# **ARSEH SEVOM**





# ANNUAL REPORT 2013













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2013

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De Wittenstraat 25, 1932 Ale Amsterdam. The Notherlands, Tet; + 11(2) 83-8786-434 👔 tehnd an observer, not. Tiettair, @Arval, Seve

"Arseh Sevom constitutes and creates what some people called 'a living exercise in democracy.' AS is self-critically and positively described by many Iranians as 'rather un-Iranian': refreshingly open and transparent, cooperating with others on principle, noncompetitive, building bridges, creating trust, unbiased and nonpartisan, not using civil society as a political tool."

From the end-2012 evaluation of Arseh Sevom

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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Readers,

2013

A year ago I wrote, "Iran is not done surprising us, of that I am sure." I am sure many of you would agree that those words are still true.

The door that was closed to civil society opened just a crack with the surprising first round election of Hassan Rouhani. His election raised the hopes of many and echoed the widespread aspiration of people in Iran to meaningfully engage with the world community.

Civil society is pushing the door open wider. Every day people in Iran are working for a better society. They are raising their voices against environmental degradation, forced hijab, and poverty. They are working to make sure medication reaches people in need. They are fighting for justice and demanding their rights.

The new administration was quick to put forward a citizen's rights document. Even so, executions proceeded at a rapid pace and minorities continued to feel the brunt of the government's oppressive policies. The work of the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Iran has never been more important than it is now. The work done by the Special Rapporteur supports that of rights activists inside the country who are risking their freedom to challenge violations and defend the vulnerable. Without domestic

efforts, the international community can do little.

2013 was a busy year for Arseh Sevom. It was a year of collaboration, partnerships, and exploration. In 2013, we brought eighteen people together to discuss civil society in Iran and create a strategy for moving forward as an organization more effectively. We did this by spending a significant amount of time mapping out Iran's civil society, identifying strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities, talking to civil society actors and organizations inside as well as outside Iran.

5

In 2014 and 2015, we want to hear more from you, our readers. Talk to us. Let us know what help you need and what we can do better. We're listening.

Bert Taken Board President, Arseh Sevom 2013

Arseh Sevom (Third Sphere) is a non-governmental organization established in 2010 in Amsterdam, aiming to promote peace, democracy, and human rights. The organizations objective is to help build the capacity of organizations and encourage the development of a vigonous third sphere of civil activities. Cooperation among civil society organizations is key to building a storing and coherent civil rights movement that can thrive and succeed.

## **ABOUT ARSEH SEVOM**

ArsehSevom(ThirdSphere)isanon-governmental organization established in 2010 in Amsterdam, aiming to promote peace, democracy, and human rights. Human and civil rights belong to all sectors of society and to all individuals. Arseh Sevom promotes the advancement of rights for people of all beliefs, genders, ethnicities, nonviolent political affiliations, and more. A key aim for Arseh Sevom is to work with individuals and organizations to amplify their actions and efforts in the promotion of civil society.



#### Mission

Arseh Sevom works to create tools, resources, and opportunities for learning and collaboration that promote a capable, vibrant, and pluralistic civil society inside Iran, in the diaspora, and among related communities.

#### Vision

Arseh Sevom envisions a strengthened civil society in Iran and among related communities that is capable, pluralistic, participatory, and effective at achieving its objectives.

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## WHAT IS CIVIL SOCIETY?

Arseh Sevom defines civil society as those informal, semiformal or formal organizations that **protect**, **promote**, and facilitate principles and practices of democracy, participation, pluralism, rights, equity, justice and peace and among the people locally, nationally, or internationally. They function outside the conventional spaces of state power and market forces, though they constantly negotiate, put pressure on, and persuade the institutions of the state as well as the market to be more responsible and responsive to the needs and rights of the people in general and the marginalized in particular.



#### Partners

7

Arseh Sevom is always looking for productive partnerships with organizations and individuals that share a passion for pluralism and rights. In 2012, the organization worked with Hivos, Article 19, United4Iran-London, United4Iran, EA Worldview, and Global Voices.



