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Rule of Law Program - Justice and Enforcement

West Bank and Gaza

NETHAM

Rule of Law Program

Justice and Enforcement

DFD-I-01-04-00173-00

Implemented by DPK Consulting

Eleventh Quarterly Report
April 1-June 30, 2008

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This quarter was concluded with key accomplishments that are expected to have a positive impact on the Palestinian justice sector. As a result of Netham-USAID assistance, this year marked the celebration of the first ever Palestinian Justice Day, which was commemorated on May 29, 2008 under the patronage of Prime Minister Salam Fayyad. The event included the dissemination of information on the judiciary and rule of law including two brochures distributed to the public through newspapers, a school poster distributed across the West Bank, Justice Day billboards in major West Bank cities, in addition to an SMS message. Justice Day highlighted a major accomplishment in the sector which was the signing of the Justice Sector National Plan for the period of 2008-2010. The plan was signed by the Prime Minister and Chief Justice and then submitted to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. The Justice Sector National Plan also included the strategic plans of the three judicial institutions including the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC), the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), and the Attorney General's Office (AGO). Netham provided extensive technical assistance in developing and formulating these individual plans as well as the Justice Sector National Plan. During this event, judicial leaders highlighted some of the accomplishments of their institutions over the last year and pledged to meet again next year on this date to report on justice sector accomplishments. Over 200 guests attended this Justice Day event including donor and international organizations, diplomats, senior judges, lawyers and representatives of the Bar Association, and representatives of civil society organizations—among other guests.

A wide range of activities were implemented and some concluded this quarter, in supporting and strengthening the SJC and MOJ. In activities with the SJC, Netham's financial and administrative consultants finalized the finance and administration procedural manuals of the SJC. The Chief Justice has approved these manuals and endorsed their adaptation into the SJC financial and administrative systems and procedures. In the same context, and in an attempt to build the capacity of SJC personnel, Netham sponsored seven SJC staff members to take part in training at the Jordanian Judicial Institute. Prior to the training, the Netham Chief of Party (COP) and the USAID CTO visited Jordan to coordinate with the Jordanian Judicial Institute preparations for the visit and see first-hand how the Palestinian Judiciary can benefit from the Jordanian judicial achievements. Meetings were organized and facilitated through the USAID Jordan Mission and the DPK-Rule of Law Project in Jordan, Masaq. During the visit a number of meetings were conducted with Jordanian judicial figures who expressed their willingness to support the Palestinian judiciary and to participate in training programs for the Palestinian judiciary.

Within its efforts of supporting the Supreme Judicial Council and enhancing the capacities of Palestinian courts, Netham continued to reduce the workload at the courts through sponsoring interns who primarily worked at the Notary Public and Civil Judgment Departments at the Ramallah and Nablus courts. The interns continued to play an effective role in reducing the archiving load in the Notary Public Departments and the Civil Judgments Departments of these courts.

This quarter, Netham also played a key role in activating the Palestinian Judicial Institute. Netham conducted a number of meetings with the Director of the Palestinian Judicial Institute, along with USAID, the US Consulate, Chief Justice, Minister of Justice, and the Attorney General to discuss concrete steps towards activating the work of the Institute. Netham was instrumental in working with counterparts to build consensus on the appointment of a director and board for the Institute. Following this process, Netham contracted a consultant who is an expert in Institutional/Judicial Training to work closely with the PJI on developing its internal regulations, organizational structure, and administrative and financial systems.

International support to the Palestinian Judiciary remained a priority especially for the donor countries participating in the Berlin conference which was held for the support of the Palestinian Police and Justice Sectors. Pledges of about \$242 millions dollars were committed for the benefit of the Palestinian police with the intention to enlarge the duties of the European mission (EUPOL COPPS) to include the justice sector. In other news, the Judicial Police Premises were officially inaugurated in Ramallah with the presence of Prime Minister and Minister of Justice in an attempt to empower the justice and police sectors. These events were highlighted in the local media; a news supplement on the media coverage of the judiciary related events of this quarter is attached.

Netham also participated in different coordination meetings with several donors to ensure that there is consensus among various projects working in the justice sector and to avoid duplication of efforts. Particularly, Netham met with the European Commission Technical Assistance Office (ECTAO) as well as the EU- funded Seyada Project, and UNDP where needs for developing the justice sector and the criminal justice system were identified. Moreover, Netham worked with the MOJ to submit equipment needs list to the Seyada EU-funded project for approval after directing their funding to the MOJ. This in return, has enabled Netham to reallocate funding to other activities supporting the judiciary.

In the same context, a meeting took place this quarter with USAID, Netham, and the EUPOL COPPS to discuss the proposed developmental recommendations of joint USAID/EU efforts on assistance to the city of Jenin after the security operation.

