

UN Human Rights at headquarters

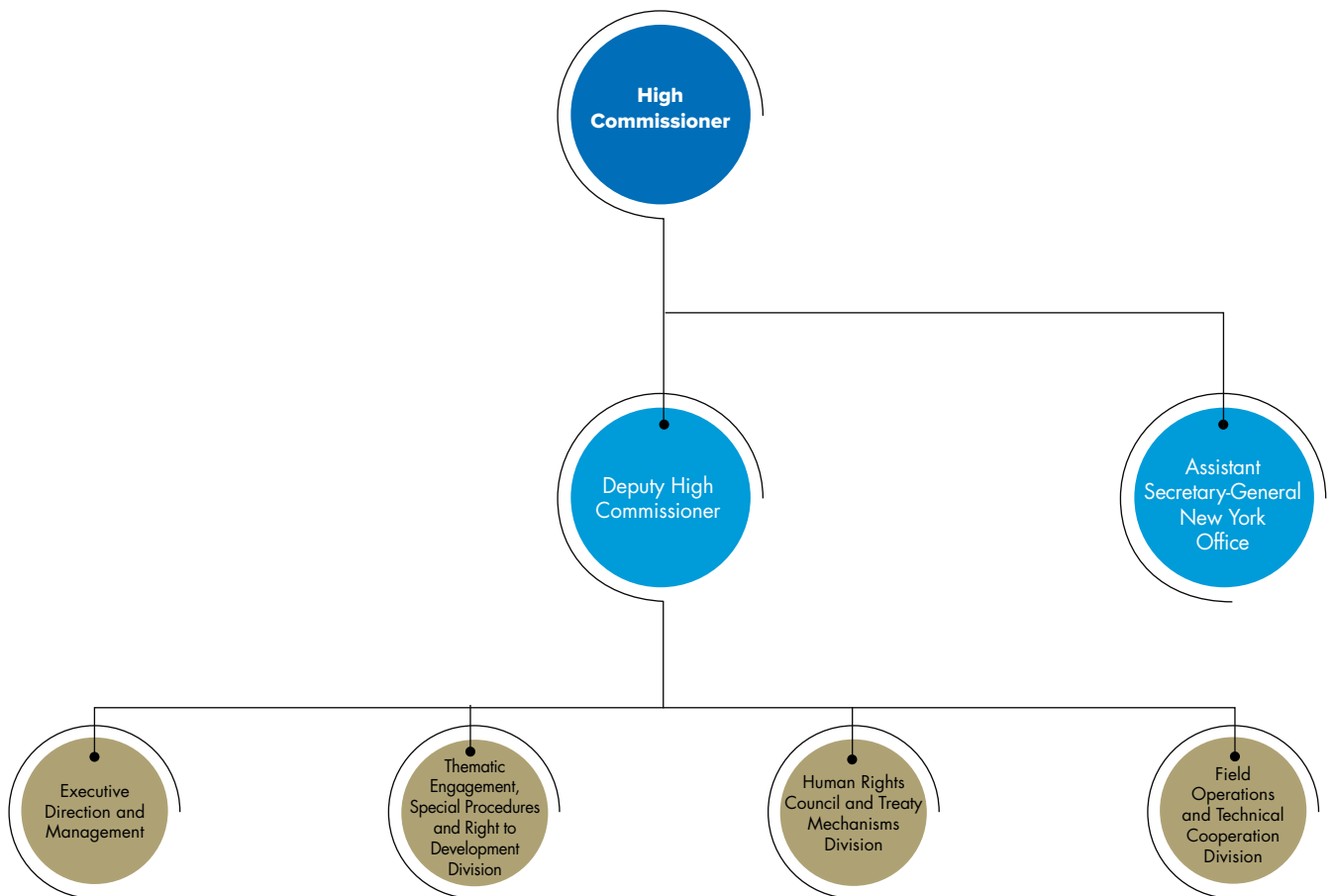


Palais Wilson, OHCHR Geneva headquarters. © OHCHR

Introduction

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) headquarters is located in Geneva and an office is maintained at the United Nations (UN) headquarters, in New York. The Geneva-based headquarters consists of three

substantive divisions and the Executive Direction and Management, which handles management, planning, coordination and outreach functions. This chapter outlines their structure, functions and key achievements in 2020.



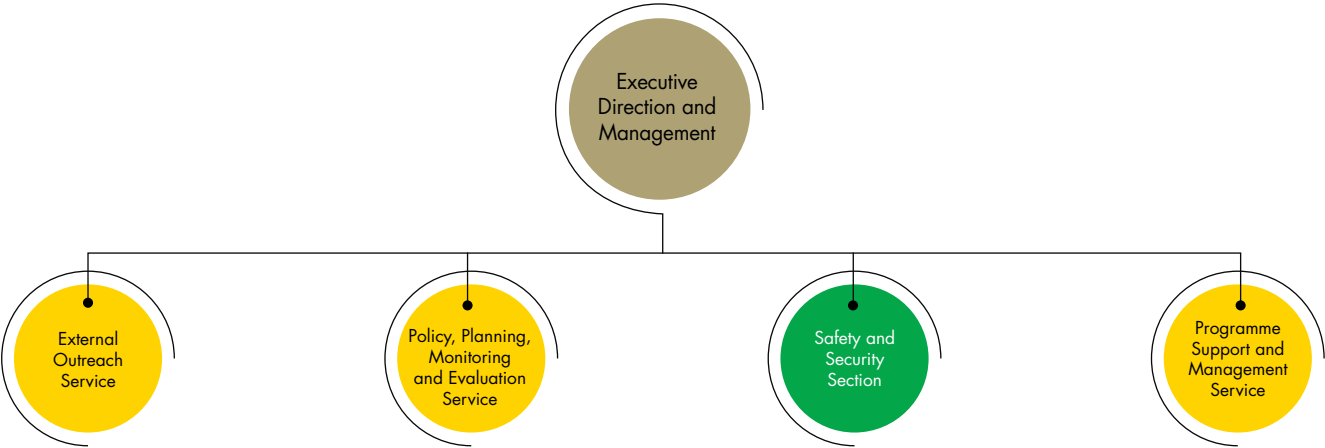
EXECUTIVE DIRECTION AND MANAGEMENT

The Executive Direction and Management (EDM) directly supports the High Commissioner, the Deputy High Commissioner and the Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) for Human Rights in their work and indirectly, the entire Office. It is composed of the Executive Office, the New York Office, the External Outreach Service, the Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Service, the Programme Support and Management Services and the Safety and Security Section.

Building a robust response to the human rights challenges created or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic was a key feature of the High Commissioner’s work in 2020. The High Commissioner continued to work towards strengthening the role of Member States as duty-bearers by proposing assistance that would enable States to build effective national human rights protection systems, including legal frameworks, institutions and practices, and promote respect for and enjoyment of human rights for all, without discrimination.

The High Commissioner, the Deputy High Commissioner and the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights engaged in dialogue with Members States, the Human Rights Council (HRC) and the General Assembly and with numerous other stakeholders, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. These efforts were guided by the OHCHR Management Plan (OMP), which provides the road map for the work of the organization until 2021 and which will be extended until 2023 to consolidate results and re-calibrate OHCHR’s focus in response to the human rights impacts of COVID-19 and to include other recent developments.

Member States, civil society, national human rights institutions (NHRIs), regional organizations and many other partners benefited from the High Commissioner’s leadership and advocacy role in addressing issues of mutual interest and concern. These same actors contributed to the High Commissioner’s analysis of activities that can bring about positive change.



Executive Office

The Executive Office (EO) supports the High Commissioner and the Deputy High Commissioner in their daily work, including by assisting with their strategic leadership and management activities and interactions with partners. It also ensures coordination between divisions of the Office and the integration of the Office's priorities, including a gender perspective, into submitted inputs.

The Executive Office is the principal focal point for overall coordination with the UN system and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG), in close collaboration with the New York Office. It also facilitates the processing of internal and external communications and correspondence.

The EO provides guidance to all parts of OHCHR headquarters and field operations on key legal issues, for the preparation of meetings with partners and in relation to the speeches and reports of the Secretary-General or the High Commissioner to UN intergovernmental bodies.

In 2020, the EO supported the High Commissioner and the Deputy High Commissioner in their roles as coordinators of OHCHR's response to COVID-19, helping them to develop, lead and implement an office-wide coherent strategy that responded to the human rights challenges that were created or exacerbated by the pandemic. These additional functions included ensuring OHCHR's participation in frequent senior-level COVID-19 inter-agency meetings in the humanitarian, development and peace and security fields.

Beyond COVID-19-related work, the EO continued to serve as the Office's focal point for the implementation of the UN

Human Rights Screening Policy, leading to a substantial increase in its workload during the reporting period.

The legal policy team in the EO provided advice to the High Commissioner on existing and emerging issues and identified areas where the High Commissioner's legal advocacy could have an impact. In 2020, the submission of formal amicus curiae briefs by the High Commissioner, at the national level, to the Supreme Court of India and, at the regional level, to the Inter-American Court on Human Rights, was a key achievement.

Advice was extended to advance the processes to finalize host country agreements with seven States and a cooperation agreement with a regional organization. The COVID-19 pandemic raised numerous novel legal issues requiring the provision of advice to the High Commissioner, the Deputy High Commissioner and the Office as a whole.

Under the leadership of the High Commissioner and the Deputy, the Executive Office also supported efforts to strengthen the Office's response to discrimination issues, both internally and externally.

New York Office

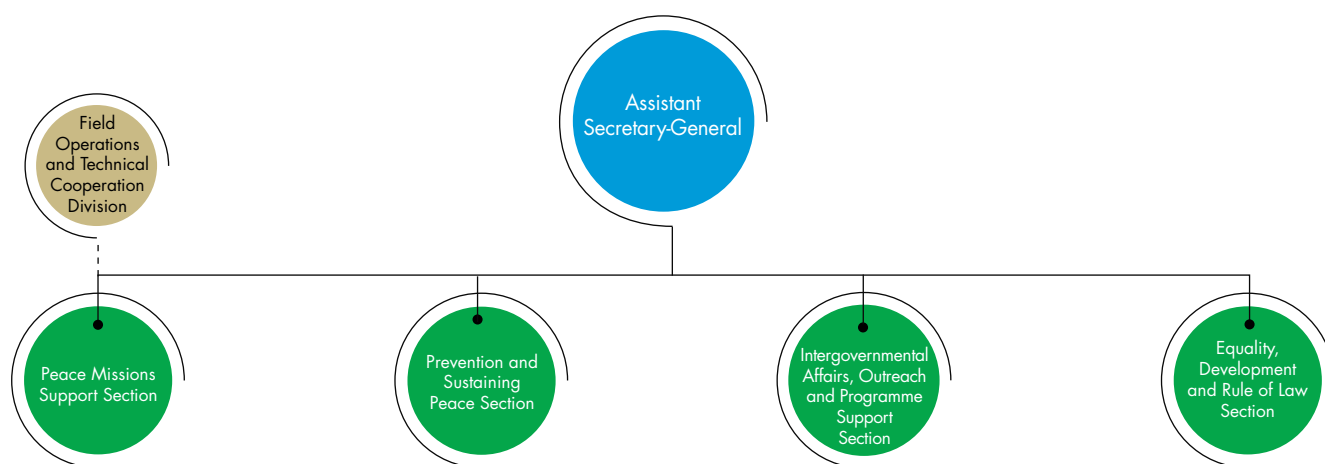
OHCHR's New York Office (NYO) is headed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights. The principal objective of the NYO is to integrate human rights norms and standards into policies, discussions and decisions made in inter-governmental, interdepartmental and inter-agency bodies at UN Headquarters in New York, including by engaging with Member States, intergovernmental bodies, UN system entities, civil society organizations, academic institutions and the media. Under the leadership of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, the NYO is responsible for the reprisals mandate, which seeks to strengthen the UN's response to intimidation and reprisals against those cooperating with the UN on human rights matters. The NYO is composed of four substantive sections:

The **Intergovernmental Affairs, Outreach and Programme Support Section** leads engagement with the General Assembly and other intergovernmental bodies, media correspondents, civil society organizations and academic institutions in New York.

The **Equality, Development and Rule of Law Section** covers all special groups and issues relating to equality and non-discrimination, the rule of law, counter-terrorism, justice, reprisals and human rights and development issues.

The **Prevention and Sustaining Peace Section** works to mainstream human rights into wider UN efforts to prevent conflict and crisis and promote sustainable peace.

The **Peace Missions Support Section** works to support the integration of human rights into UN peace operations through support for planning and the operations of human rights components of peace missions. It has a dual reporting line to the Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division at headquarters.



The Secretary-General's Call to Action: Human rights at the centre of the United Nations

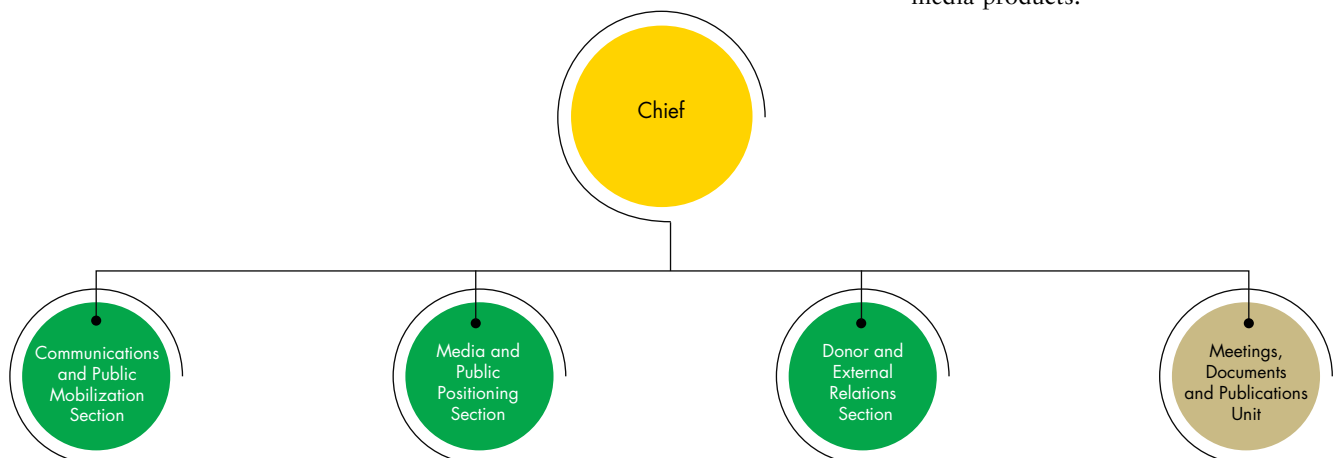
The Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights has been a key priority for the Office, which is co-leading the implementation of the initiative with the EOSG. OHCHR played a central role in launching strategic initiatives across all seven thematic areas, which are backed by an extensive institutional architecture that includes 35 UN entities. The UN's expertise and operational reach will ensure that the Call to Action achieves its transformative potential and facilitates the realization of practical results for people around the world. This necessitates a strengthening of the UN leadership on human rights across the system, particularly at the country level. To this end, ASG Brands Kehriss and Volker Türk, the ASG for Strategic Coordination, worked together to spearhead regional dialogues with Resident Coordinators (RCs) in order to further advance the objectives of the Call to Action. Efforts to generate UN system-wide engagement were accompanied by outreach to Member States and civil society to raise awareness about the Call to Action and to ensure that it will be implemented in a collective manner and will bring about actual human rights improvements with real impact for people.

External Outreach Service

The External Outreach Service (EOS) leads OHCHR's external relations efforts. It consists of four sections that work in synergy to maximize its impact:

The Communications and Public Mobilization Section develops strategies for public information outreach to a broad constituency about OHCHR, human rights and the work of the UN human rights programme. It mobilizes a variety of audiences through engagement and partnerships. The Section develops communication campaigns and produces branded print, audiovisual and online materials. It engages with the public through social media and with UN partners to mainstream human rights into outreach efforts.

The Media and Public Positioning Section engages with the media and promotes the messaging of the High Commissioner and the Office through news releases, press briefings, interviews and other media products and activities as well as speeches and video statements. It provides advice to the special procedures and the human rights treaty bodies and assists with the editing and distribution of their numerous media products.



The Donor and External Relations Section is responsible for mobilizing financial resources to enable OHCHR to implement its programme of work, as outlined in the OMP 2018-2021. It does this by building robust relationships with existing donors and exploring funding opportunities with potential donors. The Section mobilizes funds, negotiates and manages a large number of contribution agreements and organizes meetings, briefings and consultations with donors. It serves as an entry point for Member States and others seeking information on OHCHR's work, priorities and funding needs.

The Meetings, Documents and Publications Unit coordinates OHCHR's annual programme of approximately 220 meetings. It plans, verifies and submits all OHCHR official documents for processing. The Unit manages the OHCHR publications programme and develops policies for the planning, quality assurance, distribution and impact assessment of publications. It provides policy advice and operational support to the Office's publications oversight body, the Publications Committee. It oversees the production of printed and electronic publications in all official UN languages and disseminates print materials to diverse target audiences worldwide.

Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Service

The Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Service (PPMES) takes the lead in translating the High Commissioner's strategic vision into concrete priorities and operational programmes that focus on the achievement of results. The Service works to instil a culture of results-based planning, programming and budgeting across OHCHR. It ensures that programme implementation and results are effectively monitored and evaluated, that programme risks are managed and that good practices and lessons learned are incorporated into policy development, programme design and implementation. Through ongoing analysis of OHCHR's organizational environment, PPMES helps to identify substantive or managerial gaps in OHCHR's policies, results-based programming, organizational effectiveness and change management and internal communications. It then proposes actions to address those gaps.

In 2020, PPMES served as the Chair and Secretariat of the OHCHR Crisis Response Team to handle operational matters related to the COVID-19 response. The pandemic required the PPMES to identify its implications for OHCHR's results and programme implementation. Throughout the year, PPMES closely followed the evolving situation and prepared comprehensive and substantive programmatic analyses in the context of the COVID-19 reprogramming.

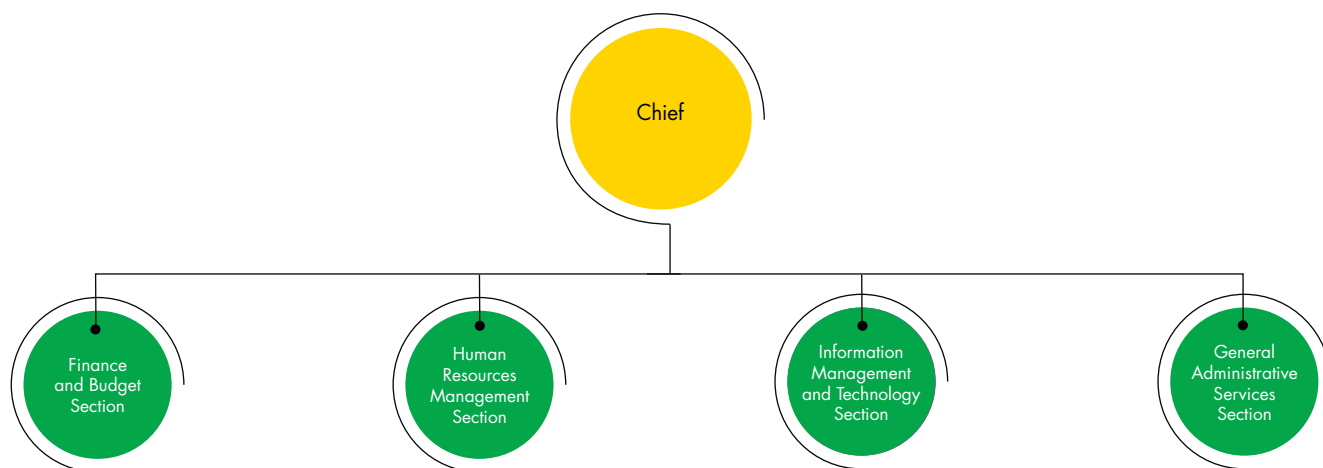
Programme Support and Management Services

Programme Support and Management Services (PSMS) provides administrative support within the Office, including budget and financial management, recruitment and human resources management, procurement, asset management and general logistical support, travel services, information technology and staff development. PSMS consists of the Finance and Budget Section, the General Administrative Services Section, the Human Resources Management Section and the Information Management and Technology Section. COVID-19 did not significantly impact PSMS programmes,

with the exception of travel, which was essentially suspended, with only a few exceptions. During the unprecedented pandemic experience, PSMS streamlined its work and by operating remotely, it was able to provide consistent, “business as usual” support to the Office. More specifically, PSMS ensured that all staff received their salaries and that field presences and headquarters divisions received financial and logistical support on a timely basis to guarantee the continuity of OHCHR operations. Staff worldwide were given access to an online psychologist and could participate in online consultations arranged by human resources.