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## **CIVIL SOCIETY IN IRAN**

# 98.66%

By 2008, 98.66% of Iran's youth, aged 15-24 were literate.



Iran's efforts at population control have been lauded as a success worldwide and were accomplished without painful coercive measures. The drop in the birthrate may be reversed in coming years as birth control has been withheld at a number of clinics and bigger families are once again being encouraged.

The number of births per woman has actually gone up to two in the past few years, reflecting a change in family planning policy.

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2013

Artist's photo illustrating the degradation of Lake Orumieh

300 The salinity of endangered Lake Orumiyeh is now as high as 300 g/litre

In 2010, activists and locals affected by the drying up of Lake Orumiyeh began protesting the diversion of water from Lake Orumiyeh and the rapidly drying lake bed.

In a <u>2013 report for the UN in Iran</u>, UN resident coordinator Gary Lewis outlined recommendations for reviving the lake. He wrote:

"It is possible that what is happening to Lake Uromiyeh is one of the most vivid examples – anywhere on the planet – of how rapidly we humans can destroy our environment..."

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# 686

In 2013, 686 people, including 30 women, registered as candidates for Iran's presidential elections. Eight men were approved.

# 7.8

One week after a 6.3 magnitude earthquake killed at least 37 people in Southwest Iran, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake hit Iran near the border with Parkistan. Iranians living abroad responded, with aid and charity, in many cases by flying to Iran with cash and donations because of the need to circumvent US sanctions laws. After pressure from activists, the US lifted sanctions on earthquake-related aid to Iran.

Three of the ten most polluted cities in the world are in Iran.



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Celebrations of Election Results in Tehran taken Photo from Instagram User a irezamalihi from Arseh Sevom's election night post: <u>Iran</u> Elections: Celebration Now, A Long and Unpredictable Path. Ahead

cost B

## 2000 Hassan Rouhani Ortassan Rouhani youtube.com/watch?v=pqVLj9... #Iranianelections2013 #HassanRouhani #Rouhani 12.44 PM-5 May 2013

Hassan Rouhani's twitter account <u>@HassanRouhani</u> went live May 5, 2013 with an unceremonious tweet of a video that has been since removed for copyright infringement. In 2013 alone, more than 2000 tweets were sent from this account. Most of them were in English.

2013

# 665

There were <u>665 executions in Iran</u> in 2013. The government officially announced 334 of them.



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"Civil society is pushing the door open wider. Every day people in Iran are working for a better society. They are raising their voices against environmental degredation, forced hijab, and poverty. They are working to make sure medication reaches people in need. They are fighting for justice and demanding their rights."

Bert Taken Board President, Arseh Sevom

## **ARSEH SEVOM ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

# 125%

Visits to the Arseh Sevom website increased by 125% over 2012 according to Google Analytics. In 2013, Arseh Sevom focused its efforts on the Persian content of its website. This appears to have paid off in terms of increased visits and increased sharing.

62,000

There were 62,000 page views in 2014 with 41,000 unique visitors.



Photo originally published on RFEL, labeled for reuse.

Last year, the Persian site of Arseh Sevom published 79 news articles, 49 weekly reviews, 29 research pieces, 6 interviews, 4 original videos, and 5 joint statements.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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## The eleven most important topics were:

- 1. News related to civil and political prisoners (campaigns, executions, conditions)
- 2. Human rights issues and related reports
- 3. News related to NGO, campaigns, civil and social activities of citizens and their organizations,
- Reviews of the comments of Iranian citizens as published in local papers 4. inside Iran
- 5. Presidential elections
- 6. The women's movement in Iran
- 7. Statements and letters of human rights defenders, organizations, or other civil movements
- 8. Children's rights
- 9. The labor movement, ethnic and religious discrimination
- 10. The impact of economic sanctions
- 11. Citizen Rights Declaration



### ARSEH SEVOM PUBLICATION





2013

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Arseh Sevom worked to create style guides in two languages for English and Persian writers. These guides put our values into practice. Those values include transparency, accountability, and autonomy of thought . We expect all our contributors to comply with them, while maintaining a high quality-standard in their work. Any pieces of writing may have a great impact on Arseh Sevom, the reader, and the wider world. The style guides are works in progress that will change and grow with the organization.