On the project's administrative level, a draft work plan was submitted to USAID covering the period from April 2008 through September 2009 based on the contract's revised statement of work. Several meetings were held with the USAID CTO to discuss the work plan. At the end of the quarter, Netham was preparing a modified work plan based on feedback from the CTO. In addition, Netham staff was making preparation to hold a staff retreat planned early next quarter. The project also completed the recruitment process of five staff members including: Monitoring and Evaluation/Grants Coordinator, Procurement Specialist, Administrative Assistant, Translator, and a Civil Enforcement Coordinator who is located in a newly established Jenin Netham office. Netham also closed its office in Gaza due to the political situation as a result minimal programming.

2. ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

SPECIFIC PROJECT ACTIVITIES

This section provides information on project activities, progress, and challenges regarding the key project activities described in Netham's work plan.

Development of the Justice Sector National Plan

In continuation of the efforts of the previous quarter and within Netham's efforts towards supporting the development of the National Justice Sector Plan for the years 2008-2010, the project was able to finalize the plan for the MOJ, SJC, and AGO. These plans focused on the major objectives and strategies for each institution. Subsequent to the approval of those plans by the various stakeholders, Netham assisted in translating and compiling these strategic plans into National Justice Sector Plan that was produced in Arabic and English, published, signed and adopted officially during a signing ceremony that took place on the May 29, 2008 Justice Day under the patronage of Prime Minister Dr. Salam Fayyad.

PROFESSIONALIZING THE FORMAL JUSTICE SECTOR THROUGH ASSISTANCE TO THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE, SUPREME JUDICIAL COUNCIL, COURT ADMINISTRATORS AND OTHER BODIES

Supporting the Process of Developing the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC)

Supporting the Development of a SJC Strategic Plan

In conclusion of Netham's efforts during the prior quarter regarding the development of the SJC strategic Plan for the years 2008-2010, the SJC plan was finalized and integrated within the above-mentioned Justice Sector National Plan that includes the strategies of the three justice sector institutions and covers the years 2008-2010. Key elements of the plan are outlined below:

- The plan outlines concrete steps to achieve a fair and just trial that first requires efforts to counter the case backlog at the courts. Case backlog has been one of the public's greatest grievances with the court system.
- To empower the judiciary, the plan proposes the acceleration of the establishment of the Court Administration Department to relieve the SJC of the heavy administrative and financial processes associated with court proceedings.
- In an important area of protecting human rights, the strategy strongly emphasizes the principle of access to justice to enable the public to resort to the courts in seeking justice as opposed to other means.
- The continuation of the public services enhancement process that began with the Notary Public plays a strong role in the plan as enhancement of public services is a key to improving the public's appreciation of the judiciary.
- There is the call for the Notification and Enforcement Departments to be fully re-organized due to their importance in the enhancement of the litigation process.
- The plan includes public outreach campaigns to educate the public of the importance of the judiciary and its role in achieving Rule of Law in an effort to gain public trust and confidence in the judiciary.

Improving the Administrative and Financial Capacities of the SJC

The project's hired financial and administration consultants who were contracted to assist in developing the financial and administrative systems and procedures of the SJC began the process of developing the needed procedural manuals to serve as a cornerstone in developing sound

financial and administrative systems for the SJC. The development of the manuals resulted from a series of meetings with various employees serving at the two departments. Subsequent to the development of the procedural manuals, the consultants held a number of meetings with the Chief Justice who granted his approval to finalize and distribute the manuals among related personnel.

After the distribution of the two manuals, the two consultants started working on a daily basis with related staff from both departments to assist in adopting the new procedures and to receive any comments or feedback regarding the newly-developed procedures. During the training on the new procedures, Netham continued monitoring the training of the two department personnel along with the two consultants to ensure the proper implementation and utilization of the new procedures.

Following the distribution and training on the procedures, Netham's consultants obtained user feedback, amended the manuals accordingly and reviewed the proposed revisions with the Chief Justice in order to obtain the Chief Justice's approval to distribute the amended manuals to concerned employees at both departments.

Currently, each of the two finance and administration consultants are following up on the implementation and adoption of the developed procedures with both departments. They will carry out a number of meetings and workshops to provide training for the personnel of the two departments.

Enhance and Build Capacity of Court Administrators

Capacity Building Plan for Court Administrators

As part of efforts to upgrade the capacities of courts administrators, Netham has obtained USAID approval for implementing a capacity building and training plan that aims at upgrading the skills of various Court Administrators, Court Clerks, Enforcement, Notification, and Notary Public staff to assist in giving these staff members skills that will allow them to provide better and more efficient services to the public using the court system.

Following receipt of USAID approval, Netham held a series of meetings with the Chief Justice to finalize the arrangements to implement the plan. Netham met with the Director of the Palestinian Judicial Institute (PJI) to coordinate preparations to hold the training sessions there.

