



UNITED NATIONS  
**HUMAN RIGHTS**  
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

# Partner for Human Rights

“All human beings are born free and  
equal in dignity and rights.”

— Art.1, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

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FOR HUMAN  
RIGHTS**

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ABOUT US

# Foreword

from the High Commissioner

**No matter who we are or where we were born, human rights bind us together, as a global community with shared values. Inclusion. Equality. Dignity.**

Around the world, the staff of UN Human Rights work passionately to ensure these are not empty words. We work to end discrimination of any kind, to reduce widespread inequalities, and to ensure the meaningful participation of all.



© UN Human Rights

We promote human rights education and help build national human rights institutions. We offer advice and technical assistance to governments, members of the judiciary and the police, and civil society movements. We work with the private sector to support them in meeting their human rights responsibilities. We support and amplify the voice of movements for justice, equality, human rights. We engage and we empower.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the steep costs of neglecting human rights, as well as how unequally and unsustainably our societies are structured. We now stand at a crossroads — policy choices have to be made. We either stand together in solidarity or we fall apart. Recovering better from this complex crisis into an inclusive, green and sustainable future is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. And I am confident that it is possible — if we are mindful of our interdependence and our need to work together, anchoring our efforts in human rights.

We now stand at a crossroads — policy choices have to be made. We either stand together in solidarity or we fall apart.

History has taught us that investing in human rights is investing in societies' resilience to crises. Today, as conflict intensifies around the world, those lessons remain just as crucial. Human rights are the remedy against injustice, poverty, inequality, conflict, under-development, and environmental catastrophe. They are a vaccine made up of universal commitments we developed after previous global shocks, including two World Wars.

Over 70 years ago, to end freedom from want and from fear, the world came together and adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Now, it is time for us to establish a new social contract, rebuilding public trust through the protection and promotion of all human rights — civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights — with the same emphasis. My Office will continue to work tirelessly in this regard.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Michelle Bachelet'.

**MICHELLE BACHELET**

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

# We support and amplify the voice of movements for justice, equality, human rights. We engage and we empower.



UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet listens to internally displaced persons and victims of violence, during a visit to Bunia in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

2020 © UN Human Rights

# Human rights for all

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

— Art. 1, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

**Whether in the world’s growing humanitarian emergencies, in the middle of a pandemic, in the devastating suffering of conflicts or on the streets of peaceful cities, human rights are essential to the lives of all of us.**

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights — or UN Human Rights — exists to work for the protection of all human rights for all people; to help empower people to realise their rights; and to assist those responsible for upholding such rights in ensuring that they are implemented.

## Who is UN Human Rights?

With over 1,600 staff members who work in some 103 countries, UN Human Rights offers assistance to governments and civil society movements, based on the global human rights monitoring we conduct. We provide legal expertise and practical training to Governments, members of the judiciary, the police and prison officials so they uphold human rights.

**It is this strong knowledge base that gives resonance and relevance to our private and public advocacy.**

We also help build National Human Rights Institutions and civil society groups and maintain strong connections with them. It is this strong knowledge base that gives resonance and relevance to our private and public advocacy, as we work with officials, non-governmental organisations and the public to spark change.

## How do we do it?

- We speak out objectively in the face of human rights violations and help elaborate the standards that are used to evaluate human rights progress worldwide;

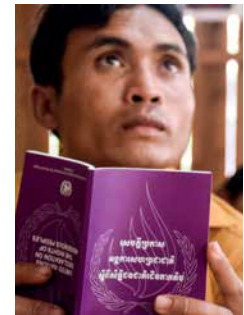
- We focus attention on those who are at risk and vulnerable on multiple fronts; and
- We pay equal attention to the realisation of civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.

## A global network to protect and promote human rights

UN Human Rights supports the work of the international human rights institutions and bodies, which States have established to promote and protect human rights. They include the human rights committees, which were created by States to monitor compliance with the core international human rights treaties; the Human Rights Council, representing 49 States; and the independent thematic and country experts named by the Human Rights Council.

## Putting human rights at the heart of the UN

Part of our work also involves working to prioritise human rights in the operations of all UN agencies. We ensure that peace and security, development and human rights — the three pillars of the UN — are interlinked and mutually reinforced. The human rights pillar appears in the pre-amble of the UN Charter, where the founders affirm “faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.”



