

THE DANISH
INSTITUTE FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS

PROMOTING
AND
PROTECTING
HUMAN RIGHTS

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21



PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS AMID A PANDEMIC

Those who work with human rights need to be constantly prepared to adapt to changing environments. Situations shift, new challenges arise. But no-one could have foreseen how COVID-19 would influence life and work nearly everywhere on the globe – and it would also have consequences for human rights.

However, already in the years leading up to the pandemic we were witnessing setbacks in democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in many countries. In some ways, the pandemic has accelerated this trend: according to Freedom House, 2020 was the 15th consecutive year of decline in global freedom. In some countries, the pandemic has been used as a pretext for violating fundamental rights, with vulnerable groups and societies being among the most affected.

Against this background, it is uplifting to see that human rights defenders have continued their work for progress in all corners of the world. Through our international work the Danish Institute for Human Rights has supported and contributed to this, in spite of all the challenges posed by COVID-19. We have pushed hard – many times in collaboration with our sister national human rights institutions – for the protection and promotion of human rights within UN agencies, government institutions, financial actors, universities, companies, security forces, and civil society.

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

Since January 2021, the institute has been guided by a new strategy. The focus areas include how technology affects human rights, new challenges to democracy and the rule of law, human rights and sustainable development, and how to promote human rights in the business sector. These thematic priorities are all reflected in this annual report.

On the following pages we present some of the results we and our partners have contributed to in 2020 and during the first half of 2021.



Louise Holck, Executive Director of the Danish Institute for Human Rights.



Dorthe Elise Svinth, Chairman of the Board of the Danish Institute for Human Rights.

‘OUR RESPONSE TO HUMAN RIGHTS SETBACKS IS TO BUILD STRONG PARTNERSHIPS AND LOCAL PRESENCE’



In the midst of a global human rights crisis, the Institute is contributing to progress in many corners of the world. Among the key drivers are strengthened local presence, digital adaptation, analytical capacity, and solid and unusual partnerships, as Eva Grambye, head of the Institute's International Division underlines:

‘A strong local presence is pivotal for many reasons. Our local staff follow the political developments in the countries where we are working, and they have direct access to the local institutions and organisations. We are highly dependent on them to push for progress’.

Recognising the power of local presence, the Institute is currently establishing four regional hubs: in Latin America, West Africa, East Africa and the MENA region.

They will help the Institute expand its work in places that are facing many severe human rights challenges.

The Institute's local presence proved its strength when the COVID-19 pandemic turned the world upside down. As Eva Grambye describes, West Africa is a good example of this:

‘Most of the international organisations working in West Africa evacuated their international staff, and many projects were put on hold. That was not the case for the Institute. In 2020 and 2021, our 14 locally-based employees in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso continued to promote human rights among the internal security forces and we even expanded our partnerships in the region. As internet connections in

” Most of the international organisations working in West Africa evacuated their international staff, and many projects were put on hold. That was not the case for the Institute.

Eva Grambye

” As pension funds and development finance institutions have the capacity to push for greater respect for human rights by tech giants and other companies, they are very important partners’.

Eva Grambye

the Sahel region are often poor, it would have been impossible to continue without our local staff’.

At the same time, strong online communities explain why the Institute contributed to results in other areas. In 2021 the Institute published an analysis showing how and why the pandemic did not stop the national human rights institutions and their regional networks from doing their job.

‘COVID-19 forced us to adapt to a new digitalised reality. In many cases it has even strengthened our partnerships and thus our ability to contribute to progress’, Eva Grambye says with reference to the many tools and studies that the Institute has published in close partnership with partners all around the world.

She also highlights the global alliance that the Institute has helped mobilise for a Sustainable Recovery Pledge based on human rights, that has so far been signed by 49 states.

‘It is very positive that it is possible to mobilise so many institutions and states via events and seminars exclusively held online’.

However, mobilising is not enough; there needs to be a constant push for action and here the Institute’s analytical capacity comes into play. Based on solid research, the Institute has launched user-friendly digital tools which will, among other things, shed light on the human rights situations of marginalised groups who are often invisible in official statistics.

Working with the business sector, the Institute has developed tools and guidance which make it easier for companies and financial institutions to avoid human rights abuses in their value chains.

‘A special focus we have now zoomed in on, is the human rights challenges that arise from the accelerating digitalisation in the Global South and how one can build action coalitions with relevant partners in both the private and public sectors’, Eva Grambye says.

The Institute’s wide range of very different partners are equally important for the progress the Institute is contributing to.

‘We depend on strong collaborations with like-minded partners, such as national human rights institutions and UN agencies, but our strength is also our capacity and willingness to work with actors who are driven by other agendas and who cannot be categorised as human rights defenders’. Eva Grambye refers to the growing number of partnerships that the Institute has established with internal security forces for example, and actors within the financial sector.

‘Investors such as pension funds and development finance institutions hold powerful positions in the global economy. As they have the capacity to push for greater respect for human rights by tech giants and other companies, they are very important partners’.

**Eva Grambye is Deputy Executive Director,
Head of International Division,
The Danish Institute for Human Rights**

#01 EMPOWERING OUR SISTER ORGANISATIONS AND THEIR NETWORKS

National human rights institutions (NHRIs) are independent bodies established to stand up for those in need of protection and to hold governments accountable for their human rights obligations. For many years the Institute has helped strengthen the capacity and impact of national human rights institutions.

During 2020 and 2021 we have helped 27 national human rights institutions gain capacity and independence in many different areas. We have provided technical support for national and international monitoring and reporting on human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Our support has led to raised awareness about human rights among people in many different countries, and we have helped strengthen thousands of people's access to justice and fair handling of complaints. As part of our support to the global NHRI EU project, we have strengthened the role of the global and regional networks of national human rights institutions and specifically their capacity to protect human rights defenders.



27 national human rights institutions have strengthened their capacity to promote and protect human rights as a result of activities supported by the Institute.

PAVING THE WAY FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN JORDAN

To combat discrimination in the labour market we supported the Jordanian national human rights institution in its efforts to amend two laws.

Over the past 20 years Jordan has achieved progress in combatting discrimination against women by revisiting laws that keep Jordanian women out of the workforce. However, even now less than 15 per cent of women in Jordan are employed and the Jordanian labour market is still characterised by large gender differences and discrimination.

To remove some of the barriers to gender equality, the National Centre for Human Rights in Jordan (NCHR) has suggested the amendment of two Jordanian laws. In July 2021 the NCHR sent the proposed amendments to the Prime Minister's Office. Later they will be sent to Parliament for adoption.

EQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF PARENTAL LEAVE AND FAMILY SUPPORT

In Jordan pension and other benefits are taken away from women when they are on maternity leave. As part of the proposed amendment, NCHR suggests that women continue to receive the benefits during leave. The NCHR also suggests that both men and women receive a family remuneration, when marrying. As it stands, women in Jordan only receive this monthly economic support for the family if they are divorced or if their husbands are unable to work due to disability.



