

About OHCHR

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is the leading UN entity on human rights. It has a unique mandate, provided by the General Assembly, to promote and protect all human rights for all people. The United Nations human rights programme aims to make the protection of human rights a reality in the lives of people everywhere. As the entity in charge of implementing the programme, the Office plays a crucial role in safeguarding the integrity of the three pillars of the United Nations - peace and security, human rights and development.

OHCHR provides assistance, such as technical expertise and capacity development, to support the implementation of international human rights standards on the ground. It assists governments, which bear the primary responsibility for the protection of human rights, to fulfil their obligations, supports individuals to claim their rights and speaks out objectively on human rights violations.

OHCHR is part of the United Nations Secretariat and has its headquarters in Geneva and an office in New York. OHCHR's staff is based in 64 countries, in regional and country/stand-alone offices, United Nations peace missions or political offices and in United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs).

Mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

General Assembly resolution 48/141 charges the High Commissioner for Human Rights with “principal responsibility” for human rights in the United Nations with the mandate to:

- Promote and protect all human rights for all
- Recommend to bodies of the United Nations system the improved promotion and protection of all human rights
- Promote and protect the right to development
- Provide technical assistance for human rights activities
- Coordinate United Nations human rights education and public information programmes
- Work actively to remove obstacles to the realization of human rights
- Work actively to prevent the continuation of human rights violations
- Engage in dialogue with governments with the aim of securing respect for all human rights
- Enhance international cooperation
- Coordinate human rights promotion and protection activities throughout the United Nations system
- Rationalize, adapt, strengthen and streamline the UN human rights machinery

Method

The Office's work encompasses three broad areas: human rights standard-setting, monitoring and supporting the implementation of human rights obligations by States. Substantive and technical support is provided to the various UN human rights bodies as they undertake their standard-setting and monitoring duties. Knowledge and awareness of all human rights, whether civil, cultural, economic, political or social, are deepened and the capacity of rights-holders and duty-bearers are strengthened through applied thematic research and analysis, methodology, development and training. International human rights experts are also deployed to field offices and other missions, including in circumstances of crisis, to work with countries seeking to meet their human rights obligations.

The work of the Office is based on the OHCHR Management Plan (OMP), which seeks to implement the Human Rights Programme of the Secretary-General's Strategic Framework. By aligning the Office with a common set of results and tying in the various components of OHCHR's mandate, the OMP plays an important role in enhancing the Office's effectiveness in implementing the Strategic Framework, increasing synergies and ensuring the best possible use of available resources.

The current OMP covers the period 2014-2017 and sets out six thematic priorities with related results. Achievements realized under these thematic priorities in 2014 are summarized in the printed version of the report and are listed in full under the corresponding field presence or division in the CD version. The OMP for 2014-2017 also identifies eight global management outputs (GMOs) to improve efficiency



OHCHR headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

within the Office. Achievements in this area are elaborated in the Management chapter at page 50.

Supporting the human rights bodies and mechanisms

The Human Rights Council, comprising 47 Member States of the United Nations which are elected by the General Assembly for fixed terms, is given substantive and technical support by the Office in its work, including its regular and special sessions, organizational meetings and meetings of its subsidiary bodies. Stakeholder meetings, special events, discussions and expert panels are also organized and supported by OHCHR.

OHCHR supports the Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The second cycle of the UPR continued in 2014 and 42 States had their human rights records reviewed by the Working Group, which benefited from the background documentation that was prepared by the Office to facilitate the review. The Office also develops UPR training modules, briefs States and other stakeholders on the UPR mechanism and provides technical assistance to States to strengthen national processes to engage with the UPR and other human rights mechanisms and to follow-up on their recommendations.

The Office provides substantive and technical assistance to independent human rights experts, known as special procedures mandate-holders, who are appointed by the Council and mandated to report and advise on human rights issues and situations from a thematic or country-specific perspective. As of the end of 2014, there were 53 special procedures; 39 of which are dedicated to thematic issues and 14 of which are dedicated to country situations. Among these 53 mandates, six are working groups composed of five members. The Office provides thematic, fact-finding, policy, legal and methodological expertise, research, analysis and documentation and assists with logistical and administrative matters. With the support of OHCHR, special procedures undertake country visits; act on individual cases and concerns of a broader, structural nature by sending communications to States and others; conduct thematic studies and convene expert consultations; contribute to the development of international human rights standards; engage in advocacy; raise public awareness; and provide advice for technical cooperation. Special procedures report annually to the Human Rights Council. The majority of the mandates also report to the General Assembly.

