



Highlights of results

UN Human Rights team visiting the indigenous communities of Q'eqchi in Petén, Guatemala, to listen to their concerns and human rights challenges faced. © OHCHR

Human rights at the heart of the response: Key figures

GUIDANCE, COOPERATION AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT



Guidance and cooperation

1 strategy for engagement

(on COVID-19 for 2021 and beyond; for field presences to enhance engagement on vaccines, social protection, health and other economic and social rights)

2 COVID-19 specific resolutions (approved by the HRC on equitable access to vaccines (A/HRC/RES/46/14) and on human rights implications of the pandemic on young people (A/HRC/RES/48/12))



Socio-economic response to COVID-19

24 strategic engagements

(with RCO economists on human rights-based transformative economies)

7 seeding-change country projects

(for the integration of economic and social rights, including human rights-based transformative economies)

1 ECOSOC report

(on OHCHR's Surge Initiative efforts to place economic and social rights at the heart of the UN's building back better efforts)

MONITORING AND REPORTING



Persons in detention

At least **62,300** persons benefited from urgent release/alternatives to detention

AWARENESS-RAISING AND ADVOCACY



Engagement by human rights mechanisms

Human rights treaty bodies

5 legal guidance documents issued:

- CESCR: Statement and guidance on universal affordable vaccination for COVID-19, international cooperation and intellectual property
- CED-WGEID: Joint statement and guidance on connection between enforced disappearance and economic, social and cultural rights
- 2 SPT Advices issued (under OP-CAT article 11(1)(b)):
 - a) SPT follow-up advice on COVID-19
 - b) The protocol for NPMs to visit under COVID-19
- CMW: Legal guidance note on equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines for migrants

ADJUSTING WORKING METHODS



Human Rights Council

Annual programme of work completed

(remotely or in a hybrid format)



Treaty bodies

78% of work online **22%** in hybrid format or in person



Human rights training

More than **3,400** workshops delivered, approximately **30%** of which were online



Engagement with human rights mechanisms

Creation of online platform and simplified guidelines (for submission of written statements by NGOs and publication of virtual events for NGOs)

Our COVID-19 response: Examples of UN Human Rights actions

In 2021, COVID-19 and its impacts continued to affect communities around the world, with the brunt of the negative effects falling on the most vulnerable. The UN Human Rights COVID-19 Strategy 2021-2022 aims to respond to the needs of the most affected populations and places them at the heart of recovery efforts. To this end, UN Human Rights' strategy outlines four focus areas that identify needs, opportunities and priority activities.

FOCUS AREA 1

ENHANCED ENGAGEMENT ON VACCINES, SOCIAL PROTECTION, HEALTH AND OTHER ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RIGHTS

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the weaknesses of social and economic systems that made insufficient investments in their fundamental public services, such as health care and social protection. The Secretary-General's Common Agenda and New Social Contract elevated social protection and universal health coverage as global priorities that are critical for facilitating access to health care, protecting people against poverty and ensuring the enjoyment of basic economic and social rights, including food, water, housing, health and education.

The pandemic also revealed vaccine inequity as a key challenge in building back better. In addition, incidents of gender-based violence (GBV) spiked during the pandemic, particularly domestic violence and child marriage. Sexual and reproductive health services were not considered as basic and essential health services in most COVID-19 responses, resulting in an increase in maternal mortality rates and unmet needs related to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

UN Human Rights will advocate with stakeholders, including governments, civil society and UN entities, in order to: promote the health and protection of particularly vulnerable populations, raise awareness about the impacts of COVID-19 and highlight the importance of social protection in COVID-19 recovery and overcome economic crises.

UN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIONS

In 2021, UN Human Rights engaged and advocated with relevant stakeholders to promote the health and protection of vulnerable populations and to raise awareness about the impacts of COVID-19. In the **Republic of Moldova**, the capacities of 50 representatives of the NGO Task Force on COVID-19 and Human Rights were strengthened on protection measures. A set of 5,700 materials, including 1,600 leaflets and 4,100 informative briefs on COVID-19, were distributed through the NGO Task Force to vulnerable groups (Roma, persons with disabilities, older persons, families with many children). In **Ukraine**, UN Human Rights advocated with State and local authorities to undertake additional measures for protecting the life and health of homeless people, especially during COVID-19, which resulted in the opening of homeless shelters in Zaporizhzhia and Melitopol and unblocked funding for another shelter in Sumy. In **Panama**, a short film and related digital materials on the differentiated impacts of COVID-19 on LGBTI persons were produced and disseminated through social networks to raise the profile of the human rights concerns of LGBTI persons and support their efforts to bring about legal change and more inclusive public policies for tackling the pandemic. In the **State of Palestine**,¹ information on COVID-19, including on psychological and social support services from the government and NGOs, was prepared in an accessible format for persons with disabilities and their families and widely distributed. The campaign was promoted on social media channels, amassing more than 230,000 views, and on Palestinian Television, government and CSO channels. In **Burundi**, an awareness-raising session was delivered to penitentiary personnel and detainees of the Bubanza prison in West Burundi on measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 and to protect detainees. In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, **Madagascar** and **Somalia**, OHCHR advocated with authorities on measures to reduce overcrowding in prisons in the context of COVID-19. Over 3,200 inmates were consequently released from several prisons in the DRC, over 10,400 convicted detainees were granted pardons in Madagascar and 80 detainees were released in Somalia.

UN Human Rights developed guidelines and advocacy messages for field presences on vaccine equity and affordable access to all without discrimination. In **Cambodia**, UN Human Rights advocated for the rights of detainees and prisoners and their access to humanitarian assistance in the context of COVID-19 and to ensure that they receive adequate health care, including through access to tests and vaccines. As a result, the vaccination of all detainees was largely completed by the end of August. In **Iraq**, an awareness-raising campaign was undertaken in collaboration with six Iraqi NGO partners. This enabled UN Human Rights to inform minority communities about the impacts of COVID-19, health protection measures and vaccination. More than 17,000 posters were translated into six minority languages and distributed throughout 25 districts. Also in Iraq, social media campaigns were launched, 20 graphic illustrations encouraging vaccination were disseminated and a “Mask Up” campaign on protection measures reached over 160,000 viewers.

¹ All references to the State of Palestine should be understood in compliance with General Assembly resolution 67/19.

Art gives a glimmer of colour and hope amid the pandemic in Iraq

While COVID-19 cases continued to be registered in Iraq's capital of Baghdad, artists joined forces to bring the human rights impacts of the virus into the public consciousness.

Across 10 Baghdad neighbourhoods, nearly 20 murals, ranging from 20 to 45 metres in height, were painted on more than half a kilometre of city walls, including on the walls of medical clinics, schools, a university, a local government building and on the side of a bridge.

The murals brought to light a number of issues, with a particular focus on access to health care, and highlighted a “collective responsibility to speak up.”

In addition, to mark Human Rights Day, another 45 metres of wall were transformed into colourful information boards to reinforce the awareness-raising campaign about the human rights impacts of COVID-19. Four murals were painted under the Forest Tunnel in Mosul city, in the Ninewa Governorate, and six murals can be found in the Al-Kut city centre, in the Wasit Governorate.

The projects were initiated in October 2020 by the NGO, Imprint of Hope, with the support of UN Human Rights.

“Public art is an effective tool to provoke discussion on the human rights dimensions of COVID-19, including the increased risk of domestic violence, stigma, discrimination, access to health care for women and girls and access to education for all Iraqi children,” said Danielle Bell, Chief of the UN Human Rights Office in Iraq.

“The neighbourhood murals are a powerful reminder that we are united in the fight against COVID-19,” she added.

To complement the mural project, 19 Imprint of Hope volunteers, including three women, distributed 10,000 postcards depicting the images and messages of the mural paintings to three Baghdad neighbourhoods.



A volunteer taking part in the mural project. © OHCHR



The picture urges “Stop domestic violence, it destroys families!” © OHCHR



The picture depicts the pervasive stigma related to COVID-19 in Iraq.