To remove some of the barriers to gender equality in Jordan, the Institute's partner the National Centre for Human Rights in Jordan (NCHR) has suggested the amendment of two Jordanian laws.

According to the NCHR, merely changing laws and policy will not change the attitudes of employers and the rest of the society overnight. Nonetheless the NCHR is convinced that the amendment of the laws will be an important step forward.

The proposed amendment was formulated in close collaboration with selected parliamentarians, governmental focal points, civil society organisations and UN agencies. The efforts to amend the laws were in response to the recommendation to 'Take further steps to promote gender equality and women's empowerment', which Jordan received in 2018 when its human rights situation was assessed as part of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

Since 2018, the Institute has guided the NCHR throughout the review process; from the initial reporting on the human rights situation in Jordan to now, as they work towards implementing the UPR recommendations adopted by the Jordanian state.

INDEPENDENT HUMAN RIGHTS WATCHDOG IS EMERGING IN ETHIOPIA

With support from the Institute, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission enhances its ability to protect and promote human rights, free from government interference.

Until recently, many people questioned the independence of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. They accused it of being too closely linked to the government.

'It was just a body that was justifying the brutality of government forces', Executive Director of the Center for Advancement of Rights and Democracy, Befeqadu Z. Hailu claims.

Editor-in-chief of the newspaper, Ethiopia Insider, Tesfalem Waldyes, agrees: 'Even when they [the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission] investigated the abuses, they blamed the protesters or the victims, rather than the government forces'.

CALLING OUT CASES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

In recent years, however, the Ethiopian government's political reforms have paved the way for concrete steps towards improving the protection of human rights. This includes an amendment to the founding law of the Commission to ensure its independence. An analysis of the founding law, carried out by the Institute as part of a capacity assessment of the Commission, helped the Commission advocate for the amendment.

As a result of the independence gained from this, the Commission now regularly carries out investigations and publishes reports on serious human rights

violations that are taking place as Ethiopia grapples with ethnic and political unrest.

After investigating the unrest and killings that followed the assassination of the musician Hachalu Hundessa in June 2020, the Commission published a report that documented abuses at the hands of security forces. According to the investigation, at least 76 people were killed by security forces, whose excessive force also left 190 injured.

INDEPENDENTLY APPOINTED COMMISSIONERS

Another result of the amendment of the founding law of the Commission is that the appointment of commissioners is now based on merit. For the first time in its history, Ethiopia's parliament has appointed commissioners for key thematic areas, including women's rights and children's rights, following a transparent process involving the direct participation of civil society organisations. The new law further empowers the Commission to inspect prisons and places of detention, as well as public service institutions, without any prior notice.

FUNDED BY

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



In 2020 the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission released a report on the massacre of more than 600 civilians in the town of Mai Kadra in the Northern Tigray region.



Human rights defenders in the Philippines (photo) as well as in many other countries face death threats and severe risks when defending their rights. The regional action plans on human rights defenders developed by the regional networks of national human rights institutions will hopefully strengthen the protection of human rights defenders.

RESPONDING TO VIOLATIONS AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Supported by the Institute the regional networks of national human rights institutions take actions against the many killings of and attacks on human rights defenders across the world.

An increasing number of human rights defenders across the globe face severe risks when defending their rights to press freedom, for example, and land rights. These risks have only intensified since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. To strengthen the protection of human rights defenders, the global and regional networks of national human rights institutions are stepping up. The regional networks have developed comprehensive regional action plans on human rights defenders with expert inputs from the Institute. These efforts have been supported by the global NHRI EU Project, which is led by the Institute.

COLLECTING DATA ON VIOLATIONS AND FACILITATING PROTECTION

The regional action plans contain thorough context analyses and case studies that exemplify the challenges human rights defenders are facing. They also describe how they are currently responding to

“ Your regional action plan is essential in the struggle to save lives’

(Mary Lawlor, special rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, at the launch of Asia Pacific Forum’s regional action plan on human rights defenders).

the challenges, and what their members are planning to do to improve respect for the rights of defenders. In April 2021 Asia Pacific Forum of national human rights institutions published its regional action plan. Among the many actions highlighted is the need for collecting data on violations against human rights defenders.

Another action highlighted is the facilitation of human rights defenders’ access to support and protection when they receive death threats, are at risk of reprisals, or for any other reason fear for their lives.

FUNDED BY

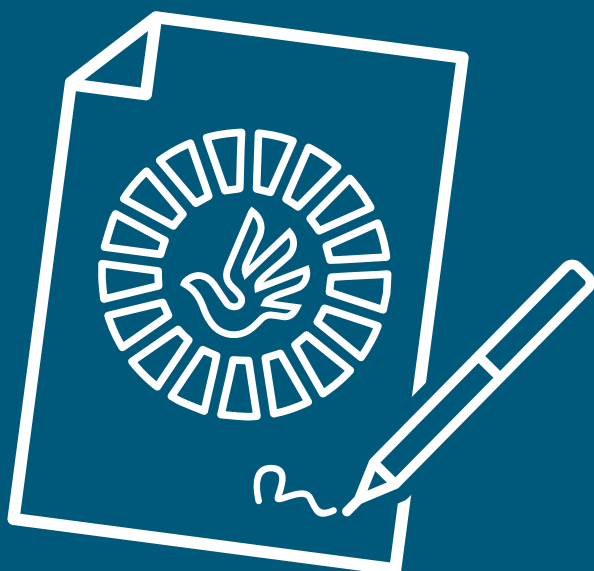
The NHRI EU Project is led by the Institute and financed by the EU.

#02 ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGH THE 2030 AGENDA

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) create new opportunities for the realisation of human rights. In 2020 and 2021 the Institute has intensified its work to promote accountability of states in SDG implementation and monitoring, with the aim of ensuring that they contribute to the realisation of human rights for everyone.

We have developed three digital tools that help national human rights institutions, states, civil society organisations and other actors collect and use data, focusing on human rights education and on marginalised and vulnerable groups such as human rights defenders and indigenous peoples. By doing so, we aim to bring visibility to the human rights dimension of the 2030 Agenda.

We have further developed a tool that helps states and other actors shape their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic with human rights at the centre, and with the SDGs as a roadmap for recovery. We organised a number of events, including two high-level, global events and a number of smaller online seminars and events to mobilise a global alliance for a Sustainable Recovery Pledge based on human rights.



Recovering from COVID-19
with human rights:

So far
49 states
have signed the
Sustainable Recovery
Pledge.

BRINGING HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS INTO OFFICIAL STATISTICS

The Institute is fostering partnerships to generate data on those who are invisible in official statistics.

Official and reliable data that shed light on the increased numbers of killings and harassment of human rights defenders and the generation of official data on gender and youth. This will hopefully be among the important results of an initiative called Inclusive SDG Data Partnerships, co-created by the Institute. The initiative strengthens the collection and use of data from non-official sources through new, country-based alliances in Costa Rica, the Philippines, the Palestinian Territories, Nepal, Canada and Ghana. The partnerships comprise national statistics offices, civil society organisations and national human rights institutions. Together they identify what kinds of data are missing on specific issues and people, and plan how to fill the data gaps.

