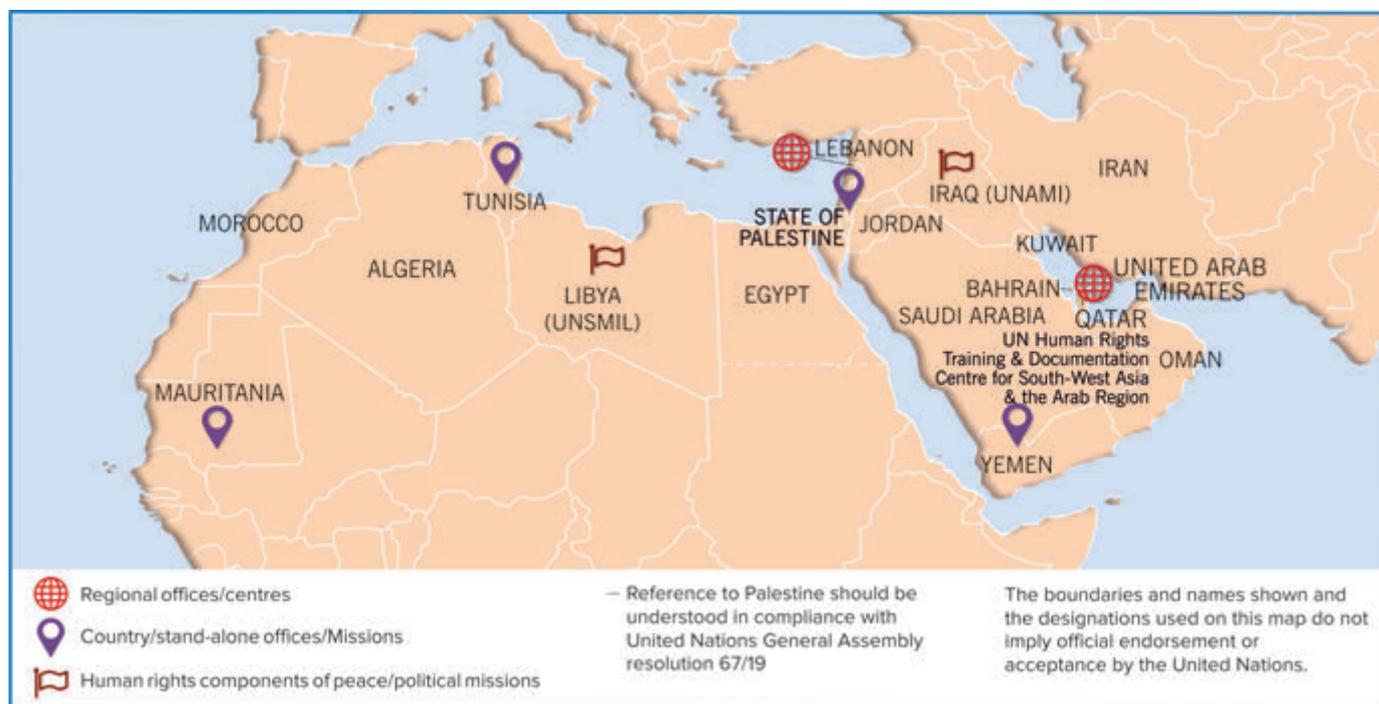


UN Human Rights in the field: Middle East and North Africa



Type of presence	Location
Country offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mauritania ● State of Palestine⁷ ● Tunisia ● Yemen
Regional offices and centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Middle East and North Africa (Beirut, Lebanon) ● UN Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region (Doha, Qatar)
Human rights components in UN political missions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Iraq (UNAMI) ● Libya (UNSMIL)

Across the Middle East and North Africa region, the work of OHCHR covers 20 countries. During 2017, OHCHR strengthened its country engagement from Geneva and through field presences, including two regional offices/centres (for the Middle East and North Africa, in Lebanon, and at the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region, in Doha); four country offices (Mauritania, the State of Palestine, Tunisia and Yemen); and two human rights components within UN political missions (Iraq and Libya). OHCHR also supported two country specific special procedures man-

date-holders: the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967; and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran. It also served as the Secretariat to the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, which was mandated by the General Assembly.

Iraq, Libya, State of Palestine, Syria and Yemen continued to experience conflict-related violence and violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. On the other hand, several countries undertook positive steps towards the realization of their international human rights obligations, and cooperated with and reported to the international human rights mechanisms. In 2017, there was a regional dimension to various trends and concerns, for example, in relation to the impact of cross-border movements of fighters and weapons; the impact on regional dynamics and tensions across the region; the movement of people fleeing conflict to neighbouring countries and beyond and the activities of non-State armed groups, including proponents of violent extremism.

¹⁴ Reference to Palestine should be understood in compliance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 67/19

UN Human Rights work on Syria

An important focus of the advocacy and reporting work undertaken by UN Human Rights during 2017 was the evolving human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. UN Human Rights ensured that evidence-based human rights information and analysis was integrated into the Secretary-General's monthly reports to the Security Council pursuant to Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015) and 2332 (2016).

UN Human Rights disseminated monthly Human Rights Digests to partners involved in the political and humanitarian response in order to provide them with early warning analysis tools aimed at strengthening prevention and to highlight current and possible future human rights concerns in Syria. The Office produced a series of legal notes to guide the UN's analysis and response in Syria, including on a variety of topics, such as the transfer of civilian populations, siege warfare, persons hors de combat in non-international armed conflicts, belligerent occupation and the duties and obligations of occupying powers and child recruitment and use in hostilities under international law.

The advocacy efforts of the High Commissioner were increased and included the formulation of a number of recommendations targeting parties to the conflict, Member States and UN partners involved in both the political and humanitarian response with a view to enhancing human rights protection in Syria. At the operational level, the Office used its high-level advocacy opportunities to discuss concerns regarding the protection of civilians in the context of military escalation, including in Raqqa and Deir Ezzor in the autumn of 2017.

Three human rights advisers based in Beirut (pending deployment to Damascus), Amman and Gaziantep, respectively, continued to support the humanitarian leadership for the Syrian crisis. Their engagement resulted in increased advocacy around violations of international law and strengthened the overall protection policy and operational response. UN Human Rights also encouraged the integration of human rights into strategic and operational humanitarian decision-making fora and Humanitarian Response Plans for 2017 and 2018.

UN Human Rights maintained regular contact with the Office of the Special Envoy as well as Member States in

order to provide human rights analysis and early warning input into the political process. It was actively involved in developing the United Nations plan in support of the post-agreement transition phase in Syria, which was aimed at coordinating activities to reinforce transitional arrangements following the conclusion of a peace agreement. The planning process was endorsed by the UN Syria Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) in March 2017. UN Human Rights provided its input to the analysis and scoped out the range of potential human rights activities to be implemented in the immediate post-agreement context.

The Office has also been involved in supporting the engagement of various actors with international human rights mechanisms and the work of the Human Rights Council, including its special sessions on the deteriorating situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic. In March 2017, the Council convened a high-level panel to increase the visibility of violations and abuses of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed by all parties to the conflict in Syria with a particular focus on arbitrary detention, ill-treatment and torture in detention and enforced disappearances since 2011. The panel formulated recommendations, notably on the need to hold alleged perpetrators to account for crimes committed. In addition, the Office sustained its engagement with different special procedures of the Human Rights Council, including the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

In 2017, UN Human Rights stepped up its role as facilitator and convenor of consultations with civil society to explore options for transitional justice and dealing with past atrocities in the Syrian context. Moreover, the Office participated in discussions related to enforced disappearances and the missing in Syria through round-tables with partners with strong expertise and experience in this area.

UN Human Rights supported the establishment of the "International, impartial and independent mechanism" as foreseen by General Assembly resolution A/71/L.48 to assist in the investigation and prosecution of those responsible for the most serious crimes under international law committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011." It also carried out its activities in cooperation with the International Commission of Inquiry on Syria.

In close coordination with relevant national, regional and international stakeholders, OHCHR sought to address the needs emanating from social, economic, civil and political upheavals and the emerging and ongoing armed conflicts across the region. In Iraq, Syria and Yemen, OHCHR took steps to strengthen its field presences and existing mechanisms to ensure improved monitoring and reporting.

OHCHR supported the follow-up to Human Rights Council resolutions, including a request that the High Commissioner appoint and establish a group of eminent international and regional experts on Yemen. In addition, OHCHR produced a report on the progress made to establish a database of companies engaged in certain business activities in illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory. With regard to the State of Palestine, OHCHR and the Graduate Institute in Geneva co-hosted an event on accountability to coincide with 50 years of occupation. The Office provided small grants to 11 NGOs in eight countries to support their work, including raising human rights awareness, promoting the rights of women and persons with disabilities and training of human rights defenders.

