

Peace and Security (PS)

Preventing violations and strengthening protection of human rights, including in situations of conflict and insecurity



CONFLICT PREVENTION, EARLY WARNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

 **Emergency deployments**
13 staff members deployed (in 8 countries with deteriorating human rights situations)


 **Emergency Response Teams**
3 teams established (to work on risk analysis, early warning and response coordination in Africa (West and Southern Africa) and the Asia-Pacific region)

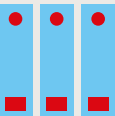
 **Humanitarian development nexus**
1 UN Regional Humanitarian Country Team supported (to integrate human rights into the Syria responses)

 **Independent investigations**
8 commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions supported (on situations in Burundi, the Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Mali, South Sudan, Syria, Venezuela and Yemen)

 **Transitional justice**
 Over **30** processes and mechanisms supported (in more than 20 countries)

PEACE OPERATIONS

 **Role of human rights components**
1 comprehensive study (documenting the support they provide to the implementation of the mandates of UN peace operations)

 **Public reporting**
13 reports by human rights components (of 8 UN peace operations)

 **Human Rights Due Diligence Policy**
10 UN peace operations and **2** regional frameworks supported (AU-UN Partnership on Peace and Security and the G5 Sahel Compliance Framework)

One step forward in Sudan

Sudan is in the aftermath of a revolution. Although significant change has taken place since the 30-year regime of General Omar al-Bashir was ousted in April 2019, many challenges remain. UN Human Rights is strengthening the capacities of journalists, lawyers and government officials to face their country's new realities.

As journalist Hussein Saad walked off a plane from Kampala in July 2015, he reflected on what he had learned at a workshop on transparency and corruption and looked forward to applying this new knowledge in his writing about human rights and peace in Sudan.

He had just cleared customs when he was suddenly stopped and whisked off to Khartoum North's political security headquarters. He was charged and placed under house arrest for three months. "That would not happen today," Mr. Saad said. "Now, the security apparatus does not interfere and I am no longer arrested for my work. Press freedom is much improved."

The ability to write as a journalist without interference or fear is a strong indication of how things have changed since tens of thousands of Sudanese took to the streets at the end of 2018. This pressure was maintained for six months until they toppled the Government. Sudan is undeniably more open and tolerant.

Many are encouraged by the visible changes, others express frustration at the seemingly slow pace of progress.

Salih Mahmoud is the Deputy of the Darfur Bar Association and a recipient of the Sakharov Prize for his outstanding human rights work in Darfur defending victims of ethnic violence. "Too much force is used against demonstrators and detainees are dying in custody," he said. While Mr. Mahmoud notes that impunity still reigns, he is encouraged by the absence of war and believes the presence of UN Human Rights augurs well for the future of Sudan. In September 2019, UN Human Rights signed an historic agreement with the transitional government to establish offices across Sudan.

"So far, things are very positive but the keys to progress are a robust constitution that respects the universality of human rights and fair elections," said Mazen Shaqoura, Head of the UN Human Rights Office start-up team in Sudan. He continued, "Most aspects of law need to be revisited through legal reform and Sudan needs to come into line with international principles and legislation." A transitional justice process is also argued to be essential to secure accountability and reparations for victims of violence.

This requires political will and a robust civil society that is equipped with the tools to advocate for change. UN Human Rights is providing a series of training workshops for civil society groups and activists.

"We are learning about the importance of human rights terminology and how to monitor and document human rights issues," said Hussain Saad, who can continue reporting on inequalities and injustices without fear of arrest.



December 2020: UN Human Rights Sudan Country Office team (left); Hussein Saad (centre); and Salih Mahmoud (right). © OHCHR

Highlights of pillar results

Peace and Security (PS)

Maintaining international peace and security is one of the fundamental purposes of the UN Charter. Situations of conflict and insecurity invariably result in violations of human rights, which are often among the root causes of conflict and insecurity. UN Human Rights has a global mandate to promote and protect human rights and a specific responsibility

to mainstream human rights throughout the work of the UN. When violence and conflict occur, the promotion and protection of human rights is not only essential for the protection of rights-holders, especially civilians, it also holds the key to rebuilding peace under the rule of law and preventing reoccurrence. Human rights are a powerful tool for conflict

prevention. They provide a sound basis for addressing issues of concern, which, if left unaddressed, can lead to conflict. As a result, human rights mechanisms can support early warning and accountability and inform UN peace and security efforts.

PILLAR RESULTS / SHIFTS / SDGs

PS1 – PROTECTION of CIVILIANS, CONFLICT and PEACE

Parties to conflict and actors involved in peace operations increasingly comply with international human rights law and international humanitarian law and provide greater protection to civilians.



RESULTS / SPOTLIGHTS

Spotlights:  Disabilities  Women  Youth

During 2020, the Office prepared 12 monthly updates and 24 biweekly reports on the **human rights situation in Yemen**. The findings of human rights monitoring activities were shared with key protection actors and contributed to the development of **14 advocacy initiatives**, including statements and press briefings that were issued by the High Commissioner and the special procedures.