Photo Mohammad Nourizad kissing the feet of a Baha'i toddler. Socurce: Khodnevis

# The ten most read articles in 2013 were:

## 1. Violence against girls as a result of modern-day slavery

- 2. Mr. Ahmadinejad! How much are Cheetohs and a room at Evin?
- 3. Arseh Sevom's concerns about a new wave of violence in Iran
- Review: Election costs for Khatami's company, defense of workers, and Miravani women protest
- 5. Reaction to physical harassment of the daughters of Rahnavard and Mousavi
- 6. The specter of the Holocaust, the Baha'i contribution to civil society
- 7. Immunocompromised patients endangered due to high drug prices
- 8. Kisses for Baha'i child
- 9. Watching executions: A cultural disease
- 10. The paradox of military participation in politics in Iran



#### ARSEH SEVOM PUBLICATION



2013

### **Election project**

Thirteen articles were written concerning the political and societal implications of elections and issues related to elections, focusing on the role of civil society. The articles explored the current situation, the criteria for free and fair elections, space within within the existing legal framework. The authors were experts in Iran's campaign process and had first-hand experience working within the system.

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Thirteen articles focusing on elections were published in 2013. Topics included free and fair elections, the role of minorities, and jurisprudence. Ten of those articles were collected in one publication, available as a <u>downloadable book</u> in Persian on our site.

Articles were shared on a variety of sites including Zamaneh Tribune. One piece was <u>translated into English</u> and shared by a number of sites including <u>EA World</u> <u>View</u>.



### Seven Reasons Why I Should Die

By Hashem Shaabani

For seven days they shouted at me: You are waging war on Allah! Saturday, because you are an Arab! Sunday, well, you are from Ahwaz Monday, remember you are Iranian Tuesday, you mock the sacred revolution Wednesday, didn't you raise your voice for others?

Thursday, you are a poet and a bard Friday: You're a man, isn't that enough to die?

For more than three years, Arseh Sevom joined other organizations to protest the severe sentencing of Iran's minority Ahwazi Arabs. Early in 2014, the <u>Ahwazi</u> <u>Arab poet Hashem Shabaani was executed</u>.

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#### ARSEH SEVOM PUBLICATION



2013

#### NGO database

In the second quarter, Arseh Sevom published a database of nearly 100 NGOs primarily located in Iran. This project represents the most ambitious database of organizations ever undertaken related to civil society in Iran. No other organization has put together a project like this before.

Hundreds of hours were spent developing the content, speaking with people in organizations, uploading information, and making this all publicly available. In 2014, we plan an overhaul of the database.

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# 100

Arseh Sevom profiled 100 active civil society organizations in Iran. Our research showed us that civil society in Iran remains active in certain sectors despite all kinds of government attacks and systematic limitations on civil society and on activists.

The same research showed what a number of Iranian NGOs lack: clear missions, practical objectives, thoughtful strategies, and professional planning.

Some of these issues will be addressed in our upcoming project: Civil Society Cookbook.

# 14

Fourteen people attended an Arseh Sevom session on advocacy with the European Union. They brought their causes with them and learned to communicate their concerns effectively and powerfully. They spoke passionately about the hidden reality of female genital mutilation in Iran, their concerns about the adverse effects of sanctions, LGBTI rights, and efforts to put an end to the death penalty.

Participants had the opportunity to meet and hear from EU officials directly involved with Iran. The officials were generous with their time and expertise and responded to the concerns expressed by participants.

"It was so beautiful and memorable the Human Rights Advocacy meeting in Brussels that huge thanks are due to the Arseh Sevom. Congratulations to [the organizers]...and all other participants who are all well Prepared to go the extra mile promoting a vibrant Civil Society in Iran.