A customer at a tea stand says that he must leave because of an approaching person who he believes could have the virus. The tea seller discourages the customer from approaching everyone with fear and states that by collectively following the instructions of health authorities, “we will get through this together.” © OHCHR



A mural illustrating a family impacted by COVID-19. © OHCHR



Volunteers distributing postcards.
© OHCHR



The mural illustrates the community fighting together against the pandemic. © OHCHR

FOCUS AREA 2

BUILDING BACK BETTER: INTEGRATING HUMAN RIGHTS INTO RECOVERY, INCLUDING MACROECONOMIC POLICIES AND STRUCTURAL REFORM

COVID-19 emergency responses and recovery efforts are not being integrated into the long-term structural changes that are needed for health, education, housing, employment, social protection measures and policies. Existing responses and efforts do not sufficiently address the significant setbacks in women's economic security and livelihood and fail to include women in policymaking, despite the disproportionate impacts of the crisis on women and girls. Furthermore, there is recognition that economic transformation is needed to tackle inequalities and invest in health and social protection.

UN Human Rights will promote a human rights-based recovery from COVID-19, including through the implementation of the UN Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights and Our Common Agenda. Further, through its Surge Initiative to accelerate the realization of economic and social rights and create conditions to build back better, Leave No One Behind (LNOB) and reduce inequalities, OHCHR will strengthen engagement at the country level, working closely with UNCTs and in the context of Common Country Analyses (CCAs) and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs).

UN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIONS

Through the Surge Initiative, UN Human Rights implemented eight projects aimed at building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic, including by undertaking more targeted analysis on groups left behind, building disaggregated datasets and evidence to advise States, UNCTs, CSOs and other national partners and stakeholders on human rights-based socio-economic responses. For example, in **Ukraine**, UN Human Rights carried out human rights analyses of 10 municipal budgets in relation to social protection, including by considering whether such budgetary processes and related structures enable the effective participation of affected rights-holders, particularly the most marginalized. In **Nepal**, UN Human Rights identified and costed the minimum essential elements of the right to adequate health for three marginalized communities of women working in the informal sector, with an emphasis on sexual and reproductive health.

By supporting human rights integration into the recovery efforts of UNCTs in **Kenya and Zambia**, UN Human Rights contributed to the development of new CCAs to ensure the integration of human rights analysis and priorities, with a focus on inequalities and the LNOB principle, the incorporation of inputs derived from a human rights-based analysis of their respective budgets and the importance of considering the human rights situation and impacts of COVID-19 on marginalized communities. In **Zambia**, UN Human Rights was actively involved in mainstreaming human rights into the new UNSDCF 2023-2027, which will be finalized in April 2022. In **Libya**, OHCHR contributed to the integration of a human rights-based approach into the UN Socio-Economic Framework (SERF) in response to COVID-19.

To contribute to more focused decision-making, the UN Human Rights Regional Office for **Southern Africa** undertook research and analysis and published its results in a document entitled *Minimum core obligations of South Africa to ensure a more just and inclusive economic recovery in a post COVID-19 era: Budgetary allocations*. It also issued a complementary advocacy brief. Additionally, three thematic advocacy briefs were produced on: 1) the impacts of COVID-19 on economic, social and cultural rights (ESCRs), with an emphasis on the centrality of human rights in socio-economic responses; 2) the impacts of COVID-19 on women in Southern Africa and their right to participation in COVID-19 response and recovery efforts; and 3) youth activism in the era of social media.

FOCUS AREA 3

MONITORING, REPORTING AND ANALYSING COVID-19 IMPACTS AND GOVERNMENT ACTIONS AND RESPONSES

Since the beginning of the pandemic, OHCHR's monitoring, tracking and reporting of human rights issues of concern has been instrumental in providing timely and accurate information for decision-making and advocacy with key stakeholders. In 2021, UN Human Rights continued to strengthen its systematic monitoring, reporting and analysis of COVID-19 issues, including from a gender perspective as they relate to LNOB and vulnerable groups, and with regard to COVAX and the vaccine roll-outs. In addition, UN Human Rights closely monitored pandemic-related restrictions that limited political rights and freedoms, including the freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly.

Within field presences, regular monitoring and reporting will continue to identify the impacts of COVID-19, including from a gender perspective and on vulnerable groups, and highlight measures that restrict human rights and freedoms.

UN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIONS

UN Human Rights continued to integrate COVID-19 into its regular monitoring and reporting and closely monitored ways in which restrictions were used to curtail the enjoyment of human rights, freedoms and civic space. In **South Sudan**, reports were produced on a regular basis with information on the human rights situation in South Sudan and weekly briefs specific to COVID-19-related human rights and protection issues were maintained until July. Since then, UN Human Rights continued to monitor and report on places of detention, undertook periodic analysis regarding vulnerable groups, particularly persons with disabilities, and advocated with national authorities to ensure compliance with international human rights standards. In **West Africa**, UN Human Rights developed and maintained a COVID-19 situation dashboard to provide daily updates on the infection rate and vaccine administration in the region. It also commissioned a study in Senegal on the situation of women detainees in the context of the pandemic, with a view to using the findings to advocate for increased mainstreaming of women's rights into the criminal justice system. In **Malawi**, the Malawi Prevention Platform (MPP) informed the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) and the UNCT about trends in human rights issues and provided early warning reports and evidence and data-based guidance on preventing, mitigating and responding to emerging crises. Its research showed that though the number of protests remained constant, there was a reduction in violent incidents. The MPP identified that protests were no longer politically motivated but were instead driven by reactions to corruption and economic-based grievances, the mistreatment of irregular migrants and a consistent escalation in mob justice attacks throughout the country. Other identified trends included a possible link between the economic impacts of COVID-19 and an increase in attacks on persons with albinism.

To enhance monitoring and reporting in **Mexico**, UN Human Rights and the National Institute of Statistics and Geography worked together to measure the impacts of COVID-19 and explore existing data to shed light on COVID-19 repercussions for ESCRs. Subsequently, a specialized technical committee on human rights was established at the National Institute of Statistics and Geography, which includes UN Human Rights as a member. The committee establishes the interests and goals related to human rights measurements. Additionally, UN Human Rights contributed to the development of a census on graveyards that measured disappearances and unreported COVID-19 related deaths. The census revealed that death rates attributable to COVID-19 were higher than those registered by the Ministry of Health.

As part of the PROMIS project, a joint initiative between UN Human Rights and UNODC that aims to strengthen the capacities of West African States to develop a human rights-based response to the smuggling of migrants and effectively respond to human rights violations related to irregular migration, UN Human Rights collected information and produced reports on **Mali and Niger**. Emphasis was placed on COVID-19 and the socio-economic situation of migrants, thereby providing insights and analysis of the impacts of COVID-19 on their mobility, livelihood and socio-economic rights, such as access to health services, sanitation, housing and education. In **Panama**, a report was submitted to the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsperson on migrant populations at reception stations in the context of COVID-19. In the **Republic of Moldova**, an in-depth study was conducted and an impact assessment concluded on COVID-19-related human rights including in the Transnistria region.

Listening to the people during the pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has quickly become the worst human and economic crisis of our time, eroding years of progress made on many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), deepening existing inequalities and social disparities and opening up new fractures, particularly in relation to human rights. The vulnerable and marginalized continue to bear the brunt of these impacts.

Policies are only as good as the data that informs them. Since the pandemic, policymakers have routinely had to make time-sensitive decisions on health, society and the economy. Yet, the basic data guiding national decision-making and response is often lacking. The pandemic has highlighted the value of timely and high-quality data. It is evident that no strategy can be effectively developed

and no measure can be effectively implemented without a solid foundation of reliable data.

It is within this context that OHCHR, UNICEF and UN Women collaborated to implement COVID-19 Rapid Gender Assessments (RGAs) in seven West and Central African countries, namely, the Central African Republic (CAR), Côte d'Ivoire, the DRC, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Senegal. The RGAs were developed in close cooperation with national authorities, particularly the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and the respective Ministries of Gender. The studies aimed to measure the impacts of COVID-19 on different aspects, i.e., social and economic activities, distribution of unpaid care work, education, discrimination, and violence, to support informed and evidence-based policymaking. The RGAs adopted a human rights-based approach to data (HRBAD), which is underpinned by six principles (participation, disaggregation, self-identification, transparency, privacy and accountability), to define the focus of the questionnaire and guide data collection.