As an example, in Nepal the Central Bureau of Statistics and the National Human Rights Commission among others are planning to introduce and teach youths and women on how to generate data on their situations. Furthermore, they are planning to generate qualitative data on marginalised communities.

ACCELERATING A RIGHTS-BASED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA

The new partnerships can play a pivotal role in accelerating action towards implementation of the



2030 Agenda based on human rights, which in many areas is far too slow. Many SDG targets and indicators in areas of key importance for human rights remain unmonitored and under-reported.

With official statistics focusing mostly on national averages, there is a significant monitoring gap of marginalised communities and of specific groups such as indigenous peoples, women, children, and human rights defenders. The main purpose of the new partnerships is to fill these data gaps.

FUNDED BY

Inclusive SDG Data Partnerships is led by the Danish Institute for Human Rights (funded by the Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations in Geneva), Partners for Review (hosted by GIZ) and the International Civil Society Centre.



PUSHING FOR A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED RECOVERY FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Institute has contributed to putting human rights at the centre of international discussions about pandemic response and recovery.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on societies and vulnerable people across the world. In many countries it has been used as a pretext for violating fundamental freedoms and human rights. To ensure that the recovery from the pandemic is sustainable and firmly grounded in human rights, the Institute co-initiated a Sustainable Recovery Pledge. The pledge contains ten commitments specifying how human rights and the 2030 Agenda will guide pandemic recovery.

A GROWING NUMBER OF STATES ARE COMMITTED

So far, the pledge has been signed by 49 states and supported by many organisations including UN agencies. The pledge was launched at an event organised by the Institute in June 2021 with the participation of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, and a number of state representatives.

‘The COVID-19 recovery is our opportunity to build back better. To address the discrimination, injustice and inequality that the pandemic has highlighted and increased. It is a chance to promote human rights, democratic principles and good governance at all levels’, said Jeppe Kofod, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, at the event.

GUIDE SHOWS THE DIRECTION

The Institute has developed the Human Rights Guide to Sustainable Recovery, which gives concrete guidance on how to recover and transform our societies in a more sustainable direction. It is a useful resource for states, national human rights institutions, businesses, civil society and researchers to develop and influence sustainable recovery planning and monitoring.

‘The lockdown has made life difficult for many people. Farmers cannot sell their products due to the coronavirus. I wish the government would do something for us’. (Maili Tamang, farmer in Nepal).

UNESCO ENDORSEMENT WILL STRENGTHEN HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION WORLDWIDE

UNESCO has endorsed a new methodology developed by the Institute. It enables states to assess the status of human rights education in national policies and school curricula.

With UNESCO's endorsement of a methodology developed by the Institute, we aim for the long-term result of growing numbers of people who stand up for their rights and protect and uphold the rights of others. The endorsement means that the tool will gain global exposure and hopefully become indispensable to both states and national human rights institutions when they assess the extent to which human rights education is included in national policies and school curricula.

The methodology enables states and national human rights institutions to collect data on the progress of the human rights education elements of SDG target 4.7 and the UN World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE). It allows them to assess whether learning environments in schools are characterised by respect and human dignity, and whether teachers enable self-expression and decision-making among students.

With states held accountable for their implementation of human rights education as enshrined in conventions, resolutions, declarations and programmes, this methodology can help them fulfil their obligations. By using the tool, states can



see where and how they are lagging behind, and ultimately strengthen their implementation of human rights education in national policies and school curricula.

With their monitoring mandate and expertise, national human rights institutions (NHRIs) are well-placed to act as data providers on human rights education. So far, ten African NHRIs have used the tool. Moreover, NHRIs from Georgia, Slovenia, Ecuador and the Philippines have tested an earlier version of the tool and contributed to its development.

'The tool and its continued work to close data gaps provides a crucial baseline to understand the status of human rights education in Kenya. It creates accountability and possibility for progress', said Hassan Abdi Omar, Kenya National Commission on Human Rights.



SDG target 4.7 states that curricula, policy, teacher training and student assessment should include human rights education.

FUNDED BY

The tool has been developed in consultation with The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) under a project funded by the Permanent Mission of Denmark to the UN in Geneva.

‘THESE TOOLS HELP US CLAIM OUR RIGHTS’

An enhanced set of digital tools help indigenous peoples collect data and advocate for their rights.

Indigenous people account for over 476 million individuals living in 90 different countries. They are culturally distinct but face many of the same human rights challenges. They are often excluded from political processes, and their rights to lands, territories and natural resources are often not respected. They are also more likely than other people to live in extreme poverty, making them more vulnerable to the impact of climate change, and to the devastating effects of COVID-19.

Collecting data and documenting their human rights and development situations is critical work towards enhancing their rights. In response to



‘The Indigenous Navigator is an important tool for the communities. It helps them and national organisations develop advocacy materials and claim their rights’ (Timothée Emini, Indigenous Navigator programme coordinator from OKANI).

FUNDED BY

The Indigenous Navigator is funded by the European Union. It is led by a consortium consisting of:

- Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP)
- Forest Peoples Programme (FPP)
- The Danish Institute for Human Rights
- The International Work Group of Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA)
- The Tebtebba Foundation

the need to document, monitor and address their situation, an online portal with a unique set of tools has recently been built by the Institute, in collaboration with a coalition of partners. The portal is called the Indigenous Navigator. It generates interactive visualisations of the collected data and comprehensive national and community reports.

Communities and civil society organisations in 11 countries have so far benefitted from the enhanced tools. Among them is OKANI, a community-based Indigenous NGO located in Cameroon in Africa.

‘The Indigenous Navigator is an important tool for the communities. It helps them and national organisations develop advocacy materials and claim their rights’, said Timothée Emini, Indigenous Navigator programme coordinator from OKANI.

Monitoring of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), other human rights and labour instruments as well as the Sustainable Development Goals is built into the tools. Thus, the Indigenous Navigator can be used in monitoring both the most important human rights instruments and the Sustainable Development Goals.

#03

PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN A REGION MARRED BY TERRORISM

In the Sahel region of West Africa, we continue to support our partners' efforts to strengthen trust-building between the security forces and the population. In 2020 the Institute extensively expanded its partnerships in Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali.

We now collaborate with 12 internal security forces, three national human rights institutions, two ministries of justice, and seven civil society organisations in Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali.

For over 20 years the Institute has contributed to trust-building across the Sahel region through collaboration with internal security forces, our sister organisations and other public authorities on promoting human rights.

Since an increasing number of terrorist groups are challenging the stability of the region, trust-building has become increasingly important. The security forces depend on the cooperation of the population when fighting terrorism.



In Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger the internal security forces finalised

14 human rights training manuals, guidebooks and workbooks.

NEW PARTNER IN BURKINA FASO: A HUMAN RIGHTS MANUAL TO HELP THE WATER AND FORESTRY POLICE IN BURKINA FASO TO FIGHT TERRORISM

The Institute supports the police in its efforts to build trust and combat terrorism. Trust-based collaboration between the population and the police is indispensable, when combatting terrorism in the region.