Safety and Security Section

The Safety and Security Section (SSS) coordinates the security of OHCHR operations worldwide, in accordance with UN security risk management policies and in coordination with host governments and the UN Department of Safety and Security. It supports the international human rights mechanisms, including those mandated by the Human Rights Council. It participates in UN security policymaking forums to ensure that human rights are mainstreamed into staff security policies and the procedures of UN entities. At the operational level, the Section conducts security risk assessments and provides technical supervision and guidance on security management and security clearance. It also provides travel advisories to field presences.



FIELD OPERATIONS AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION DIVISION

The Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division (FOTCD) is composed of the Office of the Director and three geographic branches, which are divided into five sections, namely, Africa I (East and Southern Africa), Africa II (West and Central Africa), Asia-Pacific, the Middle East and North Africa, the Americas and Europe and Central Asia. It also includes three specialized support sections, namely, the National Institutions and Regional Mechanisms Section, the Emergency Response Section and the Peace Missions Support Section. These

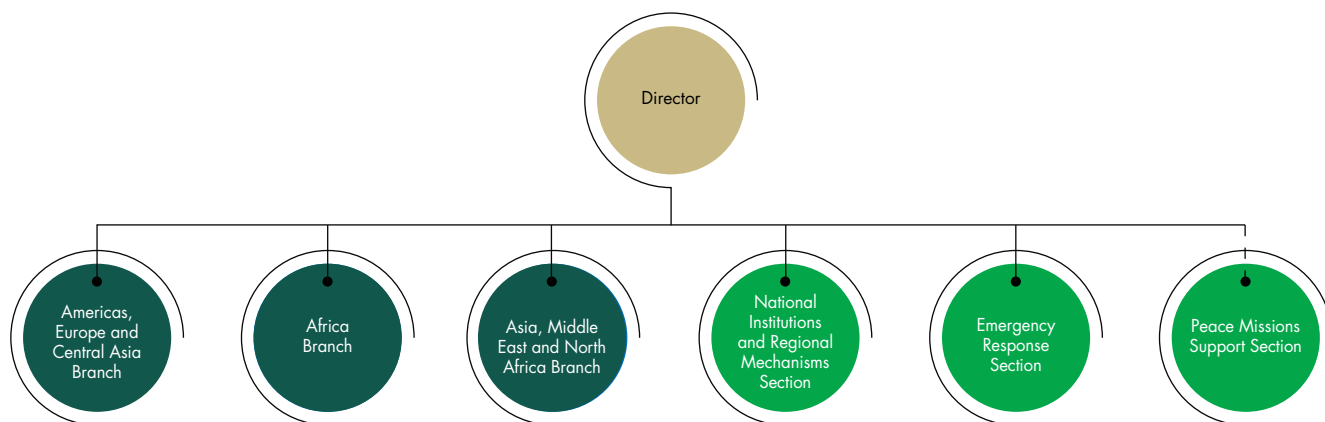
geographic branches and sections are responsible for the day-to-day work of OHCHR in the field, including following human rights developments at the national and regional levels, interacting with governments, NHRIs, civil society actors and the UN system, and engaging with the international human rights mechanisms.

FOTCD is based at OHCHR headquarters in Geneva and the Peace Missions Support Section is located in the New York Office. FOTCD offers substantive, programmatic, budgetary and human resource support and strategic oversight to all OHCHR field presences.

The Division provides direction, management and support to the work and engagement of OHCHR in the field at national, regional and international levels. This is achieved through 92 human rights presences in the field that undertake monitoring, analysis and reporting on human rights developments, early warning and prevention activities, provide advisory services and technical

cooperation, deploy human rights capacity to the Resident Coordinators and the UN Country Teams (UNCTs) under the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) Framework and manage the deployment of monitoring, fact-finding and emergency response missions. In addition, OHCHR contributes to broader UN efforts on human rights, peace and security and development (the three United Nations pillars), including through the integration of human rights across and into all pillars.

FOTCD is responsible for the implementation of the High Commissioner's mandate and supports the implementation of the specific mandates of the HRC and the General Assembly in relation to public reporting on human rights issues in countries and disputed territories. This includes 10 special procedures country



mandates of the HRC and the establishment of and support to international commissions of inquiry, fact-finding missions and investigations mandated by the Council. In cooperation with other parts of UN Human Rights, FOTCD contributes to strengthening the understanding of national authorities and civil society actors about international human rights standards and their capacities to translate these standards into national-level legislation, regulations and policies. The ultimate objective of this work is to ensure that duty-bearers are better equipped to address chronic and emerging human rights issues and that rights-holders are better protected and empowered. FOTCD fulfils its consultation and cooperation role with national, regional and international partners, including government actors, NHRIs, civil society, regional organizations and the United Nations system.

The Emergency Response Section coordinates OHCHR's engagement in and effective response to ongoing or emerging crises and it ensures, from a prevention perspective, that potential emergency situations are addressed through the deployment of fact-finding, monitoring or emergency response missions, the provision of early warning and information management and the integration of human rights into humanitarian action. This includes the deployment of human rights teams in the context of complex emergencies or natural disasters or for the purpose of preventive advocacy and action. Through its Investigation Support Unit, the Section is also responsible for the operationalization of activities mandated by UN intergovernmental bodies (mainly the HRC), such as the establishment of and support to commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions. Moreover, the Section leads the

provision of early warning information management and analyses to various UN processes, including the UNOCC and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) on Early Warning, Early Action and Readiness.

The Peace Missions Support Section, located in the New York Office, provides strategic and operational support and guidance to the human rights components of UN peacekeeping and special political missions and supports the implementation of Security Council mandates for UN peace operations, in close coordination with the FOTCD geographic branches. The Peace Missions Support Section ensures that the UN peace and security agenda integrates human rights into activities undertaken at the political, strategic and operational levels.

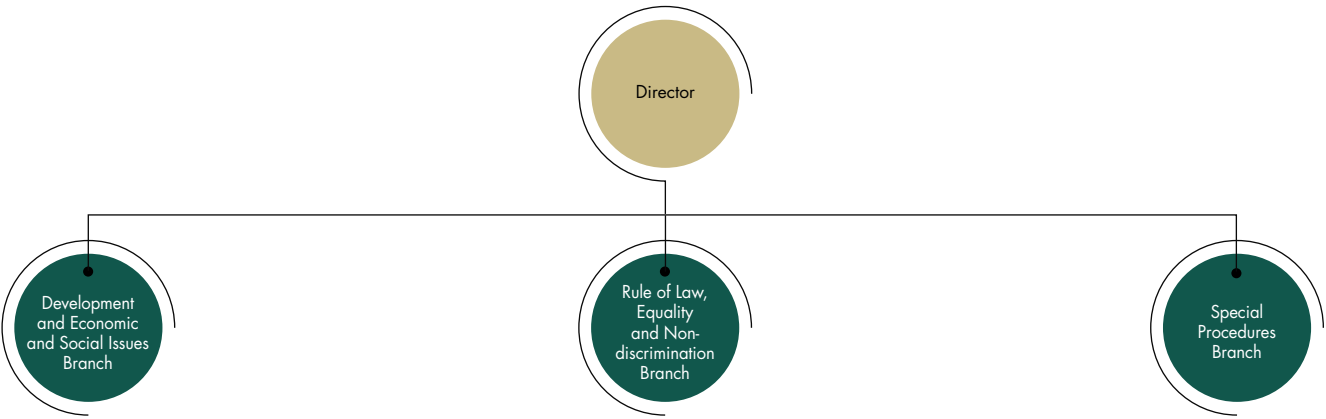
The National Institutions and Regional Mechanisms Section provides advice and support to the establishment and strengthening of NHRIs, in compliance with the Paris Principles, and serves as the Secretariat for the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI). The Section seeks to strengthen cooperation and engagement between regional and international human rights mechanisms.

The Division also administers the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights and acts as the Secretariat of its Board of Trustees.

THEMATIC ENGAGEMENT, SPECIAL PROCEDURES AND RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

The Thematic Engagement, Special Procedures and Right to Development Division (TESPRDD) is composed of the Office of the Director, the Development and Economic and Social Issues Branch, the Rule of Law, Equality and Non-Discrimination Branch and the Special Procedures Branch. The Division’s main functions include:

- Supporting the High Commissioner’s global leadership role in advocacy on thematic human rights issues in terms of research, advice, advocacy and capacity-development;
- Developing methodologies and policies relating to human rights work, namely, translating international human rights law and principles into practical methods, approaches, standards, procedures and tools for the human rights work that is carried out by OHCHR and other UN, international and national actors;
- Promoting the integration of human rights into the policy, management and operational work of the UN to strengthen its normative and operational linkages. This is primarily undertaken through OHCHR’s work with the UNSDG, through participation in inter-agency groups, during meetings and through bilateral cooperation with UN agencies, programmes and the UNCTs. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda provide the framework for this work;
- Contributing to increased knowledge and enhanced understanding of human rights through education and training, the development of materials, policies, methodologies and programmes and the provision of training, advice and coordination under the Plan of Action for the Fourth Phase (2020-2024) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education;
- Supporting the international human rights mechanisms, in particular the special procedures, and providing substantive input and organizational assistance to the HRC; and
- Taking the lead with respect to ensuring that a gender perspective is effectively integrated into all OHCHR policies, programmes and processes and contributing to enhanced staff skills in this regard.



The work of the **Development and Economic and Social Issues Branch** and of the **Rule of Law, Equality and Non-Discrimination Branch** includes: conducting thematic research and contributing to policy development and the mainstreaming of human rights across the work of the UN; producing tools and learning packages and providing expertise on human rights themes to many stakeholders, as mandated by the HRC, the General Assembly, ECOSOC and specified in internationally agreed development goals; and leading efforts to advance the right to development, in accordance with the High Commissioner's mandate to promote and protect the realization of the right to development and to enhance support from relevant bodies of the UN system for this purpose. The two branches also undertake human rights research and advocacy work and contribute to national-level implementation, including through advisory services, legal and policy reviews and capacity-development, which is often undertaken by OHCHR field presences.

The **Special Procedures Branch** supports the special procedures system and its thematic mandates. The special procedures system is comprised of 55 mandates (44 thematic and 11 country mandates) with 79 mandate holders, 24 of whom were newly appointed in 2020. The special procedures contribute to the development of international human rights law; undertake thematic studies; conduct country visits; send communications to States and other actors regarding human rights cases and issues; provide advisory services; and engage in awareness-raising activities. The Branch supports these mandates in the abovementioned functional areas; on policy issues; and by adopting efficiency measures that streamline work processes and strengthen the special procedures system. This is primarily achieved through cooperation between human rights systems at the international, regional and national level and the UN system and other stakeholders. The Special Procedures Branch assists the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures and supports the engagement of special procedures with regional mechanisms, such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

Special procedures mandate holders (as of 31 December 2020)

MANDATE	ESTABLISHED	MANDATE HOLDER(S)
Country-specific mandates		
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus	2012	Ms. Anaïs Marin (France) since November 2018
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia	1993	Ms. Rhona Smith (United Kingdom) since May 2015
Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Central African Republic	2013	Mr. Yao Agbetse (Togo) since November 2019
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	2004	Mr. Tomás Ojea Quintana (Argentina) since August 2016
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea	2012	Mr. Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker (Sudan) since November 2020
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran	2011	Mr. Javaid Rehman (Pakistan) since August 2018
Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Mali	2013	Mr. Alioune Tine (Senegal) since May 2018
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar	1992	Mr. Thomas H. Andrews (United States of America) since May 2020
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967	1993	Mr. Michael Lynk (Canada) since May 2016
Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia	1993	Ms. Isha Dyfan (Sierra Leone) since May 2020
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic	2011	Mr. Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro (Brazil) will start once the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry ends

Thematic mandates

Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent	2002	Mr. Ahmed Reid (Jamaica) since November 2015 Ms. Dominique Day (United States of America) since November 2018 Mr. Michal Balcerzak (Poland) since December 2014 Mr. Ricardo A. Sunga III (Philippines) since December 2014 Mr. Sabelo Gumedze (South Africa) since August 2014
Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism	2015	Ms. Ikponwosa Ero (Nigeria) since August 2015 Mr. Seong-Phil Hong (Republic of Korea) since August 2014 Ms. Miriam Estrada-Castillo (Ecuador) since November 2020
Working Group on Arbitrary Detention	1991	Mr. Mumba Malila (Zambia) since November 2020 Ms. Leigh Toomey (Australia) since August 2015 Ms. Elina Steinerte (Latvia) since November 2016
Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises	2011	Mr. Githu Muigai (Kenya) since August 2018 Mr. Surya Deva (India) since May 2016 Ms. Elzbieta Karska (Poland) since August 2018 Ms. Anita Ramasastry (United States of America) since August 2016 Mr. Dante Pesce (Chile) since May 2015
Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights	2009	Ms. Karima Bennouna (United States of America) since November 2015
Special Rapporteur on the right to development	2016	Mr. Saad Alfaragi (Egypt) since April 2017
Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities	2014	Mr. Gerard Quinn (Ireland) since November 2020
Special Rapporteur on the right to education	1998	Ms. Koumbou Boly Barry (Burkina Faso) since August 2016 Mr. Luciano Hazan (Argentina) since May 2017 Mr. Bernard Duhaime (Canada) since December 2014
Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances	1980	Mr. Henrikas Mickevicius (Lithuania) since September 2015 Ms. Aua Balde (Guinea-Bissau) since November 2020 Mr. Tae-Ung Baik (Republic of Korea) since August 2015
Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment	2012	Mr. David R. Boyd (Canada) since August 2018
Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions	1982	Ms. Agnès Callamard (France) since August 2016

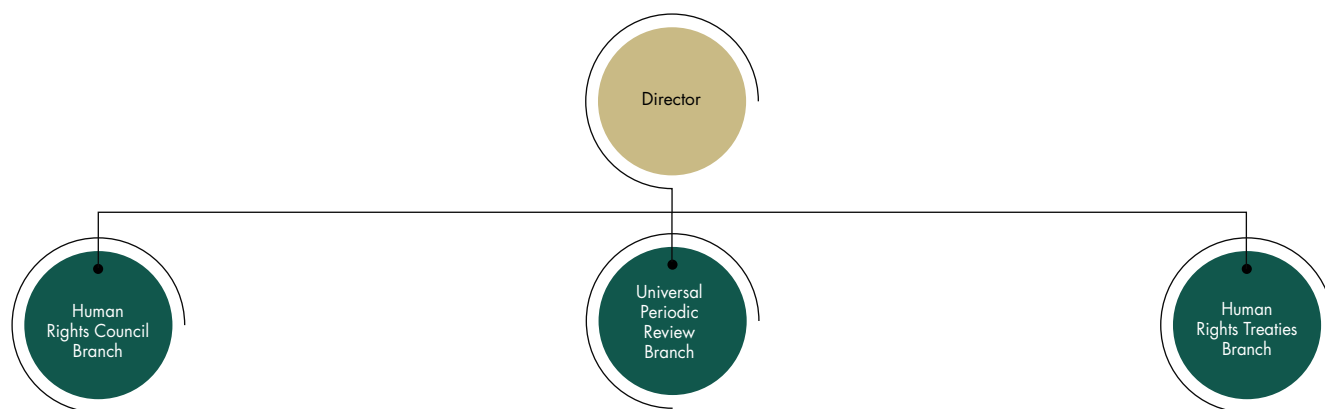
Special Rapporteur on the right to food	2000	Mr. Michael Fakhri (Lebanon) since May 2020
Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights	2000	Ms. Yuefen Li (China) since May 2020
Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression	1993	Ms. Irene Khan (Bangladesh) since August 2020
Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association	2010	Mr. Clement Nyaletsossi Voule (Togo) since May 2018
Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes	1995	Mr. Marcos A. Orellana (Chile) since August 2020
Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health	2002	Ms. Tlaleng Mofokeng (South Africa) since August 2020
Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context	2000	Mr. Balakrishnan Rajagopal (United States of America) since May 2020
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders	2000	Ms. Mary Lawlor (Ireland) since May 2020
Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers	1994	Mr. Diego García-Sayán (Peru) since December 2016
Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples	2001	Mr. José Francisco Calí Tzay (Guatemala) since May 2020
Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons	2004	Ms. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary (Philippines) since November 2016
Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order	2011	Mr. Livingstone Sewanyana (Uganda) since May 2018
Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity	2005	Mr. Obiora C. Okafor (Nigeria) since August 2017
Special Rapporteur on the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members	2017	Ms. Alice Cruz (Portugal) since November 2017
		Ms. Jelena Aparac (Croatia) since May 2018
		Ms. Lilian Bobea (Dominican Republic) since May 2018
		Mr. Chris Kwaja (Nigeria) since May 2018
		Ms. Sorcha Macleod (United Kingdom) since August 2018
		Mr. Ravindran Daniel (India) since November 2020
Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants	1999	Mr. Felipe González Morales (Chile) since August 2017
Special Rapporteur on minority issues	2005	Mr. Fernand de Varennes (Canada) since August 2017
Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination	2005	

Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons	2013	Ms. Claudia Mahler (Austria) since May 2020
Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights	1998	Mr. Olivier de Schutter (Belgium) since May 2020
Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy	2015	Mr. Joseph Cannataci (Malta) since August 2015
Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism , racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance	1993	Ms. E. Tendayi Achiume (Zambia) since November 2017
Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief	1986	Mr. Ahmed Shaheed (Maldives) since November 2016
Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children , including child prostitution, child pornography and other child sexual abuse material	1990	Ms. Mama Fatima Singhatheh (Gambia) since May 2020
Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity	2016	Mr. Victor Madrigal-Borloz (Costa Rica) since January 2018
Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery , including its causes and consequences	2007	Mr. Tomoya Obokata (Japan) since May 2020
Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism	2005	Ms. Fionnuala Ni Aoláin (Ireland) since August 2017
Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment	1985	Mr. Nils Melzer (Switzerland) since November 2016
Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children	2004	Ms. Siobhán Mullally (Ireland) since August 2020
Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth , justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence	2011	Mr. Fabian Salvioli (Argentina) since May 2018
Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights	2014	Ms. Alena Douhan (Belarus) since March 2020
Special Rapporteur on violence against women , its causes and consequences	1994	Ms. Dubravka Šimonovic (Croatia) since August 2015
Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation	2008	Mr. Pedro Arrojo-Agudo (Spain) since November 2020
		Ms. Dorothy Estrada-Tanck (Mexico) since November 2020
		Ms. Elizabeth Broderick (Australia) since November 2017
		Ms. Melissa Upreti (Nepal) since November 2017
		Ms. Meskerem Techane (Ethiopia) since November 2017
		Ms. Ivana Radacic (Croatia) since November 2017
Working Group on discrimination against women and girls	2010	

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL AND TREATY MECHANISMS DIVISION

The Human Rights Council and Treaty Mechanisms Division (CTMD) consists of the Office of the Director, the Human Rights Council Branch, the Human Rights Treaties Branch and the Universal Periodic Review Branch. The Division has a core mandate to support the HRC and its subsidiary mechanisms, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the human rights treaty bodies. It is therefore well placed within OHCHR to ensure that the significant normative value of the international human rights mechanisms is matched by committed follow-up to the implementation of their recommendations.

The **Human Rights Council Branch** supports the Human Rights Council, an intergovernmental body composed of 47 Member States that are elected by the General Assembly for a three-year period. Established by the General Assembly, the body is responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe. In 2020, the HRC was the last UN intergovernmental body to suspend its in-person activities and the first to resume them in the context of COVID-19. By holding three regular sessions with new working modalities that were supported by digital innovations, the Council fully implemented its programme of work. In addition, the Council adopted a President's statement on the human rights implications of the COVID-19 crisis and held two urgent debates on racially inspired human rights violations, systemic racism, police brutality and violence against peaceful protestors and on the situation of human rights in Belarus.



Highlights of the Human Rights Council in 2020

Despite the many obstacles posed by COVID-19, and against all odds, the Human Rights Council managed to hold its three scheduled regular sessions and two of its Universal Periodic Review Working Group sessions, addressing a long list of topics that required its attention in 2020. Through its work, it brought into focus the multiple human rights dimensions of the pandemic. As noted by the Council President for 2020, Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger (Austria), the HRC “acted like a magnifying glass for pre-existing human rights issues – in particular in the case of vulnerable and marginalized groups of the population.”