Survey workers piloting the OHCHR-supported SDG 16 Survey in Kazakhstan and listening to respondents during the pandemic. © Bureau of National Statistics Kazakhstan

Particular efforts were undertaken to ensure that the voices and concerns of vulnerable groups were heard and that No One was Left Behind.

In light of the COVID-19-related restrictions and social distancing measures, OHCHR and its partners used computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATIs) to collect disaggregated data during the last two quarters of 2020.

Since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, people's feelings of safety have been shaken. This is a visible pattern that has been reported across all demographics. The RGA asked women and men in the region about their personal experiences and perceptions of discrimination since the onset of the pandemic. On average, more than four in 10 respondents felt that discrimination had increased during the pandemic. Further, almost half of the respondents living with at least one disability felt that discrimination had increased. While there were no marked differences between women and men, women living in CAR were significantly more likely than men (55 per cent versus 43 per cent) to report an increased perception of discrimination in their communities.

Emerging evidence demonstrated that gender-based violence increased in the region during stay-at-home restrictions and other confinement measures. The results from the RGAs confirmed earlier findings and indicated that roughly one quarter or more of respondents believed that violence within households in their community had increased since the imposition of COVID-19 restrictions. Though there were some variations across countries in the region, men were more likely than women (28 per cent versus 23 per

cent) to think that domestic violence had increased in their community.

ADDRESSING DATA GAPS ON SDG 16

Discrimination is at the heart of inequalities in obtaining and enjoying human rights. Collecting disaggregated data on the prevalence of discrimination (SDG Indicator 10.3.1/16.b.1) is an essential step towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and can contribute to post-pandemic recovery. Yet...

...data on peace, justice and inclusion measures are few and far between. Six years after adopting the 2030 Agenda, several countries are facing considerable challenges in measuring progress on SDG 16. In order to support countries in addressing data gaps, OHCHR, UNDP and UNODC developed an integrated survey methodology to collect timely and comparable data on 13 different SDG 16 survey-based indicators. The dimensions of the survey methodology include access to justice, corruption, discrimination, governance, human trafficking and violence. The SDG 16 survey is built on existing practices and international standards and is founded on an HRBAD. It is designed to be implemented as a stand-alone survey though separate modules that can be integrated into other household surveys. In implementing the HBRAD, OHCHR also supported formal collaborative platforms between NSOs and national human rights institutions (NHRIs) and other parts of national statistical systems.

The questionnaire was piloted in eight countries, namely, Cabo Verde, El Salvador, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania, Togo and Tunisia. While the

pilot phase was impacted by the pandemic, remote data collection, such as computer-assisted web interviewing (CAWI) and CATI, was a pragmatic and effective tool in some pilot countries. Overall, **the questionnaire was found to be relevant and necessary for opening up discussions in policy circles about the identified themes.** In Tunisia, respondents appreciated that they were consulted on important issues, had the opportunity to express their views and looked forward to the implementation of concrete actions in response to the survey results.

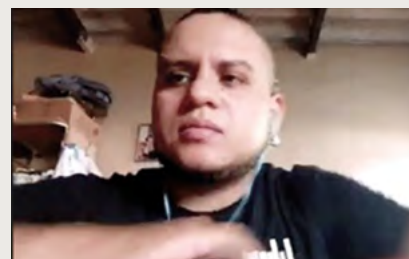
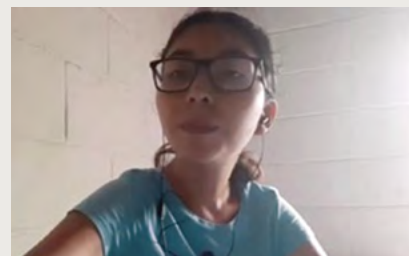
The pilot experience enabled countries to test the survey. Based on their initial experience, El Salvador integrated the Discrimination Module into its 2021 Multipurpose Household Survey and Tunisia integrated the SDG 16 Survey into its National Peace, Security and Governance Survey, which was conducted at end of 2021.

"...global initiatives need to draw on local experiences to better represent reality."

El Salvador pilot report

"The respondents felt that they were being consulted on important issues and could express their point of view through the survey."

Tunisia pilot report



Survey workers piloting the OHCHR-supported SDG 16 Survey in Cabo Verde (CAPI), on the left, and El Salvador (CAWI), on the right. © General Administration of Statistics and Censuses (Cabo Verde and El Salvador)

FOCUS AREA 4

HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS CONTRIBUTIONS TO COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Since the emergence of the pandemic, the human rights treaty bodies, the special procedures mandate holders, the Human Rights Council (HRC) and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) analysed and addressed the human rights impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and **undertook** significant advocacy. They also consistently incorporated a human rights-based approach (HRBA) into policies and actions responding to the pandemic, particularly to address inequalities and the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups.

The international human rights mechanisms received updated and substantive information on the COVID-19 situation on the ground from a variety of sources, including civil society. This enabled the mechanisms to identify risks and concerns about COVID-19-related government actions from a legal perspective, alert the international community and engage with authorities to promote the implementation of measures to ensure that COVID-19 response and recovery efforts were in compliance with international human rights law.

The international human rights mechanisms, including the HRC, paid increased attention to economic, social and cultural rights. UN Human Rights will leverage this momentum and expand this focus. In order to give effect to the UPR principles on sharing good practices and providing technical cooperation, space will be created to enable discussions in relation to COVID-19, identify common concerns and good practices and encourage cooperation and coherent action. The special procedures will facilitate engagement on the COVID-19 response and recovery through press releases, guidance documents, reports and responses to communications from those directly affected by the pandemic or adopted measures.

UN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIONS

UN Human Rights continued to compile the evolving jurisprudence issued by the human rights treaty bodies on COVID-19 and detailed how they addressed human rights issues through the application of the provisions of their respective treaties. The treaty bodies also addressed COVID-19 issues in their concluding observations and lists of issues prior to reporting.

The HRC adopted two resolutions on COVID-19. Resolution A/HRC/RES/46/14 entitled “Ensuring equitable, affordable, timely and universal access for all countries to vaccines in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic,” emphasizes the importance of international cooperation and the central role of States in adopting a gender-responsive and multisectoral approach to ensure that vaccines are accessible and affordable in developing countries. It mandates the High Commissioner to provide an oral update and report on this issue. A panel discussion will be held on the matter in the latter half of 2022. Resolution A/HRC/RES/48/12 entitled “Human rights implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people,” recognizes that the pandemic and the measures to combat the spread of COVID-19 have exacerbated existing challenges faced by young people, particularly young women and girls, in exercising their human rights. It requests that the High Commissioner conduct a detailed study on ways to mitigate these impacts.

A significant number of stakeholders’ submissions to the UPR during the year refer to the negative impacts of the pandemic. The contributions demonstrate how COVID-19 is affecting all human rights, including civil and political rights and ESCRs (i.e., domestic violence, early pregnancy, school dropout, discrimination against LGBTI persons, the right to work, prison overcrowding). The inputs will be compiled and summarized in UPR pre-session reports to facilitate the formulation of UPR recommendations to address COVID-19 issues.

In response to the deepening effects of the pandemic, the space for civil society engagement with the international human rights mechanisms was kept open through a number of initiatives. For instance, an online platform was created and simplified guidelines were prepared in relation to the submission of written statements by NGOs. In addition, a list of virtual events for NGOs was regularly updated on a dedicated OHCHR web page in an effort to make these events more visible.

The special procedures will continue to advise States and other stakeholders, create innovative tools and carry out their preventive and monitoring work. Mandate holders will develop their responses and advice on COVID-19 and recovery efforts by issuing reports and guidance on specific human rights issues. They will also highlight relevant cases with governments and entities through communications and focus the attention of the international community on important developments by issuing press releases and other public statements.

