

PROMOTING AND PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



PROMOTING AND PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS
ANNUAL REPORT 2022

FOREWORD

PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN A TIME OF MULTIPLE CRISIS

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights. In 1948, in the aftermath of World War II, visionary nations adopted the Declaration with the aim of ensuring freedom, equality and justice for all. Today, this vision is still guiding our path at the Danish Institute for Human Rights.

However, sadly, events during recent years have not been in favour of human rights. More than a year ago, war broke out in Europe. Russia illegally invaded Ukraine and shook up the international order.

The war in Ukraine continues to rage. Thousands of innocent people have lost their lives and millions have fled from war and devastation. Civilians have been subjected to war crimes such as massacres, deliberate attacks on civilian infrastructure, torture, rape of women and abductions of children.

Internationally, economic recession driven by the war and COVID-19, along with weather extremes, is currently giving rise to an upsurge in the number of people affected by displacement and hunger in many parts of the world. With war and international tension, inflation, energy crisis, climate crisis and food crisis, we must make sure that human rights, international

conventions, and treaties are still observed and will always be respected.

Crises may never become a shortcut to failing basic human rights. Whether due to pandemics, inflation or war, crises may never put human rights at risk.

The tasks are numerous. Setbacks in democracy, human rights and the rule of law are seen in many countries. In 2022, women's rights were one of the important rights struggles worldwide. In Iran, women have been protesting against oppression with their lives at stake, while the Taliban in Afghanistan is taking away women's right to education and free movement.

Despite all the challenges, the Danish Institute for Human Rights has continuously supported and strongly contributed to protect and promote human rights work internationally, in close cooperation with our international partners. And we continue our work to hold states accountable for human rights violations.

A core task for the Danish Institute for Human Rights is – together with our partners – to support human rights institutions in other countries in their efforts to protect and promote human rights, i.e., within UN agencies, government institutions, financial institutions, universities, companies, security forces

and civil society. Partnerships are key in all our efforts, and our partners span from security forces in West Africa, where jihadism is on the rise, to fishing associations standing up for their rights in Asia.

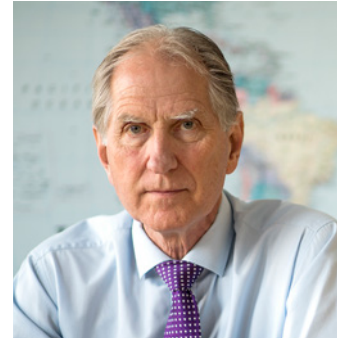
Together with our Ukrainian sister organisation, we will bring together human rights institutions from all over the world in Copenhagen in November 2023 to discuss how to prevent torture and ill-treatment. Sadly, this theme is more relevant than ever in times where human rights are being violated to an extent that we thought belonged to the past.

Against this background, it is uplifting to see that human rights defenders continue their work for progress worldwide. In the following pages we present some of the results from our programmes, projects, and activities in 2022 and the first six months of 2023.

Situations are shifting, new challenges may arise in months to come, and our partners and the Institute itself need to be constantly prepared to adapt to the changing environments. With this in mind, we are deeply thankful to all our donors, partners and everyone who are dedicated to protecting universal human rights.



Louise Holck
Executive Director of
the Danish Institute for
Human Rights



Andreas Kamm
Chairman of the Board of
the Danish Institute for
Human Rights

01 EMPOWERING OUR SISTER ORGANISATIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

The Danish Institute for Human Rights has worked for many years with sister national human rights institutions throughout the world. In 2022, this work continued in more than 20 countries where the Institute participated in developing and strengthening the capacity of national human rights institutions. The Institute provides expertise on reporting, implementation and follow-up of recommendations from the United Nations human rights organs, and we also facilitate access to our online tools on business and human rights, the Sustainable Development Goals, human rights defenders and human rights education.

National human rights institutions are a key actor in the implementation, protection and promotion of human rights at domestic level. The Danish Institute for Human Rights brings its own experience as the national human rights institution of Denmark and puts it into play, in various contexts, in close partnership with sister institutions.

Our support has helped strengthen access to justice and fair handling of complaints for thousands of people. It also participates in building strong independent human rights institutions able to engage purposely and meaningfully with state institutions at domestic level and with international and regional human rights mechanisms.

In 2019, Daniel Bekele (right) was appointed head of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. The Danish Institute for Human Rights supports the Commission in fulfilling its mandate to promote and protect human rights.



ETHIOPIA'S HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION STEPS INTO THE ROLE OF A HUMAN RIGHTS WATCHDOG

The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission gains recognition as an independent voice by bringing attention to serious human rights violations in the present volatile situation in the country.

In October 2013, the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) rejected the application by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (abbreviated EHRC or the Commission in the following) for A-status accreditation. GANHRI concluded that the Commission had failed to submit any recommendations to new and existing legislation that would impact people's enjoyment of human rights, and that the Commission had discontinued publishing and disseminating annual human rights reports.

Then, in 2022, the Commission submitted recommendations regarding four pieces of legislation. Two concerned the protection of internally displaced persons and the rights of persons with disabilities. EHRC also submitted comments on the Criminal Procedure Law and the Rules of Evidence to ensure compliance with human rights commitments.

Throughout 2022, EHRC issued 50 publications, including statements and reports that critically examine the human rights situation in Ethiopia. This change marks a significant milestone in the Commission's transformation into a body that responds to and shares its opinion on the human rights situation in the country.

The publications included the report 'Violations of Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law and Refugee Law in Afar and Amhara Regions of Ethiopia',

published on 11 March 2022. The report outlined widespread human rights violations against civilians committed by all parties to the conflict.