During the past ten years an increasing number of terrorist groups have been challenging the stability of the Sahel region, including Burkina Faso. When the internal security forces are combatting terrorism, they depend to a large extent on the support of the population. This is equally the case for the water and forest police corps, whose remit covers more than 50 per cent of Burkina Faso's national territory. The corps, which is among the new partners of the Institute, is struggling with a negative image in the eyes of the citizens of Burkina Faso.

A perception study done by the Ministry of Human Rights with support from the Institute showed that a large proportion of the population fear the corps and perceive them to be repressive and violent. Furthermore, the study revealed that the corps' knowledge about human rights is scarce to non-

FUNDED BY

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



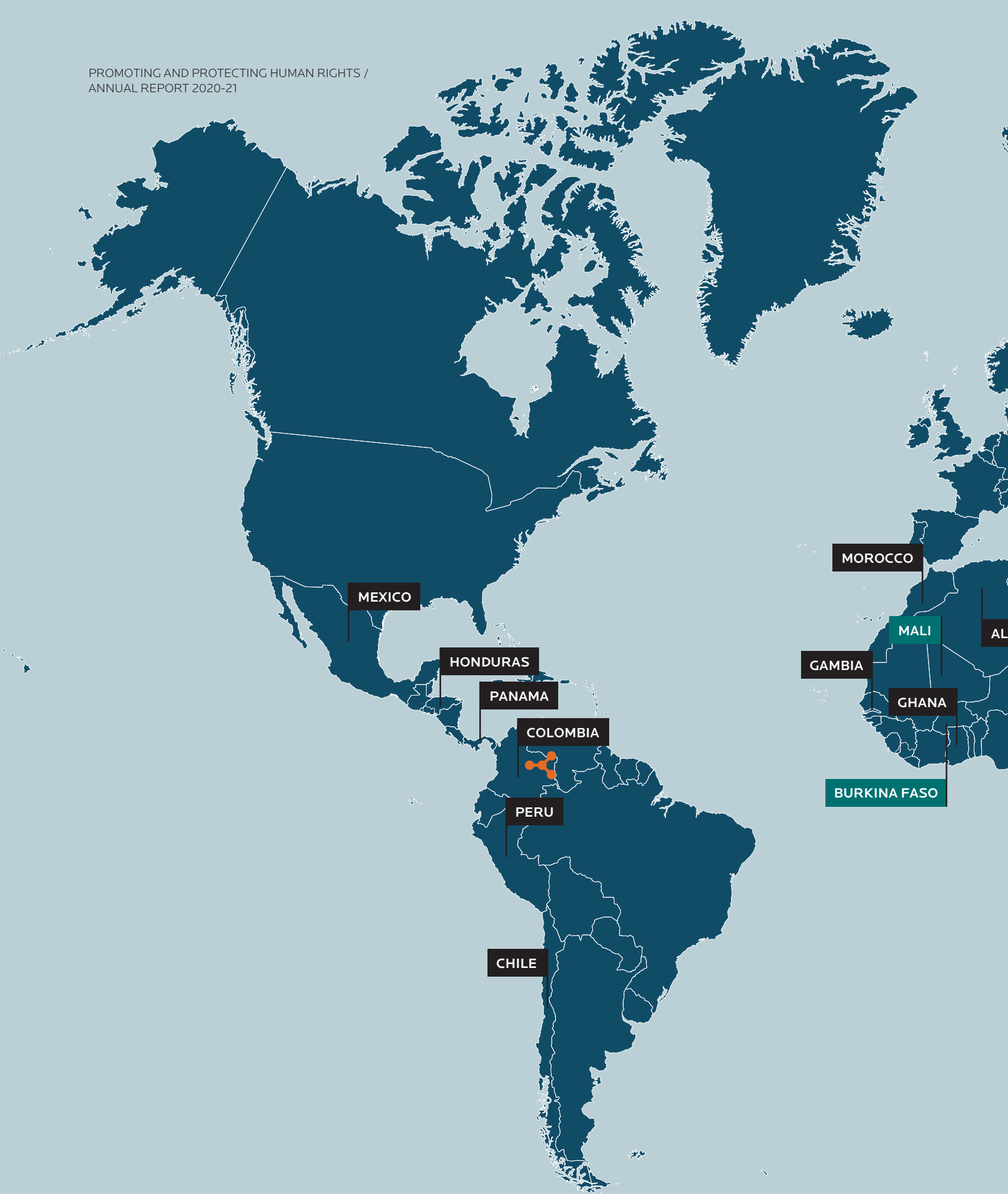
existent. Because of fear and mistrust, the citizens remain reluctant to share information with the corps, or report on terrorists hiding in forests and other areas controlled by the corps.