Implementing the OMP in 2021

The priorities, strategies and targets of UN Human Rights are set out in the OHCHR Management Plan (OMP) 2018-2021. The Plan provides a robust results framework and is based on six pillars, four shifts and three spotlights. This framework remained relevant during the COVID-19 crisis and simultaneously provided the flexibility that was needed to respond to changing circumstances. This led to the decision to extend the current OMP until 2023 and update some elements to strengthen support for specific

groups, bolstering the Office's contribution to the guiding principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to Leave No One Behind. Extending and updating the OMP will ensure that results are consolidated, providing the opportunity to recalibrate the focus of the Office in response to the human rights impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, and guarantee that important initiatives, such as the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights, the Common Agenda and other recent developments, are included.

OMP 2018-2021 at a glance



The OMP has been extended to cover 2022-2023

Overview of progress made towards achieving OMP results in 2021

In 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to present significant challenges in terms of programme delivery and demands for working on new and pressing issues. The data that follow are based on self-assessments that were undertaken by 123 reporting entities on their level of progress, notably in reference to a shift, a spotlight population or country results that were set as targets in the OMP.

REPROGRAMMING TO RESPOND TO THE PANDEMIC

The continuation of the pandemic into 2021 affected the implementation of mandates. At the beginning of 2021, sessions of the human rights treaty bodies were held remotely. Some committees resumed in-person sessions, in September, and some sessions were held in hybrid mode to enable States Parties and other stakeholders to participate remotely. Despite this, as of December, 415 State Party reports were pending review. The ongoing suspension of international travel also affected planned missions and country visits by special rapporteurs, members of the human rights treaty bodies, fact-finding missions and commissions of inquiry. Nevertheless, the special procedures carried out 28 visits in 2021.

UN Human Rights conducted all Human Rights Council sessions in a hybrid format. Some consultations and events that are normally held in parallel with sessions of the Council took place virtually, albeit with far less participation than in pre-pandemic years. Finally, the capacity of many partners, such as NHRIs, to participate in virtual activities was limited as they did not have access to necessary technology, including sufficient Internet bandwidth and uninterrupted electricity.

UN Human Rights took steps to reprogramme and divert its capacities to respond to global needs. In particular, it made significant contributions that ensured the UN system's response to the pandemic protected human rights. UN Human Rights also continued to improve on its remote monitoring and documentation activities and provided advice to States on reducing overcrowding in prisons, especially in the context of the pandemic.

In addition, to support Member States on issues related to the pandemic, the Office offered policy advice, guidance and disseminated data and information related to the pandemic and human rights within the overall scope of planned outputs.

Finally, UN Human Rights contributed human rights analyses and advice for

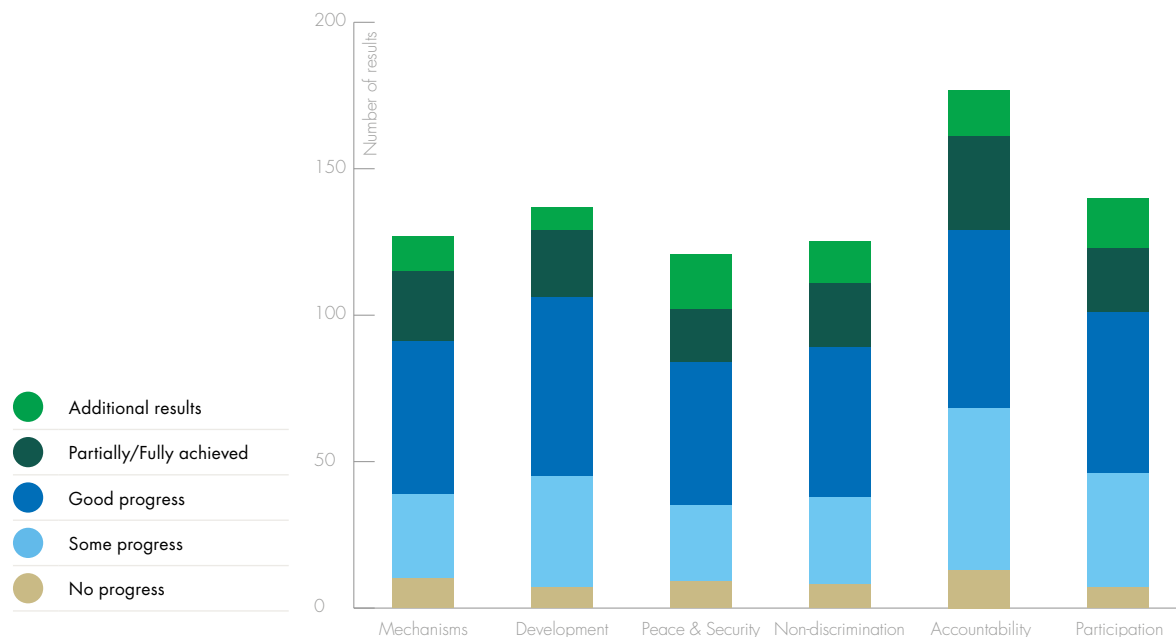
CCAs, UNSDCFs and Regional Monthly Reviews (RMRs), held consultations with economists from Resident Coordinators' Offices and contributed to national development processes.

PROGRESS TOWARDS COUNTRY RESULTS

Updates demonstrated that progress was made towards achieving country results across the Office, as evidenced by results that were partially or fully achieved. The number of these results has progressively increased each year. Nevertheless, the majority of country results were assessed as having achieved some progress or good progress, reaffirming the decision to work on these country results for another two years in the context of the extended OMP.

The primary reasons for results that had no progress were identified as insufficient funding and staffing constraints, as well as challenges arising from complex political contexts and/or difficulties in guaranteeing government buy-in to activities, including strained relations between civil society and governments. Pandemic-related restrictions on movement and gatherings also played a role. In most cases where some progress was reported, processes continued to move forward.

Progress reported under each pillar in 2021



All pillars show a similar pattern of results that had good progress or were partially/fully achieved in 2021.

In 2021, the relatively high number of additional results was maintained, indicating that UN Human Rights remained responsive to new developments and the ongoing crisis and that reprogramming has been effective for adapting to new circumstances.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO SHIFTS AND SPOTLIGHT POPULATIONS

Four shifts were identified in the 2018-2021 OMP that contributed to: 1) the prevention of conflict, violence and insecurity; 2) the expansion of civic space; 3) a broadening of the global constituency for human rights; and 4) the exploration of emerging human rights concerns identified as “frontier issues.” The last shift had five sub-thematic categories, namely, inequalities, climate change, digital space

and emerging technologies, corruption and people on the move.

The spotlight populations identified in the OMP were women, youth and persons with disabilities.

Prevention, civic space and inequalities were the major shifts selected by reporting entities in 2019-2021. In 2021, there was a slight increase in the selection of “inequalities.”

As in previous years, “women” was the most commonly selected spotlight population. This was followed by “persons with disabilities” and “youth.” Specific results related to the shifts and spotlight populations are highlighted throughout the report.

Mechanisms (M)

Increasing implementation of the outcomes of the international human rights mechanisms



TREATY BODIES



Experts
172 treaty bodies experts
(including 34 new experts)



Recommendations
59 concluding observations
(and 132 lists of issues prepared)



Capacity-building
83 capacity-building activities (63 held online, attended by more than 2,300 participants, including 995 women, to support integration of human rights in development agenda and engagement with treaty bodies)



General comments
2 new comments adopted (CMW on migrants' rights to liberty and freedom from arbitrary detention, and CRC on children's rights in relation to digital environment)

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (HRC) AND UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW (UPR)



UPR mid-term reports
11 documents submitted (on the implementation of recommendations issued during the 2nd and 3rd UPR cycles)

REPORTING AND FOLLOWING UP ON RECOMMENDATIONS



National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up
70 established and/or strengthened

More than 700 participants (State officials, CSOs, NHRIs, UN partners from over 80 countries took part in regional consultations on National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up)

SPECIAL PROCEDURES



Special procedures mandates
45 thematic and **13** country-specific



Standing invitations
Extended by
128 States (to thematic mandates)



Reports
139 presented to the General Assembly/HRC
(19 on country visits)



Communications
1,002 communications sent
(to 149 States and 257 non-State actors)
651 replies received

Bringing human rights defenders together through the Uganda National Stakeholders' Forum

“Since 2011, UN Human Rights has been supporting the National Stakeholders’ Forum for the Universal Periodic Review,” said James Nkuubi, a lawyer, human rights defender (HRD) and outgoing Coordinator of the Forum. Mr. Nkuubi has been working to raise awareness about the Universal Periodic Review process in Uganda from the beginning.