The Office called for the protection of human rights across the region and an end to the escalation of violence through press releases and briefings to the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly and the Security Council. The High Commissioner also voiced concerns about the human rights situation of migrants crossings in the Mediterranean. Moreover, OHCHR contributed to the Secretary-General's report on reprisals as part of efforts to protect human rights defenders at risk of reprisals across the region.

The High Commissioner strongly advocated for accountability and the protection of civilians in the region. He visited Libya and held a series of discussions with ministers, officials, civil society and women human rights defenders. He also visited Kuwait and Oman to engage with ministers, senior officials and members of civil society on key human rights issues of concern. Furthermore, OHCHR organized a regional conference on the promotion and protection of human rights in conflict, held in Qatar, which was attended by the Deputy High Commissioner and facilitated the first visit of the Board of Trustees of the Voluntary Trust Fund for Technical Cooperation to Lebanon and the State of Palestine. OHCHR further organized a number of events in the region in 2017 to combat hate speech, violent extremism and to enhance the role of the courts in protecting freedom of expression and deterring the incitement to hatred.

OHCHR supported specific technical assistance initiatives in Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Qatar, Saudi Arabia,

Tunisia and Yemen and organized several capacity-building activities for government officials, and representatives of regional and international organizations and civil society actors. In 2017, three trainings were organized, in Geneva, for 57 diplomats. Another training was held for 13 members of national human rights institutions. Finally, OHCHR provided technical cooperation to government officials in Egypt in relation to its cooperation with the human rights treaty bodies.

Country Offices

Mauritania

Year established	2010
Staff as of 31 December 2017	7
Expenditure in 2017	US\$850,415

Results

Strengthening international human rights mechanisms

- ▶ *By 2017, all ratified conventions are published in the public journal; outstanding conventions will have been signed and ratified (EA 2)*

In 2017, the Government of Mauritania published all ratified conventions in the public journal following OHCHR's financial and technical support in publishing all slavery-related standards in a special issue. The Government has yet to ratify international human rights instruments that would enable individuals to submit petitions to the mechanisms.

- ▶ *All generic reservations will be removed or replaced by specific reservations (EA 2)*

The Government of Mauritania has yet to submit specific reservations in 2017 to replace their generic reservations to various international human rights treaties.

- ▶ *Establishment of interministerial participatory standing national coordinating bodies on reporting on/replying to individual communications and enquiries; and integrated follow-up to recommendations of all international human rights mechanisms (EA 6)*

In 2017, Mauritania submitted its periodic reports to the Committee against Torture, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Human Rights Committee. Mauritania also submitted its initial report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. OHCHR continued building the capacity of the Interministerial Committee with a seminar on

the submission of initial and periodic reports to the Committee for Enforced Disappearances. Over the past two years, the Interministerial Committee delivered a series of trainings on Mauritania's reporting obligations.

- ▶ *UPR recommendations (second cycle) are part of UNCT joint planning efforts and the implementation of the UNDAF 2012-2016 (EA 11)*

The National Action Plan on the implementation of recommendations issued by the international human rights mechanisms is due to be finalized in 2018. In the meantime, OHCHR took steps to integrate the recommendations related to Mauritania into every training, capacity-building activity and policy discussion with relevant stakeholders. OHCHR prepared various compilations and matrixes of these recommendations, which were also developed and distributed to the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in the context of the development of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2018-2022.

Enhancing equality and countering discrimination

- ▶ *Adoption of a road map on the implementation of the recommendations issued by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, a National Action Plan on Racial Discrimination and a National Action Plan for Migration (EA 4)*



The OHCHR Representative in Mauritania addresses students at a school. © OHCHR/Mauritania

The Office supported the implementation of the road map on slavery through its observer status with the technical commission that is responsible for its implementation. Following the April 2017 visit of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery to participate in a two-day OHCHR workshop with Government representatives, civil society organizations and UN agencies on the implementation of the road map, the Government agreed to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of the road map based on a set of measurable indicators,

A migrant's fight to access justice in Mauritania

On 30 August 2017, Mohammad Sall, a Senegalese migrant, set himself on fire in front of the Embassy of Senegal in Nouakchott. He was rescued by paramedics only hours after the self-immolation. Mr. Sall was born in Dakar and is married with four children. His eldest child is 27 years old.

UN Human Rights interviewed Mohammad while he was still in the hospital recovering from his second-degree burns. As he explained, he had been jailed for three years for his inability to pay for a container that he was assigned to ship. The container was filled with flour that was to be shipped to Denmark. The container had a value of 127 million ouguiyas and Mohammed was required to pay 4.468.126 ouguiyas for customs charges. Despite making a payment, the container has been stuck at the port since 2014 due to additional fees he could not afford to pay.

Mohammad told UN Human Rights that he had gone into debt due to his inability to pay some of the additional charges and following a conviction, he served three years in prison. As a migrant worker, he had no access to a lawyer or legal aid. Upon his release from prison, Mohammad continued to claim his rights and demanded the recovery of the customs charges. He asserted that he knocked on

the doors of every relevant entity, including the Minister of Economic Affairs and Development. He also requested a receipt from the Customs Office, which was refused.

Feeling desperate and without knowing what to do, he turned to the Embassy of Senegal in Nouakchott. No response was received for several months. On the eve of his desperate act, Mohammad attempted to immolate himself in front of the Embassy, but people who were passing by stopped him.

One week after being burned, Mohammed had to leave the hospital because of his inability to pay for his medical bills. The hospital administration said they could not keep him even though his wounds were still open and susceptible to infection.

After interviewing him, UN Human Rights referred his case to the International Organization for Migration. The organization took care of paying for his medical fees and legal aid. Mohammad was finally able to recover and he is now living with his family in Dakar. His case dramatically reflects the multiple challenges of securing access to justice for migrant workers.

which were developed during a seminar facilitated by OHCHR, and are pending formal agreement by the Government.

Combating impunity and strengthening accountability and the rule of law

- ▶ *A National Preventive Mechanism against torture is established and functioning in compliance with OP-CAT (EA 3)*

Established in April 2016, the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture (NPM) completed its first year of operation in 2017. OHCHR and the Association for the Prevention of Torture provided trainings and assessments to facilitate the full implementation of its mandate and strategic plan. OHCHR advocated for an appropriate budget to be allocated to the NPM that would enable it to carry out its mandate in an independent and effective manner.

- ▶ *Access to justice and judicial assistance secured for women, migrants, victims of slavery and other vulnerable groups in a number of selected precedential cases (EA 5)*

To facilitate access to justice for individuals and groups in vulnerable situations, OHCHR gathered information on the barriers to access to justice that are often faced by vulnerable populations. It also advocated for the implementation of the Law on Legal Aid, which was adopted by the National Assembly in 2015. The first decree required for its implementation was passed in February and focuses on the establishment of regional offices. The second decree, which establishes the rates for lawyers and experts, was adopted in November.

Widening the democratic space

- ▶ *The National Action Plan on human rights education is adopted; human rights successively integrated into school and university curricula (EA 1)*

In 2017, the Office cooperated with the Ministry for National Education to finalize six modules on human rights education for primary and secondary schools. During the past two years, the modules were developed through consultations with teachers, professors and education officials and will be used as a basis for the training of teachers. It is anticipated that they will be implemented in a number of pilot schools in 2018.

Early warning and protection of human rights in situations of conflict, violence and insecurity

- ▶ *Human rights protection concerns are integrated into subsequent Humanitarian Needs Overviews and other operational humanitarian plans, including a disaster preparedness plan for Nouakchott (EA 11)*

OHCHR contributed to the inclusion of human rights protection provisions in humanitarian plans, includ-

ing in the context of the UNDAF 2018-2022. In May 2017, as coordinator of the protection sector in Mauritania, OHCHR convened members of the sector to identify the most critical protection challenges, threats and risks. The meeting resulted in the preparation of a paper, which was submitted to the UNCT to feed the joint planning process.

- ▶ *Increased responsiveness and the integration of human rights concerns into the response of the international community to potential, emerging or existing situations of conflict, violence and insecurity (EA 11)*

Based on its monitoring work in the villages of Bassikounou, OHCHR identified villages with the highest risk of conflict between members of the village population and/or with incoming refugees. As a result, 36 village committees were created and trained in conflict prevention approaches. Communication was consequently enhanced between the village committees and local and regional authorities and international aid agencies. Several conflict situations were reported to have been resolved through dialogue.