In the lockdown months that followed the suspension of its forty-third regular session on 13 March, the Council found innovative ways to deliver its mandate. In doing so, the 47-member body, supported by a team of dedicated staff at OHCHR, demonstrated great flexibility and resilience that was underscored by a firm belief that remaining silent was not an option.

In May, the Council conducted its first virtual informal conversations on human rights issues stemming from the COVID-19 crisis. The first was with the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the second was with special procedures mandate holders. On 29 May, the Council reached its first decision by silent procedure to address the human rights implications of the pandemic.

As the last organization in Geneva to go into lockdown and the first to take up its work when it resumed its forty-third session in June, the Council employed a series of creative and innovative methods to

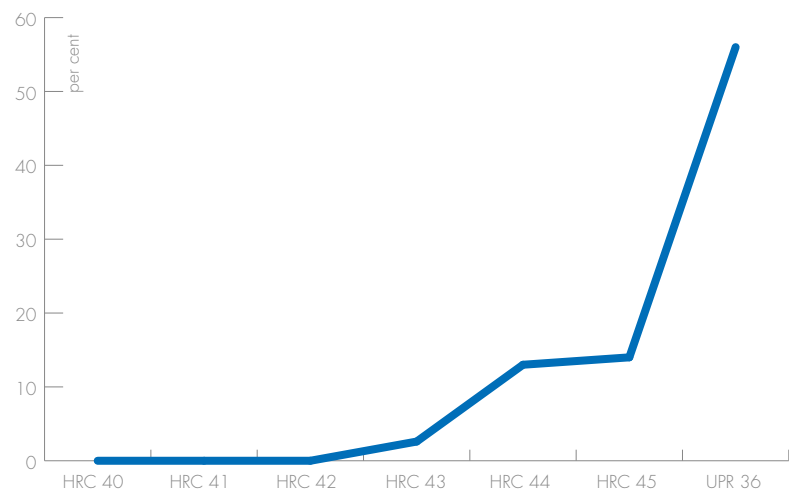
ensure the safe and efficient engagement of participants. In-person and virtual interventions from State representatives and a wide array of civil society actors were managed by Office staff who cultivated new skills to ensure that constructive discussions could take place.

With stricter COVID-19 measures applied as the year progressed, more Council participants were required to deliver their statements virtually. OHCHR staff re-adjusted the Council’s working methods, resulting in 1,386 video messages and live video conference calls managed

over the course of the year. Thanks to the ingenuity and support of dedicated staff members from the Office and UNOG, and with the backing of the Council Bureau, the HRC was able to have a successful year.

Since the HRC meetings began in 2006, video interventions were only permitted as an exception. With COVID-19 restrictions, such interventions became the norm in 2020, although it was made clear that they were permitted exclusively during the pandemic. Eventually, this format overtook the delivery of in-person interventions, as illustrated by this graph.

Percentage of video interventions by HRC/UPR sessions



The **Universal Periodic Review Branch** supports the Human Rights Council's UPR process. The third cycle places a greater focus on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and human rights protection at the country level through the creation of National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up (NMRFs) and comprehensive national human rights action plans or implementation plans, as recommended in the Secretary-General's report on strengthening UN action in the field of human rights (A/72/351) and HRC resolution 36/29. Following the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights, OHCHR issued a [UPR Practical Guidance](#), in September, to facilitate the engagement of UN Heads at the national level and the integration of accepted recommendations into UNSDCFs.

In 2020, OHCHR provided support to the thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth UPR Working Group sessions and to the UPR segments of the forty-third, forty-fourth and forty-fifth HRC plenary sessions. The Office prepared 112 documents and published 28 national reports and 26 addendum reports. Strong cooperation from stakeholders was evidenced through 692 written contributions and 232 interventions that were delivered during the adoption of the UPR outcomes at the HRC plenary sessions. The thirty-sixth UPR Working Group session, held in November, was the first hybrid in-person and virtual session in the history of the UPR, undertaken in the context of COVID-19 restrictions. Nevertheless, participation was high, with a total of 250 delegates from capitals, including a Vice-President and eight ministers, who interacted with an average of 100 States.

The **Human Rights Treaties Branch** supports the 10 human rights treaty bodies, which are independent committees that were established under the nine international human rights treaties and their optional protocols. The treaty bodies monitor the implementation of the international human rights treaties through the examination of reports that are periodically submitted by States Parties to them or through in situ visits. The treaty bodies collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders, including Member States, CSOs and NHRIs. They also issue recommendations to States Parties, encourage priority follow-up on certain matters and adopt general comments/recommendations on thematic or procedural issues.

In 2020, the Branch facilitated the review of 27 State Party reports and the Committee on Enforced Disappearances conducted one review under its additional review procedure (online). The Committee on the Rights of the Child held an extraordinary session in Samoa, representing the first treaty body session to be held outside Geneva or New York. The treaty bodies received a total of 147 State Party reports, 106 documents from CSOs and six submissions from NHRIs. A total of 172 treaty body experts received support during 21 sessions, over 51 weeks. The treaty bodies adopted 39 concluding observations, prepared 84 lists of issues and 58 lists of issues prior to reporting.

The Branch also supported the adoption of views and decisions on 239 individual communications that were submitted to the treaty bodies in relation to alleged human rights violations. It facilitated the registration of 317 new individual complaints and 192 urgent actions.

Furthermore, in 2020, the Treaty Body Capacity-Building Programme, established by General Assembly resolution 68/268 to support States Parties in building their capacity to implement their treaty obligations, organized 125 capacity-building activities, worldwide, for 3,821 participants (1,274 women, 2,547 men). Due to COVID-19 restrictions, 68 of these activities were carried out remotely, either online or in a hybrid format.

The Division administers the following six Trust Funds:

- the Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to Support the Participation of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the work of the Human Rights Council;
- the Voluntary Fund for Participation in the Universal Periodic Review;
- the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance for the Implementation of the Universal Periodic Review;
- the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT);
- the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery (UNVTFCFS); and
- the Special Fund of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Detailed information on the Trust Funds is presented in the chapter on Funds Administered by UN Human Rights on pp. 128-147.

Treaty bodies response to COVID-19

Since the early days of the pandemic, the human rights treaty bodies have urged global leaders to ensure that human rights are respected in all government measures that are implemented to tackle the public health threat posed by COVID-19.

In June, the Chairs of the treaty bodies established an intercommittee working group on COVID-19 to support discussions between treaty body experts, clarify aspects of treaty law as they relate to COVID-19 responses and enhance treaty body guidance in the context of the pandemic. This resulted in the publication of two major tools, namely, a compilation with guidance notes, advice, statements and press releases issued by the treaty bodies and a toolkit, which translates treaty law into an operational contribution to facilitate the application of a human rights-based approach to the responses of the UN and States to COVID-19.



TOOLKIT WITH LEGAL ADVICE

A toolkit was created and disseminated on COVID-19-related jurisprudence issued by the treaty bodies, which provides a practical means to strengthen human rights-based responses to COVID-19.



COMPILATION WITH TARGETED GUIDANCE

The treaty bodies issued specific guidance and recommendations to States Parties on human rights-based responses to the pandemic and UN Human Rights created a public compilation of these materials that includes:

3 guidance notes on the human rights of women and girls, migrants and on enforced disappearances

2 advices from the SPT on quarantine and the deprivation of liberty

8 statements on the rights of women, children and persons with disabilities; economic, social and cultural rights (ESCRs) and civil and political rights; elimination of racial discrimination; and risks of torture and ill-treatment

5 key press releases on international solidarity, the application of a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to COVID-19 responses, the rights of migrants and women and NPMs

1 web story on the lives of persons with disabilities

The toolkit is a work in progress, as human rights challenges continually change in form and intensity.

As of the end of the year, the treaty body intercommittee working group on COVID-19 had developed a series of eight subregional webinars, which were prepared with support from the regional field presences, to address the human rights challenges that are linked to the right to health and mental health in the context of COVID-19. Special focus will be placed on the mental health of vulnerable groups. The webinars will be delivered in 2021.

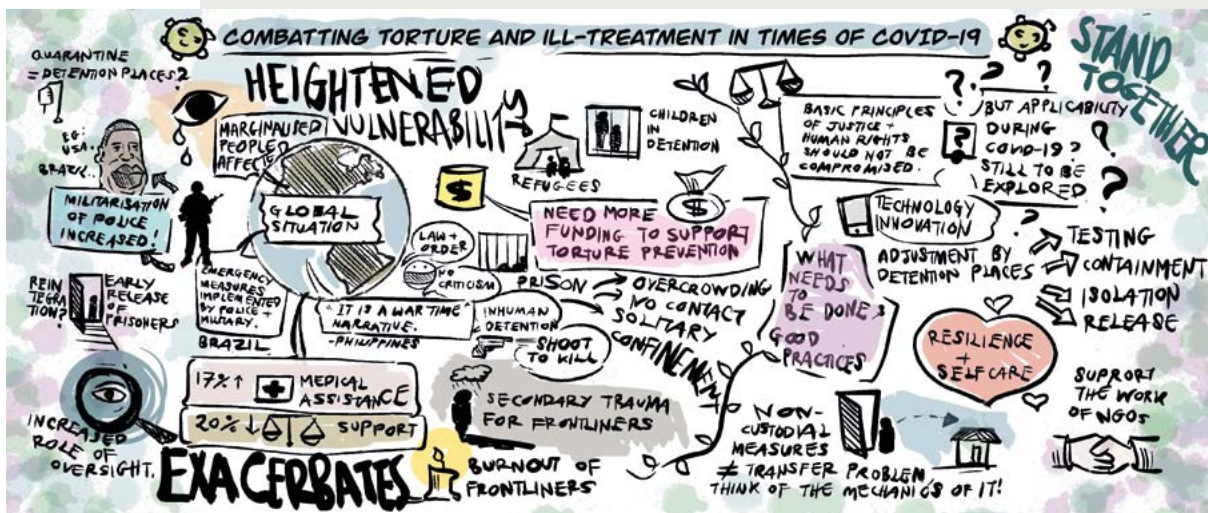
Combating torture and ill-treatment in times of COVID-19

On the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, UN Human Rights and the Association for the Prevention of Torture organized an informative webinar on the impacts of COVID-19 on torture and ill-treatment. The webinar featured the participation of members of the UN's anti-torture mechanisms, namely, CAT, SPT, the UNVFT as well as the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Representatives of CSOs from Brazil, Jordan, the Philippines and South Africa added their country-level perspectives and more than 720 online participants followed the event.

During the discussions, the experts underlined the risks associated with restrictive measures, such as curfews or compulsory quarantine, and noted that the excessive use of force by law enforcement agents might amount to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment.

They also highlighted the vulnerable situation of people in detention or confined in closed spaces and urged that the COVID-19 response must independently document the material and living conditions of persons deprived of their liberty. "Inmates should enjoy the same standards of health care that are available in the community at large, including access to virus testing and medical treatment," said Dr. Jens Modvig, Chair of CAT. Sir Malcolm Evans, Chair of SPT, added that "States should reduce prison populations by resorting to alternatives to pretrial detention and incarceration with [...] non-custodial measures. They should also end the use of immigration detention and closed refugee camps."

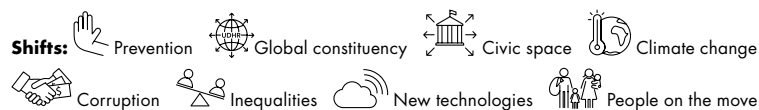
In the lead-up to the event, the High Commissioner tweeted messages calling on States to uphold the human rights of people in detention. UN Human Rights issued a total of 25 posts, which were seen by approximately 1,300,000 persons, generating nearly 30,000 engagements. The webinar video is available on the Office's Facebook page.



Webinar sketch © Shazeera Zawawi for the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT) www.apr.ch

Pillar results

Mechanisms (M)



COVID-19 response and recovery

Innovative modalities were devised to enable the international human rights mechanisms to continue working. With the support of UN Human Rights, the **Human Rights Council migrated its work online**, held three regular sessions, adopted a President's statement on the human rights implications of the COVID-19 crisis and convened two urgent debates. In addition, the thirty-sixth Universal Periodic Review Working Group session was held in a hybrid format, in November.

OHCHR helped the **treaty bodies** to migrate much of their work online and all efforts were directed towards ensuring that they could continue discharging their full mandates. The treaty bodies also issued detailed **guidance** to States and National Preventive Mechanisms (NPMs) to ensure a human rights-based response to COVID-19 (see *Compilation of statements by human rights treaty bodies in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic*). Moreover, the *OHCHR Toolkit* on treaty law perspectives and jurisprudence in the context of COVID-19 contributes to strengthening the application of a human rights-based approach to the responses of the UN and States to the pandemic.

The **special procedures** issued 124 **press releases**, sent 206 **communications**, issued 15 **reports** and designed 13 **tools**. They also published videos, guidance notes and trackers in relation to human rights concerns that arose in the context of COVID-19 (see <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/COVID-19-and-Special-Procedures.aspx>).

Significant progress was made in documenting the widespread **impacts of the special procedures at the national level**. A dedicated web page was established on "Making a Difference," which highlights those impacts in various areas, including the revision of laws, policy changes and mainstreaming of human rights. This is an integral part of UN Human Rights' efforts to ensure that human rights are transformative and provide solutions, in line with the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights.

M1 – NATIONAL MECHANISMS for REPORTING and FOLLOW-UP – National institutionalized structures facilitate an integrated and participatory approach to reporting to the international human rights mechanisms and implementing their recommendations.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

Technical assistance provided through the Treaty Body Capacity-Building Programme contributed to the **establishment or strengthening of NMRFs** in Benin, Botswana, Cambodia, Egypt, Eswatini, Haiti, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Namibia, the Republic of Moldova, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Turkmenistan, Uruguay and Uzbekistan. In particular, as a result of capacity-building support that the Office has provided to Eswatini since 2016, the NMRF was officially established in early 2020. In October, members of the new NMRF received virtual training on reporting to the treaty bodies in order to assist them with the preparation of Eswatini's overdue reports.

In October, OHCHR launched the upgraded **Universal Human Rights Index (UHRI)** as a public portal to the work of the international human rights mechanisms. With a revamped, user-friendly interface that is available in six languages, the database allows users to access the latest **observations and recommendations issued by the human rights treaty bodies, the UPR and the special procedures**. Furthermore, the thematic indexing of content for the UHRI is now supported by artificial intelligence. Text classification algorithms were trained to automatically recognize groups of persons, human rights themes and SDGs for any given recommendation (see more on p. 35).

M2 – ENGAGEMENT with human rights MECHANISMS – Civil society organizations, national human rights institutions and non-traditional actors, particularly those working on emerging human rights issues (frontier issues), increasingly engage with the international human rights mechanisms and use their outcomes.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

With technical support from OHCHR, the Special Rapporteur on the rights to **freedom of peaceful assembly and of association** developed and issued, in April, a set of **indicators** to guide governments when designing and implementing measures to tackle the spread of COVID-19. These online indicators solicited 185 submissions from 79 countries, including from governments, CSOs, women, indigenous communities, youth groups and trade unions. The indicators contribute to analysing challenges in upholding these freedoms in times of crisis, while also highlighting promising practices.

The Special Rapporteur on the rights of **indigenous peoples** organized a webinar, in November, for 400 indigenous human rights defenders (HRDs) from 14 countries in Asia. The webinar informed participants about the **communication procedures** of the international human rights mechanisms.

Additional efforts were undertaken by OHCHR to disseminate information on all aspects of the work of the **Human Rights Council** and its subsidiary bodies and mechanisms and to promote their engagement with CSOs. For instance, **web-based tools** were enhanced to facilitate the submission of **CSO written statements** and video statements for the regular sessions of the Council. In 2020, CSOs delivered 325 video statements, compared to approximately five statements in previous years.

From 2 to 6 March, the **Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** travelled to Samoa to hold its first session outside of Geneva or New York. The session focused on the situation of **the rights of the child in the Pacific region**. Three meetings were dedicated to a direct exchange with more than 100 children from the region, who helped to shape the session's agenda. Many of the children delivered statements and told the Committee members which human rights issues were important for them. One child thanked the Committee members "for their support and for listening to us children. This is personally the first – and hopefully not the last – time that anyone hears my opinions and thoughts," she said. Another child expressed that it was "very reassuring to see and know that the Committee members and everyone who has attended the session cares and values my rights as a child in the Pacific." During its eighty-sixth and eighty-seventh pre-session working group meetings, the Committee held seven meetings with 37 children from Canada, Iceland, Madagascar, the Philippines, Somalia, Ukraine and Viet Nam to discuss the human rights situations in their respective countries (see more on p. 29).

The **CRC** launched a **web page** for children that provides a clear overview of the Committee's mandate and current activities. It also explains how children can share their views with the Committee and contribute to its work. The Committee adopted a **child safeguarding procedure** that ensures a safe environment for the children with whom it interacts and outlines the steps for reporting and responding to a child's safety concerns.

The **Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED)** established a **database** of over 300 CSOs, NHRIs and other stakeholders working on enforced disappearance, to which it submits a periodic **newsletter** regarding its activities. Recipients have noted that the newsletter is a key tool that facilitates their contributions to the work of the Committee. In its two online sessions in 2020, CED included a segment for **victims of enforced disappearances** to enable them to deliver their testimonies and express their expectations.

M3 – USE of MECHANISMS' RECOMMENDATIONS – Policymakers, legislators and courts make increased use of the outcomes of the international and regional human rights mechanisms.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

In February, a Moroccan girl who was born and raised in Melilla, Spain submitted a complaint to **CRC**. Six weeks after the Committee requested that the Government take interim measures, the girl was admitted to the Spanish public school system, following more than two years of struggle to claim her right to education at the national level. The case reflects a general lack of **access to primary education for children who are considered as “irregular residents”** in Melilla, despite the fact that many of them were born and raised in that city.

In December, Argentina passed a law legalizing **abortion** in the first 14 weeks of pregnancy. In the same month, the Republic of Korea decriminalized abortion. The **Working Group on discrimination against women and girls** and the **Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences** advocated for the decriminalization of abortion, including through country visits, recommendations, letters and amicus curiae briefs.

On 16 June, the Supreme Court of Spain handed down a **judgment** on the issue of age determination of **unaccompanied migrant children**. In the ruling, the Court cited CRC's views in Communications No. 16/2017 and 22/2017, which establish that identity documents should be considered valid unless they have been challenged through judicial means. The Supreme Court also followed CRC's reasoning that: a) the person who alleges to be under the age of 18 should be considered as a child until proof to the contrary is obtained; b) an individualized assessment of age needs to be conducted in light of the circumstances of each case; c) when a person holds identity documents, s/he cannot be treated as an undocumented migrant; d) a refusal to undergo medical tests to determine a person's age cannot in itself be considered proof that the person is an adult; and e) the physical appearance of a person cannot prevail over identity documents (unless those documents are proven to be invalid). This sets an important precedent for national authorities to follow in the process of age determination of unaccompanied migrant children.

With technical support from the Office, communications sent to Egypt and Zambia by the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity contributed to the **release of a woman human rights defender (WHRD) and a trans man**, in Egypt, and two persons convicted and sentenced to 15 years in prison for allegedly engaging in consensual same-sex relations, in Zambia.

From 13 to 14 July, UN Human Rights organized a webinar on “**Engaging parliaments on the promotion of human rights**, including on the work of the Human Rights Council and its Universal Periodic Review” for Member Countries of the Commonwealth, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Commonwealth Secretariat. Approximately 45 participants, including parliamentarians from Belize, Canada, Cyprus, Grenada, Jamaica, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago and Zambia took part in the event. The webinar aimed to sensitize members of parliamentary human rights committees to the possibilities of becoming fully involved in promoting and protecting human rights, including through the work of the HRC and the UPR. A similar virtual workshop was held on 17 and 18 November for parliamentarians working on human rights in Member Countries of the Commonwealth in the Asia-Pacific region. These activities enabled participants to identify good examples of parliamentary involvement in the work of the international human rights mechanisms.

M4 – DEVELOPMENT of INTERNATIONAL LAW – International human rights mechanisms contribute to the elaboration of international law and jurisprudence, in particular in the context of emerging human rights concerns (“frontier” issues).