When asked if the workshop should be reported, nearly all the respondents answered yes. This comment was representative of several others:

"Absolutely yes. It can improve the knowledge of Iranian activists on how decisions are made in the EU, how we can be more positive activists, and the influence of

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2013

#### Iranian Human Rights Defenders & Advocacy Methods to the European Union and United Nations

Fourteen people attended an Arseh Sevom session on advocacy with the European Union. They brought their causes with them and learned to communicate their concerns effectively and powerfully. They spoke passionately about the hidden reality of female genital mutilation in Iran, their concerns about the adverse effects of sanctions, LGBTI rights, and efforts to put an end to the death penalty.

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2013

520

Arseh Sevom launched its online lectures with the first from Director of the Iran Human Rights Documentation Center, <u>Gissou Nia</u>. She discussed techniques for collecting documentary evidence of human rights abuses.

By the end of 2013, the video had been played 520 times and had received much positive feedback. Arseh Sevom received requests for republishing it on other sites and for its use as part of a course on human rights.

Reflections on the Ambiguous Universality of Human Rights: Cyrus the Great's Proclamation as a Challenge to the Athenian Democracy's Perceived Monopoly on

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### ARSEH SEVOM PUBLICATION



Reflections on the Ambiguous Universality of Human Rights: Cyrus the Great's Proclamation as a Challenge to the Athenian Democracy's Perceived Monopoly on Human Rights

Is Europe the "unique source" of human rights and individual rights, as some scholars claim? Was fifth century Athenian democracy the origin of political equality (as long as you weren't a slave)?

Hirad Abtahi, first legal adviser of the Presidency of the International Criminal Court, took these questions as his challenge when writing this book, published by Arseh Sevom. He writes:

"Athenian Democracy should be viewed as only one component of a general egalitarian aspiration within the ancient world." (p. 14)

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Human Rights (in Persian and English) by Hirad Abtahi and published by Arseh Sevom, is being distributed by Pegah Distribution. This project was a labor of love for Arseh Sevom. Much volunteer time was dedicated to the project from the author, designer, translators, and editors, which included Arseh Sevom staff.

The first edition was of 500 copies. The book is now in its second printing. It's being sold at Persian language booksellers in North America. (Download the pdf in Persian or English)

Arseh Sevom was one of more than twenty organizations to warn of the deepening human rights crisis in Iran over the last quarter of 2013. The goal was to get the UN to pass resolution A/C.3/68/L.57 on the promotion and protection of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Outcome: The resolution passed with 86 votes in favor, 36 against, and 61 abstentions.

# 5()%

Fifty percent of respondents to a recent Gallop Poll reported having insufficient money for food and shelter. Indicators show that as the economy falters, Iran's women are losing hard-won gains in education and are being encouraged to marry younger. Over the past eight years, radiology costs have increased 500 to 800 percent.

Arseh Sevom, United4Iran, and the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran launched Just Access to demand the creation of a payment channel for non-sanctioned items.

The campaign was put on hold while the nuclear negotiations were underway.

2013

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## INTRODUCTION

In the words of the US State Department, Iran is facing "unprecedented sanctions." Iranian scholars affiliated with state institutions can no longer publish in scientific journals. Regulations prevent international banking. The value of domestic currency has plunged, while the cost of living has soared. In addition, many are suffering and dying because of lack of access to needed medication. In many cases, this access has been cut because banks are no longer willing to risk doing business with Iran.

In this infographic, we illustrate some of the problems facing Iranians. Many are the fault of poor economic management. Many are a result of sanctions and the way they are enforced.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS



"For those of us operating in the diaspora, the pressure put on Iran's middle class and poor when it comes to access to life-saving healthcare and other humanitarian aid is something we cannot ignore. How can we work for expanding rights and freedoms when many in Iran face a daily struggle just to survive?"

C

Kamran Ashtary, director of Arseh Sevom

# Arseh Sevom FINANCIAL REPORT 2013



### FINANCIAL REPORT 2013 [General]





Verstegen accountants en belastingadviseurs Dordrecht, May 1, 2014 Ref.: 393/JdG/AS/AH

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#### FINANCIAL REPORT 2013 [General]



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Nr. 393 T. (078) 648 15 55 7. (078) 648 15 59

To: The board of Stichting Arseh Sevom

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#### **REVIEW REPORT**

Introduction

We have reviewed the financial statements of Stichting Arseh Sevom, Amsterdam, for the year 2013. The board is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with Richtlip voor de Jaarverslaggeving 650 "Fondsenwervende instellingen". Our responsibility is to issue a review report on these financial statements.