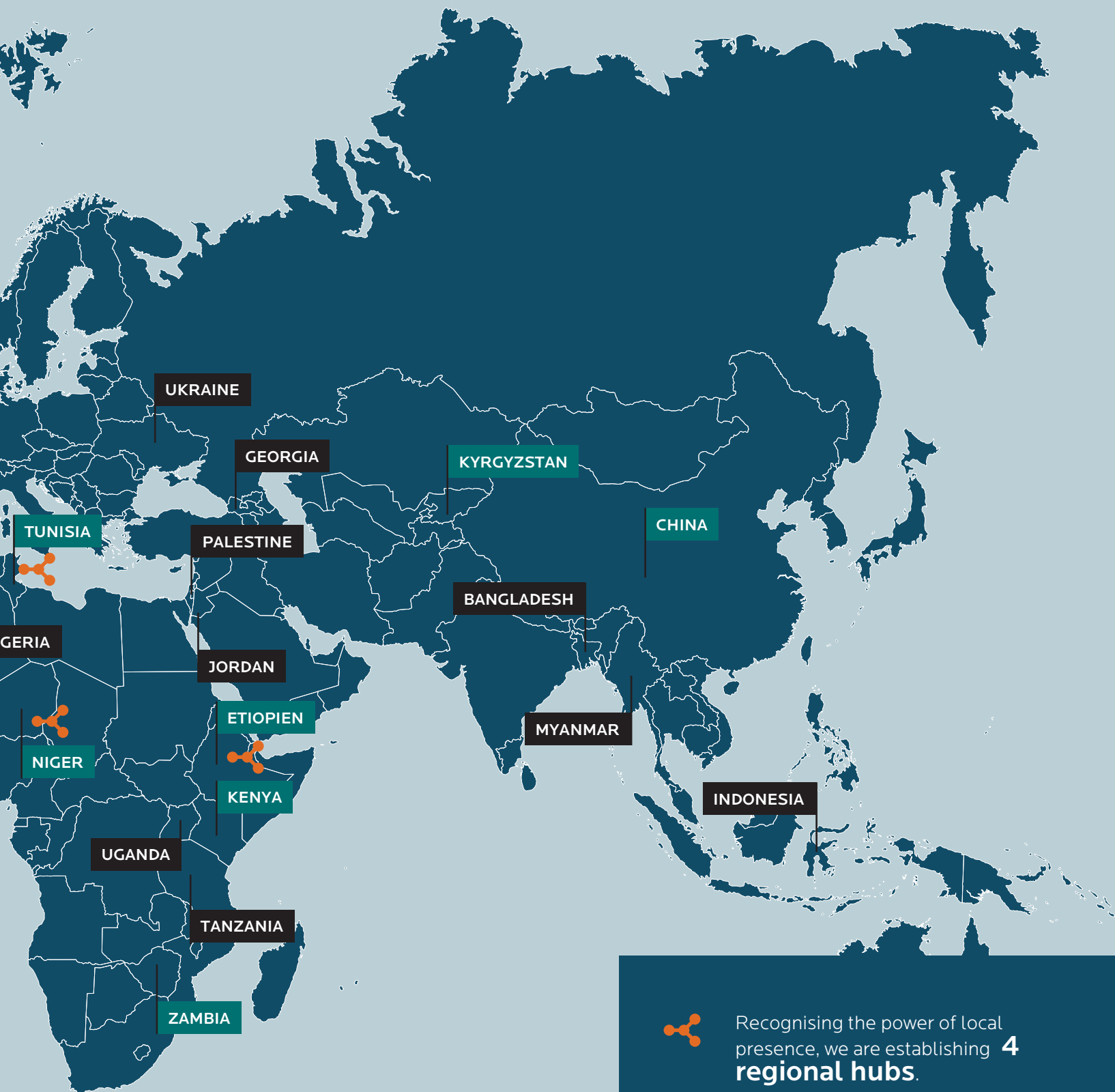
TRANSFORMING FEAR INTO TRUST

The corps, working to change public perception and build trust, is now developing a human rights manual and other tools to strengthen knowledge and awareness among its agents and ultimately to adjust their behaviour and relation to the population. The development of the manual is the first step in that direction.

'The image of the corps needs to be changed. Our hope is that within the next five years the water and forestry corps will be working hand-in-hand with the population', said Evariste Ouédraogo, National Representative of the Institute in Burkina Faso.

To build trust between the internal security forces and the population in general, the Institute has also initiated partnerships with three civil society organisations. Among other activities, they will initiate dialogues and forums for exchange between the population and the internal security forces.





Recognising the power of local presence, we are establishing **4 regional hubs**.



Through our local offices in **8 countries**, we support the development of laws, policies and other activities that promote human rights.



Through our global and thematic programmes, we work with stakeholders **18 countries**.

#04 PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE WORLD OF BUSINESS

Today, leading responsible businesses and investors increasingly regard their purpose as something more than simply generating profits for their shareholders. They take an active part in resolving global challenges such as implementing human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, a number of states are inviting the private sector to take on this responsibility jointly.

However, the number of businesses willing to promote and comply with human rights is still limited, and human rights abuses are widespread in global value chains, so the promotion of human rights in the private sector is pivotal. During 2020 and 2021 we have intensified our support to the growing movement of actors calling for mandatory human rights due diligence.

We have developed and refined a number of tools and initiated partnerships that help states and businesses integrate human rights throughout global value chains and business models. We are also collaborating with a wide range of public and private financial actors to help them respect human rights when they are investing in the world's most challenging markets.



12
Nordic companies we
engage with, support
mandatory human rights
due diligence

NORDIC COMPANIES WELCOME FUTURE LAW ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The Institute is helping drive the momentum towards mandatory human rights due diligence at EU-level. Twelve Nordic businesses have voiced their support.

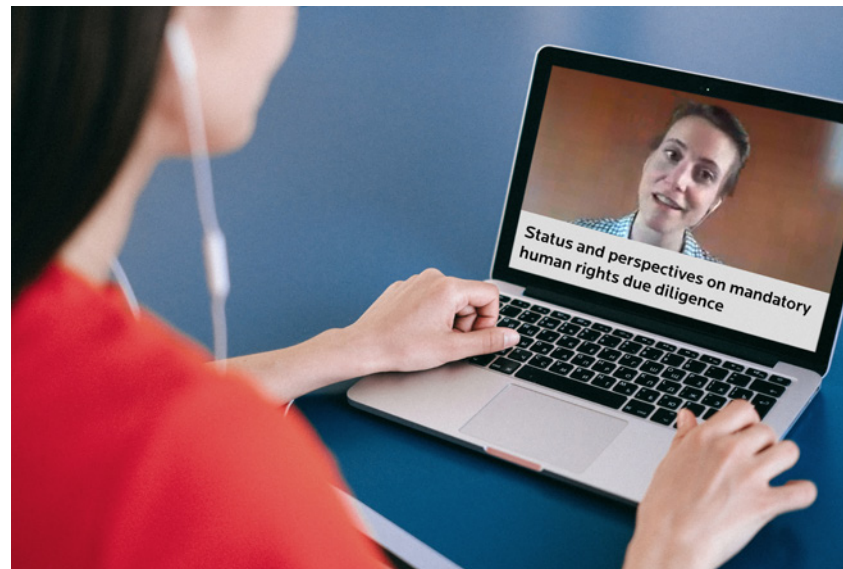
All too often, business activities have harmful impacts on vulnerable people, communities, and the environment, with few consequences for those responsible.

In 2021, twelve members of the Nordic Business Network for Human Rights, facilitated by the Institute, released a statement in favour of making corporate respect for human rights a legal requirement.

MANDATING HUMAN RIGHTS DUE DILIGENCE

Existing measures to mitigate and prevent negative human rights impacts related to business have, thus far, largely been voluntary. In 2020, a study by the Institute revealed that none of the 20 largest Danish companies demonstrate full alignment with corporate responsibility to respect human rights.

‘We see human rights due diligence as the key to future-proofing business activity so that companies can address impacts on people across the planet rapidly and proactively as they emerge. It really allows companies to think ahead and to engage in prevention and mitigation, rather than waiting for the problems to occur’, said Anita Ramasastry, professor and member of the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights.



The Nordic Business Network of Human Rights consists of 12 Nordic companies; Arla, BioMar, Danfoss, Inter IKEA Group, LEGO Group, Lundbeck, Neste, Norsk Hydro, Novo Nordisk, Statkraft, Vestas Wind Systems and Yara.

Mandatory human rights due diligence would enable victims of human rights abuses to seek justice and remedy by holding businesses accountable for their human rights abuses.

ENHANCING THE LIVELIHOODS OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERS IN BANGLADESH

A study facilitated by the Institute leads to social and economic improvements for small-scale fishers in Bangladesh.

Thousands of small-scale fishers living in coastal Bangladesh will no longer struggle as hard as previously to feed their families during the annual 65-day fishing ban. As a result of the local government's updated list of registered fishers in the area, they now receive identity cards giving them access to social security allowances during fishing ban periods. This is an important step forward, as most of them have no income during the fishing bans imposed to prevent overfishing.

The small-scale fishers' access to social security is a result of a Sector Wide Impact Assessment (SWIA) of Bangladesh's small-scale artisanal fisheries sector, facilitated by the Institute in collaboration with several local organisations. The SWIA sheds light on the critical labour conditions and extremely poor living standards the fishers face and is based on stakeholder dialogues and interviews with 1,400 men and 600 women, all highly dependent on fisheries.