A man holds a copy of the UDHR at a UN Human Rights awareness-raising event in Areng Valley, Koh Kong province, Cambodia.  
© UN Human Rights, Cambodia

## A guiding document

Adopted in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) distils the messages learned by authorities in a world shattered and devastated by two global wars in short succession. It outlines that regardless of race, skin colour, sex, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, human rights are the inalienable entitlements of all people.

Since the adoption of the UDHR, States have written and ratified a considerable body of human rights law. Every country has adopted at least one core human rights treaty.



\*as of 2021

# UN Human Rights in numbers\*

delivered  
rehabilitation support to

**47,469**  
victims  
of torture

in

**79**  
countries

assisted

**15,862**  
victims  
of contemporary  
forms

of slavery  
in

**31**  
countries

worked in

**103**  
countries

supported

**11**  
individual human  
rights  
components  
in UN Peace Missions,  
including

**560**  
staff

registered

**398**  
individual  
complaints  
on human  
rights  
violations

awarded

**35**  
grants  
by the  
UN Human Rights  
Grants Committee for  
a total amount of  
\$1,702,679  
for projects  
to be  
implemented  
in  
**26**  
countries

ABOUT US

# The human rights bodies and mechanisms

The central role of UN Human Rights in supporting the UN's human rights monitoring mechanisms

**UN Human Rights provides support, guidance and expertise to a wide range of human rights monitoring mechanisms in the UN system, which countries have established to promote and protect human rights. These include the Treaty Bodies, the Human Rights Council and Special Procedures.**

## Treaty Bodies

The human rights Treaty Bodies are ten committees composed of a total of 172 independent experts that monitor implementation of the international human rights treaties. They meet for a total of some 100 weeks per year. These ten committees play an important role in giving concrete meaning to individual rights and State obligations, and their work greatly contributes to the development of international human rights law. On average, the nine Treaty Bodies that have review procedures consider some 130 State party reports and over 300 individual communications each year. The Sub-Committee on Prevention of Torture carries out an average of seven preventive visits to places of detention on a yearly basis.

## Human Rights Council

The Human Rights Council is the highest level of the UN human rights machinery. It is an inter-governmental body within the UN system made up of 47 States, and is responsible for the promotion and protection of all human rights around the globe. One of the main features of the Council is the Universal Periodic Review, a unique process involving a detailed review of the human rights records of all 193 UN Member States. All States are examined every four years in one of the 14 sessions that take place throughout the review cycle. The Council also mandates commissions of inquiry, fact-finding missions and investigations to respond to situations of massive,

urgent and complex violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. They promote accountability for these violations and counter impunity. In 2021, there were ten such mandates, including the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen, the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan and the Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic. In 2022, a mandate established the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine. Throughout 2021, the Council adopted 85 resolutions, supporting the human rights of millions of people worldwide.

## Special Procedures

The Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council are independent human rights experts appointed by the Council to advise it on country situations, individual cases and thematic issues in all parts of the world. Usually named Special Rapporteurs, they examine almost every issue ranging from the exploitation of children, to the right to freedom of expression, to the right to food, to the rights of indigenous peoples, or the effects of economic and financial sanctions on the rights of the most vulnerable. Special Rapporteurs frequently raise the alarm on emerging human rights issues or trends that require urgent attention. Selected for three years by the Council, they work pro bono and do not receive a salary. Every year, an average of 50-60 countries host some 80 visits by Special Procedures experts.