The first session of the training began on June 28, 2008 targeting Hebron courts administrators focusing on stenography. To assist in implementing this training, Netham coordinated logistics including assisting the PJI in printing training materials, while SJC IT Department personnel will continue to provide the stenography training for the various West Bank court administrators. The estimated number of beneficiaries from the first training session is 21 staff, while the total number of beneficiaries from this training plan is about 400 staff including Chief Judges of the various West Bank courts and a range of court administrators.

Some of the key sessions of the training plan include:

- Training on electronic court stenography for the trial hearing sessions. These sessions target the court recorders of hearing sessions. The training will provide the clerks with the training needed to utilize the stenography machines to keep the minutes during the trials. The targeted group of court recorders reaches up to 150 clerks and will be divided over the 8 training sessions.
- Training for Enforcement Officers to focus on various legal and technical issues.
- One-day training session for the Notary Public Officers.
- Three training sessions for Notification Officers.

- One-day training session for the Chief Clerks and Deputy Chief Clerks including administrative skills, the role of the Chief Clerks in case management as well as identifying obstacles facing Chief Clerks in judicial case management.
- One-day training session with the Chief Judges to identify the role of the Chief Judges in case management, and identifying the obstacles facing the Chief Judges in case management.

Within the efforts towards implementing a second segment of the capacity building and training plan that focused on carrying out a regional study tour to make use of the Jordanian judicial experience, Netham's Chief of Party and USAID CTO conducted a visit to Jordan to finalize preparation for the seven SJC staff Members who participated in training there and to see first hand how the Palestinian Judiciary can benefit from the Jordanian judicial achievements. Meetings were organized and facilitated through the USAID Jordan Mission and the DPK-Rule of Law Project in Jordan, Masaq. During the visit, a meeting was also held with the Director of the Jordanian Judicial Training Institute in which he expressed full support to cooperate with the Palestinian Judicial Institute. A number of Jordanian judges also expressed their willingness to support the Palestinian judiciary and participate in training programs for their Palestinian counterparts.

Subsequent to the preparatory visit to Jordan, Netham assisted in sending seven of the SJC staff to participate in a two-week training program that was held on the premises of the Jordanian Judicial Institute and began on June 14, 2008. The training was successfully concluded with a graduation ceremony. Some specific training topics included communication skills, court case management, code of conduct, assurance, notary public, notification, and Enforcement Department tasks and responsibilities, as well as practical training for the Notary Public, Civil Judgment, and Notification Department staff.

Improving Information and Communication Technology at the SJC and Courts

Within Netham's efforts towards improving IT systems of the SJC, Netham carried out necessary arrangements and communications with the USAID-funded Civic Engagement Project (CEP), known as the ARD Mechanism to encourage the project to provide funding for the needed equipment and tools necessary for the installation of the Wide Area Network (WAN) infrastructure, and time attendance (clocking) system to monitor the attendance of SJC personnel.

Wide Area Network

This quarter, Netham worked closely with the SJC and the CEP project to procure needed infrastructure and equipment for the WAN. The WAN aims at connecting all SJC and court sites with a secure WAN infrastructure that aims at improving communication and administrative coordination between SJC and the courts. Netham's efforts were concluded with the installation of the WAN system in the Ramallah administration offices and in the various West Bank courts.

After the installation was completed, connections to all courts were tested and authenticated by the SJC system administrator including scenarios of file and data transfers between Ramallah and court sites. The WAN installation has already resulted in at least one anecdotal success story. One of the data entry computers in Nablus using Al-Mezan case management software experienced software problems. The SJC IT support personnel were able to access that PC from Ramallah using the recently installed WAN between Ramallah and Nablus to reconfigure the PC and the intern was able to successfully use the PC to enter data. This is just one example of ways in which the WAN will help in problem solving without the need for a physical presence, which is especially useful in the West Bank given the unique logistical challenges.

Following the installation, Netham staff assisted the vendor of the WAN in providing the SJC staff with needed training on the utilization of the equipment. It is also worth noting that the

vendor is the responsible entity for providing needed training and maintenance per the signed contract. During the next quarter, Netham will continue to monitor the utilization and training related to the WAN.

Clocking System

In continuation of assisting the CEP and the SJC IT in determining specifications for the time attendance software and hardware system as well as analysis of bids, this quarter, the SJC received the equipment needed for the clocking system including the software application that would manage time attendance clocks.

The purpose of the time attendance/clocking system is to capture employee time attendance in all West Bank courts. This system will assist courts and the SJC administration to properly manage and control employees' arrival and departure times and assist in human resource management as a tool for employee performance evaluations that will ultimately increase the efficiency of personnel at the SJC and courts.