Mauritania: Expenditure in 2017		
	Regular budget expenditure in US\$	Extrabudgetary expenditure in US\$
Personnel and related costs	-	479,591
Activities and operating costs	-	275,603
Subtotal	-	755,194
Programme support costs	-	95,221
GRAND TOTAL	-	850,415

State of Palestine¹⁵

Year established	1996
Staff as of 31 December 2017	29
Expenditure in 2017	US\$4,080,797

Results

Strengthening international human rights mechanisms

- ▶ *Accession by the State of Palestine to ICCPR and ICESCR (EA 2)*

Since 2014, the State of Palestine has become a State Party to seven of the core human rights instruments and three additional optional protocols (two under the Convention on the Rights of the Child

¹⁵ Reference to Palestine should be understood in compliance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 67/19.

and one under the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment). Over the course of the reporting cycle, OHCHR undertook numerous activities aimed at raising the awareness of relevant duty-bearers about the State of Palestine's human rights treaty obligations.

- ▶ *Mechanism to monitor and report on implementation of international treaty commitments has been strengthened and structures for sustained monitoring and reporting on international commitments have been created (EA 6)*

In the wake of its first ratifications in 2014, the State of Palestine created a high-level inter-ministerial committee charged with coordinating the implementation of its international human rights obligations. A technical-level committee was also created to prepare the State of Palestine's initial reports under the seven human rights treaties to which it is a Party. OHCHR's capacity-building efforts focused inter alia on providing assistance to ministry officials, members of the technical committee, in drafting of the initial treaty body reports; boosting the capacity of the members of the Committee which was created to harmonize Palestine's domestic legislation and policies with its international human rights obligations; and supporting the Palestinian Central Bureau for Statistics in establishing a set of human rights indicators against which the Government can monitor progress made in the implementation of recommendations.

- ▶ *Increased number and diversity of rights-holders, and of national human rights institutions and civil society actors acting on their behalf, making use of United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms and bodies (EA 7)*

OHCHR contributed to ensuring that Palestinian civil society was fully informed and able to both engage with the international human rights mechanisms and hold duty-bearers accountable for human rights violations. Specifically, OHCHR offered a range of training and awareness-raising activities targeting civil society organizations and the Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR). The objective was to sensitize them regarding the mechanisms that are available for lodging complaints about alleged human rights violations and improve their capacity for monitoring and documenting the implementation of human rights treaty obligations and human rights violations. In addition, the ICHR facilitated national consultations on the initial Palestinian report under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Combating impunity and strengthening accountability and the rule of law

- ▶ *Increased compliance with international human rights standards by the establishment of a formal moratorium of the death penalty in the West Bank and a de facto moratorium in Gaza (EA 1)*

During the reporting period, courts in Gaza handed down approximately 65 death sentences against civilians who had been convicted of a variety of offences and nine executions were carried out. In violation of international law, many of the sentences were handed down by military courts. OHCHR consistently engaged with Gaza's relevant duty-bearers, including security officers, the Attorney General, representatives of the Military Justice System, as well as other relevant stakeholders, to advocate for a moratorium on the death penalty with a view to its abolition. OHCHR urged them to halt executions and uphold their obligations under international law to respect the right to life and the right to a fair trial. OHCHR conducted activities with Palestinian human rights organizations, such as joint outreach activities, to advocate for the abolition of the death penalty. In November 2017, the Office issued an op-ed in which it asked the President to adopt a formal moratorium. This was followed up with a letter to the President.

- ▶ *Detention conditions and practices more in conformity with international human rights standards and reduced number of cases of arbitrary detention (EA 1)*

During the reporting period, OHCHR has monitored detention conditions and practices by all duty bearers throughout the State of Palestine. The monitoring team also conducted visits to places of detention that are run by the Palestinian General Intelligence Services, the Palestinian Preventive Security, the Palestinian police and the prison services under the de facto authorities. Overall, poor detention conditions remain an area of concern and the situation regarding arbitrary detention, ill-treatment and torture by Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the de facto authorities in Gaza has not improved across the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt). Moreover, the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in the oPt, which was presented to the Human Rights Council in March 2018, focuses on the issue of arbitrary detention and provides recommendations to all duty-bearers to comply with related obligations under international law.

Integrating human rights in development and in the economic sphere

- ▶ *Enhanced implementation of a human rights-based approach by United Nations programmes, especially within the framework of the UNDAF (EA 11)*

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2018-2022, the Common Country Assessment

(CCA) as well as a number of joint strategies of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) strongly incorporate human rights issues and standards. OHCHR encouraged the use of a human rights-based approach in the CCA/UNDAF by taking a leading role in the relevant UNCT working groups and providing written inputs for these policy documents. Moreover, OHCHR provided training to UNCT members on a human rights-based approach to development.

Widening the democratic space

- ▶ *Increased compliance of targeted duty-bearers with international human rights standards in the areas of freedoms of association, assembly and expression (EA 1)*

OHCHR carried out a series of awareness-raising activities, including workshops, trainings, conferences and seminars, on issues of freedom of expression among national human rights organizations, journalists, media workers and community leaders in Gaza and the West Bank. In 2017, these activities included two trainings on provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights relating to the freedoms of expression, association and assembly, to develop the skills of social media activists and journalists in the West Bank and Gaza to report on human rights. The Office also continued to monitor, document and report on violations by all duty-bearers, including Israel, related to freedoms of expression, association and assembly, including in cases of harassment, arrest and the ill-treatment of journalists, as well as the violent dispersal of demonstrations and public events, which were documented and later used in advocacy activities.



On the occasion of Human Rights Day, OHCHR together with the Human Rights and Democracy Media Center “SHAMS” organized a demonstration for human rights under the slogan “Everyone is a Human Rights Defender.” © OHCHR/Palestine

Early warning and protection of human rights in situations of conflict, violence and insecurity

- ▶ *Increased responsiveness of the international community to issues of impunity faced by both Israeli and Palestinian duty-bearers (EA 10)*

OHCHR significantly contributed to an increased understanding of the humanitarian and human rights situation in the State of Palestine by the international community. The Office’s legal advice, analysis, monitoring and reporting initiatives have fed into advocacy strategies to address key human rights concerns. OHCHR’s reports to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly ensured that the situation in the oPt remained at the top of the international community’s agenda. As an example, the Office produced the seminal Secretary-General’s Report on the Human Rights Situation in the oPt, which was presented to the thirty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council. The report outlined and critiqued the applicable legal framework and provided an analy-

Atta and Samara: Mutual mentorship

Samara is a youth volunteer with Defence for Children International in the State of Palestine. Through his work in an education programme in Ramallah that was implemented by Defence for Children International, UN Human Rights and Education Above All, Samara met Atta. Several years ago, at the age of 12, Israeli soldiers shot Atta in front of his school. The injuries resulted in paralysis and a period of isolation, largely because of the daily challenges he encountered due to being in a wheelchair. Atta was unable to leave his house without help and was unable to attend school because it was not equipped to accommodate persons with his disability.

Atta is now the Deputy Secretary of the protection team of Defence for Children International in Ramallah. After meeting him, Samara spoke of Atta as “a success story” and someone through whom he has learned about himself, including how to be more efficient in his advocacy. He also learned about the meaning of limits. In moments

when he thought he could not go on and felt compelled to quit, he would think of Atta and the challenges he faces and was instead inspired to continue.

Atta joined Defence for Children International with the belief that the organization could amplify his voice and help him send a message to the world to assist children in Palestine. His message, which arises out of his personal story, focuses on the right to education and the rights of children with disabilities and the connection between these two rights. He wants the world to hear about what happened to him and, more importantly, to take notice of Palestinian children who, like all children, have a right to education. He also wants to raise the visibility of disabilities in the context of education and notes that “many schools are far away and kids [with disabilities] cannot attend so they don’t go to school. The schools are not ready for kids with disabilities.”

sis of the primary violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law taking place in the oPt.

- ▶ *Enhanced implementation of a human rights-based approach by United Nations programmes, especially humanitarian strategies, planning and responses (EA 11)*

In its capacity as the Protection Cluster Lead, OHCHR has been central to the development of successive Humanitarian Needs Overviews and Response Plans with a human rights focus during the reporting period. Indeed, as reflected in the 2018-2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview and Humanitarian Response Plan for the State of Palestine, protection concerns and enhanced respect for international humanitarian and human rights law are at the core of the UN's humanitarian engagement in the country. The first of three objectives of the Humanitarian Plan puts a clear emphasis on the accountability of relevant duty-bearers in line with international human rights and humanitarian law standards. The Office further contributed to the formulation of the Inter-Agency Contingency Plan for Gaza in 2016-2017 by specifically supporting protection mainstreaming in emergency preparedness.