Shifts / SDGs



Results

In May, the **Committee on Migrant Workers** (CMW) and the **Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants** published a *Joint Guidance Note on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the human rights of migrants*. They urged States to “include migrants and their families in **economic recovery policies**, taking into account the need for the recovery of remittance flows.” The Guidance Note also states that governments must set up mechanisms to **review the use of immigration detention** with a view to reducing their populations to the lowest possible level and immediately releasing families with children and unaccompanied or separated children from immigration detention facilities to non-custodial and community-based alternatives with full access to rights and services.

On 4 November, the **Human Rights Committee** adopted a **landmark decision**, which found Italy responsible for the death of 200 **migrants** in the Mediterranean Sea in 2013. The events occurred in international waters and involved an Italian naval ship and a nearby sinking boat carrying more than 400 adults and children. The Committee found that Italy failed to **protect the life of the victims**. It also considered that although the victims were not on Italian territory, they had established a special relationship of dependency with Italy when the first distress calls were made by the victims to Italian authorities due to their proximity to the Italian coast and because they were affected by the decisions of the Italian authorities that were reasonably foreseeable in light of Italy’s relevant legal obligations. The Committee called for an independent and timely investigation.

OHCHR contributed to the development of human rights-based approaches in the use and regulation of digital technologies. During the June session of the HRC, an expert seminar was held on the **impacts of the use of artificial intelligence on the enjoyment of the right to privacy** and a panel discussion was convened on new and emerging digital technologies.

The Office also contributed to the development of new general comments/recommendations on various topics, including **preventing and combating racial profiling by law enforcement officials**; the relationship between **science and economic, social and cultural rights**; the right to freedom of **peaceful assembly**; and **trafficking** in women and girls **in the context of global migration**.

M5 – EFFECTIVENESS of human rights MECHANISMS – International human rights mechanisms are increasingly effective in promoting and protecting human rights.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

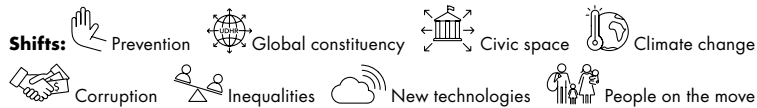
In November, the **UPR Working Group** held its **first hybrid session** in UPR’s history. The use of pre-recorded video statements and online connections with the capitals were introduced during the session. Despite the challenging circumstances and restrictions brought on by the pandemic, coupled with complex technical difficulties, the thirty-sixth session of the UPR Working Group was a success. A total of 250 delegates from capitals participated in the session and interacted with an average of 100 States. A *video* was produced showcasing this success.

OHCHR provided support to the **2020 review of the treaty body system**, including through the Secretary-General’s report on the status of the treaty body system (A/74/643) and by supporting the work of the review’s co-facilitators (A/75/601). This was also the focus of the regular remote meetings held by the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies throughout the year.

Efforts and advocacy undertaken by the mandates on the sale and sexual exploitation of children and on the right to privacy contributed to the **European Parliament's** adoption of **legislation**, allowing a temporary derogation from certain provisions of the Directive on Privacy and Electronic Communications (Directive 2002/58/EC) with regard to the **use of technologies for the processing of personal and other data**, for the purpose of combating child sexual abuse online.

OHCHR provided support to **65 virtual interactive dialogues that were held in the Third Committee** at the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly. This support facilitated the virtual engagement in interactive dialogues between the Third Committee and the international human rights mechanisms, which are mandated to report to the General Assembly. During the session, the Third Committee adopted more than 37 human rights-related resolutions. Support was also provided to special procedures country mandates through the organization of **virtual meetings with Member States, CSOs, victims and other interlocutors**.

Development (D)



COVID-19 response and recovery



Under the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights, UN Human Rights drafted the **Secretary-General's policy brief on COVID-19 and human rights**, drawing upon and leveraging the unique expertise and experience of UN entities. The policy brief has been an essential tool in the advocacy of the Office and the wider UN system regarding the **centrality of human rights for successful COVID-19 response and recovery efforts**.

UN Human Rights strengthened the integration of ESCRs, SDGs and rights-based macroeconomic analysis, including through the development of **guidance**, to **promote human rights-based emergency responses to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic**. This guidance focused on rights-based and Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) analyses, research and advice on how to operationalize the recommendations issued by the international human rights mechanisms and formulate strategies to address the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 on marginalized and discriminated communities, including through 27 seeding change projects.

In collaboration with a range of UN entities, OHCHR developed and advanced the **COVID-19 Human Rights Indicators Framework** at the request of the UN Crisis Management Team. OHCHR began supporting global and national efforts to implement this Framework, which is a crucial element of the UN's Socio-Economic Response Framework. Several UNCTs began using the indicators and work is underway to expand their implementation and report on their progress.

The Office issued guidelines on COVID-19 and the **rights of persons with disabilities** (available in 20 languages) and joined a global UN project to assess the **socio-economic impacts** of the pandemic on persons with disabilities and to highlight good practices to recover better from the emergency.

OHCHR and other partners in the Inter-Agency Working Group on Violence against Children developed a **technical note on COVID-19 and children deprived of their liberty** and an Agenda for Action on protecting the rights of children during and after the pandemic.

D1 – BUSINESS and human rights – Judicial and non-judicial mechanisms hold business and other economic actors to account for rights abuses and provide remedies to victims.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

OHCHR produced **guidance on non-State-based grievance mechanisms for victims of business-related human rights abuse**. The guidance was used to influence standard-setting processes and informed the approach of both company-led grievance mechanisms and independent accountability mechanisms of development finance institutions. OHCHR engaged these stakeholders privately and publicly, for instance, through [the GRAM Partnership](#), which is an initiative that provides guidance to companies, organizations and other institutions on how grievance mechanisms can better address harm caused to individuals and communities by development finance projects.

With the technical support of the Office, the **Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children**, held an international webinar, in June, which facilitated a collective reflection on the achievements made since the adoption, in 2000, of the Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. The Special Rapporteur's report to the General Assembly (A/75/169), which sets out a vision for a strengthened **human rights-based approach to trafficking in persons**, was partly informed by this webinar.

D2 – GUIDING PRINCIPLES on Business and Human Rights – Business actors effectively implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs).

Shifts / SDGs



Results

Engagement with leading tech companies, such as Facebook and Microsoft, through the OHCHR B-Tech Project ([OHCHR/B-Tech Project](#)) yielded a more widespread understanding of how the **UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights** add **practical value to address some of the key human rights challenges related to technology**. Several guidance documents were produced for tech companies, including on how to address human rights risks related to business models, how to conduct human rights due diligence for harm at the end-use of digital technologies and how to establish effective grievance mechanisms. Extensive outreach and direct engagement with companies was undertaken to enhance their effective implementation of the UNGPs.

The UN Human Rights ***Issues paper on legislative proposals for mandatory human rights due diligence by companies***, published in June, was reflected in policy discussions on the scope and content of proposals for mandatory measures on human rights due diligence regulation at the European Union level.

OHCHR collaborated with the World Economic Forum Partnership for Global LGBTI Equality (PGLE), together with the private sector and civil society, to disseminate the **Standards of Conduct for Business on Tackling Discrimination against LGBTI people** and to build tools to advance their implementation. To this end, OHCHR will finalize a guide for LGBTI HRDs on engaging with the private sector in 2021 and is supporting the development of a gap analysis tool to help businesses measure their performance in implementing the Standards of Conduct.

To move towards the development of a **human rights due diligence policy (HRDDP) for the business sector**, OHCHR and CSOs co-organized a forum, in Mexico, that was attended by companies, government authorities and HRDs. In addition, the Office collaborated with ILO and OECD to deliver a series of workshops to almost 100 companies in order to build their capacities on due diligence mechanisms and **impact assessments** on human rights and the environment. As a result, OHCHR and a local human rights institution facilitated negotiations between a Canadian mining company and a rural community affected by the company's activities. The company committed to meeting some of the community's demands.

In Mexico, OHCHR promoted the establishment and functioning of a **Climate Justice Network**, in cooperation with more than 25 CSOs. The Network met regularly to share information and discuss opportunities for collaboration on key issues like air quality, impact studies and the implementation of the Escazú Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean. This work led to the submission of a joint proposal to the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, with **specific recommendations** on the rights of indigenous peoples, people of African descent and persons living in rural communities, the right to a healthy environment, due diligence and the integration of human rights and gender approaches into Mexico's **Nationally Determined Contribution**, pursuant to the **Paris Agreement**. OHCHR also worked closely with the Mexican Institute of Water Technology to develop a set of **indicators on the human right to water and sanitation**.

D3 – LAND and HOUSING laws/policies – State authorities adopt and implement laws, policies and strategies on land and housing that increasingly comply with human rights.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

Supported by OHCHR, the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context, enhanced his work with UN Habitat, speaking at several events marking World Habitat Day. In addition, he participated in the Tenth World Human Rights Cities Forum in Gwangju, Republic of Korea, and in events organized in collaboration with the United Cities and Local Governments and the Global Parliament of Mayors on the **impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the right to adequate housing**. The Special Rapporteur advocated for a **global moratorium on evictions** and later participated in events related to a Zero Evictions Campaign, which was led by CSOs. At the International Summit on Family/ Domestic Violence During the COVID-19 Crisis, he highlighted the urgency of ensuring access to safe housing.

OHCHR strengthened strategic engagement with cities and local governments that promote and protect human rights at local level. The Tenth **World Human Rights Cities Forum**, co-sponsored by OHCHR and hosted by the city of Gwangju, Republic of Korea, identified the importance of building local government capacity to protect ESCRs at the local level, address inequalities and discrimination and ensure the full and **meaningful participation of the population in decision-making processes**.

In Kenya, the Office assisted the **Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples** in the preparation for his appearance as an expert witness in relation to the **reparation proceedings** in the Ogiek rights to land and housing case that is before the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. Although the final report was drafted by the Government's Task Force, which is mandated to implement the African Court's judgment, it has not yet been officially released.

D4 – HEALTH POLICIES and human rights – Public health approaches, including sexual and reproductive health policies, comply with international human rights standards and provide non-discriminatory access, especially to children, adolescents, women and migrants.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

UN Human Rights collaborated with the Centre for Reproductive Rights and the Institute of Judicial Administration Lushoto to strengthen the **capacity of the judiciary to protect reproductive rights** in the context of COVID-19 in Africa and Asia. As a result of a webinar, a platform was created to facilitate exchanges about the impacts on women's reproductive rights of State responses to COVID-19 in **Africa and Asia**. The platform gathers information on steps taken by judiciaries to ensure women's access to justice during the pandemic.

OHCHR shifted the focus of its work on the **right to health** to support capacity-building in the field to respond to the pandemic and its secondary impacts through targeted guidance aimed at protecting marginalized groups' access to essential health services and strengthening universal health coverage in recovery efforts. In collaboration with a research team at the Raoul Wallenberg Institute for Humanitarian Law, the Office is developing a **study of COVID-19 legal and policy frameworks** in 14 countries and in the Indian State of Kerala to identify key trends and challenges from a **human rights perspective**.

The Office **expanded the global constituency for sexual and reproductive health and rights** by raising awareness about the international standards related to these rights through various means. For instance, OHCHR partnered with WHO and Oxford University to launch the Right to A Better World series ([OHCHR | Right to a Better World](#)) on 18 November. The series consists of four episodes, namely, comprehensive sexuality education, contraception, maternal mortality and morbidity and violence against women. In each episode, experts and advocates from around the world share stories of their professional struggles and successes to achieve rights and well-being for their communities. Each episode is approximately 20 minutes long and the target audience is practitioners as well as students who are studying to become professionals in the world of development and human rights. OHCHR also updated its information [series on sexual and reproductive health and rights](#) to reflect the latest standards.

D5 – ENVIRONMENT and CLIMATE policies – Environmental and climate policies and plans increasingly respect, protect and fulfil human rights, guaranteeing those affected access to information, decision-making, public participation and remedies.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

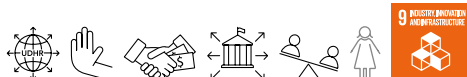
In line with the **Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights**, OHCHR contributed to strengthening support from the UN system to advance the **human right to a healthy environment**. The Office worked closely with UNEMG to establish a new Issue Management Group on human rights and the environment and co-led an ad hoc inter-agency working group to support the implementation of the Call to Action with respect to the rights of future generations and climate justice. The Office and UNEP established a joint community of practice and created a new quarterly Environmental Rights Bulletin.

OHCHR expanded its influence on the global discourse with respect to **human rights and the environment** through the development of new **information and training materials** (<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/HRAndClimateChange/Pages/Information-Materials.aspx>) on human rights, the environment and climate change. These materials were broadly disseminated to stakeholders.

With technical support from OHCHR, the **Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment** issued 40 communications concerning environmental protection and human rights as well as 25 press releases. His report to the General Assembly focused on the need for **urgent action to conserve, protect and restore the biosphere** on which all species depend. It further illustrated the devastating effects of COVID-19 and the crucial role of human rights in catalysing action to safeguard nature.

D6 – HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT assessment – Human rights assessments and impact analyses mitigate, prevent or redress the negative effects of economic, trade and development policies and projects.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

OHCHR worked in partnership with the **multilateral development banks** (MDBs) and their Independent Accountability Mechanisms (IAMs) to strengthen banks' operational strategies and **policies, reprisals and accountability procedures**. OHCHR's submissions to the World Bank Group's Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence 2020-2021 led to the recognition that human rights abuses and violations are among the causes of conflict and opened entry points for operational engagement. OHCHR's advocacy contributed to positive outcomes in operational and reprisals policies and procedures for the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), IDB Invest, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the European Investment Bank. The new IDB and IDB Invest safeguards explicitly require **human rights due diligence** and the IDB safeguards include a self-standing **gender equality safeguard**, the first of its kind for any MDB.

In **Guatemala**, the plan for the implementation of a **judicial decision**, which was handed down in the **Sepur Zarco case**, was reviewed and updated. With technical assistance from OHCHR, indicators were incorporated into the plan to help measure the progress achieved. Participants in the process included the ministries and secretaries of the central Government, the local authorities of the Panzós and El Estor municipalities that are responsible for compliance with the measures and the NGO that supports victims and victims' associations.

In the **Republic of Moldova**, OHCHR developed **guidance on applying a human rights-based approach to Socio-Economic Impact Assessments (SEIAs)**, including nine localized human rights indicators. The guidance and indicators were integrated into the UN Socio-Economic Response and Recovery Plan (SERP), guided UNDP's work on drafting an SEIA and provided the basis for a human rights impact assessment of COVID-19 that was conducted by OHCHR.

D7 – HUMAN RIGHTS INTEGRATION in implementing the SDGs – States integrate human rights, including the right to development and the outcomes of the international human rights mechanisms, as they implement the Sustainable Development Goals and other development and poverty eradication efforts. The UN supports them in these purposes and integrates human rights into its own development work.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

The High Commissioner sent letters to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the 51 countries that underwent a **Voluntary National Review (VNR)** in 2020 and to the 44 countries that will undertake a VNR in 2021. The letters encourage countries to **integrate human rights considerations** into their VNR reports and are accompanied by a country-specific document that provides relevant guidance and hyperlinks to useful tools, such as the UHRI and the National Recommendations Tracking Database (NRTD). Furthermore, the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs made reference to these tools in its annual *Knowledge Exchange Booklet on Approaches and Tools for the 2021 VNRs*. OHCHR also developed 91 country-specific documents aiming to assist Member States in integrating human rights data, analyses and approaches into their VNRs that were submitted in 2020 (47 countries) or will be submitted in 2021 (44 countries).

UN Human Rights provided technical assistance to the **Democratic Republic of the Congo's VNR** process, which was organized by the Ministry of Planning. The Office participated in five thematic working groups on the SDGs to promote the mainstreaming of human rights concerns. On 13 July, the country presented its VNR report to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

With a view to enhancing the mutual reinforcement of the SDGs and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), OHCHR concluded a four-year project to develop an **SDG-CRPD resource package**, to ensure that all actions undertaken to implement the SDGs are **inclusive of persons with disabilities** and guided by the Convention. The package, which was jointly developed with organizations of persons with disabilities and with funding from the European Union, is primarily targeted at States that have obligations to implement both the SDGs and the Convention, yet it can also serve as an indispensable guide for all stakeholders. The package resources include policy guidelines, human rights indicators related to the Convention, data sources guidance, training materials and videos.

In response to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, the **Surge Initiative** contributed **guidance on integrating ESCRs, SDGs and human rights-based macroeconomic analyses in 59 countries**, including through 27 seed funded projects and analytical contents to 30 UNCT socio-economic assessments and response plans to COVID-19. OHCHR's Surge Initiative focused on operationalizing the Secretary-General's Call for a 'New Social Contract,' building an understanding of opportunities and entry points related to the 2030 Agenda and the reform of the UN Development System, including through rights-based and LNOB analyses, research and advice on how to operationalize recommendations from the international mechanisms. Through the Surge Initiative, OHCHR formulated strategies to address the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic on marginalized and discriminated communities, documented impactful country experiences and provided advice on how these efforts can be scaled up or replicated through various cross-fertilization initiatives, including through OHCHR's online shared platform entitled the "2030 Agenda Community of Practice." In **Cambodia**, the Surge Initiative contributed to OHCHR's prevention efforts through the creation of a **UNCT early warning dashboard**, featuring an indicators framework that encompasses all rights, SDG indicators and risk factors. In **Kenya**, the Surge Initiative provided support to the Human Rights Adviser (HRA) and a network of 24 Social Justice Centres to undertake a **human rights assessment of inequality** in access to water in 24 informal settlements and communities in Nairobi, Kisumu and the coastal regions. The main findings of the assessment provided evidence-based data to support the advocacy efforts of CSOs and informed the Government's responses regarding the suspension of utility bills and the enforcement of a moratorium on evictions.

UN Human Rights launched the **Hernán Santa Cruz dialogue series** to promote forward-looking discussions **on economic, social and cultural rights, the SDGs and the right to development**. In Sudan, the Office and the University of Khartoum co-organized an inaugural event on strengthening social protection as the country focuses on development and recovery after the signing of the peace agreement. The Hernán Santa Cruz dialogues resulted in new opportunities for collaboration with the Government and other partners.

D8 – DISAGGREGATED human rights DATA – National institutions, assisted by communities, systematically collect, disaggregate and use data that are relevant for advancing human rights when they monitor and implement the SDGs.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

Data collected through the four **SDG indicators**, under OHCHR's custodianship, were used by various stakeholders, including UN entities, the special procedures, the statistical community and civil society in **advocacy efforts and reports**. Examples include a report from UN Women entitled *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot 2020*, the Secretary-General's 2020 report on women, peace and security and the report of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) entitled *How COVID-19 is changing the world: A statistical perspective, Volumes I and II*.









OHCHR facilitated technical assistance to strengthen **collaboration between NHRIs and the National Statistical Offices** to operationalize the **human rights-based approach to data** as an instrument for increasing trust in data, improving visibility around groups left behind and reinforcing **equality and non-discrimination**. In 2020, OHCHR supported similar efforts in Cabo Verde, El Salvador, Peru, the Philippines, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and new collaborative platforms were established in Albania, Kosovo, Liberia and the Republic of Moldova.

To ensure State accountability, the Office collaborated with the Danish Institute for Human Rights to support the development of a methodology to monitor and collect **data on the national implementation of human rights education** in the context of SDG Target 4.7 and the World Programme for Human Rights Education. This included the provision of advice on human rights education and human rights indicators, research and regular consultations.

To support the **compilation of data for SDG Indicator 10.3.1/16.b.1 on discrimination**, UN Human Rights collaborated with approximately 200 national statistics offices and developed a pioneering compendium of survey questions to support disaggregation by multiple characteristics (such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender identity, socio-economic status, disabilities) in international and national censuses and surveys. This set of sample questions and technical guidance are being implemented in partnership with UNDP and UNODC under the SDG 16 Household Survey Initiative. For the first time, UN Human Rights reported data on **SDG Indicator 16.1.2 on civilian deaths in armed conflict**, which were disaggregated by sex, age and cause of death.

UN Human Rights collaborated with UN Women, UNICEF and national institutions to undertake a **COVID-19 rapid gender assessment in West Africa**, ensuring the integration of an HRBA and LNOB analysis. The issued reports provide evidence regarding the impacts of the pandemic on women and men across the region and aim to inform decision-making and processes. The evidence will also promote a better understanding of the socio-economic effects of the crisis on societies, at the individual level (violence, discrimination, loss of income, psychological health, time spent on household chores) and at the household level (coping strategies, expenses for children). This work is a good example of inter-agency collaboration and provided UN Human Rights with the opportunity to generate the raw data that are needed to undertake quantitative and qualitative human rights assessments. The reports and the related database are now available for [Côte d'Ivoire](#), [Mali](#) and [Senegal](#).