In September 2022, EHRC published a report condemning the additional judicial killings, bodily injuries and looting of properties of citizens in Gambella City, following the clash between Oromo Liberation Front, Gambella Liberation Front and regional government forces. The report called for all perpetrators, including the regional government forces, to be held accountable and brought to justice.

Another highlight in 2022 was 'The Annual Human Rights Situation Report' covering the Ethiopian year from June 2021 to June 2022. The Commission presented the annual report to the Parliament followed by a press conference where it was shared with the public.

Throughout the year, the Commission continuously issued statements which focus on critical issues and recommendations for urgent action. As examples, in June 2022 the Commission released a statement demanding the release of people of Tigrayan descent detained in camps in the Afar region. In July 2022, the Commission published another statement demanding both the federal and regional forces to disclose the whereabouts of illegally detained media personnel and other prisoners and to release them if criminal

charges had not been instigated against them. In September 2022, EHRC released a statement condemning the civilian killings and attacks by armed groups in the Oromia Region.

In July 2019, Daniel Bekele was appointed Chief Commissioner of EHRC, and he initiated the transformation of the Commission. In 2021, the application by the Commission was reconsidered and it was awarded A-status by GANHRI.

Bekele described the announcement as a milestone, noting the invaluable contribution of the Commission's staff members in the reform process and in executing its mandate, in the current difficult context.

“The upgrading from the “B” status which EHRC had held since November 2013 to “A” status is a testament to the global recognition of EHRC as an independent and effective national human rights institution fully compliant with global standards”, Daniel Bekele says.

The Danish Institute for Human Rights has worked to support the Commission in fulfilling its mandate to promote and protect human rights since 2019.

WHAT IS A-STATUS?

A-status accreditation signifies that a national human rights institution is credible and independent, adhering to the internationally recognised minimum standards set out in the Paris Principles. The Principles mandate that national human rights institutions maintain independence in their legal structure, membership, operations, policy, and resource control.

The Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) is responsible for reviewing and accrediting national human rights institutions based on their compliance with the Paris Principles. National human rights institutions that fully comply with these Principles receive A-status accreditation, while those that partially comply are granted B-status.

With A-status, a national human rights institution gains independent participation rights at the United Nations Human Rights Council as well as full membership of GANHRI, including the right to vote and hold governance positions.

Funded by

Our partnership with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission is funded by the Governments of Denmark, Germany, Norway and the UK.



STRENGTHENING THE COOPERATION AMONGST NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS IN THE AMERICAS

Supported by the Danish Institute for Human Rights, the regional network of national human rights institution in the Americas, RINDHCA, has established a permanent office in Panama.

In recent years, human rights have been under extraordinary pressure in the Americas. Indigenous peoples continue to be at great risk throughout the region, violence against women remains prevalent, and attacks on human rights defenders are widespread.

This poses a tremendous challenge for the national human rights institutions of the region who often find themselves on the frontline of the crisis. Several national human rights institutions and their representatives have been unduly politically pressured and, in some cases, intimidated and harassed.

In 2021, the secretariat of RINDCHA, the regional network of national human rights institutions in the Americas, inaugurated its permanent office in Panama. It is expected that it will strengthen the cooperation amongst the national human rights institutions in the region and their capacity to act regionally regarding the many human rights challenges in the region's 18 countries.

In 2022, RINDHCA organised a conference to discuss and find a common position on national human rights institutions under political attack. The Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), RINDHCA and the Institute also facilitated a meeting among national human rights institutions in the region and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Michelle Bachelet.

Both RINDCHA and GANHRI have played a crucial role in raising international awareness of the harassment and threats that many national human rights institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean are facing.

Funded by

The Institute has supported the establishment of the secretariat and the office in Panama as part of a global project, named the NHRI EU project, running from 2016-2021.

02

ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In our work on sustainable development, we seek to drive human rights change through state development processes. We work with digital tools that add visibility to the human rights dimension of sustainable development, and we support partners in documenting and addressing human rights issues. We believe that comprehensive data on human rights issues is a sound basis for dialogue among actors that can bring about change.

We strive to fight discrimination and inequalities, and we see sustainable development processes as leverage for promoting human rights. Our main focus is on economic, social and cultural rights, and we work with marginalised groups such as indigenous peoples and poor fishing communities who depend on marine resources for their livelihoods. We also work on the broader, transformative elements of the global sustainable development agenda and believe that human rights defenders play a crucial role in bringing about the change we need to build more just and sustainable societies. Likewise, we work on human rights education as a driver for the building of societies based on respect for human dignity, equal treatment and democratic values.



ENHANCING SAFETY FOR ARTISANAL FISHERS

Strengthened local presence of fisheries authorities in Bangladesh improves conditions for artisanal fishers, who have long faced danger at sea.

Artisanal fishers in Bangladesh's Pathorgatha District have long faced dangerous and disturbing conditions at sea. The lack of proper safety measures has left the fishers exposed to numerous hazards, such as extreme weather and frequent accidents. These challenges have further exacerbated the vulnerability of these communities which already experience poverty and marginalisation.

In response to such pressing concerns, the authorities have decided to set up local offices along the coast of the Pathorgatha District. They will be in charge of ensuring the compliance with regulations, thus safeguarding the safety and health of the fishers, and issuing registration licences of the small local boats.

This initiative – part of the Danish Institute for Human Rights' Sustainable Oceans project – fills a gap in the protection of the fishers' labour rights and their right to life, documented by the Institute, in collaboration with Manusher Jonno Foundation, the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies and COAST Trust.

The role of the local authorities is to monitor all sea-faring vessels, including small-scale fishing

boats, ensuring that safety regulations are upheld. The decision to strengthen the local presence on the coast follows the adoption of the Marine Fisheries Act in late 2020. The Act includes several provisions that shall ensure the safety and security of fishers, such as clear standards for the seaworthiness of vessels, mandatory safety equipment and pre-registration of crew members.