Through the Protection Cluster, OHCHR engaged with other UN agencies and stakeholders on a number of key protection and human rights concerns in the context of the occupation. For instance, with UNHCR, the Office advocated for better protection, communication and accountability for the "refugees from the region" who are being supported by partners in Gaza. In 2017, this resulted in the provision of rental assistance and shelter upgrades for refugees. With the Legal Task Force and its partners, the Office advocated for the continued support of Bedouin communities, particularly in the context of gaps in legal aid provision for the communities that are most at risk. OHCHR also engaged with various partners to respond to attacks on human rights defenders who were identified by the Protection Cluster, for the first time in 2016, as a priority issue of concern.

State of Palestine: Expenditure in 2017

	Regular budget expenditure in US\$	Extrabudgetary expenditure in US\$
Personnel and related costs	1,610,510	1,404,842
Activities and operating costs	428,610	414,543
Subtotal	2,039,120	1,819,385
Programme support costs	-	222,291
GRAND TOTAL	2,039,120	2,041,677

Tunisia

Year established	2011
Staff as of 31 December 2017	12
Expenditure in 2017	US\$1,338,642

Results

Strengthening international human rights mechanisms

- ▶ *Reservations to at least one treaty (CEDAW, CRC or OP-CRC) are withdrawn (EA 2)*

All four reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) were withdrawn by Tunisia. OHCHR has consistently advocated for the withdrawal of the reservations since 2012, including by organizing a briefing for Members of Parliament in 2014.

- ▶ *Submission of pending periodic reports to CAT and CESCR (EA 6)*

In 2015, the Government submitted its reports to the Committee against Torture and the Committee on Enforced Disappearances. In 2016, after several years of delay, Tunisia submitted its third periodic report to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Office supported the drafting process and provided comments on the methodology and content of the reports.

- ▶ *Establishment of participatory standing national coordinating bodies on reporting on/replying to individual communications and enquiries; and integrated follow-up to recommendations of all human rights mechanisms (EA 6)*

The National Commission for the Coordination, Elaboration and Presentation of the Reports and Follow-up of Recommendations in the Field of Human Rights, the Tunisian National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up (NMRF), was established in 2015. The NMRF is composed of the human rights focal points of line ministries and its Secretariat is managed by the Ministry for Relations with Constitutional Bodies, Civil Society, and Human Rights. Since its establishment, the NMRF has met regularly and achieved substantial results, including the updating of the common core document, which has been pending since 1994, the drafting of several overdue reports to the human rights treaty bodies and the preparation of Tunisia's report for the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Supported by OHCHR, the NMRF enhanced its capacity to ensure the meaningful participation of civil society in the process of drafting reports, including through the organization of wide consultations across the country. With regards to follow-up, the NMRF developed an action plan for the implementation of recommendations issued in relation to Tunisia by the Committee against Torture. It identifies



OHCHR staff member sharing information on the international human rights mechanisms and OHCHR's mandate with students of a Master's degree in Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, in Tunisia.
© OHCHR/Tunisia

the primary and secondary actors responsible for the implementation of each recommendation, as well as the actions to be undertaken with relevant indicators and timelines. These achievements were made possible by the strong efforts of the Office during the reporting cycle to build the capacity of the members of the NMRF. Training sessions facilitated by OHCHR addressed issues such as the drafting of reports, the use of human rights indicators, data collection, information management and the development of action plans for the implementation of recommendations.

► *Increased number of CSOs submitting information to CAT and CESCR (EA 7)*

Over the four-year cycle, civil society organizations submitted almost 30 shadow reports to the human rights treaty bodies and nearly 50 organizations submitted jointly or individually 23 alternative reports to the UPR. OHCHR contributed to this result by strengthening the awareness of the organizations through training sessions and workshops for organizations from across Tunisia on the role and mandates of the international human rights mechanisms and their ability to engage with them.

Enhancing equality and countering discrimination

► *Legislation and policies in compliance with international human rights standards are adopted in the areas of the equality of women and persons at-risk; migrants; and access to education and employment for persons with disabilities (EA 4)*

Following the withdrawal of its reservations to CEDAW, in 2014, the Government of Tunisia took steps to align its legislative framework governing women's rights with both the Constitution and the Convention. To this end, the Ministry of Women, Children and Family Affairs began drafting a general law on violence against women and girls. The Office pro-

vided technical support to the drafting committee as well as logistical and financial support in organizing consultations with national civil society organizations and international partners. The legislation was adopted in July 2017 and is in full compliance with international human rights standards. Regarding racial discrimination, the Office has supported the efforts of the technical committee established by the Government, in 2016, to develop a draft law on racial discrimination. With OHCHR's assistance, national consultations were organized with civil society to gather recommendations on the text. The draft was finalized in 2017 and was adopted by the Cabinet in 2018. In July 2017, the Ministry of Social Affairs presented a National Strategy on Migration, developed with the technical assistance of OHCHR. The Office, jointly with UNDP and UNICEF, supported the creation of a civil society coalition on the rights of persons with disabilities. Following advocacy by the coalition, the Tunisian Parliament passed a bill, in May 2016, amending the framework law on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities. These amendments provide for better accessibility in the workplace as well as a requirement to double the employment quota of persons with disabilities from 1 to 2 per cent in the public and private sectors.

Combating impunity and strengthening accountability and the rule of law

► *Legislation regarding deprivation of liberty, including pre-trial detention, is revised to reduce prison crowding; security sector reform leads to the adoption of policies, guidelines and codes of conduct for law enforcement officials in conformity with international human rights standards (EA 1)*

Following the publication and dissemination of a 2014 OHCHR report on the situation of prisons in Tunisia, a working group was established by the Ministry of Justice and the Directorate General for Prisons and Rehabilitation to implement the recommendations of the report. In 2015, the Ministry adopted a national strategy and committed to reforming the Criminal Code as part of its efforts to reduce overcrowding in prisons. The 2017 abolition of the mandatory minimum sentence of one year for drug crimes was a welcome development. Also during the reporting cycle, OHCHR conducted over 80 prison monitoring visits. This enabled the Office to collect data that informed the drafting of a second report that further identifies the main challenges faced by the prison administration and advances recommendations on the improvement of prison conditions, including on the prevention of violent extremism in prison. Both the assessment and the recommendations were formulated in close consultation with the Ministry of Justice and the Directorate General for Prisons and Rehabilitation. In this context, 2,600

officers enhanced their capacities through training sessions delivered by the Office and 50 high level officials benefitted from a training of trainers session. To support the increased compliance of Tunisian legislation and security sector policies with international human rights standards, OHCHR focused on ensuring that law enforcement officers made use of relevant tools and competencies to carry out their duties in compliance with these standards. A module on human rights was included in the curricula of the National Police School and is now part of the compulsory training for officials at all levels. The capacity of 3,600 law enforcement officers from the police, national guard and civil protection service were strengthened through training sessions on human rights in policing that were organized at the National Police School. The Office also supported the drafting of the Tunisian National Strategy on Counter Terrorism and strengthened the capacities of the National Counter Terrorism Commission. As part of its training programme for judges, which reached over 1,000 judges, trainings were delivered by the Office on the role of judges in preventing and combatting torture.

► *Legislation governing the penal system is revised to reflect international standards (EA 1)*

Following the 2013 national consultations on the reform of the justice sector, the Ministry of Justice developed a Justice Sector Reform Strategy, in 2014, in cooperation with OHCHR, UNDP and other partners. Furthermore, in 2015, the Ministry of Justice and the Provisional Judicial Body adopted an action plan on the reform of the judicial and prison sectors. The Office and UNDP supported the development of the action plan by providing technical assistance and facilitating stakeholder meetings to discuss the plan. In addition, the Law on the Constitutional Court and the Law on the Supreme Judicial Council were adopted in 2015 and 2016, respectively. The process was supported by the Office and UNDP through the organization of consultations with relevant stakeholders and advocacy activities that were undertaken during parliamentary discussions on the drafts. The Supreme Judicial Council is not yet fully operational due to delays in the appointment of its members. Another positive development was the adoption of a law revising the Criminal Procedure Code, in 2016, which reduced the duration of police custody to 48 hours and guaranteed access to a lawyer immediately following an arrest and for the duration of time that a person is in police custody. OHCHR provided technical assistance to the committee in charge of the revision of the Criminal Procedure Code.