The Uganda National Stakeholders’ Forum for the UPR process is an umbrella entity of over 300 national organizations that document, monitor and report on the implementation of UPR recommendations. Mr. Nkuubi notes that UN Human Rights has been instrumental in bringing HRDs on board through annual trainings that have been offered since 2016. Learners increase their knowledge about documenting and monitoring human rights violations, undertaking fact-finding and the importance of authenticity, all of which are crucial to the UPR process.

At a capacity-building session to commemorate International Human Rights Defenders Day, on 9 December, Mr. Nkuubi said, “UN Human Rights has expanded the principle of Leaving No One Behind and provides participants with practical information on engaging with the UPR process and the diplomatic community in Uganda.” This also includes a compilation of the UPR recommendations issued in relation to Uganda, which has been disseminated to relevant stakeholders throughout the country.

“UN Human Rights works with HRDs to identify and use the space they need to speak for themselves. In the past, we’ve



James Nkuubi moderates a discussion on civil society and government experiences during the second UPR cycle, in November 2021. © NCHRD-U

been sponsored to attend and deliver statements during the UPR process in Geneva. UN Human Rights’ training for government ministries, departments and agencies has also improved our interactions with them. They’ve become more

accepting of our advocacy and recommendations. The UPR sensitization in Uganda would not have been so widespread without the support of the UN Human Rights Office in Uganda,” Mr. Nkuubi concluded.

Highlights of pillar results

Mechanisms (M)

The international human rights mechanisms, composed of the human rights treaty bodies and the Human Rights Council, with its special procedures and the Universal Periodic Review, are the backbone of UN Human Rights' work. Their analyses, monitoring and interactions with States and stakeholders

help to identify strengths, weaknesses, gaps and opportunities in relation to all rights. Through their actions and recommendations, they provide the basis for engagement with States and other actors and support duty-bearers to comply with their obligations and rights-holders to claim their rights. UN Human Rights

provides secretariat support to these mechanisms and supports States in honouring their obligations. Through their procedures and country visits, the international human rights mechanisms give a voice to vulnerable persons and groups at the national level.

PILLAR RESULTS / SHIFTS / SDGs

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 implementation of their recommendations.



RESULTS / SPOTLIGHTS



In January, following consistent advocacy and technical advice by UN Human Rights, **Sudan** established **its permanent National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up (NMRF)**. Since its establishment, UN Human Rights has been providing support through capacity-building and technical assistance to support its operationalization. Notably, the first national consultation on Sudan's UPR was launched in August, bringing together 65 civil society representatives from across the country. Sudan submitted its national report for the third UPR cycle in October.

In 2021, seven countries from the **Pacific** region underwent the **third UPR cycle**, namely, Australia, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and the Solomon Islands. UN Human Rights provided support to governments, NHRIs and CSOs from Pacific Island Countries in their engagement with the UPR process, including in the preparation of their national reports. It also delivered workshops for CSOs to submit alternative reports, coordinated joint UNCT reports and organized mock UPR sessions for government delegations. All seven national reports were successfully submitted.

In **Chad**, UN Human Rights assisted the Government with the **submission of initial and periodic reports to the human rights treaty bodies**, in accordance with their respective reporting guidelines. UN Human Rights provided technical and financial support to the Government's Interministerial Committee, which is tasked with preparing and following-up on reports to regional and international human rights mechanisms. This led to the drafting and submission of the Government's initial report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in June, and the mid-term report on the implementation of the UPR recommendations, in May. This assistance also facilitated the drafting of an implementation plan for the UPR recommendations. UN Human Rights partnered with UNICEF to support the Government in drafting and submitting two initial reports on the implementation of OP-CRC-AC and OP-CRC-SC. This momentum will be maintained during 2022 to help the Government eliminate its backlog of overdue reports to the human rights treaty bodies.

In 2021, a comprehensive redesign of the **National Recommendations Tracking Database (NRTD)**, was initiated. First launched in 2019, the NRTD is a digital application that is made available to States to support their management of their human rights treaty obligations and engagement with the international human rights mechanisms. The recommendations from the human rights mechanisms are imported from the Universal Human Rights Index (UHRI) into the NRTD. The redesigned version of the NRTD will be launched in 2022.

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.



In **Zimbabwe**, UN Human Rights cooperated with UNESCO, as the lead of the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD), to assist organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) through the provision of resources and technical expertise on the preparation and submission of the **first thematic consolidated UPR report on disability issues**. A total of four umbrella OPDs, representing a membership of over 55 organizations, contributed to the drafting of the submission. UN Human Rights also collaborated with UNESCO to deliver a briefing on the UPR for representatives of the Media Institute of Southern Africa-Zimbabwe and the Media Association of Zimbabwe. Following the delivery of technical expertise by UN Human Rights, two organizations submitted a thematic report to the UPR on the media and freedom of expression in Zimbabwe.

Enhanced **communication with and accessibility to the international human rights mechanisms** by civil society actors was ensured through the systematization of the NGO video and written statement process, improvement of the online submission platform and the dissemination of timely and targeted information to NGOs through informal exchanges, electronic broadcasts and online platforms. The mechanisms therefore became more accessible to NGO representatives from the field that would have been unable to travel to Geneva to deliver in-person statements, including prior to the pandemic.

In **Brazil**, UN Human Rights implemented a series of virtual dialogues with indigenous leaders, in partnership with the National Articulation of Indigenous Peoples and the Network of Cooperation in the Amazon. The objective of the dialogues was to strengthen their engagement with the international mechanisms. As a result, participant organizations submitted inputs for consideration in the development of CEDAW's General Recommendation on the rights of indigenous women and girls. UN Human Rights also supported members of the Lickantay indigenous peoples and people of African descent, in **Chile**, to prepare alternative reports to CERD.

UN Human Rights published its first regional thematic report on the right to freedom of association entitled *Freedom of association in the Middle East and North Africa: An overview of trends, challenges and good practices*. The report focuses on the right to freedom of association in the 10 countries being served by the Regional Office, including **Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia** and the **United Arab Emirates**. Drawing on information emanating from the engagement of States with the international human rights mechanisms, the report identifies challenges, good practices and national updates on the right to freedom of association in all 10 countries. The report seeks to encourage States and civil society to work together and collaborate on human rights action and is complemented by a second report on freedom of expression published in late 2021. The reports will inform a number of events and consultations planned for 2022.

M3 – USE of MECHANISMS' RECOMMENDATIONS

Policymakers, legislators and courts make increased use of the outcomes of the international and regional human rights mechanisms.



In **Uzbekistan**, following the creation of the parliamentary joint commission on human rights, UN Human Rights cooperated with UNDP in Uzbekistan and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to co-organize a **parliamentary forum on the ratification of OP-CAT and CRPD**, in June, and the **implementation of the recommendations** issued by the international human rights mechanisms. In November and December, UN Human Rights worked closely with UNDP in Uzbekistan to deliver presentations to law enforcement officials on the prevention of torture and the provisions of OP-CAT. The series of hybrid lectures were organized as a part of an online human rights course developed by the National Human Rights Centre of Uzbekistan. The course is aimed at improving the understanding of police officers, penitentiary service staff and prosecutors about human rights and the international obligations of Uzbekistan on the prevention of torture. During the reporting period, the course was taken by close to 200 law enforcement officials.

With support and inputs from UN Human Rights, IOM, UNDP, UNHCR and UNICEF, the Government of **Montenegro** adopted the **new Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro 2021-2025**. The Strategy draws upon recommendations issued by the Universal Periodic Review, CRC, CEDAW, CERD and CRPD to combat discrimination and negative social attitudes, improve access to education, undertake measures to combat child marriage and other forms of violence against women and girls, trafficking and forced labour and improve access to health care and employment. Specific measures are included to strengthen standards and their implementation related to non-discrimination, an adequate standard of living, education, health, employment, housing, social protection, political participation and legal identity.