'We had several dialogues with the local authorities, where we presented the findings. These dialogues have finally led to improvements of the labour rights and living conditions of small-scale fishers, and they

will hopefully continue to do so', said Nazrul Islam Khan, Executive Director of Bangladesh Institute for Labour Studies.

Likewise, the SWIA inspired local trade union activists to form an umbrella trade union which will increase their bargaining power. Further, the Boat Owners' Association and the Fishers' Union in the coastal district of Moheshkhali have agreed on how to compensate fishers or their families upon injury or death at sea.

The Institute's local partners are presenting the SWIA's many recommendations to policymakers, local authorities, fishery authorities, NGOs and other stakeholders in order to enhance the fulfilment of the fishers' rights. There is a need for fundamental changes on many structural and legal levels for this to succeed.

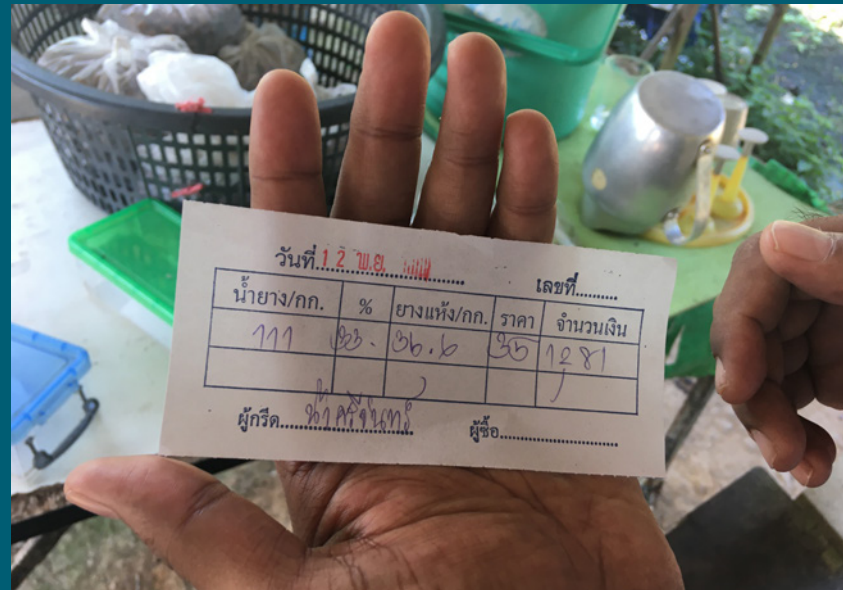
FUNDED BY

In collaboration with partners in Chile, 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).



A sector wide impact assessment facilitated by the Institute sheds light on the critical labour conditions and extremely poor living standards, that many small-scale fishers are facing in Bangladesh.

ADVANCING LIVELIHOODS OF SMALLHOLDER RUBBER FARMERS IN THAILAND



Thai farmers earning their living on smallholder rubber plantations will benefit from fair trade, a multinational manufacturer of condoms promises. The commitment follows an assessment conducted by the Institute.

Over 1,000 smallholders in southern Thailand earn their living from farming and tapping rubber latex for condom production by consumer goods giant, Reckitt. The farmers usually work only a couple of hectares and face social and environmental challenges affecting their livelihoods. Rubber trees are susceptible to disease, land rights disputes, increasingly acute weather patterns, and low natural rubber prices. All these factors constitute risks to the farmers' incomes and their right to an adequate standard of living.

The impact of low natural rubber prices on small farmers was one of several observations made by the Institute in a human rights impact assessment (HRIA). Reckitt, wanting to better understand the human rights impacts in its Thai value chain, commissioned the impact assessment in 2019. The Institute conducted the HRIA in collaboration with

the Earthworm Foundation. Together, they focused on human rights impacts associated with Reckitt's condom brand Durex.

RECKITT JOINS FAIR RUBBER FOUNDATION

To support the long-term quality and supply of latex, Reckitt has worked with latex smallholder farmers in Thailand for several years, strengthening livelihoods and farming practices. The assessment, published in March 2021, highlighted the ongoing challenge which low natural rubber prices pose to the farmers.

To tackle this challenge and strengthen their existing programmes, Reckitt joined the Fair Rubber Association in April 2021. This means that some 1,000 smallholder rubber farmers, tappers, and plantation workers will benefit from fair trade in natural rubber.

The Institute's report recommends that Reckitt explore different models for improving living conditions in farming communities. These could include fixed minimum income levels for rubber farmers and tappers, especially important when the global market price is low.

FUNDED BY

Our collaboration with Swedfund and other financial development institutions is financed by the institutions themselves through service contracts.

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ENSURING RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS WHEN FINANCING DEVELOPMENT

The Institute assists development finance institutions to respect human rights when investing in the world's most challenging markets.

Ensuring that human rights are respected by development finance institutions investing in business projects in the Global South is indispensable to sustainable development. To embed human rights more firmly in financing business projects in the Global South, the Institute collaborates directly with a wide range of public and private financial actors. In 2020, one of them was the Swedish state's development finance institution, Swedfund, whose investments are mainly focused on Sub-Saharan Africa and certain regions of Asia.

As a result of the Institute's work with Swedfund, the Swedish institution now has a toolkit to help guide the funds they invest in. The toolkit will aid in their efforts to ensure respect for human rights when investing in portfolio companies.

Many development finance institutions have respect for human rights as a formal requirement of investee companies and funds. However, they may not have the capacity or tools to implement this expectation throughout their operations. Developing and utilising such tools is therefore an important step forward.

Development finance institutions offer capital in the form of loans and guarantees to funds, private investors, local companies, and companies who wish

to do business in developing economies. They aim at funding projects that would not be eligible for traditional commercial financing. By investing in such projects they strive to create jobs, boost growth and fight poverty and climate change.



EMBEDDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN FINANCING

Over the years the Institute has collaborated with several international finance institutions and development agencies on embedding human rights in finance including:

- The Investment Fund for Developing Countries, Denmark, IFU
- The European Development Finance Institution Association, EDFI
- The European Investment Bank, EIB
- The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, EBRD
- Danida Market Development Partnerships

#05 SUPPORTING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Around the world, we strive to make it easier for people to gain access to remedy and justice. We enable them to raise complaints about all types of human rights abuses. We do so by supporting, among others, local courts, national human rights institutions and civil society organisations to establish strong complaints mechanisms, legal information centres and other entities. Some of them provide information to people about their rights and on how they can raise complaints.

Others employ paralegals who help citizens navigate legal systems and present their cases in courts. With our support, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission opened a call centre in 2021, granting people the possibility to report human rights violations in five different languages. In 2020, we supported the establishment of an additional four legal aid desks in Zambia. These provide legal aid to Zambians charged with crimes.

In Tunisia and Kyrgyzstan, digital complaints-handling systems, established with our support, help thousands of people and strengthen the national human rights institutions' overview of the human rights abuses which are taking place in the countries. In 2020 we analysed how several different African national human rights institutions facilitate access to remedy when human rights have been harmed by business activities.