The efficient utilization of the clocking system is completely dependent on the successful installation and adoption of the WAN, through which the SJC administration is capable of monitoring the clocking systems without needing to be physically at the location of the clocking system.

SJC Database Unification Efforts

The purpose of the database unification effort is to allow all court databases to be placed into one master database in Ramallah, which will make it simple to track SJC records. Currently all records do not follow the same record numbering system and formats.

Netham contracted a short-term database consultant to assist the project team in unifying the various databases of the courts and various departments through writing the needed script for the unification process. The project's hired consultant started working closely with the SJC IT Department, and Netham to develop the needed scripts for the unification.

As of quarter end, the project-hired consultant completed the unification of the databases of the twelve West Bank Civil Judgment Departments. Next quarter, the consultant will finish the unification of databases of the West Bank Notary Public Departments and regular courts.

Notary Public Services

Ramallah and Nablus Notary Public Department

In continuation to the efforts of upgrading the Ramallah and Nablus Notary Public Departments that were previously developed, Netham staff maintained regular site visits to both offices ensuring that the equipment was installed at the two departments including the computers, queuing systems, etc. are properly utilized, and that the systems and procedures are working efficiently.

As part of efforts to assist the two departments in the archiving project, Netham received USAID approval to extend the contracts of six data interns for an additional six months. Extension of their work is necessary to complete archiving of files in the Nablus and Ramallah Notary Public offices. In other Notary Public activities, Netham tested a new upgrade of the queuing system at Ramallah Notary Public that will make it possible to save the last parameters in the queuing system before any possible power outage.

Improve Judicial Notifications

Ramallah Central Notification Department

Towards initiation of activities to improve the delivery of judicial notifications, and assisting in the improvement of the Ramallah Central Notification Department, Netham held a meeting with the Head of the Judicial Inspection Department (JID) at the SJC. The meeting aimed at exploring the obstacles and needs for improving the notification process from the point of view of the JID. According to the JID, the delay in processing notifications is the primary obstacle contributing to case backlog. In addition, the JID also raised a number of other obstacles including the deficiency in the numbers of processors, the need for staff motivation, lack of vehicles to carry out work and other communication tools.

Netham staff also conducted a number of site visits to the Notification Department to carry out a needs assessment, obtain figures on the caseload of the department and to identify the number of personnel. The most noteworthy observation is that the daily average of notifications is about 2,000 while the number of personnel (processors) is 10, making this a key factor in the malfunction of the notification process. Netham has already begun activities to address some of the primary concerns as outlined below.

Hiring three Data entry interns

In light of the success noted in working with interns at the Civil Judgments and Notary Public Departments, Netham has contracted three additional interns in coordination with USAID's Ruwwad Project. Netham's USAID CTO has approved contracting the three interns to start assisting the project team in organizing and archiving the workload of the department electronically and manually to accelerate the judicial notification processing at the selected department.

Notifications Management System

This quarter, Netham also began to lay the groundwork for an application upgrade of the Notification Management System (NMS). The current notification workflow was discussed with the Netham team using a workflow chart. An alternative workflow chart of the notifications systems was prepared for a proposed upgrade of the automated Notifications Management System (NMS). In an effort to begin the automation process for notifications, Netham staff developed three new notification workflow charts that include Notary Public notifications, court notifications and enforcement notifications, in addition to a master chart that contains a workflow of all three entities. These charts will be finalized early next quarter.

Engaging and Building Capacity of the Ministry of Justice

MOJ

Strategic Planning Unit for the Ministry of Justice

Following the adoption of the MOJ plan listed in the Justice Sector National Plan, Netham maintained periodic contact and meetings with the staff of the Strategic Planning Unit (SPU) at the MOJ staff, who were assigned to assist the Ministry in developing its strategic plans. The two staff of the unit was contracted through the USAID – funded Civic Engagement Project.

In the same context, the SPU staff took part in several meetings including meetings with the Swedish consulate and the EUCOPPS/European “Rule of Law” mission to discuss the possible expansion of the EUCOPPS mission in the area of rule of law. In addition, a meeting was held with the Ministry of Planning to discuss the preparations for the Berlin Conference and linkages of the justice sector projects with the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan in general. It is worth noting that one of the MOJ SPU members participated in the preparatory meeting for Berlin Conference. After his return from the preparatory Berlin meeting, the head of the SPU

Unit provided Netham with a detailed narrative report on his trip. According to the trip report, the head of the MOJ SPU (representing the MOJ for the purpose of this meeting) provided the participants with a review of the current developments in the justice sector and promoted the sector's needs.

The Berlin Donor Conference, held on June 24, 2008 in Germany, promised pledges of \$242 million dollars to support and develop the Palestinian judiciary and police including providing infrastructure support. The conference was held with the participation of the European Union, the United Nations, the Quartet and approximately 40 countries. Participants stressed their support of the judiciary and the EU POLCOPPS mission whose responsibilities will be expanded to include the justice sector. Canada and Norway also expressed an interest in joining this mission.