These developments are a crucial step in improving the safety, working conditions and livelihoods of vulnerable fishing-dependent communities.

Our partners in Bangladesh will continue to follow the working conditions and livelihoods of the artisanal fishers closely and pay particular attention to the accountability of the new offices.

Funded by

In collaboration with partners in Chile, Honduras, Bangladesh and Africa, the Institute is leading the global project 'Sustainable Oceans – Pursuing a Human Rights-Based Approach to Fisheries and Aquaculture'. The project is funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation (SIDA).

TOWARDS FOSTERING AN INCLUSIVE AND RIGHTS RESPECTING EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN JORDAN

Our sister organisation, the Jordanian National Centre for Human Rights, is paving the way for the integration of human rights education into the secondary school curricula in Jordan.

Facing numerous challenges such as high dropout rates, violence in schools, gender inequality, inadequate teacher training and an outdated curriculum, the Jordanian education system has been under immense pressure.

In response to these issues, the Jordanian National Centre for Human Rights (JNCHR), the Jordanian Ministry of Education and the Danish Institute of Human Rights embarked on an assessment of the human rights education in Jordan's school system.

Using the SDG 4.7 / Human Rights Education Monitoring tool, developed by the Institute, the assessment looked into the education policy, national school curricula, teacher education, the learning environment and student assessments.

This marked the first comprehensive systematic assessment of the human rights education in primary

and secondary schools in Jordan and identified a gap in secondary school curricula which the education authorities are now committed to address in an upcoming curriculum reform process.

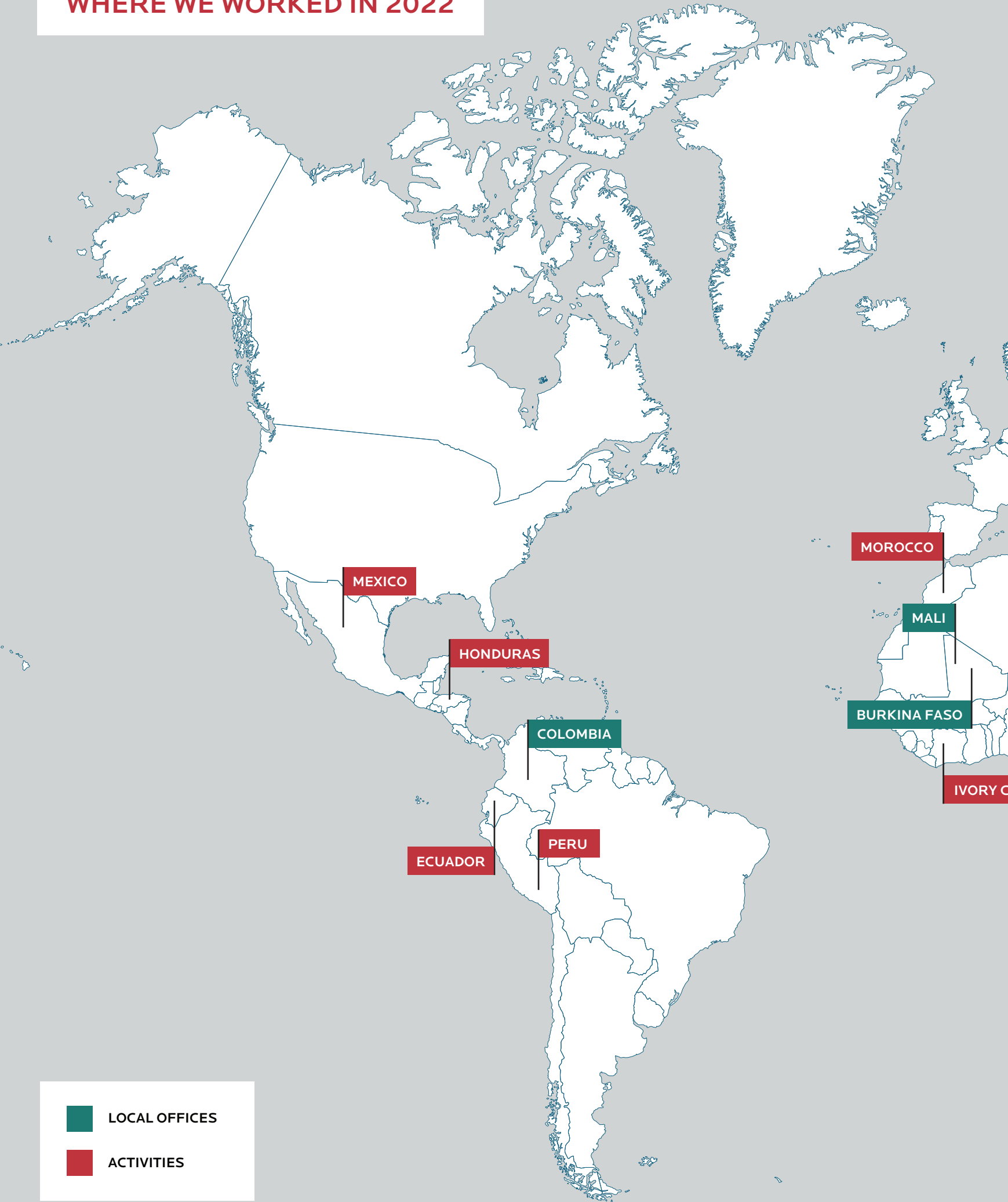
The integration of human rights education into the secondary school curriculum will hopefully help foster an inclusive and rights respecting educational environment.