► *A coherent transitional justice process is underway; a fully functional Truth and Dignity Commission is in place, has duly addressed the rights and participation of discriminated groups and generated structural reform proposals (EA 3)*



OHCHR staff member discussing with students in Tunisia the contents of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
© OHCHR/Tunisia

In 2013, Law 53-2013 on transitional justice was adopted. The drafting was supported by the Office and in 2014, the Truth and Dignity Commission was established and started its operations. A number of Sub-Commissions were established, including on vetting and institutional reforms; arbitration and reconciliation; research and investigation; reparations and rehabilitation; safeguarding national memory; and women and vulnerable groups. Supported by the Office and UNDP, the Sub-Commissions established their respective rules and developed action plans. Furthermore, the Office and UNDP supported the Truth and Dignity Commission as it opened four regional offices and established mobile units to reach victims in some of the most remote and marginalized areas of the country, as prescribed by the Transitional Justice Law. The process of submitting complaints in relation to alleged human rights violations committed in the past was closed in 2016. The Commission registered more than 62,000 cases. In 2016 and 2017, the Commission's first 10 public hearings were held on a variety of thematic issues. The Commission received support from the Office and UNDP in developing the methodology to conduct the hearings, especially with regards to the provision of adequate services to protect victims and witnesses. Moreover, they also contributed to strengthening the capacities of the commissioners and over 300 staff members through the provision of specialized capacity-building activities on international standards relating to transitional justice, monitoring, fact-finding and the investigation of human rights violations. The Office also supported the Truth and Dignity Commission in the development of an investigation and prosecution strategy, as well as a National Global Reparation Plan. The Office and UNDP further supported the creation of civil society platforms across the country to ensure that victims from marginalized regions had access to information and were accom-

panied when engaging with the transitional justice process. The Office supported the establishment of the Specialised Chambers to adjudicate on cases relating to gross human rights violations and contributed to strengthening the capacities of over 500 judges, prosecutors and lawyers on applicable laws and procedures and international human rights and criminal law.

- ▶ *A National Preventive Mechanism against torture is established and functioning in compliance with OP-CAT (EA 3)*

Although the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) was formally established by legislation in 2013, the Parliament only elected its 16 members in 2016. The Office actively contributed to the drafting of the legislation and advocated with national authorities for the operationalization and selection of the members of the NPM. OHCHR provided technical support that led to the adoption of the NPM's rules of procedure and 2017-2021 plan of action, the strengthening of the capacities of its members on international human rights standards relating to the prevention of torture and the development of a communication strategy. The NPM was further supported in organizing a series of outreach activities across the country that were aimed at engaging with civil society organizations to ensure they understood and disseminated information on the role of the NPM.

- ▶ *Increased number of strategic litigation cases on economic, social and cultural rights brought before the courts (EA 5)*

In December, a practical guide was launched on the justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights in Tunisia, developed with the support of OHCHR and the Human Rights Institute of the International Bar Association. The guide addresses the possible modalities of litigation of these rights in Tunisia, with concrete examples from some Tunisian cases as well as information on relevant international standards on the subject. Training workshops to disseminate the guide are planned for 2018 and beyond.

Integrating human rights in development and in the economic sphere

- ▶ *Increased number of budgets and development policies are designed using a rights-based approach (EA 1)*

Following the 2016 launch of an OHCHR study on the Working Conditions of Women in Rural Areas and their Access to Social Security, which was jointly conducted with UN Women and the Ministry for Women, Family and Children Affairs, the 2017-2020 Action Plan on Socioeconomic Empowerment of Women and Girls in Rural Areas was drafted. The Office provided technical support to the Ministry for Women in developing the Action Plan, which was adopted in August 2017.

- ▶ *Increased number of civil society organizations monitoring and being engaged in the preparation of selected budgets and/or development policies (EA 5)*

Tunisian civil society organizations provided inputs to the draft law on the right to water during public consultations that took place in 2015. The Office provided training to 14 NGOs working in the field of economic and social rights, including on issues relating to water and agriculture. It also organized a workshop on the right to water and sanitation, in 2015, which provided support for the advocacy work of civil society organizations with regards to the draft law.

- ▶ *The UNDAF 2015-2019 integrates a human rights-based approach (EA 11)*

Through its active participation in the process leading to the development and adoption of the 2015-2019 United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the Office ensured the full integration of human rights in all three pillars of the document, namely democratic governance, an inclusive, sustainable and resilient economic model and social protection and equitable access to quality social services. The document was signed by the Government and the United Nations Country Team on March 2014. The Office ensured that all reports on the progress in the implementation of the UNDAF reflected the efforts made towards the increased protection and promotion of human rights.

Widening the democratic space

- ▶ *Tunisian NHRI established and functioning in accordance with the Paris Principles (EA 1)*

The New Tunisian Constitution, adopted in 2014, provides for the establishment of a national human rights institution (NHRI). During the reporting period, the Office consistently provided technical assistance for the development of a draft law establishing an NHRI in compliance with the Paris Principles. An initial draft was approved by the Council of Ministers, in 2014, and submitted to the Parliament for adoption. The draft was later withdrawn, however, as the Government decided to continue working on the draft. In order to address its gaps and ensure the inclusion of inputs from civil society, the Office supported the Ministry for Relations with Constitutional Bodies, Civil Society and Human Rights in launching a series of nationwide consultations, in 2016, which gathered together approximately 600 participants from civil society. The participants prepared a set of recommendations that were submitted to the drafting committee. The revised draft was introduced to the Parliament in 2017 and it is under consideration by Parliament. In parallel to efforts taking place to establish a new NHRI, the Office continued to support the institution that is currently in place, the High

Committee for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Among other capacity-building activities undertaken by OHCHR, members of the High Committee were sensitized on the Paris Principles and trained on the drafting of reports to the international human rights mechanisms.

- ▶ *The Constitution and other policies that may constrain freedom of expression are brought into compliance with international human rights standards (EA 1)*

Judges increasingly used Decree 2011-115, which strictly regulates press offences and thus increases protection of journalists prosecuted for acts committed in the exercise of their profession, instead of the Criminal Code, resulting in enhanced protection of the freedom of expression. OHCHR undertook a study on the provisions of Decree 2011-115 and its implementation by the judiciary, which was shared with journalists, prosecutors, judges and the Ministry of Justice and used by the Office to advocate for the exclusive use of the Decree rather than the Criminal, Military or Telecommunication Code. The Office also implemented a training programme for judges on their role in protecting freedom of expression and combating hate speech, which was attended by over 200 judges. Furthermore, a training manual was jointly developed with NGO Article 19 and tested with 25 judges, who became certified trainers.

The Tunisian Parliament adopted the Law on Access to Information, in 2016, which requested the creation of an Independent Authority on Access to Information. The Independent Authority was established in August 2017 and the Tunisian Parliament elected its president, vice-president and board members. The Office provided technical support and facilitated the participation of civil society in the drafting process.

- ▶ *Oversight and accountability in the media are in line with international standards (EA 1)*

During the reporting period, the High Authority for Audio-visual Communication enhanced its capacity to monitor hate speech in audiovisual media. With the support of the Office, the High Authority created a Monitoring Unit that is charged with monitoring and analysing the phenomenon of hate speech in the media. Using a monitoring methodology that was based on the Principles of the Rabat Plan of Action, the Unit produced periodic and thematic reports to share its findings. The Office further strengthened the capacity of the National Syndicate of Tunisian Journalists (SNJT) to protect and support journalists against harassment and attacks. With technical support from OHCHR and UNESCO, the Monitoring Unit on the Safety of Journalists was established by the SNJT, in March, and is tasked with monitoring and

documenting violations of the safety of journalists and following up on individual cases. Since its establishment, the Monitoring Unit has published monthly reports with figures and statistics regarding attacks on journalists.

- ▶ *Effective human rights education programmes, particularly for youth, established or strengthened (EA 1)*

Through the Task Force on Human Rights and Citizenship Education, a joint initiative of OHCHR, UN-ESCO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR and the Arab Institute for Human Rights, the Office advocated for the formal inclusion of citizenship and human rights education in curricula and provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Education to achieve this goal. The Task Force also supported the institutionalization of the “Clubs on citizenship and human rights education.” Through this pilot project, 30 clubs were created across the country and the capacities of approximately 230 students and teachers in primary schools were strengthened to conduct human rights education activities. Finally, a practical manual on human rights education for primary schools was produced and widely disseminated by the Office.

- ▶ *The international community increasingly coordinates its support and interventions on freedom of expression and the media (EA 10)*

The Office created and coordinated the Freedom of Expression Group, which provided a platform for members of the international community in Tunis to exchange information and adopt a unified advocacy strategy relating to freedom of expression in Tunisia. An advocacy paper was developed and updated on a regular basis, reflecting priorities and concerns in the area of freedom of expression and the protection of journalists. It also fed into the recommendations provided by some Member States during Tunisia’s third cycle of the UPR, in May 2017. This approach contributed to a large number of relevant recommendations, which were adopted by Tunisia.