Institutional Development and Capacity Building

Needs Assessment

This quarter, Netham continued working with the Ministry of Justice to carry out the ministry's needs assessment. The Minister of Justice officially formed an Institutional Development Committee (IDC) consisting of five MOJ staff members and which was headed by the Deputy Assistant of the MOJ to work with Netham on the needs assessment. In this context, Netham held a series of individual and group meetings with the various staff members of the MOJ to carry out the needs assessment process.

The project team finished the process of data collection, and is producing a needs assessment report, which will include a description and analysis of the current status, a brief on the MOJ, a brief on the various MOJ strategic fields and departments, and needed developmental recommendations.

MOJ Space Renovation

Due to the fact that the Ministry of Justice expects to receive additional employees, Netham worked with the MOJ on developing proper space and creating new work areas to enable the MOJ to absorb newly appointed staff through support from the Civic Engagement Project (previously know as ARD mechanism) to provide needed assistance for the creation of the new work spaces. The new work stations along with needed wood works, including doors, painting, and partitioning was concluded and new workstations were added within the premises of the MOJ.

MOJ Strategic Plan

This quarter, Netham continued assistance to the MOJ in developing its strategic plan for the years 2008-2010. The strategic plan document was finalized and incorporated in the justice sector national plan which was endorsed and signed during the Justice Day event on May29, 2008.

Similar to the SJC Plan, the MOJ Plan calls for the development of integrated and harmonious relationship with the Executive and Legislative branches; ensuring fair and just trials; strengthening and empowering the Ministry of Justice; and protecting citizen's rights and fundamental freedoms.

Following are some highlights of the proposed plan:

- Increase cooperation with Civil Society Organizations and the media in order to raise public awareness and promote understanding of the judiciary.
- Participate in reviewing, evaluating, and proposing legislative policies related to the development of the justice sector. Participate in developing and implementing the National Legislative Plan for the Justice Sector.
- Activate the Institute of Forensic Medicine and establishment of the criminal lab.
- Establish and operation the Judicial Police.

- Strengthen strategic planning within the Ministry.
- Activate and develop administrative, financial, and technical systems.

Jericho Courthouse Project

This quarter, Netham continued providing needed assistance to the MOJ and SJC through carrying out a series of site visits to the Jericho Courthouse. The establishment of the Jericho Courthouse came in response to a request from the Prime Minister to the Minister of Justice and Netham worked with the CEP to fund the needed work.

Complementary to the procurement process, Netham provided advice on the interior design of the court chambers, the main entrance, and the clerk's office based on work by an interior designer/architect through developing needed sketches and designs that were submitted to and approved by the Chief Justice.

In addition and towards securing needed equipment required for the court, Netham conducted several visits to the Jericho court with SJC and MOJ stakeholders and CEP to determine equipment needs and specifications in addition to IT issues including network and power needs.

Improving MOJ Public Services

The Justice Records System

This quarter, Netham continued providing needed technical assistance to the establishment of the Justice Records System, which primarily focuses on the production of a “non-conviction certificate” that is often a requirement in applying for Palestinian Authority jobs, as well as a number of international visas and other transactions.

After hiring a systems analyst consultant who assisted the project team in developing the needed analysis for the processes and procedures required by the Justice Records System, the project hired another consultant to assist the project team in developing the related IT system and programming. In addition to designing the related policies, operating procedures, and IT needs, the consultants assisted the project in preparing tender documents for the IT bid.

After obtaining preliminary approval of the proposed system design, Netham conducted a competitive bid process for an IT firm to design the system and selected the most qualified firm. Currently, Netham is waiting for the signing of an MOU with the MOJ before the initiation of the development and installation of the system at the MOJ premises. This should take place early next quarter.

Palestinian Judicial Institute

This quarter, a Council of Ministers decision was issued appointing Judge As'ad Mubarak as Director of the Palestinian Judicial Institute. Netham received a copy of the PJI by-law from the Cabinet of Ministers in May and translated the by-law into English.

After the official appointment of the director, Netham held a number of meetings with the director to discuss launching training activities. Netham and the PJI Director agreed to provide the Institute with an urgently needed Judicial Institutional Development consultant to assist in developing the organizational structure and other relevant requirements. Late this quarter, Netham's Institutional/Judicial Training consultant arrived from Jordan to assist the PJI with the development of the organizational structure, the PJI budget, function requirements for the continuing education data base, and the preparatory training registration software. The Netham consultant also worked in cooperation with the EU's Seyada project to finalize the internal regulations for the PJI based upon the PJI Director's request and assisted in developing a system for a continuing education needs assessment.