More than
61,000
people in Zambia have
received free legal assistance
with our support.

‘WITHOUT THE HELP I RECEIVED, I WOULD BE IN PRISON NOW’

Of the people facing criminal charges who have received legal representation from one of 19 legal aid desks in Zambia, 73 per cent have avoided imprisonment.

In 2020, 66 year-old Bernard Kasaka, who lives in Copperbelt Province in Zambia, was arrested and charged with assault. Like many other Zambians he could not afford to hire a private lawyer and was afraid that he would end up waiting in one of Zambia’s many congested prisons for years before being put on trial. Some of those Zambians who are charged with crimes wait in prisons for long periods of time, as the legal system in Zambia is severely understaffed.

In order to reduce case accumulation in the penal system and to ensure the legal rights of all Zambians, the Institute contributed to the establishment of another four new legal aid desks in 2020. Here, people are offered free legal assistance and information about their legal rights. Since 2013, 19 legal aid desks have been set up at courts, at police stations and in prisons.

AVOIDING IMPRISONMENT

So far more than 60,000 Zambians have received help and assistance from paralegals and legal aid assistants at the legal aid desks in Zambia. As a result, in 2020 only 27 per cent of the people who were assisted and represented in court through one

FUNDED BY

The Programme for Legal Empowerment and Enhanced Justice Delivery (PLEED) in Zambia, implemented by the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) with technical assistance from the Danish Institute for Human Rights. PLEED itself has been funded by the European Union and the Federal Republic of Germany.



‘Without the help I received, I would be in prison now. I have nine grandchildren that I am taking care of. They would have suffered and become destitute if I had gone to prison’ (Bernard Kasaka).

of the legal aid desks, were sentenced to prison. The remaining 73 per cent of the criminal cases were suspended, withdrawn and diverted away from the criminal justice system, or the people charged received a fine, community service or other non-custodial sentence.

Bernard Kasaka belongs to the 73 per cent who avoided imprisonment.

At the police station paralegals advised him on his legal rights and on his right to apply for a police bond. Thanks to their help the bond was granted, and Bernard Kasaka was released from custody until his trial began. He was represented in court by the legal aid assistants and was eventually found guilty. But due to his age and circumstances, his sentence was suspended.

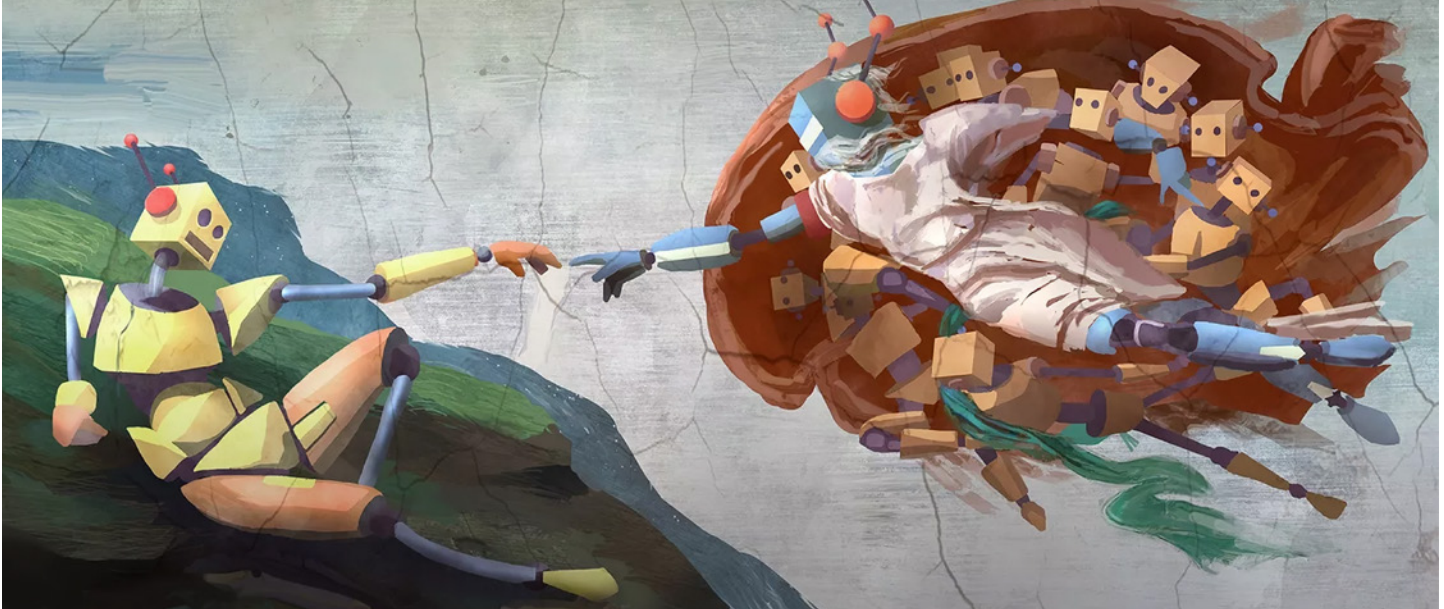
#06 ENSURING HUMAN RIGHTS-COMPLIANT USE OF TECHNOLOGY

New technologies have created fresh opportunities and enabled public participation. However, with these developments, new human rights challenges arise. As societies become increasingly digitalised, people's right to privacy, freedom of speech and, more fundamentally, their right to due legal process, are challenged.

Many countries lack robust institutions and legislation to protect these rights. In partnership with a number of national human rights institutions (NHRIs), the Institute is establishing an Action Coalition of NHRIs. The Coalition will unite NHRIs committed to ensure that the use of digital solutions does not infringe on human rights. In 2020 we published a tool that helps the private sector identify and address human rights impacts related to businesses' digital activities.



We have developed the first guide that helps companies avoid human rights abuses related to digital technology.



INVESTORS EXPECT TECH GIANTS TO DO MORE TO RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS

To counteract human rights risks raised by Facebook, Google and other tech giants, a major national pension fund has published a report setting out their expectations. The Institute gave substantial inputs.

People all over the world rely on the services of tech giants to exercise their basic human rights. But the tech giants are also involved in the spread of hate speech, misinformation, electoral manipulation, and other severe threats, all with negative impacts on human rights. This causes concern to many, including a growing number of investors who by funding or lending money to the tech giants may be contributing to human rights abuses.

Among the concerned investors is the National Swedish Pension Funds. In 2020, the Council on Ethics of the National Swedish Pension Funds published a report that contains investors' expectations of the tech giants. One of these expectations is that tech giants 'should have policies for engaging constructively with policymakers and regulators on human rights and be transparent about those policies or guidelines'.

BROADER DISCUSSION ON FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS

The expectations are primarily directed at the boards of tech giants and intended to serve as a platform

for dialogue on human rights between investors and tech giants. The Council of Ethics has teamed up with other international investors including the Church of England and Hermes. On the basis of the report they have entered into dialogue with a number of tech giants.