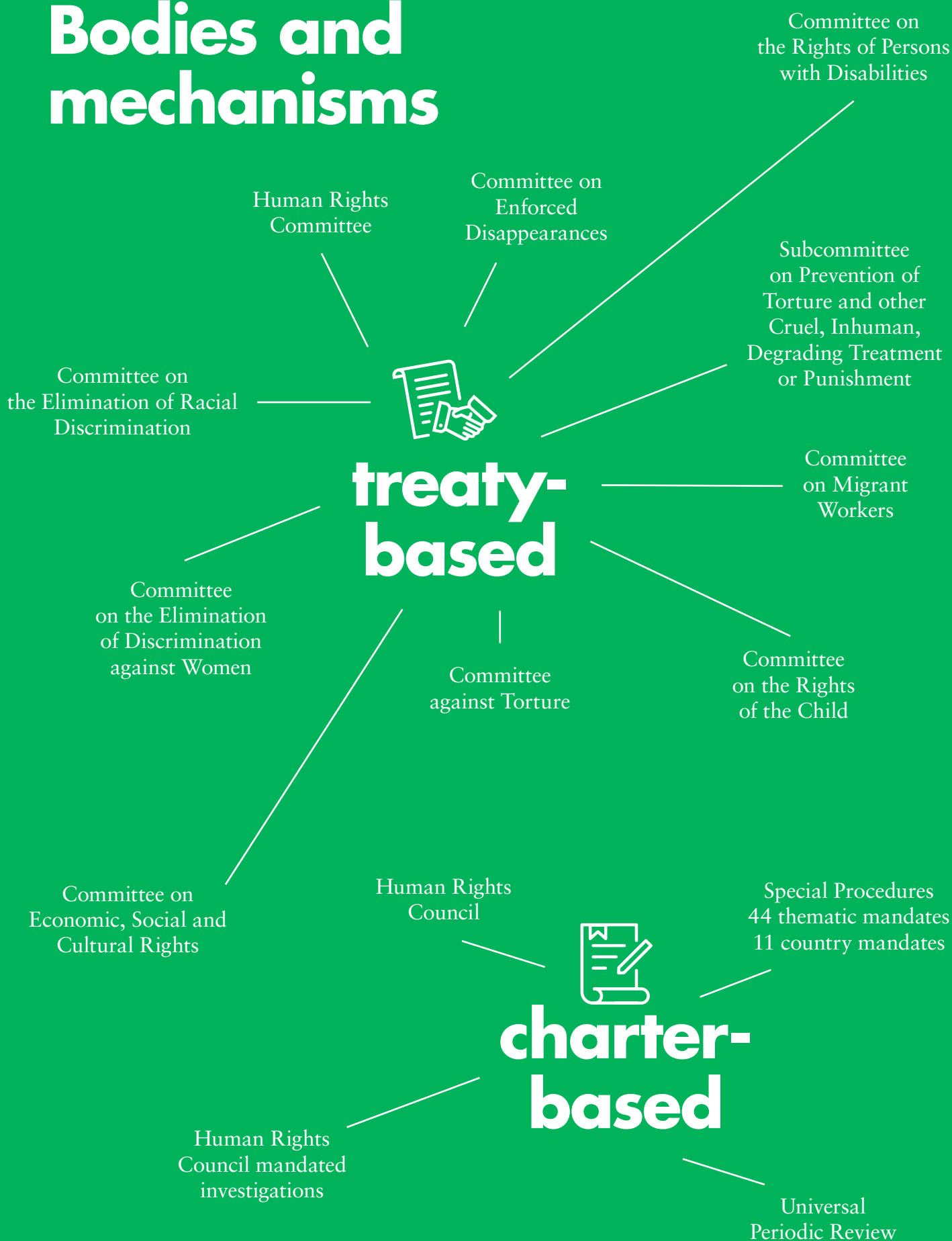
Human Rights Council, Room XX, Palais des Nations, Geneva.

© UN Human Rights

## Human rights monitoring

There are two types of human rights monitoring mechanisms within the UN system: treaty-based bodies and charter-based bodies. The ten human rights Treaty Bodies, made up of committees of independent experts, monitor implementation of the core international human rights treaties. The charter-based bodies include the Human Rights Council, Special Procedures, the Universal Periodic Review and the Human Rights Council mandated investigations. UN Human Rights provides expertise and support to all of the different mechanisms.

# Bodies and mechanisms



NUMBERS

# Financial Situation

Funding overview in 2021

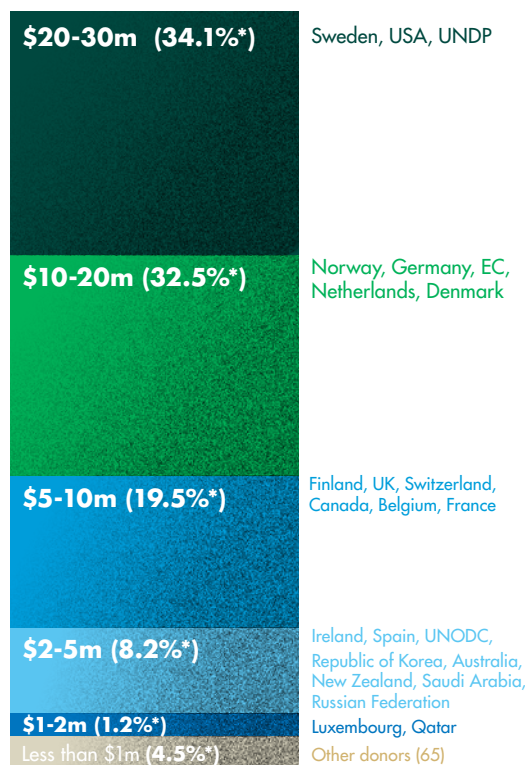
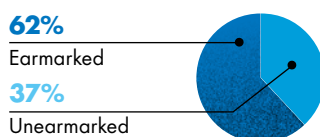
## Income

