copies of the leaflet shall we print? The number was in tens of thousands and not more. Not only for the printing costs but because the distribution will be expensive. Then the campaign's plan came to be degraded, for instead of calling the Iraqis, we picked the brilliant youth sector (Universities students) and instead of all the universities we decided to start the campaign in Baghdad (The biggest pit of violence), for we expected that we can manage to run the campaign without partners to finance the project. The number of 20.000 copies sounds good.

We agreed that the project could not fly in the sky of Baghdad without wings, and such wings are some associates from different trends, so that the campaign will not appear as it is against a specific side or presents a point of view of a part excluding others.

This partnership took an effective part in maturing the campaign starting from arguments that changed the original script of the call which was changed from a call of not using weapons for a month period, to a discard of the principles of the violence behavior for a week period which we called "The Iraqi Week for Fighting Violence", while some associates preferred to avoid mentioning self defense literally within the script, and they got what they wanted. At that time, 9 organizations' logos were put in the bottom of the leaflet and poster and became ready to be printed.

The costs of colored printing, as the first estimations, on regular paper could be more 2 million dinars which is more than 1350\$ which means that we must put the other costs in the range of 300\$ only. That means that our associates in the governorates must print the leaflet on their own expense and spread it out in their cities. But the owner of the printing house, who is a friend of ours, after holding the ruler and measuring the dimensions of the sample paper and after a little pause which accompanied some calculations, said:

If you accept to bite some millimeters from the width, we can decrease the costs because we shan't loose any papers, the cost of one paper will be 35 Iraqi dinars (more than 42 sheets for a dollar), and as a gift from me, I shall print them on "Glossy paper" and not on regular paper.

I said to myself: It's the lowered price to black and white photo copy for the students, and before I woke up from my amazement, he said: this is a special price for you despite the usual price of the market.

Another pure Iraqi, who put a stone in the building we are making. Didn't he participate in the campaign in his own way?!!

The costs are reduced to the third, the 2 millions became 700.000 dinars, here, we thought to support the leaflet with a poster, so we thought of

a simple idea for a poster to accompany the week, so we put the term "Laonf" (non violence) over a green map of Iraq, and after making some calculations, we decide to print 3000 copies of the poster, with a value of 450.000 dinars, yet the total number is beyond the expected; that will give us ability to maneuver.

Yes, we can afford to pay the costs of transportation from Baghdad to your cities and even the costs of transportation within your cities; that was our reply to our associates in the cities of Al Najaf, Al Basrah, Samara'a, and Diyala.

Their response was more effective as they let the campaign go out from the Universities' campuses to the burning streets, mosques, Husainiyat, official departments, parties' centers, patrol cars, public cars, youths' motorcycles, simple shops, walls of the parties' buildings, and weddings of young Iraqis who dream of a bright future; they received the call to give promise for another option than unjustified violence between brothers.

This experience gave us a good lesson about the importance of people's attempts and efforts, and that it's more significant than the worth of money. And today we appreciate and thank who participated in this campaign. And at this occasion, we can't forget to thank those whom didn't participate in Amman's course, yet the returned amount of the ticket's price was the "cause" of financing this campaign!

So ... Thanks to those who didn't participate!

**Yousif Mahmood
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