In addition, the Office provides support to the 10 human rights treaty bodies. The treaty bodies are

committees of independent experts that consider the progress made and challenges faced by countries in implementing the obligations of the international human rights treaties they have ratified. Most of these committees consider individual complaints of violations of treaty provisions. The results of their deliberations contribute to a rich and dynamic body of jurisprudence on international human rights law.

Developing human rights guidance, offering advice and strengthening capacity

The Office maps emerging trends in human rights and identifies lessons learned from human rights work carried out at headquarters and in the field. Based on these trends, the Office produces guidance and capacity-strengthening tools, such as methodologies and training materials, which translate international human rights law into practical approaches and procedures to be used by the UN and other actors. Providing advice, training, support and outreach to multiple stakeholders, including Member States, individuals, civil society and regional and national human rights institutions, are integral parts of the Office's approach to implementing the High Commissioner's mandate.

Mainstreaming of human rights

Under its mainstreaming mandate, the Office works to ensure the integration of a human rights-based approach into the development, humanitarian, peace and security, governance and rule of law programmes of the United Nations system. At a practical level, OHCHR advances human rights mainstreaming through its active participation in UN inter-agency bodies and activities and the High Commissioner's participation in the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination. The Office advocates for policy coherence according to an approach based on respect for all human rights, with particular attention paid to those who are victims or are most vulnerable to becoming victims of human rights violations. It equally seeks to systematically inform UNCTs of recommendations emanating from the human rights mechanisms and assist in mainstreaming their follow-up into the programmes of UNCTs.

Working in countries

As of the end of 2014, OHCHR was operating or supporting 66 field presences. In-country presence is essential to identifying, highlighting and developing responses to human rights challenges in close collaboration with governments and

the broader United Nations system. Responses may involve training judges, soldiers and police, helping to draft national legislation that is in line with international human rights standards and working with States on the fulfilment of their obligation to implement the recommendations issued by the human rights mechanisms, including the UPR. In many countries and regions, the Office cooperates with human rights groups, academic and research institutions and civil society organizations, including charities, advocacy groups and other NGOs, to strengthen their capacity and effectiveness. Staff are also deployed to rapidly developing humanitarian or other crises and to support fact-finding missions or commissions of inquiry into serious human rights abuses.

Staff

As of 31 December, the Office was employing 1,189 staff. Of those staff members, 474 (40 per cent) were based in the field (including 27 human rights advisers based in UNCTs), 695 (58 per cent) in Geneva and 20 (2 per cent) in New York. Additionally, OHCHR also worked with 820 human rights officers serving in 13 UN peace missions or political offices.

Structure

In addition to its headquarters in Geneva, the organization has an office at UN Headquarters in New York and as of 31 December, 13 regional offices or centres and 13 country or stand-alone offices (see map on pages 46-47). Furthermore, the Office supports the human rights components of UN peace missions or political offices and deploys human rights advisers to work with the UNCTs.

The Geneva-based headquarters has four substantive divisions: (1) the Research and Right to Development Division, which develops policy and provides guidance, tools, advice and capacity-strengthening support in relation to thematic human rights issues; (2) the Human Rights Treaties Division, which supports the treaty bodies; (3) the Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division, which is responsible for overseeing and implementing the Office's work in the field; and (4) the Human Rights Council and Special Procedures Division, which provides substantive and technical support to the

Human Rights Council, the UPR mechanism and the special procedures. Core management, planning, coordination and outreach functions are handled by dedicated services and sections, which report directly to the Deputy High Commissioner. For the current organizational chart, please refer to page 139.

How OHCHR is funded

OHCHR is partially funded from the United Nations regular budget, which provided 46 per cent of the resources expended to implement the Office's programme of work in 2014, and partially through voluntary contributions from donors, the majority

of which are Member States. The amount of regular budget funding that is allocated to OHCHR has gradually increased since 2005 when leaders attending the World Summit committed to a doubling of the resources available for the Office over five years. A total of US\$173.5 million was initially allocated to OHCHR for the 2014-2015 biennium, compared with US\$177.3 million in 2012-2013, US\$151.6 million in 2010-2011, US\$120.6 million in 2008-2009, US\$83.4 million in 2006-2007 and US\$67.6 million in 2004-2005. For more information, please refer to pages 75-94.