Tunisia: Expenditure in 2017

	Regular budget expenditure in US\$	Extrabudgetary expenditure in US\$
Personnel and related costs	-	880,668
Activities and operating costs	-	303,927
Subtotal	-	1,184,595
Programme support costs	-	154,048
GRAND TOTAL	-	1,338,642

Yemen

Year established	2012
Staff as of 31 December 2017	9
Expenditure in 2017	US\$3,828,538

Results

Combating impunity and strengthening accountability and the rule of law

- *Constitution and legislative framework is aligned with international human rights standards (EA 1)*

Due to the political stalemate and the weak rule of law, not much progress could be achieved on a number of reform initiatives, including the drafting of the Constitution.

- *Establishment and/or improved functioning, in compliance with human rights standards, of victim-centred transitional justice mechanisms, including the Commission of Inquiry, Truth and Reconciliation, Land and Dismissals Commissions (EA 3)*

Over the past year, the National Commission of Inquiry issued two interim reports and some monthly reports. In addition, of the more than 17,000 human rights violations reportedly documented, the Commission notes that it completed investigations of more than 10,000 allegations. As a result of political constraints, however, the perceived partiality of the National Commission and its limited access have prevented it from comprehensively executing its mandate. In April 2017, OHCHR deployed five additional staff members to provide the National Commission with technical assistance and advice and to support its investigations. Moreover, OHCHR conducted a variety of technical cooperation activities. For instance, in February, a workshop was held for members of the Commission in Doha, where infor-



OHCHR staff members monitoring a neighbourhood in Sana'a affected by the on-going conflict in Yemen. © OHCHR/Yemen

mation on good practices of commissions of inquiry was presented. In May, a working visit to the National Commission was undertaken in Aden to provide technical expertise on information management, protection protocols and archiving. Two additional workshops were held in Kuala Lumpur for field monitors and investigators from the National Commission working in 20 Yemeni governorates, to build their capacities on monitoring and documenting human rights violations.

Early warning and protection of human rights in situations of conflict, violence and insecurity

- *Systems and procedures put in place by OHCHR contribute to protection from human rights violations (EA 3)*

OHCHR established a monitoring, documentation and investigation mechanism through the deployment of field monitors to conflict-affected areas, including in Sana'a governorate, Amanat Al-Asimah, Aden, Abyan, Al Hudaydah, Al Mahwit, Hajjah, Hadramout, Al Jawf, Amran, Taizz, Al-Dhale'e, Lahj, Ibb, Sa'ada, Shabwah and Marib. During 2017, the Office organized four meetings with field monitors to enhance their monitoring and reporting skills and increase their coordination. Based on the findings reported by the monitors and OHCHR's monitoring, the Office drafted 12 monthly updates on the human rights situation in Yemen, which were shared with the United Nations Country Team, the Humanitarian Country Team, the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to Yemen and other international stakeholders. In addition, OHCHR human rights monitors conducted more than 100 field visits to prisons and detention facilities, documented human rights violations and advocated with prison authorities for the necessary corrective measures. Moreover, in October, OHCHR met with the Director of the Rehabilitation and Correction Authority to raise



OHCHR workshop on human rights in the context of conflict and humanitarian emergencies for Yemeni civil society actors. © OHCHR/Yemen

concerns about the detention conditions in prisons, including overcrowding and a lack of basic services.

Yemen: Expenditure in 2017		
	Regular budget expenditure in US\$	Extrabudgetary expenditure in US\$
Personnel and related costs	-	1,850,877
Activities and operating costs	-	1,537,202
Subtotal	-	3,388,078
Programme support costs	-	440,460
GRAND TOTAL	-	3,828,538

Regional Offices and Centres

Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa (Beirut, Lebanon)

Year established	2002
Staff as of 31 December 2017	26
Expenditure in 2017	US\$2,108,008

Results

Strengthening international human rights mechanisms

- ▶ *Increased ratification of international human rights treaties by countries in the region (EA 2)*
While some positive steps were undertaken by a number of countries in the region to ratify international human rights instruments, none of these instruments were ratified by the targeted countries during the period under review.
- ▶ *Increased compliance and engagement of Member States with international human rights mechanisms, including through the establishment of participatory standing national coordinating bodies on reporting on/replying to individual communications and enquiries; and integrated follow-up to recommendations of all human rights mechanisms (EA 6)*
Following support received from the Office, Lebanon submitted most of its delayed reports to the human rights treaty bodies in 2016 and 2017. In Saudi Arabia, OHCHR provided technical support to the Permanent Committee for reporting to the interna-

tional human rights mechanisms through three training workshops. Discussions also progressed on the development of an action plan for the implementation of Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations.

- ▶ *Increased number of submissions to the human rights treaty bodies, special procedures and Universal Periodic Review from civil society actors (EA 7)*
Partly as a result of OHCHR's technical support and training, Jordanian civil society submitted more than 20 alternative reports to the human rights treaty bodies during the reporting cycle. In Lebanon, OHCHR maintained its good relationship with civil society organizations and supported them in reporting to the international human rights mechanisms and in the implementation of UPR recommendations.

Enhancing equality and countering discrimination

- ▶ *Legislation, policies and practices increasingly comply with anti-discrimination and equality standards in relation to the rights of women and of migrants (EA 4)*

In 2014, a law was adopted in Lebanon on the protection of women and family members from domestic violence, in compliance with international standards. In 2017, the Moroccan Parliament adopted legislation establishing a National Authority to combat discrimination and enhance equality, while a law to combat violence against women was adopted in early 2018.



OHCHR staff member briefs civil servants from the Middle East region on the human rights treaty bodies. © OHCHR/Middle East

OHCHR closely followed the development of these laws and advocated with relevant duty-bearers in both countries for their approval.

Combating impunity and strengthening accountability and the rule of law

- ▶ *Establishment and functioning of accountability mechanisms in accordance with international standards to monitor, investigate and redress acts of torture and ill-treatment (EA 3)*

In 2016, the Lebanese Parliament adopted a law creating the National Commission for Human Rights. The legislation includes a National Preventive Mechanism mandated to visit places of detention as required by the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, to which Lebanon has been a Party since 2008. The law was adopted following several recommendations that were issued by the UN human rights mechanisms. OHCHR provided technical inputs to the draft.

Integrating human rights in development and in the economic sphere

- ▶ *At least two countries have mainstreamed human rights into their policies (EA 1)*

OHCHR advocated for a stronger linkage between the Sustainable Development Goals and human rights in relevant planning documents and provided guidance to stakeholders when needed. As a result, Lebanon adopted a human rights plan of action and it is currently developing a plan of implementation

for the Sustainable Development Goals. Jordan adopted similar plans of action.

Widening the democratic space

- ▶ *Constitutions, laws, administrative measures and policies are adopted to promote respect for freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association (EA 1)*

OHCHR liaised with duty-bearers in the region to advocate against laws that restrict freedom of expression and worked closely with the media, civil society actors, human rights defenders, the judiciary, religious scholars and other stakeholders to promote respect for freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association. As an example, the Office advocated with the Government of Jordan against a proposed amendment to the Law on the right of freedom of expression and right to association, which would have imposed restrictive criteria related to the establishment of associations. A number of activities were also carried out during the reporting cycle to support Member States in their implementation of the recommendations outlined in the Rabat Plan of Action. For instance, OHCHR has organized 10 events since 2013 in order to operationalize the Rabat Plan of Action, including a two-day regional workshop in Tunis on the role of civil society and media in promoting tolerance and diversity in the Middle East and North African region. Following the workshop, participants established the modalities for the establishment of a regional coalition to combat hate speech. In 2015, OHCHR organized an

Promoting the right to education in Egypt

In Nasr City, a suburb of greater Cairo, two girls relayed their experiences as participants in the right to education programme implemented by Defence for Children International, thanks to a grant that was provided by UN Human Rights and Education Above All. As part of the programme, the participants were asked to become members of a committee on the rights of the child where they could discuss their rights and duties as students at the school. The girls spoke about some of the human rights content that they had learned through the training programme, however, they focused on the ways that the programme had helped them to feel more comfortable and confident in expressing themselves at school.

One of the girls, Raghed, said, “I am happy to be a part of this programme because things inside me came out which I didn’t know were there.” “I can speak more freely about problems at the school,” she added.

Another girl, Zahra, talked about a different aspect of the programme, specifically, the lines of communication that

were opened between students and teachers and between the students themselves. “In the beginning, people didn’t talk to each other but now the students talk to each other. The teachers and students are now open to discuss about issues,” she said. Zahra also connected the implementation of the programme with a reduction in violence at the school. “The programme changed things a lot! There is no longer any hitting. Life became more beautiful,” she noted.