During the consultancy and through regular meetings with the Director of the PJI and Seyada project consultants; the scope of work was expanded to include work on developing the PJI's internal rules and regulations. As a result, Netham and Seyada experts worked together on the candidates' admission regulations, the faculty regulations, and the diploma regulations. The consultant provided his comments on the draft regulations and recommended best practices. The drafters of the regulations were influenced by USAID's previous work in the Judicial Institute of Jordan which was also taken into consideration. The consultant also developed a weighted application for the diploma program.

Finally, Netham's consultant and the project team developed a proposed Organizational Structure (OS) for the PJI; which was discussed and ultimately approved by the PJI Director. The consultant emphasized the urgent need for a rapid deployment of key staff listed in the OS during a meeting with the Minister of Justice to allow the PJI to begin immediate operations and enable the progress of already funded training projects. The immediate funding of these positions will allow the PJI and begin to build its envisioned capacity as opposed to serving only as a hosting space for training activities without any impact on the training process. The Minister promised to act on this recommendation immediately.

On another area of assistance to the PJI, the USAID CTO received a letter from the PJI Director where the latter requested USAID assistance in providing the institute with some urgently needed equipment, including:

1. Shredder
2. Telephone devices
3. Automatic operator
4. Shelves for store room
5. Book and file shelves
6. Photocopier
7. Water cooler
8. Small refrigerator
9. Hot water preservative
10. Transparency projector
11. Video camera
12. Mock trials PIAT form
13. Clothes hanger
14. Microphone and sound system
15. Recorder (Digital)

Netham also received a copy from this request, and within the project's efforts towards supporting the PJI, Netham submitted a request of approval for procuring the needed items, Netham is still waiting for USAID approval in order to proceed with the procurement process.

STRENGTHENING THE ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS AND COURT DECISIONS

Supporting the Civil Judgment Department

Ramallah Civil Judgment Department

The Ramallah Civil Judgment Department was selected by the Chief Justice as a pilot location for Netham to initiate a needs assessment identifying the obstacles facing the judgment of civil court decisions. Following the assessment and in the context of improving the Civil Judgment

Department, Netham contacted the USAID Ruwwad Youth Project and made use of the project's database in hiring six data entry interns to assist the department in archiving.

Before initiating the work of the interns, Netham held an orientation session for the selected interns in which they were introduced to the Chief Justice, the head of the Financial and Administrative Department, the Judge of the Civil Judgment Department and other staff in the department. The staff at the Civil Judgment Department provided a detailed briefing to the interns on Al-Mizan program and the nature of the work at department, particularly the sensitivity and the need to keep the privacy of files that will be archived. Additional training involved actual data entry of files on Al-Mizan.

In the course of their data entry work, interns noticed some illegal files at department. These files were brought to the attention of the judge of the department to take action. The judge in return reviewed these files and made the decision to adjourn these cases or take other corrective measures. In addition, the interns screened active and inactive cases as well as classified the types of active cases into subtitles in an effort towards better organizing and classifying the cases.

As of the end of this quarter, the interns at the Ramallah Civil Judgment Department filed approximately 6,000 records. These records include files that were not previously filed in the system, new cases were registered at the department, and the cases that were adjourned by the presiding judge. The number of cases that were adjourned totals approximately 3,400 records. To date, nearly 80% of the department workload has already been saved and filed into the Al-Mizan automation system at the department.

With the same objective of strengthening the enforcement of civil judgment decisions, along with the selection of Ramallah as a pilot location, Netham submitted a request for CTO approval to initiate the activity of developing and upgrading the Ramallah Civil Judgment Department. In coordination with the Supreme Judicial Council and the Chief Justice, the Ramallah Civil Judgment Department has been selected as a pilot project for development primarily due to the heavy workload that is processed by this department. Following the implementation of this activity and in compliance with the project's work plan, Netham will select other Civil Judgment Departments in the West Bank for development at a later stage.

Due to the fact that the current Judgment Department has a very small space, along with chaotic processing procedures, in addition to a challenging data retrieval for the department's files, Netham will work with the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) to re-locate the Civil Judgment Department to a new space available in the same building but on the ground floor. The proposed renovation plan will include some construction work as well as a proposal to change the tiles, windows, doors, paint, installation of air conditioning and restrooms, and renovation of the entrance of the building. In addition to the renovation work, some equipment and furniture will be procured.

Nablus Civil Judgment Department

As part of efforts to determine another pilot location for development, Netham staff carried out a number of site visits to the Nablus Civil Judgment Department to gather information on its status and assess potential areas of assistance. Following the series of meetings, Netham and in agreement with the Chief Justice, selected the Nablus Civil Judgment Department to be the second location.

After the selection of the location, Netham worked with related SJC and court personnel towards directing efforts to assist in launching an archiving project for the department's caseload. The archiving project included the organization and filing of the records electronically and manually.