Regular budget appropriation	Extrabudgetary requirements <b>\$385.5m</b>	
<b>\$140.1m</b>	Received <b>\$227.5m</b>	Unmet <b>\$158m</b>
Total funds available <b>\$367.6m</b>		

## Voluntary contributions



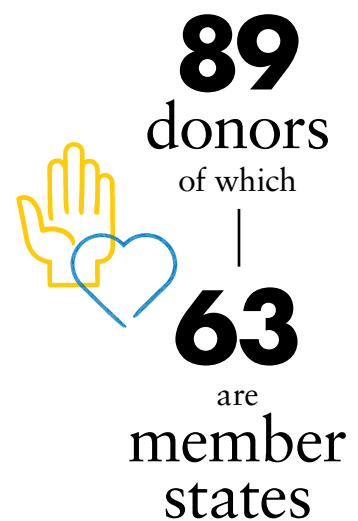
Breakdown of donors by brackets of contributions\*\*



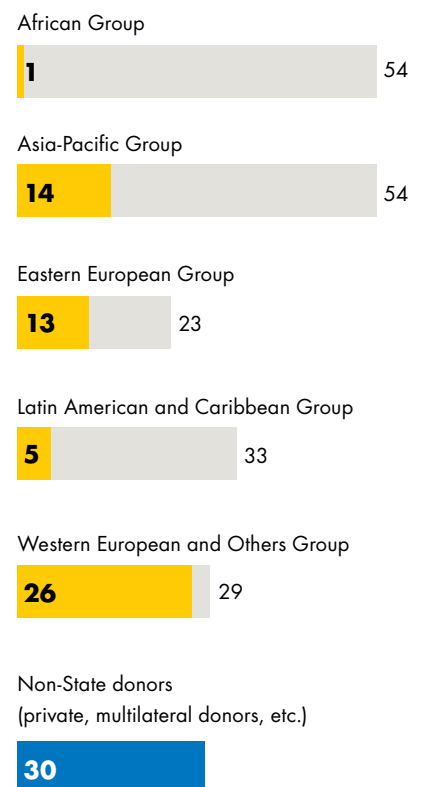
\* Of total amount of voluntary contributions.

\*\* Donors are listed according to their level of contribution.

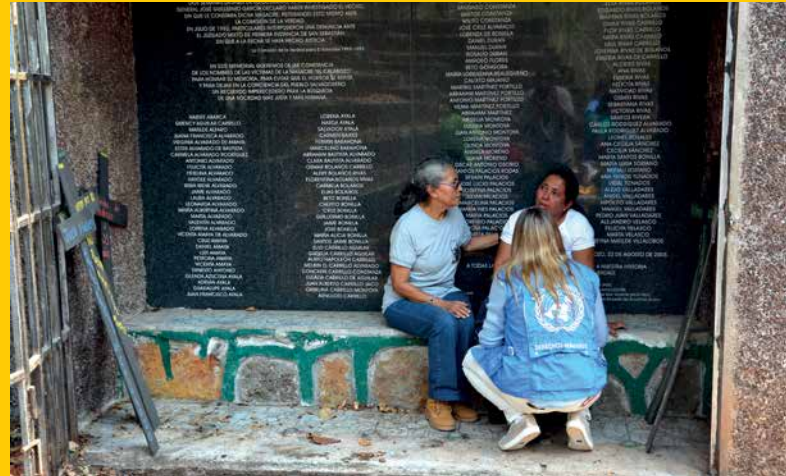
## Donors



Breakdown of donors by geographic group







Mandate **We speak out objectively in the face of human rights violations and help elaborate the standards that are used to evaluate human rights progress worldwide.**

A psychologist from the Madeleine Lagadec Human Rights Promotion Centre, and a UN Human Rights staff member console a survivor of the 1982 El Calabozo massacre in El Salvador at the memorial to the victims of the massacre. Roxana Aguilar lost most of her family members in the massacre.