Funded by

The cooperation with the Jordanian National Centre for Human Rights (JNCHR) on the assessment of the human rights education in primary and secondary schools was carried out with funding from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2021. Dialogue with JNCHR and the Jordanian education authorities continued in 2022 with funding from the Danish Arab Partnership Programme.



WHERE WE WORKED IN 2022



 LOCAL OFFICES

 ACTIVITIES



UKRAINE

KYRGYZSTAN

AFGHANISTAN

MYANMAR

INDONESIA

TUNISIA

PALESTINE

NIGER

JORDAN

ETHIOPIA

UGANDA

KENYA

EAST

TANZANIA

ZAMBIA

03

SUPPORTING TRUST BUILDING AND SECURITY EFFORTS

Security actors have a key role as protectors of human rights in terms of justice and security in building a democratic state. At the same time, security actors are among the main violators of human rights in many countries, resulting in a lack of trust and confidence among the population.

We support national security actors to help them fulfil their key role as protectors of human rights, justice and the security of the population. For more than a decade, we have been working with police forces, gendarmes, penitentiaries, national guards and other security actors in countries like Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Nepal and Palestine.

We provide support to our local partners so that they can strengthen their knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour in regards to human rights, among staff and officers. This includes supporting the partners in the development of training materials and programmes, inclusion of human rights in curricula and development of internal monitoring mechanisms to track and prevent human rights violations.

If human rights are integrated into the practices and daily work of security actors, we believe that it will enhance security actors' accountability and the protection of rights and fundamental freedoms of vulnerable and marginalised individuals or communities. They will ensure maintenance of public order and safeguarding of internal security, but also help combat violent extremism, trafficking in human beings and corruption and ensure economic development.



We have worked in Niger since 1997. In collaboration with Niger's security forces, the Ministry of Justice and other state actors, we contribute to trust-building and the protection and promotion of human rights.

AWARENESS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AMONG SECURITY FORCES IS INDISPENSABLE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

With our support, ten internal security forces in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger in the Sahel region have now integrated human rights into their curricula.

‘Police should only resort to physical force when all other options have been depleted. When they use physical force, they risk violating a person’s bodily integrity and basic human rights, such as the right to life.’

This text is part of a booklet focusing on human rights which every single police cadet in Niger is reading, while studying at the national police academy.

Like in Niger, all students in the neighbouring countries Mali and Burkina Faso who are studying to become either prison guards, water and forestry guards, gendarmes, national guards or police officers will receive human rights education and training. This means that the students at all these schools now have human rights pedagogical tools at their disposal together with an array of human rights trainers.

Since the first partnership in the region in 1999, ten internal security forces in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger have fully integrated human rights standards and norms into their curricula.

In recent years, the number of terrorist attacks and the insecurity in the Sahel region in Africa have reached an unprecedented level.

Awareness of human rights among internal security forces is indispensable in the fight against terrorism, according to Christelle Zafiryadis, Department Director of the Human Rights, Africa Department, at the Danish Institute for Human Rights. That is why one of the key goals within these partnerships is to instil a culture of respect for human rights amongst internal security forces in order for them to understand and apply the tools designed for promote human rights and dialogue in local populations.

“Regardless of whether you control the borders between Mali and Burkina Faso, work as a guard in a prison in Niger or ensure law and order in the forests of Burkina Faso, it is key that you know and respect human rights. Internal security forces who don’t respect the rights of the inmates or the population in general are most likely not trusted”, says Christelle Zafiryadis.

When the security forces are combatting terrorism, they depend to a large extent on the support of the population.

If the citizens fear or distrust the security forces, they are reluctant to sharing information, for instance by reporting on terrorists’ hiding places or informing about people who are collaborating with terrorist groups.

STRENGTHENING TRUST BETWEEN THE POPULATION AND ITS SECURITY FORCES IN THE IVORY COAST

Until recently, the Ivory Coast on the West African Coast has largely been free from the threat of the violent extremism which mars many of the neighbouring Sahel countries. However, in recent years, numerous terrorist groups have been threatening the country. Building on many years of collaboration between the Danish Institute for Human Rights and internal security forces on human rights in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, the Ivory Coast is now following in the footsteps of their neighbouring countries. With support from the Danish Institute for Human Rights, the National Human Rights Council in the Ivory Coast is currently planning how to improve trust between the population and the security forces by promoting human rights among the country's security forces.



Funded by

Our work in West Africa is funded by the EU Trust Fund Sahel and our framework agreement with Danida.

SUPPORTING PALESTINIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT

By bringing main actors together, we help integrate human rights in the operations of Palestinian law enforcement.

In Palestine, the Danish Institute for Human Rights works together with the Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR) to enhance the capacity of Palestinian law enforcement by integrating human rights standards into their practices.

In a complex context of ongoing human rights violations and challenges for the law enforcement actors, we work with our partners to enhance knowledge sharing and integrate human rights in their operations.

In 2022, a task force was formed, consisting of experts from the Palestinian Police and ICHR, with the aim of developing a human rights education tool for the police academy. Through workshops and expert discussions, the task force worked with the Institute's methodology for the creation of effective teaching materials. The task force works collaboratively to define the themes and structures of the education tool in line with the local context, directly addressing the pressing challenges faced by the Palestinian Police. The work on the police education tool takes the

international standards and best practices as its point of departure while focusing on topics such as access to justice, digital rights, prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment.

This collaborative effort equips the Palestinian Police with the knowledge and skills necessary to uphold human rights in their operations, ensuring the protection and promotion of human rights throughout Palestine. The finalisation and approval of the human rights education tool, expected in late 2023, will be a significant milestone in advancing human rights education within the law enforcement sector.