To assist in the archiving project, Netham contacted the USAID Ruwwad Youth project who provided Netham with a list of interns for consideration to be used by Netham. The project team contacted a number of those interns and selected three to assist the project team in the electronic and manual archiving of the department's caseload. By the end of the quarter, the interns finished processing 1,400 judgment cases that were classified and archived into the system.

SUPPORT PUBLIC OUTREACH, NETWORKING, AND CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT ON RULE OF LAW ISSUES

Palestinian Justice Day

This quarter Palestinian Justice Day was commemorated on Thursday, May 29 with a signing ceremony for the Justice Sector Plan and public event held on this day in Ramallah under the patronage of the Prime Minister, Dr. Salam Fayyad. The event was attended by the Chief Justice, the Minister of Justice, and the Attorney General each of whom highlighted key accomplishments of their institutions over the last year and pledged to meet again next year on this date to report on justice sector accomplishments of this year. The Justice Sector Plan was signed by the Prime Minister and Chief Justice and subsequently was submitted to the Palestinian Authority President. Over 200 guests attended this event including donor and international organizations, diplomats, senior judges, lawyers and representatives of the Bar Association, and representatives of civil society organizations—among other guests. In this event, Netham played a key role in building consensus among the judicial stakeholders on the Governing Framework of the Justice Sector Plan and assisted each of the institutions in developing their respective individual plans. In addition, the project produced various public outreach materials for the event including two brochures, a school poster, publishing the Justice Sector Plan, and providing the event logistics for the signing ceremony. This event received significant press coverage in the local press, as well as on the Arab satellite channels.

While Justice Day is officially designated for May 29, Justice Day activities and the distribution of the school poster took place a week prior to this date in order to finalize distribution and raise awareness among students before schools are closed for the summer. Posters were distributed by the Ministry of Education to 1500 UNRWA and government schools across the West Bank. A one-page talking sheet on the judiciary was also distributed with the poster so that teachers can introduce information on the judiciary and principles of justice and equality.

The Ministry of Education chose the Ramallah Girls Secondary School to officially launch the school poster. The school organized an event for the students to talk about justice and Justice Day. The event was attended by the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Education, and the Minister of Information. There was good press coverage of this event on local radio, television including WATTAN TV and Palestine TV as well the three local newspapers including Al-Quds, Al-Ayyam, and Al-Hayat Al-Jadida Newspapers. Netham will translate some of this coverage and send to USAID.

Major Justice Day achievements included:

- **Public Outreach.** To raise public awareness and knowledge regarding the concepts of rule of law, independence of the judiciary and respect for these concepts by citizens and officials, 5,000 copies of a **brochure** on the rule of law, and another 5,000 copies of a brochure on independence of judiciary were distributed through Al-Hayat Al-Jadida Newspaper on May 29. In addition, a **newspaper advertisement campaign** took place on May 28 and May 29 in the three local newspapers that include Al- Quds, Al- Ayyam, and Al- Hayat Al-Jadida Newspapers with two ¼ page ads on each of these days.

Public Outreach material was designed by Sky Advertising with Netham assistance. The first advertisement included the text of Article 6 of the Palestinian Basic Law, which states that: "The principle of the rule of law shall be the basis of government in Palestine. All governmental powers, agencies, institutions, and individuals shall be subject to the law." The second advertisement highlighted Article 9 of the Basic Law that stipulates: "Palestinians shall be equal before the law and the judiciary, without distinction based upon race, sex, color, religion, political views or disability." These advertisement messages were also disseminated to the public through billboards that were placed at the entrances of major cities in the West Bank including Nablus, Bethlehem, Ramallah, Jenin, and Hebron.

- **Media coverage.** Palestinian press covered this event extensively including front page coverage on May 30th newspapers. In addition, Arab satellite channels and BBC covered this event. On May 29, Al-Hayat Newspaper included a lengthy interview with the Chief Justice on Justice Day.
- **Justice Day briefing package.** Netham assisted in preparing a Justice Day briefing package for the event that included the two brochures, agenda, and a one-page summary on Justice Day in both Arabic and English.
- **Printing Justice Sector Plan.** Through Netham, Sky Advertising provided the design and printed copies of the Justice Sector Plan that were distributed at the signing ceremony event. Netham also translated this document from Arabic to English.
- **Jawwal SMS.** The Palestinian mobile telecommunications company Jawwal distributed a Justice Day message to 60,000 subscribers.
- **MOJ presentation.** Netham assisted in preparing a presentation on MOJ achievements during the past year and particularly focusing on the e-Government component within the presentation. This presentation was prepared with pre-recorded narration.