2019 © UN Human Rights

ABOUT US

# Why partner with UN Human Rights?

Protecting, promoting and upholding  
human rights – together

**To help build resilient societies, UN Human Rights strives every day to advance human rights in every corner of the world. But this is not a job we can do alone.**

Human rights are indispensable to the lives of all of us. The right to education, health and food. The right to a fair trial. Freedom of expression and the right to privacy. The right to life and liberty.

**W**ithout these and other fundamental rights and freedoms, whole societies can fail and fall apart. Progress slows, communities divide, and peace is threatened.

Upholding human rights requires the engagement of everyone — from Governments, to business, to civil society organisations, to journalists, to the education sector, and far beyond. Realising human rights requires a collective effort. Everybody has the power to do it.

In our endeavour to promote and protect human rights, we work with hundreds of partners around the world.

Human rights belong to us all. By partnering with us, you can help make human rights a reality for everyone, no matter who they are, where they live, or where they come from.

To protect the human rights of all, we need to work with Governments and National Human Rights Institutions. To help us hold those Governments accountable, we need the support of grassroots activists and non-governmental organisations. To help

us speak out about human rights violations, we need the help of traditional and social media. To ensure human rights are being upheld in everyday lives, we need the engagement and support of businesses. To stand up for human rights, we need the voices of individuals everywhere.

**Realising human rights requires a collective effort. Everybody has the power to do it.**

Our partners' continued and vital commitments to better human rights mean that the marginalised can be empowered, the abused can be protected, and the oppressed can be liberated.



Casino workers undertake an industrial strike in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. UN Human Rights monitor gatherings like protests to analyze any human rights abuses.

2022 © UN Human Rights, Cambodia / Amanda Fisher

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Today, our partners support our work in 103 countries. They are helping us bring to light and to fight against the deep inequalities exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. They assist in documenting incidences of racism, xenophobia and hate speech. They help us expand the ability of journalists and human rights defenders to speak without fear or censorship. They are supporting the rights of groups and individuals in situations of vulnerability, including Roma people, people with disabilities, homeless people and LGBTQ+ persons. In 2020, UN Human Rights established and enhanced partnerships with more than 1,650 civil society organisations and human rights defenders.



UN Human Rights staff members monitoring a neighbourhood in Sanaa's affected by the ongoing conflict in Yemen.

© UN Human Rights, Yemen

**By partnering with us, you can help make human rights a reality for everyone, no matter who they are, where they live, or where they come from.**

# Towards a more diverse Kyrgyzstan

Expanding opportunities in the civil service

**UN Human Rights has pioneered an internship programme that helps the Kyrgyz civil service engage more minorities and increase diversity.**

OSHANDISSY-KUL, *Kyrgyzstan*—Today, nearly 28% of Kyrgyzstan's population is composed of ethnic minorities—Uzbek, Russian, Dungan, Kazakh and many other smaller groups—but fewer than 5% of civil servants come from minority groups.

In the Osh and Issy-Kul regions of the country, an internship programme designed by UN Human Rights has expanded opportunities in the civil service for ethnic minorities, women and people with disabilities. Each intern was assigned a mentor and received training in human rights and public administration.

The internships are funded by the European Union and the UN Peace Building Fund.

“Some qualified specialists cannot find work, but through such a project they could get a job,” said Anara Temiraliyeva, one of the programme's mentors and head of the Family and Children's Unit in the Department of Labour and Social Development.

**“It helps attract and promote qualified young people into public service, it evens out the rural-urban divide by providing equal access to all.”**

Anara would like to see the programme expanded nationwide, especially since it is difficult to attract young people to the civil service. Oleg Tarbinskii is the deputy head of the State Personnel Service, which handles all civil service hiring.

“It helps attract and promote qualified young people into public service, it evens out the rural-urban divide by providing equal access to all, and it helps support professional consistency through the transfer of skills and continuity,” he said.

## Internal practices improved

Internal practices have been shored up and improved, for example by providing stipends making it more attractive to apply. The interns, too, are happy with the result. “This was a wonderful experience,” said Maftuna Mavlyanova, an accountant from Osh. “Now, all my friends want to be interns too. A lot of them have university degrees but they face obstacles. When they don't get hired for good jobs, it is never because of their qualifications, but because of ‘something else’.”