UN Human Rights cooperated with UNICEF and UNEP to release a joint statement and organize a virtual launch of the *Principles and policy guidance on children's rights to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment in the ASEAN region*. The document is the result of an 18-month collaboration between the three UN agencies and child, youth and adult experts from the **ASEAN region**. It sets out fundamental principles for realizing the **right of the child to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment** and for putting the best interests of the child at the forefront of those efforts. It provides essential policy guidance for governments, civil society, businesses, the media and children to implement these principles. A child-friendly version for youth aged 14-18 years was also developed.

In **Ukraine**, as a result of advocacy, technical cooperation and recommendations provided by the Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU), the Parliament adopted a **law on the harmonization of criminal law** with standards and principles of international criminal law and international humanitarian law. As recommended by the HRMMU, this legislation aligns the provisions on criminal liability for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression with the Rome Statute and customary international law. It also includes crucial provisions on command responsibility, the non-applicability of statutory limitations for international crimes and universal jurisdiction for the prosecution of international crimes.

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).



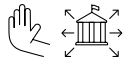
UN Human Rights supported the Committee on Migrant Workers in the development and launch of its **General Comment No. 5 on migrants' rights to liberty and freedom from arbitrary detention**. The General Comment is intended to provide guidance to States regarding the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families against arbitrary detention. UN Human Rights further supported the development of a General Comment on land and economic, social and cultural rights (CESCR), a General Comment on sustainable development and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), a General Recommendation on the rights of indigenous women and girls (CEDAW) and a General Comment on the rights of persons with disabilities to work and employment (CRPD).

UN Human Rights supported the adoption of decisions by the human rights treaty bodies that developed **human rights standards in the area of climate change and environmental harm**. These included five decisions issued by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in cases filed by 16 child activists. In the decisions, the Committee noted that the failure of a State to reduce carbon emissions may result in violations of the rights of the child, including for those located outside of its territory, if the State has effective control over the sources of emissions that caused the foreseeable harm to the children. The Human Rights Committee found that **Paraguay's failure to prevent and control the environmental harm** caused to an indigenous community due to the intensive use of pesticides by nearby commercial farms had violated the community's rights and sense of "home." It recommended that Paraguay complete the criminal and administrative proceedings against all parties responsible and make full reparation to the victims.

UN Human Rights updated an analytical paper on **normative standards in international law in relation to older persons**, which was originally issued in 2012. The updated UN Human Rights study, issued in March 2021, provides an analysis of protection gaps and the adequacy of the existing international legal framework for the promotion and protection of the human rights of older persons. The study provoked significant discussion among Member States, civil society and NHRIs and led to the adoption by the HRC of the first ever thematic resolution 48/3 on the human rights of older persons. The resolution mandates the High Commissioner to submit a report to the forty-ninth session on normative standards and obligations under international law in relation to the promotion and protection of the human rights of older persons and to organize a multi-stakeholder consultation to discuss the findings of the report in 2022.

M5 – EFFECTIVENESS of international human rights MECHANISMS

International human rights mechanisms are increasingly effective in promoting and protecting human rights.



Significant progress was made in **integrating human rights information**, including information generated by the international human rights mechanisms, **into the UN's Regional Monthly Review process**, notably through prevention assessments undertaken by the human rights treaty bodies and the inclusion of a standard human rights slide in the RMR briefing decks. This resulted in an increased awareness about the role of the international human rights mechanisms in opening up a space to engage with national authorities on key risk areas identified in the RMR that have limited entry points for the UN system. For instance, the RMRs on Djibouti and Eritrea identified specific entry points for UN engagement based on UPR recommendations that were accepted by the respective governments.

Despite the pandemic, the **accessibility of and participation in the UPR review process** was enhanced during 2021. Support provided by the Voluntary Fund for participation in the UPR enabled representatives of Member States, particularly Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) that would have been ineligible for travel assistance due to travel restrictions, to participate virtually in their reviews. By the thirty-ninth session, held in November, COVID-19-related restrictions had eased. In parallel with assistance for virtual participation, UN Human Rights provided travel assistance to delegates from some eligible States to facilitate in-person participation in their reviews. Accordingly, the UPR continued to see a 100 per cent participation rate by States under review.

At the end of 2020, UN Human Rights conducted an initial assessment of its digital technology needs in order to lay the foundation for a sustained **digital transformation**. The assessment mapped digital gaps and needs, as well as existing tools, in particular with regard to the international human rights mechanisms. In 2021, UN Human Rights embarked on a two-year project to develop and deploy fit-for-purpose digital tools, which will make the mechanisms more accessible to stakeholders and enhance their efficiency in everyday operations. While the new tools are under development, improvements are being made to existing tools. For example, the functionality and information retrieval of the treaty bodies database was streamlined, including in relation to the follow-up procedures and general comments, resulting in the increased visibility of the human rights treaty bodies. The Petitions database was upgraded with the introduction of new functionalities to streamline workflows and allow for a more efficient handling of individual communications. In addition, preparatory steps have been undertaken to further define key components of a new digital case management system and a submission portal.

“We need your support and hope to see our dreams coming true”

On 30 July 2005, businessman Masood Janjua was travelling by bus with one of his friends, Faisal Faraz, to Peshawar in north Pakistan, from the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

Somewhere along the way, they disappeared.

Their families immediately began searching for them. Eventually, they learned that the two men had been forcibly disappeared by forces loyal to then President Pervez Musharraf.

Today, the families still don't have information on the whereabouts of their loved ones.

“Our three children were very young at the time. It would be impossible for anyone to understand what we've all gone through during these 16 years of torture and misery,” said Amina, Masood's wife, at the twenty-first session of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, in Geneva, which began on 13 September. At each session, the Committee reserves a space for hearing the stories of victims of enforced disappearances. It uses these testimonies to identify options to support victims and their families and governments of concern.

Amina described the period of shock and anguish she experienced when her husband was disappeared. Their family had to take care of the children and Masood's business deteriorated.

Soon after, she connected with three other families of disappeared people to initiate a movement that held protests in front of the Parliament House, the Supreme Court

and the presidential residence. Together, the families transformed this movement into an association known as the Defence of Human Rights (DHR).

FEAR, UNCERTAINTY AND GRIEF

Sixteen years later, Amina is still searching for answers. At the same time, DHR has developed into a well-known organization that envisions “a world without enforced disappearances, injustices and where the disappeared are reunited with their loved ones.” Families of disappeared victims from around Pakistan have now joined the association.

As Amina told the Committee, enforced disappearances in Pakistan have become a “widespread social evil.” Victims include activists, HRDs, writers, poets, journalists, students and lawyers.

“Fear, uncertainty, grief, economic and emotional devastation have become a part of the daily life of the families of the disappeared,” she said.

Since its inception, DHR has registered 2,818 cases of disappeared Pakistanis. A total of 1,358 individuals have been traced by the organization and subsequently reunited with their families. Sadly, 77 disappeared people have reportedly lost their lives in custody.

Amina and her DHR colleagues have strongly advocated for the Government to criminalize enforced disappearance in the country. As a result, a bill will soon be brought before Pakistan's Parliament.



Amina and her husband before his disappearance.
© OHCHR

While Amina is pleased with this progress, she insists that there is still a long way to go.

“Pakistan needs to ratify the Convention so that authorities can rely on the Committee to get the guidance they need to better address enforced disappearances, in law and in practice,” she said.

She urged the Committee to support this process. “We hope to see our dreams coming true that Masood and all the disappeared will be traced and that Pakistan will stop this practice once and for all,” she said.