Our collaboration with the ICHR and Palestinian Police serves as a testament to the positive impact that can be achieved through partnerships and collective efforts.

Funded by

Our work in Palestine is funded by the Representative Office of Denmark in Ramallah.



In the Palestinian Territories, we work with the Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights.

04

MAKING BUSINESS AND INVESTORS RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS

The role and responsibility of business and investors in respecting and supporting human rights have never been higher on the agenda. Right now, we are witnessing a surge of legal and policy developments that are mandating business and investors to exercise human rights due diligence at regional and global levels. This agenda and priority are necessary as business and investors still face challenges in their efforts to respect human rights, and as human rights abuses continue to occur in global value chains.

During 2022, we have continued our efforts to support the development of mandatory human rights due diligence that aligns with international standards and principles regarding business and human rights. We have applied benchmarks to business disclosures, mapped and outlined policy developments and their coherence, engaged in policy and legal developments at country and regional levels and developed and initiated partnerships, all with the aim of supporting states, business and investors in better integrating human rights throughout global value chains and the way in which they conduct their activities.



IMPROVING THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION OF INDIGENOUS MISKITO DIVERS IN HONDURAS

Collaborative efforts strive to improve the situation for Miskito divers in the hazardous industrial fishing sector.

In the coastal province of Gracias a Dios in Honduras, dive fishing of lobster, sea cucumbers and snails has developed as an important occupation for the indigenous Miskito population. Artisanal lobster fishing was traditionally part of the Miskito livelihood, and the free-diving capacity of the indigenous fishers was exploited in the rapid commercialisation of the industry. Lobster diving is the main source of employment in the region, including very young men, and lobster is an important export commodity in Honduras.

However, the indigenous Miskito divers face numerous human and labour rights violations in the fisheries sector, with many suffering from

decompression sickness due to inadequate safety measures.

Recently, a Miskito diver became seriously injured. To ensure that he received proper medical care and that his labour rights were respected, the Honduran National Human Rights Institution (CONADEH) stepped in. The case exemplifies the ongoing efforts by CONADEH and the Danish Institute for Human Rights to address such challenges.

To document and tackle the human rights issues faced by the Miskito divers, CONADEH and the Danish Institute for Human Rights have carried out a sector-wide impact assessment of the industrial



fishing sector in Honduras. The assessment aims to document the human rights impacts inflicted on the divers and engage industry and government actors in developing recommendations and joint actions to address the identified issues.

The Gracias a Dios region is characterised by high poverty levels, illiteracy, unemployment, chronic malnutrition and poor access to health services. The state presence in the region is weak.

The lack of supervision, abuse by boat captains, absence of decompression facilities, insufficient training and failure to comply with basic diving safety standards are some of the reasons behind the devastating conditions for the Miskito divers.

The collaboration between CONADEH and the Danish Institute for Human Rights helps generate the space for dialogue amongst actors, aimed at improving the working conditions and rights of the Miskito divers and their families in the Gracias a Dios region.

Funded by

In collaboration with partners in Chile, Honduras, Bangladesh and Africa, the Institute is leading the global project 'Sustainable Oceans – Pursuing a Human Rights-Based Approach to Fisheries and Aquaculture'. The project is funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation (SIDA).



“HUMAN RIGHTS ARE UNIVERSAL VALUES WHICH WE MUST ALL FIGHT FOR”

Human rights are not neocolonial heritage, but values that apply to everyone. We have to be vigilant about that, especially in a time of polarisation and with a rapidly changing global threat assessment. This is emphasised by the International Director for the Danish Institute for Human Rights, Mette Thygesen, who took office at the end of 2022.

The international world order as we have known it for a long time is falling apart. We live in a time when Russia's illegal war has intensified the global threat assessment and led to international armaments. Wars, regional conflicts and strong autocracies negatively impact civil rights and civil liberties in the Middle East, Africa, Asia and parts of Europe. And global agendas such as the climate crisis, digitisation and the quick-as-lightning development within artificial intelligence challenge human rights in completely new ways.

In other words, human rights are under pressure, and there are plenty of challenges to tackle for Mette Thygesen who took over the position as international director of the Danish Institute for Human Rights at the end of 2022. The experienced diplomat and ambassador is responsible for all the Institute's international cooperation projects in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

“It is crucial to protect human rights, the international legal order and cooperation – not least today where the time is characterised by polarisation, and where the threat assessment is growing increasingly complex”, says Mette Thygesen.

The Danish Institute for Human Rights has a long tradition of collaborating with public and private actors in countries where there is a will, but where the country lacks capacity or resources to build and run the necessary institutions to ensure the framework for compliance with human rights. This work will continue under Mette Thygesen who will, however, have a stronger focus on efforts in and around Ukraine, in the MENA region and Sahel.

“ We live in a world of great change, and we will have to be flexible and adjust our work so that we concentrate our efforts where it is most realistic that we can make a concrete difference together with our donors.

For more than 25 years, the Institute has collaborated with private companies and public institutions such as ministries, universities, police, security forces, prisons, and courts to support capacity building. The long-standing partnerships have delivered results – even though it has often required a balancing act between the idealistic and the pragmatic, a delicate balance which will become more and more relevant, predicts Mette Thygesen.

“In parts of the world there is a perception that human rights are a neo-colonial legacy, and that we in the West are not necessarily right that human rights have universal significance. We in the Western countries will have to get used to assuming a humbler position. But that does not mean we should refrain from bringing our expertise into play. It means that we must engage through equal and long-term partnerships based on mutual respect and attempts at understanding. And here, we must insist that human rights are universal values that apply to everyone”.