That ‘something else’ is what the government hopes to eliminate. While not all interns end up with jobs in the civil service, they feel the experience was worth it, whatever the outcome.

Madina Gasanova, an intern from the Dungan minority, plans to return to the tourism industry after her internship, saying the training was eye-opening.

“Before, I believed human rights violations could only take place between people. Now I understand States can also infringe on our human rights,” she said.



One of the programme's interns, Madina Gasanova.  
© UN Human Rights

## A difficult start

The programme has not been without its challenges. While the authorities supported the idea of internships for young professionals, in 2016, they called for a broadening of the programme to include members of the ethnic majority as well.

Added layers of complexity arose from factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced much of the training for interns to move online. However, the internship programme has worked so well that the personnel department of the civil service would like to expand it beyond Osh and Issy-Kul.



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2019 © UN Human Rights



SOUTH  
EAST ASIA

# Life of trafficking survivor transformed

with the support of the 'Compassion House' and the UN Slavery Fund

**Far too often, young girls are trafficked for marriage or slave labour. Many suffer appalling treatment and, if they manage to escape, need the best care possible. The UN Slavery Fund is able to help grassroots service providers do exactly that.**

LAO CA, *Vietnam* — Mo\* is from the Lai Chau Province of Vietnam. When she was just 13 years old, she and her older sister were tricked into believing that they were being offered work in China. Instead, they were trafficked and sold into slavery.

Separated from her sister and unable to speak Chinese, Mo was eventually sold to a family. Still a child, she was forced to marry a man aged 20 who threatened to break her legs if she tried to run away.

**"**It was a dark, scary time. I didn't feel human. I was falling into a deep hole, not able to get out."

The family never gave her money to support herself. She started learning Chinese and persuaded the family to allow her to work in a backpack production factory.



Mo\* was sold as a child bride but was rescued through support from 'Compassion House' and the UN Slavery Fund.

© Pacific Links Foundation

With the little money she was earning, Mo bought a mobile phone and called the Chinese police. Officers escorted her to

the Vietnamese Embassy, who helped her return home.

## Social outcast

Mo was reunited with her mother, but her neighbours stigmatised her and she became a social outcast. She didn't dare to speak to outsiders. She had also discovered that her sister had been forced to marry a Chinese man, and now had a young child. "There were times when I went to work in the fields and was tired. I looked down at the ground and said to myself, 'I can't live like this'. My whole life is like this. I was criticised by people who didn't like me. I have to change."

At that point, Mo turned to the 'Compassion House' in Lao Ca, a safe house project run by the Pacific Links Foundation.

## A life transformed

Mo is from one of the ethnic groups in northern Vietnam, and only spoke her native tongue. While at Compassion House, Mo learnt the Vietnamese language as well as the necessary social skills. She was treated like family by the others there. She initially studied tailoring, but afterwards applied for a culinary vocational training programme in Hanoi.

As Mo herself says: "My life is very good right now. I am beyond what happened to me, I don't look back. If it wasn't for the Compassion House, I wouldn't be sitting here to tell my story."



"It was a dark, scary time. I didn't feel human. I was falling into a deep hole, not able to get out."

© Pacific Links Foundation

## UN Slavery Fund and Compassion House

The Compassion House project is funded by the UN Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery. The Fund, which is managed by UN Human Rights, helps hundreds of thousands of people who remain enslaved today by awarding grants to organisations that provide direct relief to victims on the ground.

\*Name has been changed to protect identity

Vietnam **“If it wasn’t for  
the Compassion  
House, I wouldn’t  
be sitting here to tell  
my story.”**

“My life is very good right now.  
I am beyond what happened to me,  
I don’t look back.”

© Pacific Links Foundation



# Securing families safer homes in Uruguay

Ensuring the right to adequate housing via a project supported by UN Human Rights

**Law professor Juan Ceretta may not be a bricklayer, but, through the Strategic Litigation Clinic, he devotes much of his time securing people's access to safe roofs and walls.**

*Uruguay* — As an expert on human rights strategic litigation at University of the Republic in Montevideo, Uruguay, Ceretta has championed the work of his students to provide legal assistance to poor families. He has established a programme to demand housing solutions, and single mothers, migrants, and people with disabilities visit him weekly.