Development (D)

Advancing sustainable development through human rights



2030 AGENDA



Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Data analysis on **4** SDG indicators (under OHCHR's custodianship, included in various SDGs reports, downloaded more than 36,000 times and featured in over 350 online articles in 43 countries and territories)

8 Countries piloted the **SDG 16 Survey Initiative** (which collects data on 13 SDG 16 indicators on thematic areas of governance, access to justice, discrimination, corruption, violence and trafficking in persons)

Over **3,000** people trained from **145** countries (from statistical offices, government ministries, NGOs, academia, and UN entities; on 20 SDG 16 indicators to address data availability and quality challenges)



High-level Political Forum

15 Voluntary National Review (VNR) processes supported

(with guidance integrating human rights data and analysis - 41 VNRs submitted in 2021)



Right to development and SDGs

Over **100** persons completed the **UN Human Rights e-course on right to development and the 2030 Agenda**

(from 100 countries)

HUMAN RIGHTS INTEGRATION



UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks

61 CCAs/Cooperation Frameworks processes supported (integration of human rights analysis and recommendations)



In the field, human rights mainstreaming support to

104 RCOs/UN Country Teams

382 Other UN partners

336 Government counterparts



Submissions for Universal Periodic Reviews (UPR) from

16 UN Country Teams (joint submissions)

57 UN entities

ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Climate change, environment, toxics and human rights

118 UPR recommendations issued

(104 of which were supported by the State under review)

30 special procedures communications

(sent and made publicly available)



Preventing business-related human rights abuses

Over **3,000** participants in the **10th Forum on Business and Human Rights**

(over 180 speakers in 27 sessions, addressing climate change, HRDs, NHRIs, access to remedy, and the role of investors)

A landmark forum for environmental human rights defenders



Banner of the Asia-Pacific Environmental Human Rights Defenders Forum. © OHCHR

Advocating for a clean and healthy environment shouldn't be risky. But in Asia, risks abound. According to Global Witness, of the 227 environmental human rights defenders (EHRDs) who were reportedly killed in 2020, 18 per cent were from the Asia-Pacific region. Against this backdrop, the UN Human Rights Regional Office for South-East Asia collaborated with the UN Human Rights Regional Office for the Pacific, UNEP, the Asia Pacific Network for Environment Defenders and CSOs to co-organize the first regional forum dedicated to their protection. The three-day event, "Building safe spaces for dialogue and support among environmental human rights defenders," was held from 17 to 19 November and convened nearly 400 participants from 57 countries, online, to share their experiences and discuss key issues faced by women and vulnerable groups, including indigenous peoples and children. Discussions also considered how business interests are linked with human rights. Participants watched video messages from

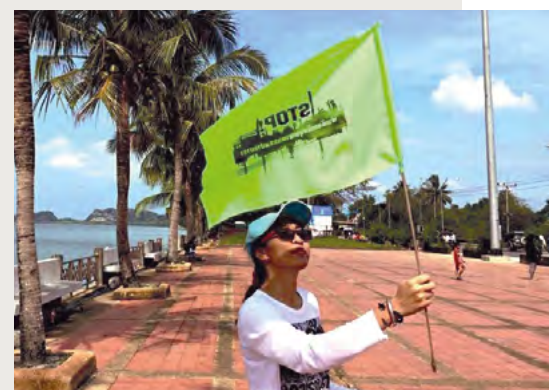
the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Special Rapporteurs on the situation of human rights defenders and on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

"This event was a significant milestone because it was the first dedicated space for EHRDs to come together and safely discuss, exchange and formulate recommendations for positive change in the region," said Romchat Wachirattanakornkul, the UN Human Rights Focal Point in Bangkok for Human Rights, Climate Change and the Environment. "We hope these recommendations will become a foundation for raising awareness among policymakers, the private sector and other stakeholders to encourage policies and practices that recognize the vital role of EHRDs."

The Forum also provided a platform for peer-to-peer support. Slaitip Subhanka, co-founder of the Green South Foundation, which defends environmental rights in

southern Thailand, said the Forum had shown her that other women in the region are facing similar harassment when advocating for the environment. "As women, we are dealing with challenges posed by the State and private actors and because of our gender," Slaitip said. She added that much more needs to be done by all sectors of society to ensure a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

In order to disseminate the knowledge that was generated during the Forum to a wider audience, UN Human Rights and UNEP will issue a report in 2022 that will include a summary of the discussions, the final recommendations, regional statistics and inputs from civil society partner organizations. The recommendations will guide UN programming and advocacy at national and regional levels to continue supporting EHRDs. A follow-up forum on EHRDs will be held in 2022 to build on this momentum.



Slaitip Subhanka, co-founder of Green South Foundation, protests the construction of a deep seaport in Thailand's Satun province. © Slaitip Subhanka

Highlights of pillar results

Development (D)

UN Human Rights supports efforts to advance economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development. It helps to address human rights gaps in development and economic policies and

regulations. It takes steps to strengthen the accountability of duty-bearers and the participation of rights-holders, including those furthest behind. UN Human Rights promotes the achievement of rights-based

Sustainable Development Goals and the overall integration of human rights into the work of the UN Development System.

PILLAR RESULTS / SHIFTS / SDGs

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.



RESULTS / SPOTLIGHTS

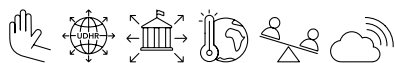


Building on the report of the UN Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises regarding the role of national human rights institutions in facilitating access to remedy for business-related human rights abuses, and in the context of the Responsible Business Conduct in Latin America and the Caribbean project, UN Human Rights and the NHRI of **Argentina** co-organized seven training sessions to strengthen the capacity of 23 local and provincial human rights institutions. Consequently, **a protocol of actions to deal with business-related human rights abuses**, including facilitating access to remedy, was developed and agreed upon by the participating local and provincial human rights institutions.

In June, after more than two years of preparatory work, the Cabinet in **Peru** approved the **first national action plan on business and human rights**. UN Human Rights began supporting the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights following the 2017 visit of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises. The national action plan proposed 99 strategic measures, including the revision of grievance mechanisms, the establishment of a national mechanism to monitor due diligence and measures to eradicate racial discrimination and protect indigenous peoples and human rights defenders.

D2 – GUIDING PRINCIPLES on Business and Human Rights

Business actors implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights effectively.



The Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, developed **guidance for multi-stakeholder initiatives to address trafficking in supply chains**. The guidance, which is divided into three chapters, includes one that is dedicated to the establishment of grievance mechanisms and was founded on the work and recommendations emanating from the UN Human Rights-led Accountability and Remedy Project.

UN Human Rights and the UN Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises organized the **Second UN Pacific Forum on Business and Human Rights**, which was held in a hybrid format, in November. It was attended by over 300 participants, including at regional hubs in Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu. The Forum highlighted key business and human rights issues and opportunities for the effective implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) in the region. It addressed the disproportionate impacts of climate change and how COVID-19 exacerbated pre-existing challenges in addressing the adverse human rights impacts of business activities relating to the extractive industries, fishing and infrastructure projects.

Within the framework of its collaboration with the World Economic Forum Partnership for Global LGBTI Equality (PGLE), UN Human Rights disseminated the **Standards of Conduct for Business on Tackling Discrimination against LGBTI People**. It also co-developed a self-assessment tool with PGLE and the UN Global Compact, which was launched in September, to enable companies to analyse their performance in the implementation of the Standards of Conduct.

In **Kenya**, the **National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights was approved** by the Cabinet, in February, five years after it was launched. While its official adoption is pending before the Parliament, much progress has been made. The National Action Plan (NAP) was tabled as Sessional Paper No. 3 of 2021. The Attorney General/Department of Justice appointed the implementing committee, which is composed of representatives from government ministries, departments, agencies and constitutional commissions, including the NHRI, civil society actors and private sector actors, to oversee its implementation from a sector-specific perspective. UN Human Rights collaborated with the Government and the NHRI and carried out sensitization forums on the NAP for government and businesses in preparation for its adoption and implementation.

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.



To support the Government of **Cambodia**'s efforts to **mitigate the adverse effects resulting from rapid urbanization and economic growth**, UN Human Rights cooperated with UN-Habitat and the Resident Coordinator's Office to implement a year-long project called "Sihanoukville for all: Promoting a smart, sustainable and inclusive city project." The project aimed to assist authorities and UN agencies with the identification of smart city policies and programmes that capitalize on investments, while improving the livelihood of different populations, including vulnerable groups in Preah Sihanouk Province. An inclusive consultation process was undertaken with all relevant stakeholders. Challenges to human security, their root causes and future opportunities were identified and used to inform local and national authorities.