Being vigilant about human rights has become especially necessary at a time when rights are challenged from completely new angles. It applies

not least to the climate crisis which has rapidly developed into a rights crisis. Climate change threatens fundamental rights such as the right to life, health, water, housing and self-determination. At the same time, we see that the consequences of climate change are most devastating for the people and societies who are already exposed and vulnerable due to geography, age, poverty, gender, disability, cultural or ethnic background.

“ The climate crisis will become a completely natural part of our future field of activity. The transition to green and renewable energy is absolutely necessary, but the transition itself also needs to take place with respect for human rights.

The development of renewable energy involves a wide range of risks from a human rights perspective – from forced labour in the manufacture of solar cells to a lack of dialogue with indigenous peoples in the establishment of wind farms on their land.

“It is crucial that states recognise their duty to protect citizens’ rights – both in the climate crisis itself and in its possible solutions”.

In these years, we also see how the development of advanced technology, digitisation and the rapid development of artificial intelligence put fundamental rights under pressure.

“Especially in authoritarian states, there is a tendency that the states may abuse the technology to monitor and suppress their populations. This happens to a large extent with technology from countries that do not necessarily accept the need to regulate tech companies or respect human rights. It is of course a challenge that we also must address”.

Later this year, the Human Rights Convention turns 75. The magnitude of urgent tasks in the anniversary year is large – but so are the opportunities. But it requires pragmatism because dialogue is the way forward. Even with those we do not agree with. “Safeguarding human rights is a state responsibility. Only states can do that. Therefore, isolation is not a long-term solution”.



Mette Thygesen

International Director of the Danish Institute for Human Rights

05

PROMOTING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The Danish Institute for Human Rights has been engaged in international cooperation around promotion and protection of human rights through the delivery of justice access services for over 25 years. During 2022, the Institute continued to implement justice programmes and activities in collaboration with national partners in Zambia, Kenya, Niger, Myanmar, Kyrgyzstan and Indonesia.

The Institute's approach to access to justice is human rights-based, contextual and holistic. The added value of taking a human rights-based approach is that it situates government justice policy and financing discussions within a framework of international human rights law and state party responsibility to ensure the availability of adequate, appropriate and accessible justice services of good quality for all people living within its area of jurisdiction. Further, it underscores that access to justice is essential for the protection and promotion of all other civil, cultural, political, economic and social rights and for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

We take a country- and context-based approach. Human rights principles need to be situated within the national operating context, and, finally, we promote a holistic approach to delivery of legal services. Access to legal services should go hand in hand with access to other advisory services or forms of social support. Some problems can be sufficiently addressed through administrative or legal pathways. Others (e.g., obtaining access to public goods or services that may also be characterised as rights) may require other kinds of assistance.



For 20 years, we have contributed to the development of effective and self-sustaining national human rights systems.

TWO DECADES OF PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN KYRGYZSTAN

Working towards stronger rights based systems and obligations in Central Asia.

The year 2022 marked 20 years of engagement by the Danish Institute for Human Rights in Kyrgyzstan and in Central Asia. For more than two decades, we have contributed significantly to the establishment and development of stronger human rights systems in Central Asia. The Institute has been present in four out of five Central Asian states, with the most long-standing and solid engagement in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

We have delivered a range of services and support in almost all processes of strengthening the overall human rights system in the countries. We have provided technical assistance and helped strengthen capacities of non-state actors, national human rights institutions and relevant authorities and ministries to help them meet their mandates and human rights obligations.

We have supported advocacy activities to raise awareness and understanding of human rights and we have pushed for – and supported – dialogue and coordination among the national human rights institutions, state actors and civil society.

Across the region, there are now two generations of human rights professionals who are assuming leadership in government and public life. The previous Ombudsperson in Kyrgyzstan, the first woman to be appointed to the post, has a background as a human rights lawyer and civic activist, while the current Ombudsperson, also a woman, has yearlong experience with prosecution.

A strong human resource base exists in Kyrgyzstan, and other countries in the region, that will continue to advocate for a national development, drawing strength from Central Asian indigenous culture and traditions, at the same time embracing an open, democratic, and inclusive society.

Funded by

Our work in Kyrgyzstan is co-funded by the EU and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ).

2002

Kyrgyzstan celebrates 11 years as a sovereign state and 10 years as a member of the United Nations. In that same year, the Ombudsman Institution of Kyrgyzstan – in the Kyrgyz language the Office of the Akyikatchy – is established by presidential decree.

The Danish Institute for Human Rights becomes the first international partner of the Akyikatchy, with the goal of supporting Kyrgyzstan's efforts to establish an effective and self-sustaining national human rights system.

2016-2018

From 2016-2018 and after four waves of the awareness raising national campaign “Know your rights”, 11,700 persons received free legal aid across the country. The campaign has been a catalyst for cooperation among governmental entities at both central and local levels.

In 2018, the Institute helped the Ombudsman Institution to develop and launch an online system for human rights complaints' handling, improving access to justice for people in rural areas and reducing corruption and lengthy justice procedures

2022

The first woman is appointed to hold the position of Ombudsperson in Kyrgyzstan: Atyr Abdrahmatova, a human rights lawyer and civic activist.

2003-2005

The Institute supports the establishment of the Human Rights Advisory Board – a platform that gathers state agencies and civil society to discuss and engage in human rights related issues. The platform still exists and is fully operational. Every year the platform produces a human rights yearbook – an analysis of human rights situation in the country and recommendations for improvements.

2021

With our support, the Ombudsman Institution in Kyrgyzstan launched the “Caravan of Law” event in 2021. This initiative covered 44 areas, 20 cities, and about 70 institutions in the fields of prisons/ detention centres, psychiatric, health, and education countrywide.