**M**ore than 1.8 billion people worldwide lack adequate housing, according to estimates from UN-Habitat. Every year, two million people are forcibly evicted, many more are threatened with evictions and some 150 million people worldwide are homeless.

Recently, Ceretta and his students took on the case of a family with six children between the ages of two and 14, living in extreme poverty. The family had been occupying a house in Montevideo for the past 14 years that was on the brink of collapse.

Every year, two million people are forcibly evicted, many more are threatened with evictions and some 150 million people worldwide are homeless.

For the professor and his team, this case represented an enormous challenge. “In the research we carried out at the University of the Republic Law School, we only found five records of litigation claiming the effective enjoyment of the right to housing,”

Ceretta pointed out. “All these cases referred to extreme circumstances of vulnerable people — migrants, women and children who were not enrolled in State housing programs, who occupied land or had been forcibly evicted; however, no successful case was known to date.”

The road was long and bumpy for Professor Ceretta and his students. However, in an unprecedented outcome, the constitutional protection suit filed by the Strategic Litigation Clinic team, which demanded urgent housing solutions for the vulnerable family, was deemed admissible by the court.

Uruguay's Housing Ministry agreed to provide the family with adequate housing — through a rental subsidy for a period of two years — within 24 hours and cover their access to essential services, as part of their human right to adequate housing.

This first case has now opened the doors for other claimants to present their cases to the judiciary, and since, there have been a number of positive rulings on the right to adequate housing.

“This ground-breaking advance would not have been possible without the capacity building support of UN Human Rights,” Ceretta said. “We learned to use international human rights law and standards in our exchanges with authorities, as well as good practices from other countries to turn economic, social and cultural rights into a reality.”



More than 1.8 billion people worldwide lack adequate housing, with two million being forcibly evicted each year.

© Pato Eizmendi

Since its creation in 2015 as an optional course for law students, the Clinic has focused on causes that contribute to progress realizing human rights, especially social and cultural rights. The UN Human Rights Advisor in Uruguay, Graciela Dede, has been closely involved with the Clinic through a number of activities. In September 2020, they started collaboration on litigation for the right to adequate housing, which included a conference with students, lawyers, judges and prosecutors, and activists.



"We learned to use international human rights laws and standards, as well as exchanges with other countries to turn economic, social and cultural rights into a reality," said Professor Juan Ceretta, who heads the Strategic Litigation Clinic.

© Pata Eizmendi

Uruguay **"This ground-breaking advance would have not been possible without the capacity building support of UN Human Rights."**



MIDDLE EAST

# The fight for gender equality in Lebanon

Opening discussions on passing on citizenship

**Lebanese women who marry foreigners cannot pass their nationality to their children. A two-year campaign by UN Human Rights has helped bring this issue into the spotlight, and with the help of activists, there are now three draft laws in Parliament on equality for women.**

BEIRUT, *Lebanon* — The explosion in the port of Beirut in August 2020, killing 200 people, was a tragedy that grafted itself onto an ever-growing layer of Lebanese crises: massive social unrest, political instability, serious governance problems, economic meltdown and a currency crash, all overlaid by the COVID-19 pandemic and an already overstretched health system.

Lebanon as we know it has been in existence for just over a century, first under French mandate and, since 1943, as an independent state. It was a founding member of the United Nations and played a key role in the Universal Declaration for Human Rights.



A young woman holds up a placard in front of the interior ministry building in Beirut.

© REUTERS/Jamal Saidi

Yet not everyone in Lebanon has the same rights when it comes to passing on citizenship.

“Lebanese women who marry foreigners cannot pass on their citizenship to their children, yet Lebanese men married to foreign women can,” says Claudine Aoun, president of the National Commission for Lebanese Women, a government

body. Aoun identifies two main culprits: the patriarchal mentality and the Lebanese confessional political system. This system

accommodates the country’s religious diversity (6 Muslim and 12 Christian sects), by allocating senior positions and civil service jobs by religion.

“Lebanese women who marry foreigners cannot pass on their citizenship to their children, yet Lebanese men married to foreign women can.”

The nationality issue is highly sensitive but at least it is now being discussed, especially since a two-year campaign led by UN Human Rights, known as *Equality in Nationality*, helped break the deadlock by forcing this taboo issue into the open.

“When the social protests erupted (in 2019), the first banners at the front were those held by women demanding the right to nationality,” said Roueida El Hage, Regional Representative for UN Human Rights in the Middle East. “This showed the awareness and support of civil society groups for human rights, which must be integrated into all policies.”