Peace and Security (PS)

Shifts:  Prevention  Global constituency  Civic space  Climate change
 Corruption  Inequalities  New technologies  People on the move

Spotlights:  Disabilities  Women  Youth

COVID-19 response and recovery

UN Human Rights gave **visibility** to structural issues that preceded the outbreak of the pandemic, notably **inequalities and discrimination**, and **exacerbated their negative impacts on human rights**. In **Ukraine**, for example, the Office issued a briefing note on the impacts of COVID-19 and related prevention measures on homeless people. It also issued a comprehensive report on the human rights impacts of COVID-19 in Ukraine, which highlights concerns about the human rights situation of women, older persons, persons with disabilities and others. In **West Africa**, OHCHR gathered and analysed information on potential human rights violations related to the pandemic and created an [interactive dashboard](#) to maintain an almost real-time overview of COVID-19-related developments in the region.

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.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

The Office made significant progress towards generating a quality and timely **evidence base for credible human rights analysis and reporting of conflicts**, including on civilian casualties and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). OHCHR now has access to useful tools for **open source human rights monitoring** and investigations and has trained approximately 500 staff members from 28 field presences on their use and other specificities of remote monitoring. In addition, a new **human rights case database** module for casualty recording was rolled out, which facilitates the collection, disaggregation and analysis of information on casualties and fulfils the reporting requirements for SDG Indicator 16.1.2 on conflict-related deaths.

Through **methodological guidance**, advice, training and support to existing commissions of inquiry, fact-finding missions and other mandated **investigative bodies**, OHCHR contributed to the enhanced cross-fertilization of investigative methods and peer learning in areas such as remote interviews, protection protocols, the use of forensic expertise and referrals. In 2020, 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. It also delivered briefings on methodology and UN practices for staff and experts of the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya.

In March, the High Commissioner addressed two letters to Libya's Government of National Accord and to the Libyan National Arab Army requesting the **urgent reduction of the number of detained persons in detention facilities in Libya**, with particular attention to **vulnerable groups**. The letters contributed to the response of the Libyan authorities, which reportedly released more than 2,000 prisoners and detainees between March and May.

Through its field presences, OHCHR **monitored and reported on violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law**, including civilian casualties, raising the awareness of and advocating for the protection of civilians with all parties to conflict, including in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Guinea, Iraq, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

In **Darfur, women protection networks** were created with the support of OHCHR and UNAMID. These networks performed important awareness-raising and advocacy roles in camps of internally displaced persons (IDPs), where sexual violence remains a serious concern. A similar network for **survivors of sexual violence** was established to provide a platform through which survivors can engage with **response and remedial mechanisms** at the state level and with civil society and humanitarian organizations.

OHCHR advocated for **enhanced compliance with human rights and international humanitarian law in the Sahel**. In the context of new security initiatives that were established in the region, notably the International Coalition for the Sahel, the deployment of European special forces in Mali and the announcement by the African Union that it will deploy a large military force in support of the counter-terrorist efforts of the G5 Sahel Joint Force, OHCHR stepped up its engagement with these partners to ensure that they comply with international human rights, humanitarian and protection of civilian standards, in accordance with the G5 Sahel Joint Force Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Compliance Framework.

PS2 – Counter-TERRORISM and preventing VIOLENT EXTREMISM – Efforts to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism comply with international law.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

In September, the Office submitted its report on terrorism and human rights (A/HRC/45/27) to the HRC. Through the report, OHCHR provided detailed **guidance to Member States on the international human rights parameters governing criminal accountability processes** for terrorism-related offences. This guidance is particularly crucial for States dealing with a high number of terrorism-related investigations and prosecutions. It also highlights that criminal accountability processes should be **victim-centred** and comply with due process and fair trial guarantees as prerequisites in order to close the impunity gap and respect the rights of victims to remedy and reparation.

OHCHR provided advice, as requested, on national policies and legislation on the prevention of violent extremism and counter-terrorism and mainstreaming human rights and counter-terrorism perspectives into thematic and country specific reports, including in: the [UNAMA-OHCHR joint report](#) on *Preventing torture and upholding the rights of detainees in Afghanistan: A factor for peace* (February 2021); the Secretary-General's annual report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (forthcoming); and the High Commissioner's [report](#) on the human rights situation in the Philippines (2020). The Office also began engaging with Member States and CSOs in connection with the ongoing revision of the **UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy** to inform the review process and coordinate human rights messaging.

In its capacity as Protection Cluster Lead in the **State of Palestine**, UN Human Rights advised the Humanitarian Coordinator on key issues of concern in Palestine, ensuring that **protection** remains **at the centre of the UN response**. The Office highlighted a number of areas that had been previously overlooked in the context of UN advocacy, primarily related to gender-based violence and conditions in Israeli prisons. Furthermore, OHCHR's technical support and guidance led to the **mainstreaming of protection indicators** into all projects approved and funded by the oPt Humanitarian Fund and to the **prioritization of vulnerable groups**, such as women with cancer, women with disabilities and children impacted by dropping out of school and child labour.

PS3 – HUMAN RIGHTS protection in PREVENTION/RESPONSE – Strategies to prevent and respond to conflict consistently integrate human rights protection.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

In July, the **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)** 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 Bosnian war, in a village that was under the control of the Bosnian Serb forces. In addition to experiencing the stigma attached to this violation and enduring long-term physical and psychological harm, she unsuccessfully sought justice at the national level for over 25 years. This case is of great importance not only because it is the first decision adopted by CEDAW that addresses the issue of sexual violence during conflict, but also because it requires that the State **recognize the plaintiff as a civilian victim of armed conflict** and provide her with adequate social support and benefits. The case contributes to restoring the dignity of survivors of sexual violence in conflict and formulates concrete recommendations to the Government to support the transitional justice process.

In January, the new **United Nations Policy for Field Missions on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence** entered into force. The Policy is accompanied by a handbook, which was launched virtually, in June. OHCHR's sustained and active engagement in the process was instrumental to ensuring the integration of human rights-based and victim-centred approaches and a gender perspective into both documents.

OHCHR engaged with the **Security Council** on the renewal of the mandates of 12 **peace operations** and, in particular, supported the inclusion of a strong human rights mandate for the new **United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan**. The Office also supported the preparations for the historic Security Council **Open Debate on "Peace Operations and Human Rights."** During the debate, the High Commissioner delivered a statement stressing that peace operations are a powerful tool to promote and protect human rights and calling on States to provide substantial political and financial support to these operations.

In response to the **escalation of hostilities in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone**, the High Commissioner issued three public statements and the Office facilitated the engagement of the **international human rights mechanisms**, contributed to various internal UN early warning and coordination platforms and provided human rights inputs to the terms of reference for an **inter-agency mission** to the conflict area.

OHCHR 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, which began on 4 November.

UN Human Rights supported the integration of human rights-based and victim-centred approaches 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 [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 made 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.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

OHCHR provided support to **transitional justice** processes and mechanisms across the globe, including in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, the Gambia, Guatemala, Iraq, Lebanon, Liberia, Mali, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and the Western Balkans. OHCHR organized an online event to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the **Basic principles and guidelines on the right to a remedy and reparation** and launched a year-long series of events to emphasize the catalytic power of reparations. The High Commissioner provided a briefing at the first Security Council Open Debate and identified transitional justice as an essential component of building and sustaining peace. Efforts continued to implement the EOSG-led project on “renewing the UN approach to transitional justice,” to collectively rethink the UN’s approach to transitional justice. These activities will inform a revised guidance note from the Secretary-General.

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.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

During the year, OHCHR developed the **COVID-19 Tracker**, a tool that enabled the Office to capture, in a structured way, COVID-19-related issues of concern, mitigating measures adopted by States and other stakeholders and actions undertaken by the Office in response to the pandemic. In using this technology, OHCHR transformed itself into an organization that employs technology to effectively work with data and develop analytics. This resulted in enhanced collaboration across the Office and informed its strategic decision-making (see more on p. 23).

As a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on movement and travel, the possibilities for **emergency deployments** were limited. Nevertheless, the Office supported eight emergency deployments to Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guyana, Kyrgyzstan, Niger, Uganda and Yemen.

In relation to **SDG Indicator 16.1.2**, UN Human Rights consolidated, for the first time, **data on conflict-related deaths**, disaggregated by sex, age and cause of death, during 12 of the deadliest armed conflicts. The data were included in the Statistical Annex of the Secretary-General’s 2020 SDG Progress Report, the SDG Report 2020 and the database of the Inter-Agency Expert Group on the SDGs. A secure data-sharing platform and a metadata and data collection template were developed to improve and harmonize field support. To expand its data sources, the Office strengthened its partnerships with UNMAS, UNICEF and the Casualty Recorders Network. OHCHR implemented new approaches to expand its data coverage. In South Sudan and Syria, recommendations were made on the estimation techniques for undocumented direct deaths. The Office concluded a template data-sharing agreement between data sources and the UN (represented by OHCHR) to ensure data privacy and security.

The Office continued to upgrade the Petitions internal database. In 2020, 192 new **urgent action requests under CED** were registered. Specific recommendations were sent to the States Parties concerned on the actions to be taken to search for and locate the disappeared persons and investigate their alleged enforced disappearance. In approximately half of these cases, CED requested that the States Parties take interim measures to protect the life and integrity of family members or representatives of victims involved in search activities or to preserve evidence related to the location of the remains of disappeared persons. In 2020, 102 follow-up notes were sent regarding registered urgent actions requests. The notes assessed the information provided by States Parties and outlined recommendations on search and investigation processes and compliance with previous recommendations. At its nineteenth session, CED adopted 969 decisions regarding urgent action requests. As of 31 December, 1,001 urgent action requests had been registered and 90 disappeared persons had been located (see p. 34).

OHCHR also registered 317 new **individual communications**. The human rights treaty bodies adopted 239 decisions on individual communications, 229 of which are online. This remarkable result in light of the challenges caused by COVID-19 enabled the treaty bodies to prevent a protection gap during the pandemic.

UN Human Rights supported the **humanitarian response system in Mozambique** to ensure the integration of human rights into the analyses of UN partners and their response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the growing conflict in northern Mozambique and the context of violence in central Mozambique. The Office strengthened engagement between national stakeholders and the humanitarian system, including by promoting a more diverse national civil society, such as groups protecting the rights of older persons and local legal aid clinics that collaborate with humanitarian entities. Similarly, OHCHR facilitated greater engagement and dialogue between the international humanitarian system and protection entities, including the National Human Rights Commission and the 1st Committee of Parliament.

UN Human Rights' work on humanitarian action emphasized the **centrality of protection in humanitarian emergencies**, including the COVID-19 pandemic. OHCHR and WHO guidance on COVID-19 and persons deprived of their liberty supported advocacy with State authorities to address **risks related to detention centres**, for example, by improving conditions and adopting decongestion measures and releases in accordance with international human rights law. That guidance and the High Commissioner's public calls on the issue were instrumental to enhancing the monitoring and advocacy activities of OHCHR field presences. As a result, several States adopted **decongestion measures**. Countries such as Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, the Gambia, Ghana, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Malawi, Morocco, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia and Yemen implemented recommendations on early release, release on furlough and the release of pretrial detainees on bail. In addition, the UN Human Rights Country Office in Yemen and an international CSO worked together on protecting vulnerable categories within prisons. In Somalia, the Office co-established the UN Task Force on COVID-19 and detention to support Somali authorities in mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 in prisons. CSOs used this tool in their advocacy and legal actions to assist detainees.

OHCHR contributed to the **review of criteria for grants** by the **Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)**, which now recognizes a wider range of human rights activities as 'life saving,' which are therefore eligible for CERF funds. At the field level, these criteria provided the foundation for the Office's advocacy to enhance protection during the responses to Hurricanes Eta and Iota in Honduras. Moreover, UN Human Rights participated in the needs assessment, the flash appeal and overall response and supported national capacities, monitoring and advocacy for the inclusion of populations left behind in the response, with a specific focus on women, children, persons with disabilities and LGBTI persons.

PS6 – HUMAN RIGHTS DUE DILIGENCE POLICY – The support of the United Nations to national and regional security forces, law enforcement agencies and non-State actors integrates human rights and complies with the HRDDP.

Shifts / SDGs

**Results**

OHCHR continued to raise awareness about and strengthen the implementation of the **HRDDP** in countries and regions where UN support to non-UN security forces significantly contributes to advancing the peace and security agenda. OHCHR provided enhanced support to implement the HRDDP in **UN peace operations**, including the instrumentalization of the HRDDP as a tool to contribute to the overall strategic objectives of UN peace operations and to strengthen its contribution to the ongoing peace processes. OHCHR provided technical advice on the implementation of the HRDDP to BINUH, MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, UNAMA, UNIOGBIS, UNMIK, UNMISS, UNSMIL and UNSOM. OHCHR established an online community of practice among HRDDP practitioners in UN peace operations to promote and share lessons learned and good practices. It also held six virtual meetings to discuss various themes under the HRDDP, such as implementation during the pandemic, working with the UNCTs in UN peace operations and HRDDP mitigating measures.

The Office continued to provide support and guidance for the **implementation of the HRDDP to the UNCTs**, notably in relation to the development of standard operating procedures (SOPs), risk assessments and mitigation measures. The UNCTs in Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Lesotho and the Philippines requested briefings and advice from OHCHR. The briefings and support led to an enhanced application of the Policy and significant interest was shown in its application in non-mission settings during the reporting period.

PS7 – NEW TECHNOLOGIES, WEAPONS, TACTICS and PRIVATE SECURITY – The use of private military and security companies and the development and deployment of new technologies, weapons and tactics are increasingly consistent with and respect international human rights law and international humanitarian law.









Shifts / SDGs

**Results**

OHCHR **developed an office-wide strategy to address the diversion of weapons, ammunition and their parts and components.**

In response to requests from the field and following the review of reports and statements, the Office provided legal and policy advice on the use of force, weapons and the impact on international human rights law of the development, transfer and use of weapons.

Non-discrimination (ND)

Shifts:  Prevention  Global constituency  Civic space  Climate change
 Corruption  Inequalities  New technologies  People on the move

Spotlights:  Disabilities  Women  Youth

COVID-19 response and recovery

UN Human Rights led inter-agency efforts to draft the **Secretary-General's policy brief on the impacts of COVID-19 on older persons**, which was issued in May. A total of 146 Member States endorsed a joint statement of support. The policy brief also inspired broader civil society actions at global and local levels, including a joint letter to the Secretary-General that was signed by 122 CSOs and networks from around the world.

OHCHR issued a series of targeted **guidance notes**, including one on the interlinkages between **COVID-19 and racial discrimination**, which focuses on areas of concerns such as health, education, housing, employment, adequate standards of living and law enforcement and the administration of justice. In addition, it issued a Guidance Note on the **impacts of COVID-19 on minorities and indigenous peoples**, which highlights trends and promising practices. To develop these materials, the Office gathered data on COVID-19 testing, infections and deaths, which were disaggregated by sex, age, racial or ethnic origin and other status, and on promising policies informed by the data that aim to support the most vulnerable.

OHCHR reactivated the **UN Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities**, which issued a range of guidance for the UNCTs on combating racial discrimination and protecting minorities, including through COVID-19 response and recovery plans. In November, the Network convened its first senior-level meeting, involving Assistant Secretaries-General (ASGs) from 10 UN entities, resulting in the adoption of the Network's first workplan.

ND1 – NORMATIVE FRAMEWORKS to combat DISCRIMINATION – Laws, policies and practices more effectively combat discrimination in all forms and responsible authorities actively work to Leave No One Behind, including by addressing the root causes of inequality.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

OHCHR provided guidance to States and other stakeholders on preventing and addressing **racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia** and related intolerance. Advisory services were provided on **anti-discrimination laws** in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Tajikistan. The anti-discrimination database, which is publicly available on OHCHR's website, was enhanced. It currently contains more than 1,500 documents that include examples of anti-discrimination laws, policies, national action plans as well as good practices resulting from their implementation.

In December, under the auspices of the Vice-President of Costa Rica, OHCHR and UNFPA organized a dialogue among Afrodescendant leaders, experts and governments on the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on **people of African descent**. More than 100 individuals from the Latin American and Caribbean region participated in the online event. With support from the Surge Initiative, the Office initiated the implementation of a project that aims at establishing an early warning and prevention monitoring platform within the UNCT, with a focus on the enjoyment of ESCRs of indigenous peoples and the rights to land and food. This monitoring mechanism will be instrumental in mapping persistent and emergent factors that generate inequalities, which disproportionately affect indigenous peoples, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following the killing of George Floyd, in June, the Human Rights Council met and adopted resolution 43/1, which requests the High Commissioner to prepare a comprehensive report on systemic racism, human rights violations by law enforcement agencies against Africans and people of African descent and government responses to peaceful anti-racism protests. In line with this mandate, OHCHR began drafting a report on **racial justice**, which will be submitted to the Council, in June 2021, and will include the voices of victims who are people of African descent, their families and communities.

The Office provided support for legislative and policy changes in relation to access to justice, culturally appropriate education, land rights and the free, prior and informed consent of **indigenous peoples**, including in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda. OHCHR consistently stressed the importance of ensuring the meaningful and informed participation of indigenous peoples in decision-making.

OHCHR supported the reform of laws and policies to guarantee the protection of the human rights of LGBTI persons through technical assistance, research and policy guidance. Similarly, the Office assisted relevant stakeholders in their efforts to combat violence and discrimination against **LGBTI persons**. For instance, OHCHR worked closely with field presences to monitor and document rights violations and issued guidance on addressing the impacts of COVID-19 on LGBTI persons and including them in efforts to build back better.

OHCHR, UNESCO and the World Jewish Congress jointly raised awareness about **antisemitism** by supporting the celebration of the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, including through an exhibition and a round-table on education and antisemitism.

With support from OHCHR, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences collected 270 submissions on the increase in **violence against women in the context of COVID-19**. The submissions revealed many shortcomings that prevented women in all regions of the world from accessing essential services, thereby putting them at even greater risk. On this basis, the Special Rapporteur raised the awareness of relevant stakeholders and encouraged the General Assembly to adopt and maintain protective measures and ensure the availability of essential services during the pandemic. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women issued a similar call in its **Guidance Note on CEDAW and COVID-19**, adopted in April. It also adopted 12 lists of issues in relation to reports received from States Parties and six lists of issues prior to reporting under the simplified reporting procedure. These documents contained a new standard paragraph asking States Parties about the impacts of COVID-19 on women's rights and gender equality and women's equal participation and leadership in COVID-19 responses and recovery efforts.

ND2 – JUSTICE SYSTEMS investigate DISCRIMINATION – Justice systems and related institutions increasingly monitor and investigate discrimination and provide redress to victims.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

With OHCHR's support, **CEDAW** adopted **General Recommendation No. 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration**. Inputs from 120 contributions received by the Committee were incorporated into the text, with substantive contributions stemming from regional consultations and three expert group meetings that were organized by the Office. This guidance will enhance the capacity of justice systems to monitor and investigate human rights violations and provide redress to victims of trafficking.

ND3 – WOMEN PARTICIPATION and PROTECTION – Legal and social frameworks increasingly promote the autonomy and choices of women and girls and protect them from violence, including in the digital space.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

With support from OHCHR, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences initiated and led the Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on Discrimination and Violence against Women (EDVAW Platform). Composed of representatives from UN and regional expert mechanisms, the Platform focuses on **ending discrimination and violence against women**. In February, the Special Rapporteur participated in the third regional meeting of the Platform, which she organized in collaboration with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Secretariat of the Gender Is My Agenda campaign. This resulted in a joint statement that was issued by the expert mechanisms entitled "Elimination of discrimination and violence against women and girls, including its root causes, must be integrated in all efforts to silence the guns before, during and after conflict."