#### Scope

We conducted our review in accordance with Dutch law, including the Dutch Standard 2400 "Engagements to review financial statements". This requires that we plan and perform the review to obtain moderate assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. A review is limited primarily to inquiries of company personnel and analytical procedures applied to financial data and therefore provides less assurance than an audit. We have not performed an audit and, accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion.

#### Conclusion

Based on our review, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that the accompanying financial statements do not give a true and fair view of the financial position of Stichting Arseh Sevorn as at 2013, and of its results for the year then ended in accordance with Richtlijn voor de Jaarverslaggeving 650 "Fondsenvervende instellingen".

Emphasis of uncertainty with respect to the going concern assumption

We draw attention to the financial statements which indicates that Arseh Sevom incurred a net loss of & 18.763 during the year ended 2013 and, as of that date, the company's current liabilities exceeded its total assets by & 18.508. These conditions, along with other matters as set forth on page 3, indicate the existence of a material uncertainty which may cast significant doubt about Arseh Sevom's ability to continue as a going concern. Our conclusion is not qualified in respect of this matter.

Dordrecht, May 1, 2014

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### FINANCIAL REPORT 2013 [General]



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### FINANCIAL REPORT 2013 [General]



2013

Stichting Arseh Sevom

FINANCIAL REPORT

#### 1.1 BALANCE SHEET AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2013

(ofter profit appropration)

	2013	2012
ASSETS	¢	¢
Current Assets		
Receivables, prepayments and accrued income Cash at bank and in hand	7.060 3.755	9.642 21.341
Total current assets	10.814	30.983
Total Assets	10.814	30.983
		2012 €
LIABILITIES		
Equity Foundation's equity	-18.508	255
Total Capital	-18.508	255
Current liabilities		
Debts to credit institutions Taxes Other current liabilities	0 4.588 24.735	2.478 3.806 24.444
Total current liabilities	29.323	30.728
Total Liabilities	10.814	30.983

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### FINANCIAL REPORT 2013 [General]



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Stichting Arseh Sevom

#### 1.2 PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT 2013

	2013	2012
	e	¢
REVENUES		
Contributions	201.913	210.793
Other revenues	3.464	(
Total revenues	205.377	210.793
EXPENSES		
Project costs	50.460	106.955
Staff- and office costs	140.891	74.405
Other expenses	32.342	29.022
Total expenses	223.693	210.382
OPERATING RESULTS	-18.316	411
Financial income and expenses	447	368
NET RESULT	-18.763	43

**2013** 

### FINANCIAL REPORT 2013 [General]



#### Stichting Arseh Sevom

#### **1.3 SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

The stichting has been founded at the 25th of February 2010 and its name is Arseh Sevom. At December 31, 2013 the board of the stichting is composed as follows:

Function:
President
Secretary
Treasurer
Member
Member

#### **Directive 650**

2013

The Stichting Arseh Sevom financial report 2013 has been compilated in accordance with directive RJ 650 "Fundraising institutions" issued by the Dutch Council for reporting.

#### Assets and liabilities

Unless stated otherwise, assets and ilabilities are stated at their historical costs, expressed in Euro.

#### **Revenues and expenditures**

Revenues are recognised when realized. Losses are recognised in full as soon as they become apparent.

#### Continuity

The financial statements are compiled in application of the continuity principle. Despite the financial position of Arseh Sevom the board is corvinced the operations will be continued in 2014 and further. The board has approved new projects for 2014 for an amount of \$ 156.000. Arseh Sevom has also submitted 3 proposals for the next 2 years.