UN Human Rights published two quarterly notes on **trends of human rights violations and abuses attributed to Malian Defence and Security Forces, G5 Sahel forces as well as armed groups**, documenting 1,230 human rights violations and abuses. The documented cases and recommendations on actions for addressing them were brought to the attention of relevant authorities. As a result, the Malian military authorities opened investigations in relation to 17 cases. Moreover, the implementation of six protection projects enabled the temporary and **safe relocation of 253 victims** and/or witnesses (35 women, 218 men) and the extension of support to Malian police investigators on interviewing complainants.

Through **methodological guidance** and support to commissions of inquiry, fact-finding missions and other **mandated investigative bodies**, UN Human Rights contributed to the enhanced cross-fertilization of investigative methods and peer learning of these mechanisms. For example, the Office facilitated start-up workshops for the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the UN Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen.

PS2 – Counter-TERRORISM and preventing VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Efforts to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism comply with international law.



Through its report on terrorism and human rights (A/HRC/45/27), UN Human Rights provided detailed **guidance** to Member States on the international human rights parameters governing **criminal accountability processes for terrorism-related offences**. The guidance highlights that such processes should be victim-centred and comply with due process and fair trial guarantees as prerequisites to closing the impunity gap and respecting the rights of victims to an effective remedy and reparations.

In June, the **G5 Sahel Joint Force Commander** adopted the **standard operating procedures on the conduct of internal investigations**, representing an important step towards ensuring accountability as it provides for internal investigations when members of the Joint Force are suspected of violations of international human rights law and/or international humanitarian law. The SOPs also require that UN Human Rights be informed when a commission of inquiry is constituted. Furthermore, the Office and the Centre for Civilians in Conflict supported the Joint Force to establish its internal Civilian Casualty and Incidents Tracking and Analysis Cell, which will enable the Joint Force to ascertain the circumstances of and responsibility for casualties and violations.

In **Nigeria, 15 human rights monitors from the National Human Rights Commission** were **deployed**, in conjunction with human rights officers from UN Human Rights, to Benue state, which is one of the states that is most affected by clashes between herders and farmers. The monitors reported 8,131 human rights violations and referred 6,002 cases to relevant authorities. As a result, **3,691 cases were positively resolved** by government agencies.

PS3 – HUMAN RIGHTS protection in PREVENTION/RESPONSE

Strategies to prevent and respond to conflict consistently integrate human rights protection.



In July, the **CEDAW Committee** adopted an emblematic decision on a **case against Bosnia and Herzegovina for conflict-related sexual violence** (CRSV). The victim was raped by a military officer, in 1995, during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in a village that was under the control of the Bosnian Serb forces. This case is of great importance as it is the first case adopted by CEDAW that addresses sexual violence during conflict and because it requires the State to recognize the plaintiff as a civilian victim of armed conflict and provide her with adequate reparations.

UN Human Rights supported the preparations for the **Security Council Open Debate on “Peace Operations and Human Rights,”** during which the High Commissioner delivered a statement stressing that peace operations are a powerful tool to promote and protect human rights, effectively highlighting human rights as a cross-cutting issue at the Security Council. She also called on States to provide strong political and financial support to these operations.

UN Human Rights reviewed the final draft of the **Ukraine National Strategy for the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflicts until 2030**, which it had been advocating for since 2018. The Strategy was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers at the end of the year and submitted to the President's Office for final endorsement.

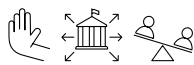
With support from UN Human Rights, the **Network of National Human Rights Institutions in West Africa** undertook its first **electoral observation missions** to Burkina Faso, Ghana and Liberia. This contributed to increased collaboration among members of the Network and a positive outcome related to the protection of human rights in the context of elections for the countries concerned.

UN Human Rights participated in meetings of the **UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Ethiopia** and deployed a surge capacity team, in December, to respond to the conflict in the **Tigray region**.

UN Human Rights supported the integration of a human rights, victim-centred approach into the **UN Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**. In addition, the Office supported the Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate (OVRA) in the mapping of services available to victims of SEA by UN entities and external parties in 13 countries. The public reports that were subsequently issued paved the way for new initiatives. In June, the Office, OVRA and UNICEF jointly conducted a technical consultation to identify ways to improve legal assistance for victims of SEA, leading to the development of a road map to enhance progress in this area. UN Human Rights also contributed to the finalization of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) [Learning Package on Protection from Sexual Misconduct for UN partner organizations](#) and the development of guidance on PSEA for Resident Coordinators. Throughout the year, the Office investigated and publicly reported on allegations of SEA against non-UN international forces operating under a UN Security Council mandate and followed up with Member States and the regional forces concerned.

PS4 – Transitional JUSTICE and ACCOUNTABILITY

Justice mechanisms, including for transitional justice, provide increased accountability for conflict-related violations.