ND4 – ERADICATING HARMFUL NORMS – Judicial institutions, media and other sectors increasingly recognize and challenge harmful gender stereotypes and gender norms with a view to their eradication.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

OHCHR strengthened the capacity of the judiciary to address and dismantle harmful stereotypes and protect **women's human rights**, which is critical to ensuring that decisions are made on the basis of facts and not deeply entrenched beliefs and stereotypes about the characteristics and roles of women and men. For example, in Uruguay, OHCHR has been working with judges, prosecutors and defence lawyers since 2018 to eradicate **judicial gender stereotyping**. This work resulted in the launch of a guide for the judiciary and a guide for the Office of the Prosecutor on gender stereotypes and international standards for women's access to justice. In June, a virtual course was delivered to more than 80 judges and prosecutors to build their capacity in using the guides. An internal resolution of the Supreme Court requests that judges use the guide when ruling on cases related to gender-based violence (GBV).

On the occasion of **International Women's Day**, OHCHR partnered with Wikimedia to address stereotypes about WHRDs and to create content on less well-known defenders who have made important contributions to their societies. A total of 72 competitors submitted edits in 36 languages and 3,224 articles were created or improved.

Through the **UN Free & Equal campaign**, awareness-raising and advocacy were pursued to advance the human rights of **LGBTI persons** in the context of national activities in 13 countries. On the occasion of the International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (17 May), two thematic campaigns were launched at the global level in all UN languages and in Portuguese on **LGBTIQ+ youth homelessness** and on breaking the silence around discrimination and violence against LGBTI persons (jointly organized by UN Human Rights, True Colors United and Cyndi Lauper). OHCHR also developed social media toolkits on the inclusion of LGBTI persons in COVID-19 prevention and recovery efforts. Moreover, two high-level UN events were organized with the United Nations LGBTI Core Group, in New York, with a focus on LGBTI persons facing intersecting forms of discrimination and the impacts of COVID-19 on LGBTI persons.

With support from OHCHR, the **Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery**, including its causes and consequences presented to the HRC, in September, the report on the 2019 visit to Togo, with a focus on the exploitation of children, child labour, harmful gender stereotypes and harmful cultural practices. Since the country visit, the Government of Togo has taken steps to address the concerns raised by the Special Rapporteur, such as strengthening its child protection framework at the domestic level.

OHCHR strengthened the capacity of journalists to apply a **human rights-based approach and gender lens** in their **media coverage** by organizing an online training on the “Role of media in promoting and protecting human rights in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic” for 15 journalists from Jordan, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, the State of Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen. The training, which was held from 24 to 26 November, enhanced the knowledge of journalists about women’s rights and the particular impacts of COVID-19 on women.

In June, CEDAW published its **inquiry report on female genital mutilation** in Mali, concluding that the State Party had failed to comply with its due diligence obligations to adopt and enforce a law prohibiting female genital mutilation. It also noted that the efforts made by Mali had been neither sufficient, effective nor timely to eliminate deeply entrenched discriminatory gender stereotypes that underlie this harmful practice.

ND5 – DIGITAL SPACE – Principles and practices effectively counter discrimination and hate speech in the digital space.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

OHCHR organized two virtual regional forums on the topic of “**hate speech, social media and minorities.**” The first was organized in relation to Europe, in September, and the second was organized in relation to Asia-Pacific, in October, and included representatives of States, international and regional organizations, NHRIs, civil society, academia and ICT and social media companies. The resulting recommendations informed the thirteenth session of the annual **Forum on Minority Issues**, which took place virtually on 19 and 20 November. The Forum attracted more than 400 participants, with an average of 150 participants who were online during each session.

The Global Compact Working Group on Promoting and Protecting Human Rights, the Rule of Law and Fundamental Freedoms and Supporting the Victims of Terrorism, chaired by UN Human Rights, initiated a research project relating to new technologies entitled “**The use of artificial intelligence in counter-terrorism, notably its impact on freedom of expression.**” The research is expected to be completed in 2021. To increase awareness and advocate for the use of the human rights framework in this area, OHCHR made presentations at a number of events, including the webinar on counter-terrorism and surveillance technologies organized by the Global Center on Cooperative Security, on 20 May, and the Third INTERPOL-UNICRI Global Meeting on Artificial Intelligence for Law Enforcement, on 27 November.

ND6 – MIGRATION – The human rights of all migrants, particularly those in vulnerable situations, are protected.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

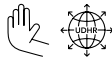
Through the **UN Network on Migration**, at national, regional and global levels, OHCHR supported Member States in the implementation, review of and follow-up to the Global Compact for Migration. The Office conducted research, policy analysis and capacity-building activities on key issues, including the **return of migrants in the context of COVID-19** and monitoring human rights at international borders.

OHCHR launched **a campaign and a toolbox to reshape narratives on migration** (#StandUp4Migrants), with a view to shifting fear- and hate-based narratives to hope- and values-based narratives, showcasing communities coming together to welcome migrants and the connections we all share, no matter where we come from or what we look like (see more on p. 53).

The Office continued to visit key locations to raise awareness about human rights protection gaps faced by migrants and to assist States and others in implementing human rights-based responses. In 2020, a monitoring **mission** was dispatched to Malta to **remotely monitor the situation of migrants in Libya**.

ND7 – PUBLIC MOBILIZATION for INCLUSION – Public support increases for equal, inclusive and diverse societies, without discrimination.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

OHCHR launched a series of online **webinars**, in English and Spanish, **for Roma human rights defenders** and leaders in the Americas to enhance their knowledge and capacity in relation to **minority rights protection**. Approximately 30 Roma grassroots leaders, academics and intellectuals from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Mexico and the United States of America participated in the events.

With support from OHCHR, the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with **albinism** built a campaign around International Albinism Awareness Day, on 13 June, culminating in an online concert. In addition, a social media campaign was launched on the theme #MadetoShine. OHCHR issued approximately 25 social media posts in English, French and Spanish and designed an Instagram story that reached 30,000 people.

OHCHR increased its advocacy for the protection of **religious minorities**. For instance, in India, OHCHR filed an amicus curiae brief of the High Commissioner with the Supreme Court, in March, which highlights her position on the Citizenship Amendment Act, with a focus on provisions that discriminate against India's Muslim population.

ND8 – UN response to INEQUALITY and DISCRIMINATION – The UN system implements a coherent and human rights-based response to inequality and discrimination, including intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

OHCHR advocated for the implementation of the UN System-wide Action Plan on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which proposes actions across six areas, including in relation to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Within the context of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues, the Office contributed to the development of a **policy statement on indigenous peoples**, which was **endorsed by the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB)**.

The Office mainstreamed human rights into UN policy, including the new **guidance on Common Country Analysis/the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (CCA/UNSDCF)**, which includes a section on “economic transformation.” Moreover, OHCHR had an active role in promoting a human rights-based approach to macroeconomic policymaking and shaping the UN’s newly assertive economic role. The Office worked at the UN inter-agency level to **mainstream human rights** into the new **UN guidance on transformative economies**, which resulted in recommendations that the UN pay particular attention to the political economy and identify potential winners and losers in economic restructuring, with explicit references to the full respect for human rights, including ESCRs, and the duty to avoid retrogression in times of crisis.









In 2020, OHCHR issued a **Checklist for a Human Rights-Based Approach to Socio-Economic Country Responses to COVID-19**. The Checklist, which was developed by OHCHR, UNDP and DCO, is a non-exhaustive list of potential actions, tools and resources, many of which are featured on OHCHR’s website, to assist the UN in examining whether socio-economic impact assessments, responses and recovery plans are applying a human rights-based approach.

Through the **Surge Initiative**, OHCHR provided advice and substantive inputs regarding addressing inequalities and discrimination through key UN development processes, including CCAs and UNSDCFs in 65 countries and SEIAs and COVID-19 SERPs in 39 countries. Emphasis was placed on providing in-depth and holistic human rights analyses with regard to ESCRs, civil and political rights, VNR commitments, SDGs, inequalities, the LNOB principle, economic policies and transformative economies, with inputs submitted across all areas of UN analyses and interventions. In Cambodia, for instance, the Office contributed to the 2020 CCA update and the overall UNCT strategy in response to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19. OHCHR produced a human rights-based analysis of national and subnational economic situations and included analyses of fiscal policies and fiscal space.

Within the context of the **UNSDG Task Team on Leaving No One Behind, Human Rights and the Normative Agenda**, OHCHR led a review of 109 UNCT COVID-19 SERPs and produced an assessment of the extent to which they integrated human rights. The review was a collegial, inter-agency effort and a good example of a concrete action to bring about positive change, in accordance with the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights. Through this exercise, good practices were identified, including in terms of macroeconomic responses, identification of at-risk groups and drivers of exclusion, inequalities and discrimination and the use of human rights indicators. Some of these good practices occurred in countries that benefited from the engagement of OHCHR's surge team, such as Argentina, Belize, Kenya, Madagascar and the Republic of Moldova.

OHCHR collaborated with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide to co-organize a virtual consultation on the "Global Pledge for Action by Religious Actors and Faith-Based Organizations to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic in Collaboration with the UN." The consultation was opened by the High Commissioner, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. The High Commissioner urged **religious leaders** to speak out firmly against **hate speech**, which was directed towards minority communities across the world that were stigmatized as supposed carriers of the virus and subject to discrimination and physical and verbal attacks. A series of webinars on six targeted topics were consecutively organized by the three partners.

Accountability (A)

Shifts:  Prevention  Global constituency  Civic space  Climate change
 Corruption  Inequalities  New technologies  People on the move

Spotlights:  Disabilities  Women  Youth

COVID-19 response and recovery

UN Human Rights engaged in private and public advocacy with national authorities to urge them to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in places of detention and reduce overcrowding in prisons and migrant centres. This led to tangible results, including the **release of thousands of persons in pretrial detention or convicted of non-violent offences** in several countries through humanitarian pardons, special amnesties or through the use of provisional release, house arrests, bail and parole. OHCHR's advocacy also resulted in legislative measures and recommendations to reduce overcrowding and adopt protocols for detention facilities. For instance, the Attorneys General of Chile and Peru urged prosecutors to consider alternatives to pretrial detention. In the Central African Republic, the Office's advocacy led authorities to take preventive measures.

OHCHR supported the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children in producing a **position paper** with recommendations on protecting the human rights of trafficked persons and potential **victims of trafficking in the context of COVID-19**. The paper demonstrates how emergency measures, such as restrictive migration policies and border closures, affect and exacerbate the vulnerabilities of actual and potential victims. It also identifies the long-term consequences for workers when global supply chains are disrupted and underlines the immediate impact that emergency measures have on assistance programmes for trafficked persons.

A1 – ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE and LAW ENFORCEMENT – Laws, policies and practices increasingly address, prevent and reduce human rights violations in the context of law enforcement and justice systems.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

OHCHR continued to advocate in relation to the **responsibility of States for actions of third parties**, such as non-State armed groups that are supported by or linked to a State. For instance, a thematic report by the High Commissioner on the integrity of the justice system examines modes of attribution and the responsibilities of a State for the extraterritorial detention of individuals by State and non-State third parties.

In implementing General Assembly resolution 73/304, OHCHR convened a one-day expert consultation, in April, on possible common international standards on **torture-free trade**. The Office also sought the views of Member States on the feasibility, scope and parameters for possible common international standards for the import, export and transfer of goods used for capital punishment, torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

OHCHR continued to advocate with States for the establishment or maintenance of **moratoriums on the use of the death penalty**, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 73/175, and for the protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty in retentionist countries. The Secretary-General's report to the Human Rights Council on the question of the death penalty was submitted to the HRC, in September, and the Secretary-General's report on the moratorium of the death penalty was submitted to the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly. The Office also supported CSOs working on topics related to the imposition of the death penalty in the United States of America, in particular regarding the referral of cases to the special procedures, with a focus on the use of drugs. Concerns relating to the resumption of federal executions were transmitted to State authorities by the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions through several communications and press releases. A positive development was the signature of a bill, on 23 March, that abolished the death penalty in Colorado.

The Office provided support for engagement with **national law enforcement agencies** in Angola, Burkina Faso, Fiji, the Gambia, Lesotho, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Mexico, Niger, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Moldova, Uganda, Venezuela and Zambia. OHCHR increased its partnership with the **UN Police Division's Standing Police Capacity** to more effectively integrate human rights standards into the policy, training and accountability frameworks of law enforcement institutions.

OHCHR contributed to the development of an **e-learning tool for airlines and civil aviation authorities** as well as **guidelines for reporting trafficking** cases. In addition, the Office began to support data collection on the identification of victims by cabin crew in order to assess compliance with the guidelines.

A2 – ACCESS TO JUSTICE and REMEDIES – Strengthened national mechanisms provide redress to victims and accountability for human rights violations, including for economic and social rights.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

OHCHR engaged with Member States, UN partners and CSOs to promote accountability for human rights violations. For instance, the Office collaborated with UNSMIL to deliver several briefings and consultations on Libya for HRC Member States, with support from the Permanent Mission of Libya, on the need to ensure accountability for violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including war crimes. This contributed to the establishment, in June, of a **Fact-Finding Mission on Libya**.

The Office advocated for **accountability in Yemen** through the High Commissioner's bilateral meetings with Member States and press releases. OHCHR supported the UN Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen, including the organization of their mission to Geneva, in January, to advocate for accountability in Yemen with Member States, the President of the HRC and CSOs. The Office also delivered capacity-building activities to the Yemeni National Commission of Inquiry (NCoI).

In February, OHCHR conducted a mission to **Nepal** to follow up on the **transitional justice** process. The Office met with key stakeholders, including conflict victims' groups, civil society leaders, UN partners, donor countries, government officials and the Chair of the National Human Rights Commission, to discuss the fallout of the public consultations, which were boycotted by most of the victims' and civil society groups. OHCHR supported the special procedures in verifying information related to the public consultations and the appointment of new commissioners to the transitional justice bodies. The Office monitored developments regarding the amendment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act, as authorities reportedly delayed a new draft due to the pandemic. OHCHR advocated for a more participatory process. Following a judgment that was handed down by the Supreme Court on transitional justice, in April, OHCHR held a press briefing and urged the Government to revitalize the transitional justice process in line with international norms and its international commitments.

In commemoration of the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, OHCHR supported the organization by the UN Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery of its fifth annual expert panel on “Contemporary slavery and racial discrimination: Civil society support to survivors during the global pandemic.” The High Commissioner opened the panel and statements were delivered by representatives of four CSOs from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil and Lebanon as well as UN experts and staff. Discussions focused on the **interrelationship between racial discrimination and contemporary slavery** and how COVID-19 has exacerbated social inequalities linked to structural racism. Over 270 participants attended the event, including representatives of 39 Member States and 22 CSOs that are supported by the Trust Fund.

A3 – Investigation of GENDER-related CRIMES – Justice systems investigate and prosecute gender-related crimes more effectively.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

As a **co-lead entity of the United Nations Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict (TOE)**, UN Human Rights supported national authorities in the investigation and prosecution of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings. In the Central African Republic, the TOE collaborated with MINUSCA and UNDP. As a result, the Joint Rapid Response Unit to Prevent Sexual Violence against Women and Children finalized the judicial investigation into the crimes that occurred in Kaga Bandoro, in August 2019, including CRSV, which involved 264 victims. In January 2021, the judicial file was sent for review to the Office of the Prosecutor of the Kaga Bandoro High Court. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the TOE collaborated with the Joint Human Rights Office of MONUSCO, the UNCT and CSOs and worked with Congolese counterparts to implement a case prioritization strategy for serious international crimes, including sexual violence. The TOE also provided technical assistance in relation to the investigation, prosecution and trial of Ntabo Ntaberi Sheka and his co-conspirators for crimes committed between 2010 and 2017, including the mass rape of 387 civilians. These efforts contributed to the groundbreaking decision of the Cour Militaire Opérationnelle of North Kivu, on 23 November, to sentence Ntabo Ntaberi Sheka to life imprisonment after he was convicted of rape, sexual slavery and the recruitment of children. In Guinea, UN Human Rights and the TOE collaborated to support awareness-raising efforts regarding the importance of accountability for the events of 28 September 2009, during which at least 109 women and girls were victims of sexual violence. This resulted in a renewed commitment by senior officials to ensure accountability and to elaborate draft guidelines to convene trials for these events.

The TOE and the Journal of International Criminal Justice published a special issue on **Justice and accountability for sexual violence in conflict: Progress and challenges in national efforts to address impunity**. This was followed by the release of a “Digital dialogue series” that addressed topics covered in the special issue with leading practitioners in the field, including on the prosecution and investigation of serious crimes in Latin America, with a focus on Colombia and Guatemala; the impact of sexual violence committed in the context of terrorism; and national accountability efforts connected to CRSV in the Central African Republic.

Gender-related crimes and human rights violations suffered by women and girls were increasingly **monitored and reported on**. This was achieved through the strengthened capacities of OHCHR field presences, including human rights components of peace missions and staff and experts conducting human rights investigations. **Awareness** was **enhanced among the judiciary** about various topics, including the role of gender stereotypes in preventing access to justice for women and victims of gender-related crimes and access to justice and the protection of reproductive rights in the context of COVID-19. In addition, the capacity of the criminal justice system to investigate femicide in some countries in Latin America was strengthened to ensure unbiased, effective investigations and greater accountability. The regional protocol on femicide continued to be jointly promoted with UN Women, including through webinars with prosecutors that reached over 1,000 participants in the region. An independent evaluation that was concluded in December highlighted the important achievements by the Office in the area of documenting gender-based violence and support for access to justice for victims.

A4 – ACCESS to INFORMATION – States take measures to ensure that their decision-making, policies and actions are more transparent and that the public has access to information for accountability purposes.

Shifts / SDGs

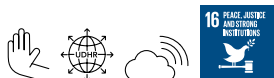


Results

In the Middle East and North Africa region, OHCHR advocated with States about the importance of **transparency and access to information**, including **in the context of COVID-19**. For instance, in its press briefing on Yemen, in June, the Office called on the parties to the armed conflict to ensure Yemenis have access to information in order to help them protect themselves, gain access to medical treatment and prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other outbreaks in the country.

A5 – UN ACTION on the RULE of LAW – UN efforts for the rule of law, justice, counter-terrorism and accountability put human rights at the core.

Shifts / SDGs



Results









OHCHR developed and adapted the **digital image verification tool**, which was initiated in 2019, and deployed it as an internal service within the organization. This enabled staff and accountability mechanisms to test confidential digital artefacts for evidence of tampering, enabling a higher degree of confidence in the digital evidence used to support casework, human rights analysis and reporting.

Through its participation in the meetings of the Human Rights, Rule of Law and Victims of Terrorism Working Group and the Global Compact Human Rights Working Group, UN Human Rights highlighted the importance of integrating human rights into **counter-terrorism responses and responses to terrorist incidents and crisis situations**. The Office provided comments related to the national counterterrorism strategies of Iraq and Tajikistan, the Watchlisting Guidance Manual Initiative and the human rights aspects of the use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems. The Global Compact Human Rights Working Group finalized the **Basic Human Rights Reference Guide** (BHRRG): Proscription of Organizations in the Context of Countering Terrorism. The BHRRG provides guidance to States on the parameters and human rights implications of identifying organizations as terrorist organizations. In cooperation with the Office of Counter-Terrorism, UN Human Rights delivered training of trainers sessions to law enforcement officers on counter-terrorism and human rights in Cameroon, Iraq, Mali and Nigeria.

UN Human Rights provided technical advice to ensure that human rights are mainstreamed into the **Global Framework for United Nations Support on Syria, Iraq and Third Country National Returnees** (Global Framework). This resulted in the integration of human rights into Global Framework processes (i.e., joint scoping exercises, risk management, technical guidance and advice on programme design and implementation, monitoring and fund allocations from the Global Framework pooled funds). Further, support from UN Human Rights included the provision of human rights and gender expertise to facilitate the implementation of the Global Framework.

The Office also advocated for the application of international human rights standards by the UN system when addressing issues related to accountability, the rule of law and drugs. On 25 February, OHCHR collaborated with Mexico, Switzerland, the European Union, UN partners, the International Drug Policy Consortium and the University of Essex to organize a side event entitled “The **International Guidelines on Human Rights and Drug Policy**” during the HRC’s forty-third session. Finally, the Office worked closely with UNDP and other partners to organize two regional dialogues on the implementation of the guidelines in the Americas and Asia.