The level of voluntary funding allocated to OHCHR increased substantially over the last decade, almost tripling from US\$41.2 million in 2002 to nearly US\$120 million in 2008. In 2009, contributions

History of the UN Human Rights Programme

The UN human rights programme has grown considerably since its modest beginnings almost 60 years ago. Organizationally, the programme started in the 1940s with a small Division in the UN Secretariat in New York. The Division later moved to Geneva and was upgraded to the Centre for Human Rights in the 1980s. At the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, Member States decided to establish a more robust human rights institution and later that year, the General Assembly adopted a resolution establishing the post of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

This resolution led to the transformation of the Centre for Human Rights into the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights which was vested with a wide-ranging mandate and primary responsibility for promoting, coordinating, strengthening and streamlining human rights work and related activities throughout the United Nations system. Twelve years later, at the 2005 UN World Summit, Heads of State from around the world committed themselves to an expansion of the UN human rights programme that recognized the central role

and importance of ensuring the application of a human rights-based approach in all aspects of the UN's work. At the same time, the three pillars of the UN system were recognized as intertwined, namely peace and security, development and human rights. The growth in the UN's human rights activities reflects the increasing strength of the international human rights movement since the General Assembly first adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 1948. Drafted as "a common standard of achievement for all peoples and nations," the Declaration sets out basic civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all human beings are entitled to enjoy. Over time, this unprecedented affirmation of human rights became widely accepted as the standard to which all governments should adhere. The Declaration, together with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its two Optional Protocols, as well as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and its Optional Protocol, form the "International Bill of Human Rights." International Human Rights Day is now observed on 10 December around the world.

As international human rights law developed, a number of UN human rights bodies were established to respond to evolving human rights challenges. These bodies, which rely on OHCHR for substantive and logistical support, are either Charter-based (political bodies with mandates originating in the United Nations Charter that are composed of representatives of Member States) or treaty-based (committees established by international human rights treaties that are mandated to monitor the compliance of States Parties with their treaty obligations and composed of independent experts). The Commission on Human Rights, which was established in 1946 and reported to the Economic and Social Council, was the key United Nations intergovernmental body responsible for human rights until it was replaced by the Human Rights Council in 2006. In addition to assuming the mandates and responsibilities previously entrusted to the Commission, the Council reports and makes recommendations to the General Assembly on ways to further develop international human rights law. Two years after its first session, the Council operationalized the Universal Periodic Review.

dropped slightly to US\$118.1 million and then sharply decreased in 2010 to US\$109.4 million, before making a slight recovery in 2011 and 2012 to a level of US\$111.1 million. In 2013, however, the level of voluntary funding for OHCHR reached US\$121.2 million then increased in 2014 to US\$123.7 million, the highest amount ever received by the Office.

The amount of unearmarked voluntary contributions has grown steadily since 2002 and reached a maximum of 56 per cent of total contributions received in 2009. While unearmarked contributions dropped slightly to 54 per cent in 2010 and again to 51 per cent in 2011, they increased to 53 per cent in 2012 and 54 per cent in 2013. In 2014, however, the proportion of unearmarked funding decreased to 47 per cent. Please refer to pages 62-74 for more information on funding and trends and challenges and pages 105-123 for the profiles of all donors in 2014.

How OHCHR spends its budget

Total expenditures in 2014, including both regular budget and voluntary contributions, increased to US\$239.1 million (compared to US\$219.44 million in 2013). In 2014, nearly 48 per cent of total expenditures were devoted to fieldwork, particularly capacity-strengthening projects and human rights monitoring, which were predominantly financed through voluntary contributions. Approximately 10 per cent was spent on thematic research and human rights mainstreaming, 10 per cent on supporting the human rights treaty bodies, including policymaking organs, and 12 per cent on support for the Human Rights Council and its special procedures. The remainder was devoted to programme support (6 per cent), executive direction and management, resource mobilization and outreach activities (9 per cent) and the trust funds and miscellaneous activities (5 per cent). Further information on the financial accounts for the year-end to 31 December and the breakdown of expenditures and allocation of voluntary contributions can be found on pages 75-94.

Global map of field presences





As at 31 December 2014