In the **Central African Republic**, significant progress was achieved in the transitional justice process with the **adoption of Law No. 20-009**, which established the **Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission**. UN Human Rights collaborated with UNDP and experts from the International Center for Transitional Justice to help elaborate the draft law by providing technical support to relevant authorities and institutions, including the Steering Committee that was tasked with drafting the law.

In **Kenya**, in order to implement the recommendations of the report entitled **Breaking cycles of violence**, the Office developed the capacity of HRDs and members of the Survivors' Network to address instances of **gender-based violence**. This support led to the **assistance of 555 survivors** (477 women, 78 men) who accessed safe shelters and medical and psychosocial services.

Following the decision of the Government of **Tunisia** to publish the **final report of the Truth and Dignity Commission** in the Official Gazette, the Minister for Human Rights requested support from UN Human Rights to organize an information campaign in July. The campaign included key messages on the value of transitional justice, which were shared on social media platforms. The Office facilitated online discussions with CSOs regarding their role to support the Government in designing an action plan to implement the recommendations contained in the report.

UN Human Rights followed up on emblematic cases within the military justice system to enhance the protection of civilians and improve the **fight against impunity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**. In 2020, more than 20 meetings were organized with judicial authorities to discuss technical aspects of judicial cases. This included designing a proper prosecutorial strategy and developing and implementing judicial **protection measures** for the benefit of **victims and witnesses**. The Office also participated in the drafting of the Peace Accord Agreement between the Government and Forces de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri (FRPI) to ensure its alignment with international law standards, including the right to justice, truth and compensation for victims.

In **Sudan**, UN Human Rights advocated for the swift establishment of the **Transitional Justice Commission** (TJC). It provided the Ministry of Justice with technical advice to lead a participatory process to draft the **TJC Law**, including by facilitating consultations with representatives of CSOs, academia and national and international lawyers. In December, the Ministry adopted a final draft that addresses the concerns raised by civil society and incorporates the Office's recommendations on the independence and composition of the TJC.

PS5 – INFORMATION and EARLY WARNING

Human rights information and analyses are integrated into early warning and analysis systems and influence international and national policymaking, strategies and operations to prevent, mitigate or respond to emerging crises, including humanitarian crises and conflict.



UN Human Rights **Emergency Response Teams** (ERTs) made good progress in strengthening **human rights risk analysis** in support of UNCTs, in line with the Human Rights up Front (HRuF) Initiative and the prevention agenda. In 2020, the ERT in the Regional Office for **South-East Asia** was closely involved with strengthening human rights risk analysis in the CCAs for a number of countries, including Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand and Viet Nam. Through its ERT in **Southern Africa**, UN Human Rights provided human rights inputs and risk analysis to various CCAs and VNR processes in the region, with a focus on the most vulnerable groups. The Office provided human rights inputs regarding specific country situations in Madagascar, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The ERT in the Regional Office for **West Africa** played a key role in gathering and analysing information on potential human rights violations in the context of COVID-19 that informed the Office's regional reports and snapshots. The ERT also created an interactive dashboard to maintain an almost real-time overview of COVID-19-related developments in the region.

In February, during the regional round of the Oxford University moot court competition, which was held in Lebanon, UN Human Rights rolled out components of the **#Faith4Rights toolkit**, with a focus on ethnic and religious minorities and human rights. Participants, including youth and university students, discussed the **Rabat Plan of Action** and the human rights duties of religious leaders. During the discussions, the Office identified youth participants who could further engage with these initiatives.

PS6 – HUMAN RIGHTS DUE DILIGENCE POLICY

United Nations' support to national and regional security forces, law enforcement agencies and non-State actors integrates human rights and complies with the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy.



UN Human Rights continued to provide support and guidance for the implementation of the **Human Rights Due Diligence Policy** (HRDDP). Enhanced advocacy and guidance from the Office resulted in an increased application of the Policy in non-mission settings and a more consistent application in mission settings. UN Human Rights engaged with a greater number of UNCTs, notably in relation to the development of **SOPs, risk assessments and mitigation measures**, including in Bangladesh, Belarus, the Gambia, Jamaica, Jordan, Maldives, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. UNCTs in Burkina Faso and Malawi requested technical advice from the Office, which led to an improved application of the HRDDP. In Burkina Faso, for example, UN Human Rights assisted the UNCT with drafting standard operating procedures on the HRDDP and establishing a Task Force. Support was also provided for the creation of a regional HRDDP coordination structure in the Sahel region, which is planned to begin operating in 2021. In Mali, UN Human Rights conducted 68 risk assessments on MINUSMA's support to non-UN security forces and established a mechanism to follow up on the mitigation measures recommended for cases that were reviewed between October 2019 and December 2020.

UN Human Rights established an online **community of practice among HRDDP practitioners in UN peace operations** to promote and share lessons learned and good practices. Six virtual meetings were held to discuss issues such as HRDDP implementation during COVID-19, working with UNCTs in UN peace operations and HRDDP mitigation measures.