Participation (P)

Shifts:  Prevention  Global constituency  Civic space  Climate change
 Corruption  Inequalities  New technologies  People on the move

Spotlights:  Disabilities  Women  Youth

COVID-19 response and recovery

UN Human Rights advocated with UN partners for effective and inclusive participation in the context of COVID-19, ensuring a **free flow of information** and supporting experts, medical professionals, journalists and HRDs to speak without fear or censorship. In a landmark development that was spearheaded by OHCHR, in collaboration with the EOSG and other UN partners, the UN adopted a **system-wide Guidance Note on civic space**. The Guidance Note recognizes civic space as a threshold issue for the successful implementation of all three pillars of the United Nations and commits the UN to taking steps to promote and protect civic space. The preparatory process involved broad consultations within the UN and beyond. For instance, from 13 to 24 January, UN Human Rights conducted “global online consultations with civil society,” which attracted 274 active civil society participants and more than 5,000 visitors from 84 countries. The launch of the final Guidance Note, in December, was attended by over 800 people from civil society around the world.

The Office raised awareness about **state of emergency measures** and offered **legal advice** to ensure that restrictions to freedoms of expression and assembly were necessary and proportionate, with a focus on safeguarding public health, and applied fairly and humanely. It issued policy guidance on civic space and COVID-19 and on emergency measures and COVID-19 and promoted the right to participate in COVID-19 responses through its [Guidelines on Participation](#).

P1 – ENABLING NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK for civil society – Stronger laws, policies and practices protect the right to participate and civic space, including online, and the environment for civil society is increasingly safe and enabling.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

The Office served as a **bridge between civil society and social media platforms**. In February, OHCHR helped bring together journalists, HRDs and social media platforms with a view to identifying key obstacles to **online civic space** and identifying new avenues through which they can be addressed. These efforts led to more regular engagement between tech companies and human rights organizations. It also established channels of communication with social media platforms, enabling OHCHR field presences to communicate concerns regarding incitement cases and to engage in advocacy regarding content moderation.

OHCHR engaged with a broad range of stakeholders to advocate for a **safe online environment for human rights activists**. The Office collaborated with the Qatari National Human Rights Committee, GANHRI, the European Parliament and the International Federation of Journalists to organize an international conference, from 16 to 17 February, in Doha, on “Social media: Challenges and ways to promote freedoms and protect activists.” The conference brought together more than 250 representatives of governments, CSOs, NHRIs, HRDs, media workers, the tech community and international human rights mechanisms. At the end of the conference, OHCHR presented 27 targeted recommendations.

OHCHR participated in **advocacy** efforts around issues related to **disinformation and hate speech**. For instance, the Office provided advice in relation to the planned EU Digital Services Act, which aims at regulating social media platforms. On 8 September, the High Commissioner sent a letter to the European Union recalling the necessity of respecting transparency, legality, participation and accountability. On 12 November, the Office and the Europe Office of the Centre for Democracy and Technology co-organized a high-level panel to discuss “Democracy in the digital age,” with the participation of the Deputy President of the European Commission.

Moreover, OHCHR supported monitoring by other actors (CSOs, NHRIs) of the **human rights situation during electoral processes** in Belarus, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guyana, Niger, the Republic of Moldova, the Seychelles, Tanzania, Uganda, the United States of America and Venezuela. The Office provided guidance and supported the development and implementation of electoral engagement strategies and deployed **surge capacity** teams to Côte d'Ivoire, Niger and Uganda in the context of political and electoral violence. In **Côte d'Ivoire**, OHCHR supported the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) to strengthen its human rights analytical capacities in the context of the presidential election on 31 October. In **Niger**, the Office provided technical assistance to the Government, trained national partners on the protection of human rights during elections, including defence and security forces, the National Human Rights Commission, CSOs, women's groups and the media, and monitored the human rights situation to prevent violations and violence during the elections. In **Uganda**, the surge capacity team engaged with the security forces in the context of policing elections. At the beginning of 2021, the Office monitored the human rights situation in the electoral context in cooperation with the Uganda Human Rights Commission.

OHCHR strengthened the capacities of State representatives and civil society on issues related to **participation in protests**. For instance, the Office analysed responses to protests in the Gambia and Morocco, which led to new UN guidance on protests. OHCHR also monitored the post-November 2019 protests in Iran and analysed the laws and policies that contributed to a shrinking civic space, including through the arrest, detention and prosecution of anyone expressing dissenting views against government policies, such as in the context of COVID-19, and the crackdown on CSOs and shutdowns of the Internet/communications. The Office engaged in private and public advocacy and contributed to positive outcomes for two prominent WHRDs.

The Office provided legal advice in constitutional processes in the Gambia, Guinea and Samoa and contributed to the drafting of the **updated Guidance Note on constitution making**, which was released in September.

P2 – PROTECTION of CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS – The UN system and international, regional and national mechanisms provide increased, timely and effective protection to civil society organizations and individuals, including from reprisals.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

OHCHR finalized a **guidance document for the UN system on preventing and addressing reprisals**. In June, the Office organized a consultation with UN partners and distributed the guidance for further refinement and use by UN actors in various contexts, such as peace operations, work on counter-terrorism, development or international finance and work with indigenous peoples. In November, OHCHR developed **supplementary guidance on preventing reprisals in the digital sphere**, contributing to an enhanced understanding, knowledge and preparedness of UN staff to undertake preventive measures to address reprisals. This work extended into a Security Council-focused project on reprisals, which entailed a mapping of Member States and civil society engagement with the Council and its subsidiary bodies in 2020, with guidance on enhancing the protection measures of Member States.

OHCHR organized a high-level side event on “Participation, human rights and the governance challenge ahead” at the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, with the participation of the Secretary-General, youth representatives and civil society actors from around the world. This contributed to the placement of the issue of **participation – both as a human right and as a critical element in combating the COVID-19 pandemic – on the top of the UN's agenda** at its high-level segment.

With support from OHCHR, the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association raised awareness about 164 situations, including 24 cases related to **laws that could have a negative impact on the right to association and on trade unions**, such as legislation in Bulgaria (BGR 3/2020), Guatemala (GTM 2/2020), Honduras (HND 4/2020), Ireland (IRL2/2020), Kyrgyzstan (1/2020), Tanzania (TZA 2/2020) and Ukraine (UKR 2/2020). The Irish Government acknowledged the legitimate concerns in relation to the 1997 Electoral Act and committed to establishing, by the end of 2021, an independent Electoral Commission which will review the Act in its totality, including Section 22. In Tanzania, Mr. Tito Magoti, a human rights lawyer, was released on 5 January 2021. On 31 January 2021, a number of special procedures sent a joint communication to the Government regarding his case and the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued a decision on his case.

P3 – PUBLIC SUPPORT for CIVIC SPACE – Business, policymakers and the public at large increasingly value and support civic space.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

OHCHR contributed to a multitude of interventions of the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General, the High Commissioner, the Deputy High Commissioner, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and other senior officials on issues relating to civic space in different forums, including in sessions and side events of the General Assembly and the HRC and with State representatives during bilateral meetings. In 2020, the crucial role of civil society in the **COVID-19** context was amplified through OHCHR **messaging** that **access to reliable information and the free flow of information** and space for the expression of critical views are key to an effective response and at the core of building back better. The High Commissioner, the Deputy High Commissioner, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and Heads of field presences regularly spoke at civil society events and engaged with civil society representatives.

OHCHR supported **innovative** thinking on **channels to ensure the safe and effective online participation of civil society at the international level**, for instance by facilitating discussions among CSOs that engaged with Geneva-based international human rights mechanisms. Through this advocacy, UN Human Rights drew the attention of UN and Member State partners to the importance of improving accessibility and digital security to ensure the effective engagement of civil society.

In May, UN Human Rights developed a **Guidance Note on civic space and COVID-19**, which was translated into four languages and widely disseminated (it was downloaded approximately 5,000 times by visitors from over 80 countries).

P4 – ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS – Civil society assistance to victims of human rights violations is strengthened.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

With support from OHCHR, the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers maintained and enhanced its partnership with professional organizations and associations of judges, prosecutors and lawyers. The Special Rapporteur participated in several expert meetings, **seminars and workshops** that were organized by **professional associations of judges, prosecutors and lawyers** and by CSOs working in the field of administration of justice.

P5 – CIVIC SPACE MONITORING – More systematic monitoring of the environment for civic space, including threats to it, takes place.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

OHCHR began developing a **tool to monitor civic space online**, in particular **online threats to HRDs and journalists** with a view to better documenting and reporting on such attacks. The tool covers targeted surveillance, where an attacker attempts to steal usernames and passwords or install malware on specific computers, and targeted attacks, such as influence operations that use social media platforms and their supporting algorithms to amplify their content. The Office also promoted active reflection on the most frequent forms of online attacks affecting HRDs and organized a round-table with first responders to online attacks to ensure greater consistency in detection, documentation and reporting on online hostilities against HRDs and journalists.

The Office provided support to CSOs and HRDs in **Hungary**, including by conducting human rights **analysis of new legislation** and its human rights implications in the context of COVID-19 (Act LVIII of 2020 on the Transitional Rules and Epidemiological Preparedness related to the Cessation of the State of Danger in response to the COVID-19 situation) and by carrying out public advocacy to increase awareness about **threats to civil society** posed by this legislation, including to **freedom of expression**.

Through **remote monitoring of open source information** and corroboration with trusted sources, OHCHR documented a significant number of cases of human rights violations in the Human Rights Case Database. This database includes chronological and legal analyses, actions taken, developments and sources. It also enables users to follow individual cases remotely and identify patterns.

P6 – PEOPLE HAVE a VOICE – The voices of people affected by decisions, particularly victims and those who face discrimination, are more clearly heard.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

UN Human Rights expanded its partnerships with international and regional initiatives/organizations dealing with **human rights education and training for youth**. For instance, OHCHR partnered with Columbia University and commissioned a [study on the impact of human rights education and training programmes for children and youth in non-formal education](#). The study was undertaken by a group of graduate students under the guidance of expert faculty advisors from the School of International and Public Affairs and its final report was launched in June. OHCHR also collaborated with the Council of Europe in developing and delivering a pilot global joint training of trainers course on human rights education for young people. The Office supported the participation of young human rights educators from countries such as Cambodia, Fiji, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan and Tunisia. The course aimed at building their competences to develop quality human rights education activities with young people at local/national levels and to advocate for the further mainstreaming of human rights education into youth policy and youth work in their own countries.

In the context of COVID-19, OHCHR redesigned its **Indigenous and Minorities Fellowship Programmes** by selecting 34 of the most successful former fellows to serve as senior fellows. Twenty of the participants were indigenous peoples and 14 represented minorities from 27 countries. The Fellows were posted in 29 locations worldwide, including with field presences, UNCTs and peacekeeping operations.

The Office developed an internal guidance on supporting WHRDs, which was disseminated through a virtual dialogue series and translated into Spanish. In addition, OHCHR developed and widely disseminated a **Brief for the UN system on supporting women human rights defenders** to complement the [Guidance Note on promoting and protecting civic space](#).

OHCHR increased the **capacity** of UN staff, Member States, civil society and others to **deliver impactful human rights education and training** by providing expert advice. The Office advised CSOs and NHRIs on related strategies, methodologies and activities.

P7 – Human rights RESPONSE to VIOLENCE – Public recognition increases that human rights and accountability make important contributions to effective responses to violence, including terrorism and violent extremism.

Shifts / SDGs



Results

The Office increased its engagement with the UN Working Group on partnership with the World Bank in crisis-affected States. This was accomplished by leveraging the preventive utility of human rights, promoting policy coherence to sustain peace and sharing examples of the **collaboration between OHCHR and the World Bank** in the field as well as engagement on fragility, conflict and violence, including on issues related to participation and democratic space.

Organizational effectiveness results

In the following pages, we provide examples of achievements in the implementation of the UN Human Rights 10 Organizational Effectiveness Action Plans (OEAPs) in 2020 (see pp. 86-101 of the report for summary information on progress made towards the achievement of results under the 10 OEAPs).



STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND DIRECTION

UN Human Rights leadership bodies are making timely, evidence-based strategic decisions in line with results-based management (RBM) principles.

- As soon as the pandemic hit Geneva, the Deputy High Commissioner established an **OHCHR COVID-19 Crisis Response Team (CRT)** to handle operational matters. This Team developed the Office's Business Continuity Plan and issued approximately 30 all staff messages, including guidance on telecommuting, returning to the Office, meetings and travel. It replied to individual staff inquiries and concerns within a 24-hour timeframe through the COVID-19 staff email system and facilitated cooperation between different entities to quickly respond and address COVID-19 operational concerns as they emerged. An Intranet site on the COVID-19 response was set up and regularly updated with relevant information for staff.
- Support was provided to managers through the **community of practice LeadingNet** with four sessions on topics such as preventing conflict in the workplace and managing performance, the post-pandemic return to the Office. Sessions were also held with a psychologist to cope with uncertainties.
- A total of 1,450 staff members from 54 headquarters entities and 49 field presences across the Office completed the **Leadership Dialogue on dignity and civility**. This represents 93 per cent of all staff.
- Information about all aspects of the Office's work was shared regularly and in various formats. The **Weekly Update** was enhanced with more user-friendly content and layout, including the systematic sharing of PAG, SMT, PBRB decisions and minutes, information about senior leadership, ongoing office-wide initiatives, external outreach, operational matters and information related to the international human rights mechanisms, thematic issues and field work. A **Weekly News Podcast** was created, providing weekly office-wide updates in audio format, with close to 300 listeners each week. A dedicated podcast app was set up for internal purposes. The News Podcast was complemented by other internal podcast "channels," offering resources such as interviews and recordings of webinars and events.
- Following the implementation of actions from previous surveys, the **2020 OHCHR All Staff Survey** was launched. For the first time, a professional survey company was employed to ensure the safe handling of data and to meet industry standards. The analytical reports will enable action planning on key areas.
- The pandemic offered us unexpected opportunities to be more innovative and inclusive in our internal working modalities. In the generalized teleworking context, OHCHR's **governance bodies meetings** were shifted to an entirely virtual format, leading to a boost in participation. More broadly, the Office underwent an analytical process to assess its use of technology. This resulted in a decision to make major changes to our IT environment in 2021 in order to facilitate internal operations.
- OHCHR engaged with the new **United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework** by joining internal capacity-building efforts and outlining the links between OHCHR's (country) programmes and the CCAs and UNSDCFs. As a result, over 65 Common Country Analysis and Cooperation Framework processes were supported to integrate human rights analysis and recommendations.
- Following an office-wide consultation process, the **UN Human Rights Risk Management Plan, including a Risk Register**, which identifies the most critical risks for the Office and mitigation measures, was finalized. Sixteen risks

were identified during the risk assessment process - four very high risks, four high risks and eight medium risks. The Office also provided inputs to the UN Secretariat Risk Register on the Secretary-General's Strategic Focus Areas and Critical Risks regarding the risk analysis related to priority 3 (the continued protection of human rights), which is one of the Secretary-General's six priorities.

- UN Human Rights prepared an **Organizational Governance Improvement Framework** to review potential decisions and actions in relation to the roles of senior leadership, accountability, direction, resources and performance, ethical governance culture and stakeholder engagement, risks and internal control, counter-fraud and corruption, independent audits and inspections.
- Four independent **evaluations** were finalized and the implementation of the recommendations derived from the evaluation of RBM in OHCHR began with the preparation of the Office's Programming Manual and the revision of the RBM training package.



DYNAMIC KNOWLEDGE

UN Human Rights' knowledge base is used strategically to actively shape programming, capacity, culture and structure.

- UN Human Rights developed **tools and methods** to support the **shift to remote events, consultations and collaboration** and to **document good practices** in terms of human rights-based responses to the pandemic, with a focus on ESCRs. The Office used a form of collective intelligence called 'crowdsourcing' to collect promising practices and share key messages with partners to support human rights-based responses to COVID-19 at the national level. The COVID-19 Tracker (see p.23) was designed as a system to store data in a structured way and make it accessible across the organization. The Office embarked on its own Build Back Better Tech exercise to analyse its tech needs and the lessons learned from remote work and to identify solutions for work digitalization.
- OHCHR accelerated the move to online training by piloting its **first fully remote human rights monitoring course**. Leveraging the good practices developed in the first part of the year, the Office delivered the six-week course to 24 colleagues in 16 field presences and headquarters, who practiced key tasks like conducting remote interviews and using open source methods of verification.
- OHCHR partnered with the University of Geneva to conduct an office-wide study about staff learning practices and preferences, which led to the development and adoption of an **OHCHR e-learning strategy**.

- Building on its knowledge management work and the new working modalities that were adopted in the context of COVID-19, the Office organized a **series of global webinars on COVID-19 human rights-based responses**. It created new online thematic discussion spaces and facilitated regular outreach activities and debates at the global, regional and country levels. It engaged partners to connect policy development and practices in order to address human rights concerns in response to the pandemic.
- The Office continued to develop a new innovative **onboarding process** called "Welcome Mat," to help welcome new staff to the organization. The process will be rolled out at the beginning of 2021.
- In 2020, OHCHR was an active member of the **UN inter-agency Knowledge Management Network** and contributed to the Africa UN Knowledge Hub for COVID-19. In addition, the Office supported the creation of a UN inter-agency group with DCO, DPPA/DPO, IOM, UNICEF, UN Women and the World Bank that submitted a knowledge management proposal to the UN Build Back Better Challenge. The project will be implemented in 2021, with a focus on developing an inter-agency toolkit to assess the impact of the use of knowledge.

- UN Human Rights staff created **Yammer groups** to share information and experiences. For instance, staff working within the framework of the **G5 Sahel Joint Force Compliance Framework Project** used a Yammer group to facilitate knowledge management and access to information across the three continents where the project operates. At headquarters, the Treaty Body Capacity-Building Programme created a Yammer group called “**Engaging with human rights mechanisms**” to share information on the work of the human rights treaty bodies, the HRC, the UPR and the special procedures and on the implementation of their respective outcomes. The group enabled its members to share good practices and lessons learned, new ideas, developments, events and activities of the international human rights mechanisms; fostered exchanges between the field and headquarters and the dissemination of tools on engaging with the mechanisms and implementing their outcomes; and enhanced support between colleagues.



INNOVATION

Across UN Human Rights, innovation is encouraged, supported and its results are implemented accordingly.

- Two of the four winning proposals from the 2019 **Innovation Challenge** were implemented in 2020, namely, “Ditch UNfair Internships” and “Technology as a source for good: Automatizing the UHRI.” “**Ditch UNFair Internships**” aimed to provide an opportunity for qualified students from the Global South to intern at OHCHR in Geneva as a concrete contribution to ensuring greater diversity, equality and Dignity@Work in the Office. Seed funds from the challenge helped to create, for the first time, university UNV positions at OHCHR in Geneva to provide financial support to university students working in the Office. The pilot will be scaled up to a full programme in 2021 in order to bring at least five university UNVs per year to OHCHR in Geneva. This will be the first programme of its type to be implemented at the UN in Geneva. Other parts of the UN Secretariat are now looking to replicate the initiative. “**Technology as a source for good: Automatizing the UHRI**” aimed to automate the process of updating the Universal Human Rights Index, thereby eliminating the need for staff to manually fill in Excel spreadsheets. The UHRI team collaborated with Geneva-based HURIDOCS, a CSO that supports human rights organizations to manage information, and developed three AI-based text classification models to identify: 1) human rights themes; 2) concerned groups; and 3) linkages with the SDGs. The models are up and running and their suggestions have sped up the indexing process.

- In November, the 2020 **OHCHR Innovation Challenge** was launched with the theme of “**Building Back Better.**” Seed funding will be provided to the winners to support the implementation of their initiatives.
- In May, the **Innovation Engine** core group reconvened and communicated with staff through the Weekly Update and on Yammer to re-invigorate interest in innovation. The Innovation Engine also partnered with the University of Geneva to deliver several projects related to e-learning, gaming for rights, data visualization for human rights and the onboarding of new colleagues. Other projects were developed in partnership with the University of Geneva for implementation in 2021, including tracking astroturfing campaigns, web scraping for indicator production, visioning sustainable environmental management and human rights and digitizing the gender accreditation programme.
- UN Human Rights developed and initiated the implementation of a technology education strategy for 2020-2021 to enable colleagues across the organization to increasingly apply **technology in human rights training work** and to support impactful learning. In 2020, the Office established a unified OHCHR learning management system (using Moodle), developed an online resource for staff on incorporating technology into human rights training and delivered blended human rights training courses for the first time.

- OHCHR developed a web-based module to support coordinators in **drafting and clustering UPR recommendations**, which are formulated during sessions of the Working Group, and producing the Working Group's reports. This will enable staff to use IT solutions to reduce the time and effort needed to produce such documents. As a first step, a tool was produced to automatically tag and cluster recommendations to help the States under review more easily take a position on the recommendations.



SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

UN Human Rights is set on a path to global leadership in sustainable environmental management (SEM), catalysing efforts to build back better and strengthening partnerships and global standard-setting, especially with regard to the right to a healthy environment and climate change.

- In 2020, UN Human Rights created a **Working Group on Sustainable Environmental Management**, with four sub-groups aimed at: 1) institutionalizing and improving environmental sustainability across the Office by **drafting a new OEAP** on sustainable environmental management and identifying solutions for integrating environmental sustainability into existing OEAPs; 2) compiling **good practices** on SEM in the field and at headquarters and facilitating their replication across the Office; 3) identifying a **vision** and benchmarks to set OHCHR on a path to global leadership in SEM; and 4) informing and engaging all staff members through effective **internal communications**.
- The **new OEAP on SEM** was adopted at the end of 2020. First steps were taken to create awareness about the need for SEM change within the Office and whole-of-office consultations were initiated to ensure buy-in and accountability by all, create an internal network of SEM focal points and identify good practices. A decision was adopted to reduce staff travel by 50 per cent in 2021 (with reference to 2019). At the end of 2020, the Working Group on SEM had approximately 50 members.

- UN Human Rights joined a climate action initiative called **2050Today**. This initiative, led by the Mission of Switzerland, aims to make Geneva a world leader in reducing and ending carbon emissions. The Office is also a member of the UN-wide Issue Management Group for Sustainable Management and the Greening the Blue community, both of which engage and support the UN system in the transition towards greater environmental sustainability in the management of its facilities and operations.



EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

The human rights impact and messages of UN Human Rights are effectively communicated, helping to position it as a partner of choice for its key stakeholders.

- The **visual identity** exercise that UN Human Rights began in 2018 finally concluded with the launch of a new brand manual. The new manual is more modern and will enhance the storytelling of the Office.
- The **growth** of all **social media channels** throughout the year, including at headquarters and in the field, is illustrated by a combined number of 9.7m followers. A total of 7.05m are followers of the headquarters channels. The numbers for central OHCHR accounts are: Twitter: 3.1m followers (in English only); Facebook: 2.55m followers (2.45m English, 90k Arabic, 4.6k Spanish, 2.1k French); Instagram: 1.27m followers (1.2m English, 72k Spanish); and LinkedIn: 94k followers. A new Twitter account was set up for the human rights treaty bodies, following the creation of an account for the special procedures in 2018.
- The **Web Transformation Project**, which began in 2019, continued, with a focus on content revision, governance, procurement and taxonomy. Work on visual design, technical development and migration commenced in the second half of the year. The main objective of the project is to launch a new user-friendly OHCHR website in 2021 that leverages current technology and is effectively governed.
- The communication efforts around COVID-19 included an **international solidarity campaign** that showcased how people were standing up for each other during the crisis by putting human rights at the heart of the response. In parallel, “Voices from the field” showcased staff work in the context of the pandemic. On International Migrants Day, the Office launched a toolbox and a global campaign, **#Standup4Migrants**, on how to change the narrative on migration, which will be rolled out throughout 2021. A series of targeted campaigns were organized in the field, including a campaign on people on the move (returned migrants) in Honduras (255,000 Facebook users reached), a campaign on the Guiding Principles for the Search for Disappeared Persons in Mexico (700,000 Facebook users reached) and a campaign on the right to water and the right to health in Kenya.
- OHCHR also enhanced its **audiovisual storytelling** to support its media outreach activities. The Office produced 548 video stories, which included campaigns, human interest and feature stories, human rights defender profiles, a record number of video messages from the High Commissioner (138) as well as news stories and briefings. Of these, UNIFEED distributed 74 stories that were used by 205 television stations, more than 1,000 times.
- Throughout the year, the Office developed **innovative partnerships to reach new audiences**. This included: a photo challenge with photographer Justin Wu (“World is in our hands”); the production of GIFs with GIPHY (the world’s largest GIF platform); a partnership with Kahoot (an education platform), which promoted OHCHR educational quizzes about COVID-19 and human rights in English, French and Spanish; the creation of articles about **#RecoverBetter** on various human rights themes with the Wikimedia Foundation; the celebration of artists who promote social justice through their music with the High Note Global Initiative; an international photo contest with Photography 4 Humanity (calling on photographers around the world to bring to life the power of human rights); the creation of an orchestral work on the basis of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with Max Richter, a highly accomplished classical composer (“Voices”); and a partnership with Salesforce, a tech company, to make human rights knowledge more accessible to all.
- The **high number of media articles** generated by the Office reflects strong storytelling and clear and effective messaging geared to the needs and requirements of the news media. A total of 38,922 articles were generated in 2020, the third highest number on record, after a record high of 61,015 in 2019 and 41,629 in 2018. This marks a 62 per cent increase over the 2017 annual total. From March until June, OHCHR produced numerous COVID-19-related materials, several of which received substantial pick-up by the media, in particular those related to detention facilities and the impacts of the pandemic on racial and ethnic minorities.

- OHCHR continued to develop the **Human Rights Council** dedicated website, first launched in 2018, and introduced features that gave the HRC and its mechanisms a distinguishable identity, as they are sometimes confused with UN Human Rights. With support from the UPR Trust Funds, the Office prepared **infographics** on trends between the second and third UPR cycles. In addition, the OHCHR library catalogued 32.5 hours of digitized audio statements that were delivered during the **World Conference on Human Rights** (Vienna, 1993) and launched a research guide on the World Conference.
- The Office developed outreach strategies to increase support for its work in targeted areas. For instance, 24 new information materials were designed on the **environment and climate change** and a quarterly Environmental Rights Bulletin was created with UNEP. The **#Faith4Rights toolkit** was launched on the OHCHR website, with case studies, resources and artistic expressions that provide ideas for peer discussions on the relationship between religions, beliefs and human rights. The launch of the toolkit reached 240,000 Instagram users within 24 hours and received more than 20,000 likes.



PARTNERSHIPS

UN Human Rights has broadened and diversified its institutional partners and maximized the mutually reinforcing human rights benefits of the exchange of expertise, reach and resources.

- UN Human Rights partnered with UNESCO on a joint programme aimed at stepping up efforts to foster **independent and free media** and public recognition of the value of access to information. It is also focused on the prevention of, protection from and accountability for violations against journalists, with a special focus on women journalists.
- In 2020, the Office partnered with the IPU and the **Organisation internationale de la Francophonie** (OIF) to enhance the **participation of parliamentarians in the UPR** process, including through the organization with the IPU of two significant virtual events with parliamentarians in Member Countries of the Commonwealth. Participants included the Secretary General of the IPU, the President of the HRC, the High Commissioner and the Commonwealth Secretariat. In cooperation with the IPU and the OIF for the **French version**, the Office produced a publication entitled *UPR Tips for Members of Parliament*. OHCHR also finalized its *UPR Practical Guidance*, which was developed with the EOSG, UNDP, DPPA/DPO, OCHA and other UN entities and provides advice on UN engagement at the country level to support the implementation of accepted UPR recommendations by Member States.

- UN Human Rights launched the **B-Tech Project** to advance the embedding of respect for human rights in business practices in the area of digital technology. The participation of tech companies in the project enabled the Office to engage a new constituency with cutting-edge expertise on **business and human rights in the digital space**. It also led to the adoption of a series of short authoritative “foundational papers” that outline the relevance and practical implications of key UNGPs for accelerating the uptake of human rights in tech company business models.
- The High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Secretary-General of the OIF renewed the cooperation agreement between their organizations for another two years in order to promote multilingualism in the human rights system, with a focus on diversity and the fight against all forms of discrimination. UN Human Rights participated in virtual workshops organized by the OIF, in particular for Least Developed Countries/Small Island Developing States. During HRC sessions, the HRC Help Desk for Small States provided information and expert advice on the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms in French.

- The Office enhanced its partnership with UNEP to intensify its work on the right to a healthy environment. Both organizations established a joint community of practice and created a new quarterly Environmental Rights Bulletin. In Somalia, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between UNEP and OHCHR to undertake an impact assessment of environmental degradation on the human rights of vulnerable Somali communities. In Southeast Asia, both organizations strengthened their work on climate action, the sustainable management of natural resources and the protection of environmental HRDs. In addition, the Regional Office partnered with the Raoul Wallenberg Institute on capacity-building activities for NHRIs and the judiciary on the promotion of the right to a healthy environment.



DIVERSITY AND GENDER

Respect for diversity, gender equality and inclusion is at the centre of UN Human Rights' organizational culture and is fully supported by appropriate organizational arrangements.

- In 2020, UN Human Rights rolled out its **Gender Accreditation Programme** in the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in **Ukraine** (HRMMU) and in its Country Office in **Colombia**. The impact of the implementation of the Programme is visible in the OHCHR offices in Cambodia and the State of Palestine, the two pilot offices that are now accredited. More specifically, there is an improvement of the staff's capacities to integrate gender and diversity into their work, an increase of activities and funds that are allocated to women's rights and gender issues and a deepened gender analysis in reports, planning and communication products. The awards ceremony of the pilot offices took place on 30 January, in the presence of the High Commissioner. The Gender Accreditation Programme was showcased in the annual report of the Secretary-General on women, peace and security as a good practice to strengthen accountability.
- Through a **new fellowship for LGBTI HRDs**, the first fellow, a trans HRD, joined the Office in 2020 and contributed to OHCHR's work by conducting research and monitoring the situation of LGBTI persons, providing support to field presences and substantive inputs into OHCHR publications and undertaking advocacy on the rights of LGBTI persons. The second round of the LGBTI fellowship programme will be launched in 2021.

- In May, OHCHR launched an **introductory electronic course on the human rights of LGBTI persons** to equip staff and others with information on key terms and concepts related to LGBTI persons, harmful myths and stereotypes, human rights violations faced by LGBTI persons, the role of the UN and steps that UN officials and others can take to tackle violence and discrimination against LGBTI persons. More than 300 learners registered for the course and the Office worked on an in-person training package on the rights of LGBTI persons.
- Following the launch of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS), in June 2019, with a view to enhancing the work of the UN system to better include persons with disabilities in programmatic and operational work, **UN Human Rights** reported for the first time, in 2020, on 13 relevant indicators that were grouped into four core areas. Building on the 2019 report, UN Human Rights took remedial action and adopted its first **Disability Rights Strategy**, which includes a 10-year policy, a five-year strategic document and a one-year action plan. This will enable the Office to have a consistent pattern of growth, leading to transformational change. As a consequence, OHCHR advanced its performance on four indicators: #1 Leadership from missing to exceeds requirements; #3 Disability-specific policy/strategy from approaches to exceeds requirements; #10 Evaluation from approaches to meets requirements; and #13 Employment from missing to approaches requirements. In the field, OHCHR took steps to implement the UNDIS. For instance, in **Barbados, Bangladesh, Guyana, Madagascar, Malawi, the Republic of North Macedonia, Papua New Guinea**

and the **Republic of Moldova**, the HRAs were appointed as the disability inclusion focal points for the UN and led the pilot roll-out of the UNDIS scorecard. In addition, the Disability Rights Community of Practice was created in early 2021 to increase support to field presences and improve knowledge management.

- UN Human Rights is approaching **gender parity** for regular staff appointments at the professional and higher categories, i.e., within the 47 to 53 per cent margin prescribed by the UN system-wide strategy on gender parity. In fact, women now account for over 56 per cent of staff. While their representation improved across all levels at headquarters (aided by temporary special measures applied to selections and appointments), senior level appointments at the P-5 level (39 per cent) and D-1 level (31 per cent) require additional investment. An improvement in the representation of women across all levels in field presences is needed.
- With regard to selections, the Office made significant progress on the **disaggregation of diversity and gender data**. Information on geographical diversity and gender parity was recorded for regular and non-regular appointments for all staff categories at all levels. Utilizing up-to-date data that were extracted from Umoja, managers were afforded greater visibility at the divisional and service level. The development of a Power Business Intelligence tool provided further transparency through the provision of information on gender parity, equitable geographical representation, regional group representation and Member State desirable ranges. Quarterly reports on staff movements (regular recruitments, lateral transfers, promotions and separations/resignations) were issued to all staff and include information on the overall

geographical distribution and gender representation in OHCHR.

- The 2019 **Diversity Dialogue** was concluded in 2020. An analysis of the staff consultation exercise provided an insight into how OHCHR staff viewed diversity in the Office. More than 60 individual dialogues were registered, with the participation of 760 staff from all divisions and services in the field and at headquarters. Issues raised included a greater definition of diversity, the impact diversity can have on human rights work and tensions between diversity and merit.
- The Office created a new set of institutional arrangements to build an inclusive culture and respectful workplace. A dedicated **Working Group on Inclusion**, composed of over 40 staff members, was established. The Working Group is utilizing the results of the Diversity Dialogue to inform the development of the new OEAP on Inclusion, which is essential to diversifying the demographic profile of the Office. Emphasis will be placed on addressing racial discrimination and promoting the inclusion of intersectional approaches to advance gender equality and respect for diversity. In addition, the Office will hire a **Senior Diversity and Inclusion Adviser** to support a more diverse workforce through a systematic integration of gender, geography, race and other factors into the human resources cycle.
- The Office promoted ethical and professional standards, integrity and respect towards all participants in **HRC sessions** and disseminated the **Secretary-General's Code of Conduct on Harassment, including Sexual Harassment**, among delegations. Efforts were initiated to make gender equality more explicit in the work of the two **UPR Trust Funds**.



MANAGING OUR TALENT

UN Human Rights is actively unleashing the full potential of its staff, with focused talent and career management accessible to all.

- In 2020, OHCHR continued to invest in and realize the full potential of its staff alongside the challenges of alternate working arrangements and imposed restrictions on selections and appointments for regular budget posts due to the pandemic. The **regularization of national staff** in field offices was concluded as part of an overall effort to improve the conditions of service of field-based staff. The second phase of the **General Service staff review** at headquarters finalized a comparative review of roles and responsibilities across the Office. A third and final phase will undertake a reclassification and realignment exercise of posts.
- Positive efforts continued in 2020 to create a working environment where all staff feel equally valued and respected. Progress was achieved in the implementation of the internal framework, known as the **UN Human Rights Dignity@Work Policy and Action Plan**, improving standards of conduct and value-based behaviour in the workplace. Regional **expansion of the Dignity Contacts Network** provided staff with nearly 30 active Dignity Contacts whom they can approach if they have a concern about their treatment in the workplace.

- In support of the United Nations System Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy, OHCHR introduced a **Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plan** that sets out measures to improve access to psychosocial resources, promote health services, provide preparedness and critical incident training and ensure the wider integration of well-being into management frameworks. The introduction of dedicated psychological support strengthened the mental health of staff working remotely under alternate working arrangements.
- With enforced remote working, the Office promoted **workplace flexibility measures** and included the implementation of all available flexible working arrangements to assist staff in balancing their professional and personal obligations. Telecommuting from outside of the official duty station was supported and extensively used during the reporting period.
- Despite the challenging situation in 2020, OHCHR staff members continued to deliver exceptional performance throughout the year. Particular focus was placed on supporting staff members through **online e-performance management briefings in English, French and Spanish**. The possibility of attending performance management training sessions, in Spanish, for the first time this year, was greatly appreciated, especially by 47 staff members based in the Americas region. Furthermore, individual coaching sessions were offered to 95 field- and 171 headquarters-based staff to help support managers and staff members throughout the performance cycle.



RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Investment in and support for UN Human Rights has expanded and donors are expressing confidence in the value delivered by these investments.

- **Total voluntary contributions** amounted to **US\$224.3 million**, representing an increase of 25.3 per cent compared to 2019. In 2020, 78 donors contributed, including 61 Member States. In addition, a deepening of partnerships with the UN Multi-Partner Trust Funds, including the Human Rights Mainstreaming and Peacebuilding Funds, led to a significant increase of contributions received, from US\$10.2 million in 2019 to US\$16.1 million in 2020. Donors, however, continued moving towards further earmarking their contributions. In 2020, the percentage of received unearmarked contributions dropped to its lowest level since 2006 (28 per cent unearmarked contributions versus 72 per cent earmarked contributions). Notwithstanding the difficulties created by COVID-19, the Office managed to maintain a strong relationship with its donors. It provided regular updates on OHCHR's work through nine consultations and 13 briefings. A total of 90 funding agreements were also signed in 2020. Efforts to reach out to non-traditional donors bore some fruit and materialized with the signing of four new funding opportunities with grant-making foundations.

- UN Human Rights applied a **results-based management approach** to its fundraising proposals. This proved to be critical in building the trust of donors and increasing accountability. The Office submitted to donors 119 funding proposals, including nine for the COVID-19 compendium, which raised US\$5.8 million. OHCHR also drafted 167 results-based reports and 17 results frameworks. The Office enhanced the development of funding proposals that target specific **spotlight populations**: 1) **Youth** (an MoU was signed with two Qatari organizations – Education Above All and Silatech – to promote and protect the rights of young people, achieve progress on youth components of the 2030 Agenda and implement the United Nations Youth Strategy); 2) **Persons with disabilities** (a joint submission was made to the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Multi-Partner Trust Fund with ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO, UN Women, UNFPA and UNDESA to support the design and implementation of disability-inclusive COVID-19 responses at the country level); and 3) **Women** (gender-sensitive results frameworks developed in 2020 led to increased financial support from the Government of Canada).
- Storytelling continued to be a priority for OHCHR to help humanize its work and increase support from external audiences and donors. During the year, **human interest stories** were collected from across the Office to showcase the positive impact of its work on people's lives. Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, the five prioritized stories had to be prepared remotely. They presented the results of the work of UN Human Rights on COVID-19, its impacts on human rights and on COVID-19 and

ESCRs and the results of the work of the Office in Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon and Sudan.

- The OHCHR *Case for Support brochure* was printed and made available on OHCHR's website. Both digital and printed versions were distributed through outreach efforts with stakeholders from the private sector. Avenues of collaboration were explored with several **private sector stakeholders** and due diligence was conducted on 10 leads. One partnership was concretized with Vodafone in support of the B-Tech Project. The Office also materialized four new funding opportunities with foundations for a total of US\$730,000. Individuals also donated on OHCHR's website, with a steady increase in monthly donations throughout 2020.
- The **first phase** of the development of the **customer relationship management platform, Salesforce**, was fully implemented. The platform is used by UN Human Rights to record and follow-up on contributions received in 2020 and to input interactions with donors. Its implementation enables the Office to have timely and accurate information on contributions and related financial aspects, gather donor intelligence and support decision-making and resource mobilization efforts. It is expected that the system will be rolled out to OHCHR managers, selected headquarters entities and field presences in 2021.



OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

UN Human Rights managers are enabling the most efficient and responsible use of all available resources, supported by the effective deployment of relevant technologies.

- UN Human Rights **revised** and finalized the **Field Administrative Manual**, which will be launched in 2021. The updated Manual will serve as a useful tool for staff in the field, as it sets out all the information that is relevant to carrying out administrative functions in OHCHR field presences, ensuring the easy availability of guidance for staff and enhanced accountability for managers. The update of the Manual responds to recommendations from internal and external auditors for improved guidance for staff and managers in OHCHR presences around the world.
- The **OHCHR Intranet was updated** to improve access for all OHCHR staff globally and to enhance the user-friendliness and accessibility of internal information.
- During 2020, the **AdminNet community of practice** continued to support the administrative staff of OHCHR around the world. It was particularly useful during the pandemic, as many staff were working remotely. Thanks to this online community, colleagues were able to meet regularly and use the online platform to facilitate their work with limited disruption. A total of 10 online meetings took place throughout the year, during which issues related to finance, human resources, field staff reviews, cost plans and performance management were covered. Special problem-solving sessions were also organized to enhance the work with counterparts in UNDP.

- The **correspondence management system (eMemo)** was developed and piloted to manage correspondence sent from within the Office to the administration. The system, which provides standard templates to facilitate the preparation of requests and their processing, will be launched in 2021. Experience during the pandemic clearly demonstrated the value and need for the electronic processing of requests and demands.
- Due to the pandemic, all official air travel was essentially suspended from mid-March until the end of the year. The HRC's March session was suspended and those who had travelled to Geneva with support from OHCHR had to travel back early. In mid-May, **the Office signed up to the COVID-19 Aviation Service**. Its travel unit effectively became an internal UN travel agent and ensured that seats could be booked on World Food Programme/United Nations Humanitarian Air Service flights for urgent official travel when no commercial alternatives were available.
- An extensive **study** was completed on **UN procurement practices** and ways to ensure their compliance with international human rights standards. Funds were allocated to begin this process.