'We need a broader discussion on the corporate responsibility of tech companies and respect for fundamental human rights. It is still a relatively young sector that in a short time has grown rapidly and has a wide impact. Our goal is for the report to be a platform for that work', said John Howchin, Secretary-General of the Council on Ethics.

In recent years the Institute has collaborated with a number of investors on human rights.

'Investors have a responsibility to respect human rights and address human rights abuses. It is important that they use their leverage on the tech giants and other companies', said Eva Grambye, Deputy Executive Director at the Institute.

NEW GUIDE HELPS COMPANIES RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS IN AN INCREASINGLY DIGITALISED WORLD

The Institute has developed a guide for the private sector among others. It helps companies identify, avoid and track human rights abuses, when selling, buying and producing digital services and products.

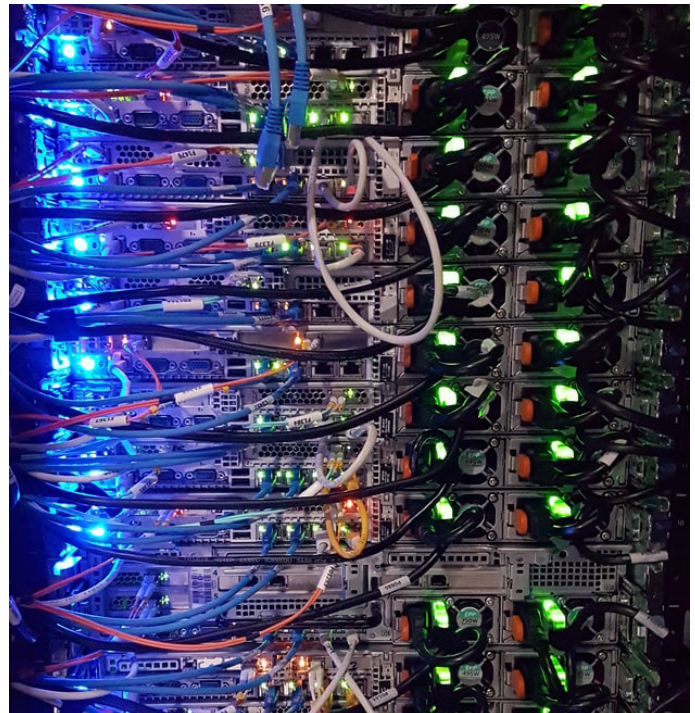
Virtually all major companies are now active in the digital ecosystem. Private companies are increasingly benefitting from facial recognition technologies, algorithmic decision-making and many other digital products and services. However, technological breakthroughs have their downsides. When, for example, companies sell facial recognition systems and software in countries that have no data protection laws to protect their citizens, it can lead to severe human rights abuses.

To help companies handle their digital operations responsibly, the Institute has developed guidance on conducting human rights impact assessments of digital activities. The guide offers a methodology that all companies can use if they are designing, developing, selling, or otherwise using digital projects, products, and services.

TRACKING HUMAN RIGHTS HARMS

So far, there has been a shortage of guidance available for companies who wish to act responsibly and with respect for human rights in their digital activities. At the same time, an increasing number of civil society organisations, and academic and intra-governmental organisations are calling on companies to conduct human rights impact assessments of their digital operations.

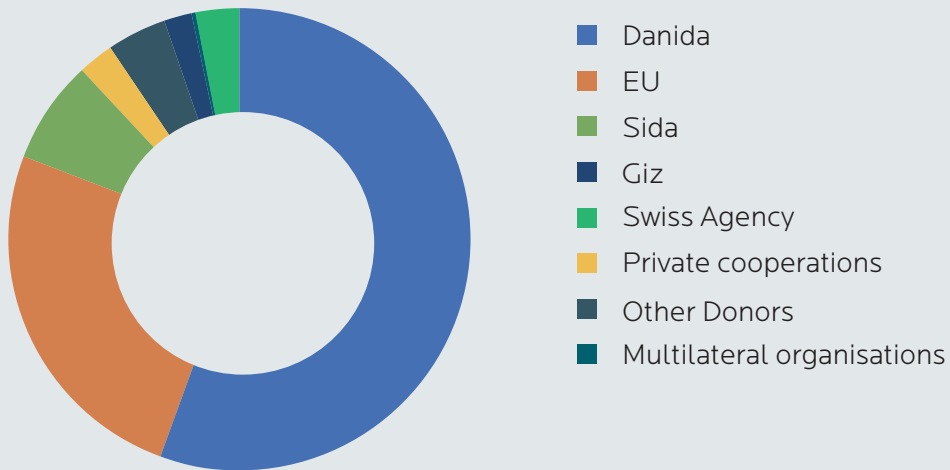
One of these organisations is Ranking Digital Rights (RDR), an NGO that promotes freedom of expression and privacy on the internet. According to Jan Rydzak, company engagement lead of RDR, the guidance is 'a critical instrument, not just because it is firmly grounded in human rights, but also because it is tailored to a digital world. Human rights harms are insidious and tracking them is an increasingly challenging labyrinth to navigate. The guidance illuminates many of the points that Ranking Digital Rights has made on human rights due diligence and equips civil society and companies alike with an excellent framework'.



BUDGET FOR OUR INTERNATIONAL WORK FOR THE PERIOD 01.01.2020-30.07.2021

Million DKK

Danida	98.4
EU	44.3
Sida	12.8
Giz	3.4
Swiss Agency	5.1
Private cooperations	4.4
Other donors	7.2
Multilateral organisations (UN etc.)	0.6
In total	176.1





HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

Our work contributes to the achievement of several SDGs.

These are the ones, that the results presented in this report, contribute most to.

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THE INTERNATIONAL WORK OF THE DANISH INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The Danish Institute for Human Rights is the National Human Rights Institution of Denmark. We promote and protect human rights in Denmark and internationally.

LEGITIMACY AND LOCAL APPROACH

Our status as an independent state institution gives us legitimacy in our work with governments, international institutions, civil society and businesses. We work in local partnerships to ensure sustainability and local relevance of our work.

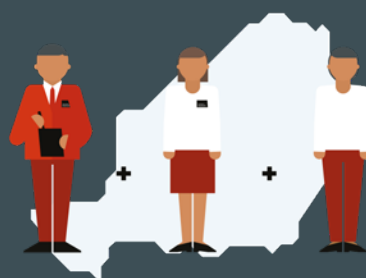
RESEARCH CAPACITY AND PROVEN TRACK RECORD

Our in-house research capacity ensures that we build our projects, tools and training programmes on scientific evidence and solid academic knowledge. With 25 years of experience worldwide, we have a proven record of accomplishment.

WE CREATE SUSTAINABLE CHANGE BECAUSE OF OUR



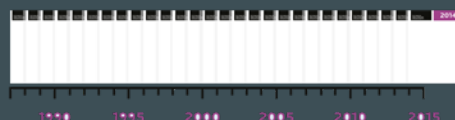
Legitimacy



Local approach



Research capacity



Proven track record

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