Following the successful event of the Justice Day, the Minister of Justice and in the presence of the Prime Minister held a meeting with the Palestinian Authority President and his senior staff. This meeting included a presentation of the Ministry of Justice's presentation of achievements (Justice Day presentation) which took place during the signing ceremony event. The President's Office was impressed with the Justice Day presentation and suggested airing this presentation/film on Palestine TV.

Development of SJC Publication

In order to build the capacities of the SJC and increase public engagement on rule of law issues, Netham hired a short-term consultant to work with the Supreme Judicial Council to produce its annual report for the year 2007. This is an informational report that focuses on the SJC accomplishments, highlights, purpose, and function. The report was produced in both Arabic and English, and was produced for distribution to the public, governmental institutions, donor organizations and individuals seeking additional information on the judiciary.

After holding a series of meetings with related SJC personnel including the Chief Justice, Netham's hired consultant submitted the proposed final version of the report for review and approval. The final report was officially submitted to the Palestinian Authority President by the Chief Justice and contained key information on SJC and court achievements during the past year as well the strategy for developing the Palestinian judiciary during the next years. In submitting the report the Chief Justice noted that strengthening the Palestinian judiciary assists in creating

stability and development as well enhancing public trust in the Palestinian judiciary. He also stressed that the President has been absolutely supportive of the judiciary, and providing all possible support to enhance its capacities. The Netham-hired consultant assisted in drafting this report and the project also provided funding for related printing and design expenses.

In addition to providing assistance in the annual report development and production, Netham met with SJC staff in the Financial and Administrative Department, Technical Department, and the Director of the Office of the Chief Justice to provide guidance and support with respect to statistical analysis and periodic reports. The project's team also assisted in gathering figures and statistics concerning number of employees, number of judges and their distribution, as well as photos that were included in the report.

3. OVERALL PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

CONTRACT MODIFICATION/NEW WORKPLAN

This quarter, Netham conducted a number of meetings with the USAID CTO to discuss the needed modifications for the work plan. The work plan was submitted to USAID in early May and at the end of the quarter, Netham was incorporating additional changes to the work plan before submitting to USAID.

PROJECT STAFFING

This quarter, Netham almost completed its staffing plan through filling a number of vacant positions. The project hired five new long – term employees including Nader Hamadneh as a Judgment Process and Procedures Coordinator, Hassna Dajani as a Translator, Haya Musleh as an Administrative Assistant, Wissam Abbasi as a Procurement Specialist, and Nehad Fattah as M&E and Grants Coordinator.

PROJECT AUDIT

A closing meeting was held with the PricewaterhouseCoopers auditors on May 27 to discuss the project audit. Netham responded to their findings and revised their report/findings accordingly and sent the draft audit report to USAID.

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS) TRAINING

As Netham hired the project's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Grant Coordinator, a meeting was held with USAID's M & E Project Management Specialist to discuss GIS data entry and finalize GIS activity types. Following these meetings, Netham began the data collection process required for entering GIS activities.

4. CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES IN IMPLEMENTING ACTIVITIES

There are a couple of challenges in implementing program activities that should be noted. The project has experienced some obstacles in implementing program activities with the Ministry of Justice. Internal feuds and a lack of a clear chain of command at the MOJ has complicated Netham's mission on several occasions. It should be noted that some senior MOJ staff do not cooperate with the Minister of Justice and sometimes even work to hamper his objectives; therefore, these staff members are reluctant to work with donor assistance programs as directed by the Minister-- complicating Netham's work at certain times.

In addition, several Netham staff members have not been able to receive travel permits , travel is necessary for at least two of these staff members. As a result of these obstacles, travel movement has been restricted for these staff members and they have not been able to participate in meetings

with USAID along with other team members. Netham hopes that USAID can facilitate the necessary action to solve this issue.

5. SUMMARY OF PLANNED ACTIVITIES NEXT QUARTER

- Submit modified work plan to USAID.
- Continue follow up on implementing the capacity building plan to enhance skills of court administrators
- Finalize the MOJ needs assessment and solicit MOJ feedback.
- Implement SJC unification of data base records pilot in Ramallah.
- Continue to follow-up with SJC administrative and financial consultants on the implementation of systems and procedures.
- Conduct workshops on newly developed systems for court employees.
- Assist the MOJ in developing a workshop for prioritizing the agreed activities from the Needs Assessment Report.
- Assist in the development of MOJ Organizational Structure (OS).
- Develop and sign memorandum agreement with the MOJ on Judicial Records System.
- Supervise MOJ's automation process of the Justice Records System.
- Supervise the layout for renovation of Justice Records System.
- Evaluate and finalize the project matrix report for the SPU.
- Assist in institutionalizing the PJI training operations.
- Initiate the renovation and development of layout for the Ramallah Civil Judgment Department.
- Develop grants manual and action plan to implement a grants program.
- Conduct needs assessment and action plan for developing educational material for youth on rule of law issues.