“There are now three draft laws in Parliament on equal rights for women,” said El Hage. In another positive development, the government has recently adopted a law against sexual harassment, so there is hope momentum will be maintained despite the country’s troubles.

**Women without same rights as men**  
 “Women are simply not recognised as citizens the way men are. We have had some advances on women’s equality, but the citizenship issue remains a taboo,” Claudine Aoun says. This can be traced in part to the confessional system, and the fact that political parties are at a stalemate: what one group considers discrimination, another sees as culture. “Each religion chooses the rights that suit its programme, so wide recognition of women’s equality is difficult,” Aoun says. “We need to convince people that this is not only a women’s issue,” she stresses.



Lebanon **“There are now  
three draft laws in  
Parliament on equal  
rights for women.”**



Lebanese women hold up banners during a demonstration demanding nationality rights in Beirut.

© Reuters

## AFRICA

# Conflict-related sexual violence in Ituri, DR Congo

Healing and justice for sexual violence survivors

**In Ituri, DR Congo, UN Human Rights is supporting the fight against impunity for conflict-related sexual violence. Our partner, Solidarité féminine pour la paix et le développement intégral, has become a crucial entry point for women, children and men seeking justice.**

ITURI, DR Congo — The inter-ethnic violence, which erupted in December 2017 in Ituri, DR Congo, has resulted in hundreds of deaths, serious human rights abuses, including brutal acts of sexual violence, and the displacement of half a million people throughout Ituri and neighbouring provinces.

## A holistic approach to healing

The staff at the Karibuni Wa Mama (Welcome, mothers) medical centre help heal many wounds - physical and psychological, and go even further in healing survivors. The centre is managed by the NGO Solidarité féminine pour la paix et le développement intégral (Female Solidarity for Peace and Integral Development) — SOFEPADI.

A medical doctor oversees general visits, the provision of HIV post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) and testing, and family planning. Another unit provides psychosocial care to deal with victim's trauma and rehabilitation, while one more offers vocational training for survivors to help them become financially independent. Recently, SOFEPADI added a new segment to their activities: providing legal aid for survivors and training for civil society actors on the body of Congolese law criminalising sexual violence; as well as increasing the awareness of members of the judiciary on sexual and gender-based violence. The Joint Human Rights Office\* has been providing

funds to support judicial investigations and Mobile Courts, and providing protection for victims and witnesses so that they can participate in proceedings safely.

The Office also advocates for courts and relevant actors to pursue all other possible legal avenues for redress when perpetrators are not able to pay financial reparations.

SOFEPADI is among the first entry points for victims who seek justice. With the aim of uncovering the truth, the staff at Karibuni Wa Mama collect medical details to strengthen cases filed with the courts.

“The victims recount the facts of their ordeal and bring elements that allow SOFEPADI to start managing them as patients. When victims arrive with the marks of their injuries, SOFEPADI is able to deliver medical certificates and take photo evidence that could help to uncover the truth,” Human Rights officer Gloria Malolo pointed out. “The military or civil court will then use those elements to uncover the truth, since the magistrates will only get the opportunity to listen to the victims months after the events,” she added.

“The traces would have disappeared, even when it comes to rape, the wounds would have healed. But all the elements gathered by SOFEPADI, already at the level of first contact, will allow the judge or the magistrate to find out what happened.”

## The first steps to justice

SOFEPADI has helped file over 1,500 cases against alleged perpetrators in the courts. “We have also obtained rulings, but reparations remain a problem,” said Noella Alifua, one of the NGO's coordinators. For Gloria Malolo, Human Rights Officer with the Joint Human Rights Office in Bunia, Ituri's capital, reparations primarily bring victims a sense of relief that the harm they suffered has been redressed, but also strengthen the population's trust in the justice system.



Noella Alifua, coordinator of SOFEPADI, says that women are the most affected by conflict related sexual violence in Ituri.

© UN Human Rights

\*The Joint Human Rights Office is the combined UN Human Rights and the human rights division of MONUSCO – the UN Mission in DRC.

DR Congo **The staff at the Karibuni Wa Mama (*Welcome, mothers*) medical centre help heal many wounds — physical and psychological, and go even further in healing survivors.**



This mother came to SOFEPADI for a postnatal visit. She decided to keep her baby born of rape.

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