An important element of the students’ participation in this programme was the opportunity to express their thoughts through drawing. They were encouraged to draw their thoughts and feelings about issues that were important to them and included their personal recommendations on how to resolve any problems they saw. They then discussed their drawings with fellow students, which often resulted in a lively debate on their rights and duties as students.

Expert Group Meeting, in Beirut, on the role of the judiciary in the implementation of the Rabat Plan of Action. In 2017, the Office organized a seminar, in Amman, for academics to explore practical ways in which the courts can protect the freedom of expression and combat incitement to hatred. OHCHR used the outcomes of the seminar to develop a training manual for judges on these subjects.

- ▶ *Establishment or strengthening of NHRIs that are compliant with international standards (Paris Principles), including in Bahrain, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (EA 1)*
In 2016, national human rights institutions (NHRIs) were established in Kuwait and Lebanon. The Lebanese NHRI is largely operating in compliance with the Paris Principles, however, the law that created the NHRI in Kuwait falls short of international standards. OHCHR undertook a number of advocacy initiatives and provided support to duty-bearers in both countries for the establishment of the NHRIs. In Saudi Arabia, the Office continued its technical cooperation programme to enhance the capacity of the Saudi Human Rights Commission through, for instance, a series of trainings on the Paris Principles and the development of manuals on human rights issues. Discussions also took place with the Saudi Human Rights Commission to develop a strategy for human rights education.

Early warning and protection of human rights in situations of conflict, violence and insecurity

- ▶ *Support is provided to non-UN security forces and UN security policies and programmes in compliance with the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (EA 11)*

Efforts to mainstream human rights into UN programmes in Jordan and Lebanon resulted in the adoption of the Human Right Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) in both countries, in 2017, with guidance and support from OHCHR. OHCHR co-led the drafting of the HRDDP implementation plan in Lebanon with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and other UN entities.

Regional Office for Middle East (Beirut, Lebanon): Expenditure in 2017

	Regular budget expenditure in US\$	Extrabudgetary expenditure in US\$
Personnel and related costs	99,275	1,199,183
Activities and operating costs	16,791	579,700
Subtotal	116,066	1,778,883
Programme support costs	-	213,059
GRAND TOTAL	116,066	1,991,942

United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region (Doha, Qatar)

Year established	2009
Staff as of 31 December 2017	6
Expenditure in 2017	US\$1,264,367

Results

Strengthening international human rights

- ▶ *Establishment of participatory standing national coordinating bodies on reporting on/replying to individual communications and enquiries; and integrated follow-up to recommendations of all international human rights mechanisms (EA 6)*

During the reporting period, OHCHR strengthened the capacity of diplomats from the region to interact with the regional and international human rights mechanisms. This was achieved through four annual trainings that gathered together more than 100 diplomats, including 40 women.

Enhancing equality and countering discrimination

- ▶ *Legislation, policies and practices related to migrants, minorities and trafficked persons increasingly comply with anti-discrimination and equality standards (EA 4)*

Some positive legislative changes took place in the region to counter discrimination and promote the rights of minorities, in particular victims of human trafficking. This was due in part to OHCHR's advocacy and capacity-building activities including a workshop on combating human rights trafficking for Saudi Arabia officials, a regional training on the right to effective remedy for victims of trafficking in persons, a seminar on bridging the gap between national legislation and international law on combatting trafficking in persons in the Arab region, and a workshop on the role of national human rights institutions in combating trafficking in the Arab region. As result of all these efforts, national laws in Morocco, Qatar, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates were amended between 2014 and 2016 to criminalize trafficking in persons. More recently, in November 2017, Saudi Arabia initiated discussions on a draft law on anti-discrimination and hate speech.

Widening the democratic space

- ▶ *National human rights institutions function in accordance with international standards regarding their interaction with international human rights mechanisms and civil society (EA 1)*

Within the large geographic area that is covered by the United Nations Training and Documenta-

tion Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region, there are 14 national human rights institutions (NHRIs). Seven of these have been accredited with 'A' status. OHCHR worked closely with the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions and the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions to enhance the skills and capacities of NHRIs in the region. This was done through the organization of various activities, including five training events on the drafting of reports for the Universal Periodic Review and the implementation of and follow-up to recommendations issued by the international human rights mechanisms.

- ▶ *Civil society, youth and journalists increasingly advocate for and claim their rights (EA 5)*

As a result of a number of activities implemented by OHCHR during the reporting period, approximately 400 human rights activists, including women human rights defenders, youth and journalists, increased their awareness about international and regional human rights standards, international humanitarian law, combating violent extremism, hate speech and promoting human rights culture and principles. These activities included two seminars on the role of media in promoting peaceful communities, in 2015 and 2017, and a 2017 training for women human rights defenders from 12 different Arab countries on engagement with the international and regional human rights mechanisms.

Early warning and protection of human rights in situations of conflict, violence and insecurity

- ▶ *States adopt policies to ensure protection of the right to education in situations of conflict (EA 1)*

From 2014 to 2016, OHCHR collaborated with Education Above All to carry out a project on the "Protection of the Right to Education during Insecurity and Armed Conflict in the MENA region." The project provided grants to two civil society organizations in the region to enhance the role of civil society in ensuring that the right to education is protected in conflict-affected countries. One of the grantees, Defence for Children International, implemented a regional project to enhance protection mechanisms to ensure that children can enjoy their right to education in Iraq, Libya, State of Palestine, Tunisia and Yemen, which benefited 306 children. The other grantee, the Teachers Creativity Centre, implemented a project in the State of Palestine where 30 teachers and 30 youth activists were trained on using human rights legal tools and mechanisms to promote the protection of their right to education and document violations. In total, the trainers delivered 118 educational sessions in their respective schools to a total of 1,050 students. Following the sessions, the students documented and submitted 56 complaints to relevant authorities in relation to violations of their right to education.

UN Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region (Doha, Qatar): Expenditure in 2017

	Regular budget expenditure in US\$	Extrabudgetary expenditure in US\$
Personnel and related costs	769,255	162,653
Activities and operating costs	145,895	146,388
Subtotal	915,150	309,042
Programme support costs	-	40,175
GRAND TOTAL	915,150	349,217

Human Rights Components in UN Political Missions

United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq

Year established	2004
Staff as of 31 December 2017	42

Results

Enhancing equality and countering discrimination

- ▶ *Improved legislative framework to combat discrimination against women, minorities and persons with disabilities, including a new Family Protection Law and an amended Law on Persons with Disabilities (EA 4)*

In April, the Iraqi Council of Representatives' Human Rights Committee organized a public hearing that discussed potential amendments to the draft Law on the Protection of Diversity and the Prevention of Discrimination. Members of Parliament, representatives of civil society, judges from the Shura Council and the Parliamentary Human Rights and Legal Committee provided suggestions for the consideration of the Parliamentary Human Rights Committee, which is tasked with making recommendations for amendments to the draft. The Human Rights Office (HRO) of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) advocated with the Council of Representatives for the incorporation of the views submitted by various actors, including the HRO and civil society actors, in the revised final text. While the HRO also advocated for the adoption of the draft Family Pro-



Training workshop for civil society actors, human rights defenders and journalists in Iraq on the protection of civilians and transitional justice. © UNAMI PIO

tection Law, the draft has been awaiting consideration by the Council of Representatives for more than four years. Moreover, many provisions in the draft must be amended to ensure its compliance with international standards. In this regard, following consultations with women's rights groups and civil society organizations in late 2016, the HRO submitted written comments on the draft to the Council of Representatives.

The HRO continued to monitor the situation of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community and engaged with the Government of Iraq to promote the protection of LGBTI rights and investigate incidents of violence against the community. As a member of the Government Committee on LGBTI issues, the HRO submitted comments on a draft report, which examined the current state of the LGBTI community in Iraq. In September, HRO's comments were reviewed in a meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Committee, however, the report has yet to be finalized.

Combating impunity and strengthening accountability and the rule of law

- ▶ *Amendment of Anti-Terrorism Law No. 13 of 2005 and Iraqi Criminal Procedure Code No. 21 of 1971 in compliance with international human rights standards (EA 1)*

The Anti-Terrorism Law No. 13 of 2005 does not include due process or fair trial guarantees and its application remains of particular concern. The HRO used its public reports to advocate for the reform of the Law so that it reflects international standards on the right to a fair trial and due process.