The Ombudsman Institution met with over 5,000 citizens and ensured the participation by heads of local authorities to promptly resolve issues and provide consultations. The results were presented to state bodies, the country's leadership, and NGOs. The “Caravan of Law” initiative led to a prompt response to over 500 complaints and violations identified during the first wave, enhancing legal awareness and access to justice for vulnerable groups.

EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS: ACCESSIBLE JUSTICE IN BARINGO COUNTY, KENYA

Community justice systems transform the lives of victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

In Baringo County, situated in the Rift Valley of Kenya, vulnerable women and girls have long faced obstacles to accessing justice for sexual and gender-based violence. The region's traditional justice systems, operated by male-dominated Councils of Elders, often perpetuate gender biases and fail to protect human rights. However, through the dedicated efforts of the Citizen Participation Forum (CIPAF) and the support of various justice sector actors, changes are finally happening.



One significant accomplishment of this project is the establishment of the Social Justice Centre in 2020 by CIPAF. This centre, run by six women volunteers with backgrounds in community health and counselling, provides community justice support to women and girls on various issues, including sexual and gender-based violence, property disputes, inheritance and child protection. The centre also makes referrals to other justice actors in the area, such as the Gender Desk at the local police station and the Children's Office.

The Gender Desk, staffed by a dedicated female police officer, handles cases involving rape, defilement and indecent assault, primarily affecting women and children. This police officer works closely with other state and informal actors, including chiefs, village elders and the Children's Officer, in order to ensure that victims of sexual and gender-based violence can access justice in a gender-sensitive way.

In addition, a mobile court is now set up twice a week in Marigat, providing a faster and more accessible way for sexual and gender-based violence victims to seek justice. Previously, victims had to travel 45 km to the nearest court, often sharing transport with offenders. The introduction of the mobile court has made a significant difference in the lives of those seeking justice.

The work carried out by CIPAF and its justice sector partners in Baringo County, including the establishment of the Social Justice Centre, the Gender Desk and the mobile court, has made considerable progress in ensuring that women and girls can access justice in the face of sex and gender-based violence. By addressing the challenges faced by traditional justice systems and collaborating with key actors representing the formal and informal justice processes, this project is helping to reshape the landscape of justice for the most vulnerable in the community.

Funded by

Our work in Kenya is financed by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



A court clerk preparing for a mobile court in Kenya.

06

ENSURING A RESPONSIBLE TECHNOLOGY THAT RESPECTS HUMAN RIGHTS

A digital transformation based on human rights holds great potential for individuals and societies, whereas digitalisation without due consideration for human rights entails significant risks, especially in countries lacking robust institutions and legislation to protect individual rights. Rapid development of digital technologies without proper safeguards poses huge threats to the enjoyment of a wide range of human rights, from the impact on privacy by surveillance technology to hate speech on social media.

In 2022, the Institute has built an alliance of national human rights institutions, supporting them in their efforts to become stronger and more competent actors in the field of digital rights, and has led an action coalition that promotes a human rights-based and responsible approach to technology among state actors, the business sector, financial actors as well as civil society.



STRENGTHENING DIGITAL RIGHTS PROTECTION: NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS UNITE

We gather national human rights institutions at the Internet Governance Forum in Addis Ababa.

The Danish Institute for Human Rights led a peer-learning workshop focused on digital rights protection in the lead-up to the Internet Governance Forum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This event brought together 14 staff members from ten national human rights institutions across the globe, equipping them with essential knowledge and tools to address the human rights implications of digital technologies.



Emerging technologies such as facial recognition, AI-based profiling, internet banking and digital identity systems pose new human rights challenges, necessitating a proactive response from national human rights institutions. The workshop empowered participants to mainstream digital rights within their institutions' mandate areas, assess the impact

by technology on human rights and deepen their understanding of rights in the digital space.

The Internet Governance Forum saw unprecedented involvement of national human rights institutions, particularly from the Global South, with many participants actively contributing to sessions for the first time. This newfound confidence bolstered the recognition of the crucial role of national human rights institutions in focusing on human rights within digital transitions.

The NHRI Digital Rights Alliance, established in March 2022, comprises members from 24 countries who are committed to addressing the challenges of digitalisation on human rights. Initiatives include developing a reflection tool on the roles of national human rights institutions in tech and human rights and contributing to international processes. This growing alliance demonstrates national human rights institutions' dedication to shaping the future of digital rights protection and promoting human rights online as well as offline.

Funded by

Our work in Ethiopia is funded by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

UNVEILING THE DIGITAL RIGHTS CHECK: SAFEGUARDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

The Danish Institute for Human Rights and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) are introducing a tool to identify and assess human rights risks within digital development.

As countries worldwide adopt digitalisation strategies, digital technologies are increasingly integrated into public administration, offering potential for improved accessibility and more efficient processes. However, there is growing concern that such technologies might exacerbate discrimination, enable increased surveillance, and inadvertently support authoritarian regimes.

To address these concerns, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and the Danish Institute for Human Rights have developed the Digital Rights Check, a human rights assessment and guidance tool specifically designed for staff and partners working in technical development cooperation and development finance on digital projects.

The need for such a tool is underscored by the World Bank's significant increase in digital projects, from just six in 2019 to 29 in 2021. Although digital technologies offer many benefits, their misuse

may reinforce patterns of discrimination and exclusion, highlighting the importance of identifying and assessing human rights risks within digital development projects.

The Digital Rights Check allows users to identify risks related to the types of technologies used, to the country and context in which it is implemented and to the intended users of the solution.

Using the Digital Rights Check tool, Mohamed Kimbugwe, Digital Government Adviser with the Digital Transformation Center - Kenya, concludes: "You get to think about the roles of all involved and the case studies offer a practical perspective".