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#### FINANCIAL REPORT 2013 [General]

Stichting Arseh Sevom

#### 1.4 NOTES TO THE BALANCE SHEET AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2013

	2013	2012
	(	(
ASSETS		
Receivables, prepayments and accrued income		
Receivables	4.577	5.470
Prepayments	683	2.37
Guarantee deposit	1.800	1.800
	7.060	9.643
Cash at bank and in band		
ING Bank	3.730	21.341
Petty cash	25	
	3.755	21.341
LIABILITIES		
Capitai		
Foundation's equity		
Balance as at 1 January	255	212
Result financial year	-18.763	43
Balance as at 31 December	-18.508	255
Current liabilities		
Debts to credit institutions	0	2,478
faxes	4.588	3.806
Other current liabilities		
Amounts received in advance	8.800	8.800
Payable auditors costs	2.500	1.500
ayable holiday allowance	4.615	3.344
	204	2.796
ialary payments		
alary payments Payable staff and office costs	8.616	8.004

The foundation accepted a rental agreement on November 1, 2010, for effice space at 25 De Wiltenstraat, Amsterdam. The agreement was made for a period of two years and is extended with three years. The total amount of rental costs in 2013 is € 7.668

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### FINANCIAL REPORT 2013 [General]



Stichting Arseh Sevom

#### 1.5 NOTES TO THE PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT 2013

REVENUES

2013

	2013	2012
	c	. 6
Contributions		111111
Hivos	100.000	146.383
Hivos / KBF project	98.010	
Hivos / Salary	0	10.800
Hivos / Sofia	0	30.000
Others / Sofia	0	6.428
Contribution art. 19	71	17.170
National Democratic Institute	3.832	
Total contributions	201.913	210.79
Other revenues	3.464	8
Total other revenues	3.464	1
EXPENSES		
	2013	2012
	c	(
Woject costs		
Voject costs including traveling expenses	50.460	106.955
Total project costs	50.460	106.955
Staff- and affice casts		
Salary costs	116.577	61.826
Other personel expenses	24.315	12.579
	140.891	74.405
Other expenses		
Office costs	10.090	9.665
Seneral expenses	11.482	8.963
tousing expenses	10.769	10.395
fotal other expenses	32.342	29.022
FINANCIAL INCOME AND EXPENSES		
Financial costs and interest	447	36

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### FINANCIAL REPORT 2013 [General]



#### Stichting Arseh Sevom

#### 2. Other information

#### 2.1 Proposed appropriation of results

The articles of association provide that the appropriation of the result for the year is to be decided by the Board.

- € 18.763 (-) is taken out the foundation's equity

Amsterdam, May 1, 2014

#### <u>37</u>

Mr. A.J.M. Taken President

2.2 Events after the balance sheet date There are no events after the balance sheet date. **2013** 

e Witterstraal 21, 1912 AF Ammerikan, The Natherlands, Tet. = 1113 85 #786 #34 Tetradusterin net, Tertinic @Arah/Seven

"Democracy is not for the faint of heart. It is messy and emotional and taxing. It takes a lot of time to create and maintain and everyone must come prepared with awareness and a good heart." Hollis Glaser, PhD: Building Democratic Groups, Civil Society Cookbook



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Arseh Sevom (Third Sphere) is a non-governmental organization established in 2010 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, dedicated to civil society capacity building along with the promotion of peace, democracy and human rights. Human and civil rights belong to all sectors of society and all individuals. Arseh Sevom supports the advancement of rights for people of all beliefs, genders, ethnicities and non-violent political affiliations. A key aim for Arseh Sevom is to work with individuals and organizations to amplify their actions and efforts in the development of civil society.

عرصه سوم ارتقاء دهنده حقوق همه احاد جامعه، گروهها و نیروهای اجتماعی با هر نوع اعتقادی از هر جنس، قوم و تعلقهای سیاسی غیر خشونت آمیز است. ازآنجا که برای گذار به یک جامعه دمکراتیک، بررسی موانع فرهنگی، اجتماعی و سیاسی، اجرای اعلامیه جهانی حقوق بشردرآن جامعه اهمیت دارد، عرصه سوم درتحقق تلاشهای جنبش حقوق مدنی – سیاسی در ایران و برای ظرفیت سازی و تامین نیازهای آتی و توسعه جامعه مدنی دموکراتیک و توسعه گرا، با رهبران و فعالان جامعه مدنی ایرانی همکاری میکند.

## www.arsehsevom.net

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