- ▶ *Restriction of the death penalty to the most serious crimes and establishment of a moratorium on the implementation of all death sentences (EA 1)*

While the HRO consistently called for the abolition of the death penalty and a moratorium on its use until abolished, death sentences continued to be handed down by the judiciary in Iraq, based primarily on

the Anti-Terrorism Law No. 13. The Central Criminal Court in Baghdad sentenced 25 people to death for their role in the Camp Speicher mass killing of June 2014. The appeals will be heard by the Federal Supreme Court of Iraq. On 24 September, the Ministry of Justice announced that 42 people convicted of terrorism-related crimes had been executed earlier that day. On 27 September, the High Commissioner for Human Rights declared that he was appalled to learn of the executions and expressed doubt that the necessary strict due process and fair trial guarantees had been met in each of the 42 cases.

- ▶ *Implementation of a grassroots-driven transitional justice policy aimed at ending impunity and promoting community-based reconciliation (EA 3)*

Following extensive consultations with a range of stakeholders, including judges, prosecutors and civil society actors, on formal and informal justice mechanisms for ensuring accountability for crimes committed in relation to the ongoing armed conflict in Iraq, it was decided that the HRO would collaborate with other UNAMI units to support a proposed Iraqi-led process to ensure accountability for international crimes. Specifically, the HRO advised on the legislative changes needed to prosecute international crimes and helped to establish the Task Force on Accountability and Justice, composed of Iraqi jurists in Baghdad and Erbil. Furthermore, two expert discussions were held in Baghdad and Erbil, which resulted in a draft law for the creation of a specialized court for the most serious crimes, in full compliance with international principles. The draft has been finalized and disseminated for consideration.

Widening the democratic space

- ▶ *The Independent High Commission is fully functioning in accordance with the Paris Principles (EA 1)*

The Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights (IHCHR) was established by Law No. 15 of 2012 in full

compliance with the Paris Principles. In 2017, the HRO provided technical support to the Committee of Experts. The Committee is responsible for the selection of a new batch of commissioners and the recently formed Parliamentary Committee and is tasked with re-organizing the IHCHR Secretariat. In January 2017, a consultant was hired to determine what changes could be made to increase the capacity of the IHCHR. A total of 36 meetings were held with staff members and other interlocutors to collect information on the structure of the IHCHR and the roles, responsibilities and skills of its staff. The final report will be presented to the Parliamentary Committee for its consideration in 2018.

United Nations Support Mission in Libya

Year established	2011
Staff as of 31 December 2017	15

Results

Enhancing equality and countering discrimination

- ▶ *The legislative and policy framework incorporate international standards against discrimination, especially in relation to minorities, migrants and women (EA 4)*

Due to the political stalemate that has gripped the country since 2014, there was no possibility of amending Libyan legislation to better protect vulnerable groups against discrimination. The Human Rights, Transitional Justice and Rule of Law Division (HRD) of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) prioritized the monitoring and advocacy work relevant to discrimination against women, minorities and migrants. With respect to migrants, the HRD continued to monitor detention facilities controlled by Libyan authorities and advocated with their Libyan counterparts to end arbitrary detention, torture, unlawful killings and other egregious violations against migrants in detention. It also actively encouraged the international community to take a stronger position on the situation of migrants in Libya.

Combating impunity and strengthening accountability and the rule of law

- ▶ *Constitution, penal code, code of criminal procedure and legislation on torture increase its compliance with international human rights standards (EA 1)*

Adoption of the draft Constitution has been pending since 2016. The HRD participated in the drafting process to ensure that the draft was in compliance with international standards. Many of the HRD's inputs were taken into account in the draft. Given the

paralysis of the legislature in Libya, no new laws or amendments were adopted.

- ▶ *Reduction in the scope of the application of the death penalty, improved safeguards and enhanced mechanisms for clemency (EA 1)*

While the courts continued to sentence a number of defendants to death, the de facto moratorium has been maintained and the death penalty has not been carried out in Libya.

- ▶ *An increasingly functioning judiciary applies due process standards in a safer environment (EA 1)*

Between 2014 and 2017, the HRD continued to monitor the trial of former Gaddafi regime officials. On 21 February, OHCHR released a report that analyses key aspects of that trial in light of international standards and national law. The report concludes that while the trial demonstrated a major effort by the Libyan judiciary to hold people accountable for crimes committed during the 2011 revolution, including grave human rights violations, it failed to meet international fair trial standards. Serious violations of due process were identified, including prolonged periods of incommunicado detention for defendants and allegations of torture that were not properly investigated. In addition, no prosecution witnesses were called to testify in court and the court restricted the number of witnesses for each defendant to two. The report outlined a series of recommendations to address gaps in Libya's criminal justice system that were highlighted by the trial.

- ▶ *Detention centres are fully under the control of State-trained judicial police officers and have improved security and effective safeguards against torture (EA 1)*

Although the Libyan Political Agreement, signed in 2015, stipulated the transfer of detention facilities from armed groups to State control, progress in implementing this provision has been slow. By the end of 2017, only three detention centres in Tripoli were



Migrants sleep alongside one another in a detention facility in Tripoli, Libya. © UNHCR

under the full control of the Judicial Police, while four others were being operated by armed groups. The HRD has nevertheless made some progress in preparing State forces to take over additional detention facilities, including through capacity-building and raising awareness regarding the management of prisons and the treatment of detainees from a human rights perspective. The HRD has been working with the Ministry of Justice to create a timeline for the transfer of all detainees to prisons that are being operated by the Judicial Police. Finally, technical assistance has been provided to prison officials to promote the investigation of allegations of human rights violations and the adoption of preventive measures to counter the existing practice of torture in prisons.

- ▶ *Transitional mechanisms are in place and functioning in compliance with human rights standards, including a transitional justice law, an active and impartial truth commission, a missing persons commission, a reparations programme and vetting processes. A number of fair trials of former regime members and brigade perpetrators have been carried out (EA 3)*

To date, no general transitional justice mechanism has been established. In relation to the Tawergha-Misrata transitional justice process, following the 2011 conflict when approximately 40,000 Tawerghans were forcibly displaced from their native city by Misratan armed revolutionary groups, a milestone was reached when an agreement was signed between the Tawergha and Misrata communities, in 2016, addressing issues of truth-seeking, justice, reparations and reconciliation. In 2017, the HRD and UNDP co-organized the fifteenth meeting of the Misrata-Tawergha Joint Committee dialogue, in Tunis, which called for the establishment of an interministerial committee for reparations and discussed steps that needed to be taken to facilitate the safe return of the displaced Tawergha community. By the end of 2017, the Government of National Accord had signed onto the agreement and issued several decrees to support the return of the displaced Tawergha community to their town.

Widening the democratic space

- ▶ *An impartial and effective National Council on Civil Liberties and Human Rights that is working well with civil society and increasingly operating in compliance with the Paris Principles (EA 1)*

In light of the current security situation and ongoing political stalemate, the National Council on Civil Liberties and Human Rights has been closed since 2014 and has not resumed its activities.

- ▶ *Diverse networks of civil society organizations actively advocate for human rights and participate in public life (EA 5)*

The environment for civil society, particularly for women activists, remained hostile as armed groups

continued to threaten members of civil society and the media, thereby hampering their activities. The HRD facilitated the participation of Libyan civil society organizations and human rights defenders, including women, in international fora and initiated and supported various groups and networks for NGOs. These included the Libya Working Group for national and international NGOs, established in 2015, the Libya Platform, launched by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies in 2016 and a forum that was created in 2017 by Libyan civil society organizations that are active in the field of human rights.

Early warning and protection of human rights in situations of conflict, violence and insecurity

- ▶ *Consistent reference to the human rights situation and recommendations in statements by the international community and increased responsiveness to meet emerging human rights needs (EA 10)*

The HRD continued to raise the awareness of the international community on the human rights situation in Libya, including through inputs to reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on UNSMIL as well as thematic reports on sexual violence in conflict, the Central Mediterranean crossing, minorities and the protection of civilians. It also regularly published general updates on the human rights situation in the country and thematic reports on detention, torture, migrants, judicial processes and human rights defenders. The HRD published monthly civilian casualty reports, which received significant coverage by Arabic and English language news outlets in the Libyan media. Finally, the HRD contributed to press statements by the High Commissioner and provided numerous talking points for UNSMIL and OHCHR for high-level meetings with Member States and other stakeholders.

- ▶ *Increased integration of human rights standards and principles into the UN's security policies and programmes, including the implementation of the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on UN support to non-UN security forces (EA 11)*

Through its leadership role on the implementation of the United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) in Libya, the HRD supported the creation of a HRDDP Task Force and the adoption of a general and preliminary risk assessment for support to security forces in Libya. In September, the Task Force adopted a HRDDP Risk Assessment with respect to support to the Libyan Naval Coast Guard. Agencies involved in supporting this Libyan organization agreed to implement extensive monitoring and advocacy measures to mitigate risks of human rights violations at sea. It is also expected that a risk assessment will soon be adopted with respect to UN support to the Department for Combating Illegal Immigration.