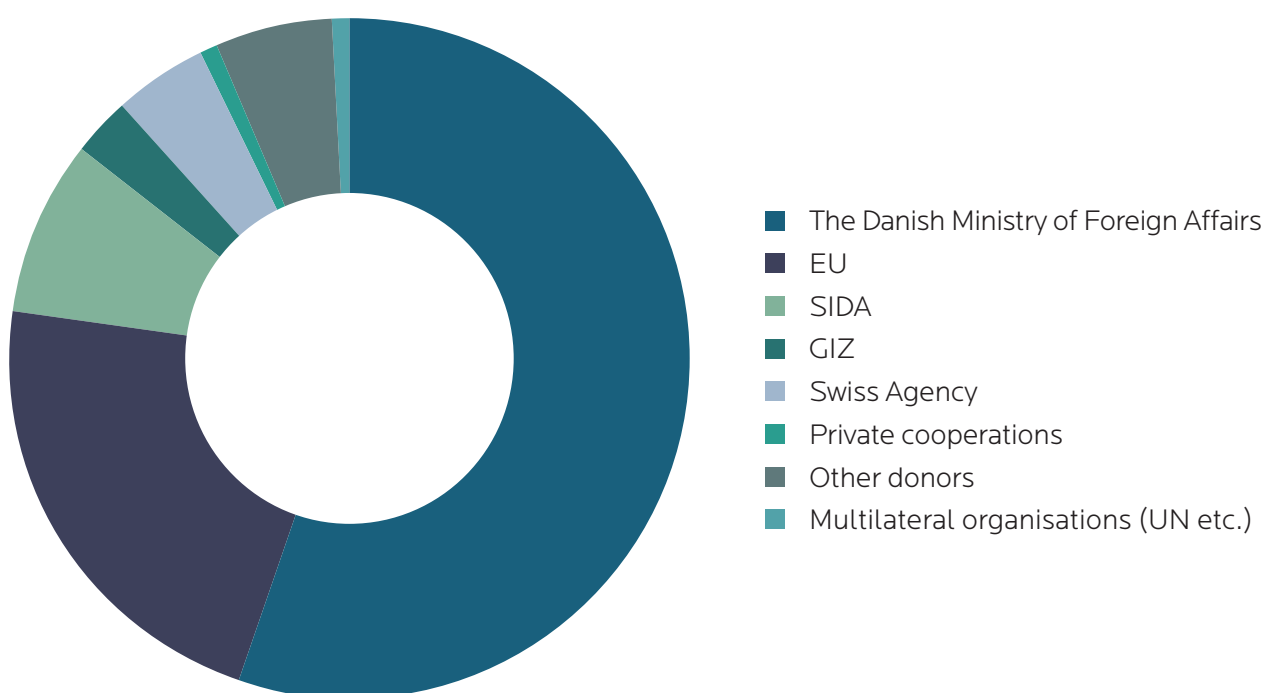
Funded by

The tool is developed in cooperation with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ).



BUDGET FOR OUR INTERNATIONAL WORK IN 2022

	Million DKK
The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs	76,4
EU	30,3
SIDA	11,3
GIZ	4,0
Swiss Agency	6,1
Private cooperations	0,9
Other donors	7,9
Multilateral organisations (UN etc.)	0,8
In total	137,7



OUR WORK IN DENMARK

As a national human rights institution, we work to promote and protect human rights in Denmark and abroad.

In Denmark, we advise the government, the parliament, ministries and public authorities on human rights, among other things in connection with proposals for new legislation.

We monitor Danish legislation and make sure that it is in accordance with human rights. We carry out this task by observing how Denmark implements and applies international conventions and EU legislation.

A key monitoring task is to prepare consultation responses on legislative proposals. In the legal briefs, we assess whether a specific proposal may have adverse effects on human rights. If this is the case, we submit our recommendations for needed changes.

Furthermore, we intervene before national and European courts in principled human rights cases.

We work with cross-disciplinary reports on human rights issues. We map out the biggest human rights challenges in Denmark as well as the yearly improvements in the area and prepare an annual report to the Danish Parliament. For more information, visit menneskeret.dk/status.

PROMOTING AND PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

ISBN: 978-87-7570-186-5

e-ISBN: 978-87-7570-185-8

Photo credits: Cover photo: Hugh Mitton / Alamy Stock Photo; p. 5 – left: Danish Institute for Human Rights; right: Søren Bidstrup / Ritzau Scanpix; p. 7 - Uncredited/AP/Ritzau Scanpix; p. 10 – Valiant Made / unsplash.com; p. 13 - Bahalul Hossen Sykot; p. 19 - Olivier Girard; p. 21 - Tommy Trenchard / Alamy Stock Photo p. 23 - JLBvdWOLF / Alamy Stock Photo; p. 25 - Tom King / Alamy Stock Photo; p. 26 - Conadeh; p. 28 – Kzenon / Shutterstock; p. 31 – Vlad Ushakov; p. 34-35 - Danish Institute for Human Rights; p. 37 - Koshiro K / Alamy Stock Photo; p. 41 - Field Engineer / pexels.com

Layout: Michael Länger

© 2023 The Danish Institute for Human Rights
Denmark's National Human Rights Institution
Wilders Plads 8K, DK-1403 Copenhagen K
Phone +45 3269 8888
humanrights.dk

Provided such reproduction is for non-commercial use, this publication, or parts of it, may be reproduced if authors and source are quoted.

At the Danish Institute for Human Rights we aim to make our publications as accessible as possible. We use large font size, short (hyphen-free) lines, left-aligned text and strong contrast for maximum legibility. For further information about accessibility please click www.humanrights.dk/accessibility