In **Zimbabwe**, following a series of evictions and demolitions in various parts of the country that resulted in the displacement and increased vulnerability of hundreds of people during the rainy season and in the midst of the pandemic, UN Human Rights led and supported the development of position papers that were submitted to the UNCT and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). The papers outline **the human rights and protection impacts of evictions and demolitions in urban informal settlements** and propose short- and long-term interventions by the UN, in collaboration with the Government. In the immediate term, through the RC's intervention and advocacy efforts, the Government ceased evictions. With support from UN Human Rights and UN-Habitat, the UN continued to engage in discussions with the Ministry of Housing regarding a comprehensive assessment of the housing sector and the development of regulatory and policy frameworks on forced evictions and demolitions, with a view to providing a basis for medium- and long-term solutions to this problem. The Government is committed to addressing the mushrooming informal settlements and streamlining land and housing allocations, as evidenced by the National Development Strategy, which includes the delivery of housing as one of 11 priorities.

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 prepared a report entitled **Twenty years of promoting and protecting the right to adequate housing: Taking stock and moving forward (A/HRC/47/43)**. The report provides an assessment of the mandate's achievements and contributions at the local, national and international level since its establishment. It also highlights the development of guidelines on forced evictions, security of tenure and the implementation of the right to adequate housing, outlines recommendations to enhance its working methods and identifies seven priorities for its future.

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.

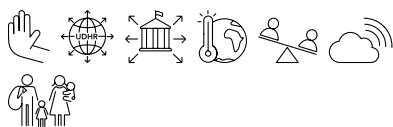


UN Human Rights continued to expand the global constituency for sexual and reproductive health and rights by **engaging with health workers on their fundamental role in the realization of human rights**. For example, in **Uganda**, UN Human Rights partnered with the Ministry of Health and UNAIDS to design and pilot a training for 20 health care workers to build their awareness and capacities to apply an HRBA to the provision of sexual and reproductive health and HIV-related services, while also identifying and eliminating stigma and discrimination affecting women living with HIV.

UN Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on the right to food promoted the **integration of human rights norms and principles into the work of the Committee for World Food Security**, including its Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition. UN Human Rights actively engaged in the Food System Summit, bringing human rights concerns to the forefront of discussions around sustainable food systems and healthy diets. In collaboration with WHO, UN Human Rights stressed the potential role of the private sector in encouraging the public to make the shift towards sustainable and healthy diets, thereby contributing to the enjoyment of the right to food and right to health. In Jordan, UN Human Rights and the UNCT launched a policy brief with recommendations on promoting healthy diets in the national context.

D5 – ENVIRONMENT and CLIMATE policies

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

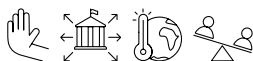


UN Human Rights continued to work closely with UNEP and other UN partners, as well as States, CSOs, indigenous peoples and other relevant stakeholders, to advocate for the global recognition and **advancement of the human right to a healthy environment**. This contributed to the adoption of HRC resolution 48/13, which recognizes that a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is a human right.

UN Human Rights continued to raise awareness about the **linkages between human rights and the environment** and built the capacity of stakeholders to address them. More specifically, UN Human Rights launched its first publication on climate change, *Frequently Asked Questions on Human Rights and Climate Change* and worked with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Committee on Capacity-building (PCCB) to develop and launch an **e-learning course on human rights and climate change**. It also issued new advocacy materials, which were jointly developed with UNEP and other partners, on **human rights and biodiversity**, **human rights and hazardous substances**, as well as **human rights, the environment and gender equality**.

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.



Through the **Surge Initiative**, UN Human Rights implemented eight projects in the field aimed at **building back better** from the COVID-19 pandemic, including by undertaking more focused analysis on groups left behind, building disaggregated datasets and evidence to advise States, UNCTs, CSOs and other national partners and stakeholders on human rights-based socio-economic responses. For example, in Nepal, UN Human Rights identified and costed the minimum essential elements of the right to adequate health for three marginalized communities of women working in the informal sector, with an emphasis on sexual and reproductive health. In September, a High Commissioner's report on the work of the Surge Initiative was submitted to ECOSOC, highlighting efforts undertaken in the context of COVID-19 response and recovery in 24 countries.

UN Human Rights undertook advocacy with the Asian Development Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the European Investment Bank with regard to their **safeguard policies** and issued **recommendations to improve gender integration and address gender-based violence**, including through the establishment and implementation of a self-standing gender equality standard. In 2021, the AIIB's Environment and Social Framework made increased references to the consideration of gender equality.

D7 – HUMAN RIGHTS INTEGRATION in implementing the SDGs

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



UN Human Rights substantially contributed to the UN’s support to States in the **implementation of the SDGs and other development efforts**. This was achieved through the integration of human rights into the UN’s development work and by placing human rights at the centre of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and COVID-19 response and recovery plans. In particular, UN Human Rights ensured that human rights were integrated into CCAs, UNSDCFs and COVID-19 response plans by providing technical support during the drafting process in a number of countries, including Albania, Bangladesh, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Côte d’Ivoire, Ecuador, Egypt, the Gambia, India, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Niger, the Pacific (Fiji, Micronesia, Samoa), Pakistan, Peru, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Zambia. In addition, UN Human Rights supported UN Country Teams and Resident Coordinator’s Offices in applying an HRBA and an LNOB approach and using recommendations issued by the international human rights mechanisms for their programming. To this end, the Office delivered targeted capacity-building activities and participated in and supported UN regional and cross-regional platforms that are dedicated to development operations.

UN Human Rights worked closely with ILO to co-lead Outcome Group Six on Human Rights, one of the strategic priority areas of the **United Nations Pacific Strategy 2018-2022**. The Outcome Group hosted a retreat to facilitate discussions on the promotion and protection of civic space, human rights and COVID-19 and regarding preparations for Human Rights Day. A key achievement was **the pilot implementation of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS)**, through a new Working Group on disability inclusion that was established by the Outcome Group. Activities in Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu included capacity-building, accessibility audits of UN premises and a baseline report on UN staff, identifying disability inclusion awareness and practices in procurement and hiring. To ensure the sustainable implementation of the UNDIS, partners agreed to cost share a dedicated Disability Inclusion Specialist, who will be recruited in 2022.

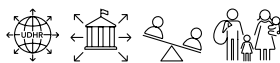
With the support of UN Human Rights, **European Union (EU) institutions continued to make progress in integrating human rights** into external development programming. In June, the EU Parliament and Council formally adopted the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument for 2021-2027. It obliges all countries that are bound by the Instrument to apply a human rights-based approach and assist partner countries in implementing their international human rights obligations. This approach must be guided by the principles of Leaving No One Behind, equality and non-discrimination.

In **Malawi**, under the leadership of the RC, UN Human Rights, UNDP and UNODC collaborated on a joint scoping mission on anti-corruption in early 2021. This resulted in a National Anti-Corruption Dialogue, which was held in November, and hosted by the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Ministry of Justice. The Dialogue brought together all key entities working against corruption and led to the development of an **action plan for the full implementation of the Malawi National Anti-Corruption Strategy**. UN Human Rights highlighted ways in which human rights could be further integrated into anti-corruption work and several of these suggestions were incorporated into the action plan, such as the engagement of NHRIs and CSOs; the development of strategies to ensure that diverse groups have access to accountability mechanisms, including persons with disabilities; and the prioritization of resources to advance development and human rights.

UN Human Rights continued to strategically engage with a wide range of UN actors to ensure that meaningful contributions were made to key UN development policies and guidance. For example, OHCHR contributed to the revised *Management and Accountability Framework of the UN Development and Resident Coordinator System*, ensuring a clear framework for management and accountability within UNCTs, including on performance and mutual accountability for human rights, in line with the RC's job description and the objectives of the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights.

D8 – DISAGGREGATED human rights DATA

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



The *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021* and other reports, such as the Secretary-General's report on *Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals* and its statistical annex, include the latest **disaggregated data on the four SDG indicators under OHCHR's custodianship**, namely, SDG 16.1.2 on conflict deaths; SDG 16.10.1 on killings and attacks against human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists; SDG 16.a.1 on NHRIs; and SDG 10.3.1/16.b.1 on the experience of discrimination and harassment.

With the support of UN Human Rights, NHRIs and National Statistical Offices in **Albania, Jordan, Mongolia, the Philippines and the Republic of Moldova** signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) in 2021 to establish formal agreements to **disaggregate data and integrate human rights into official development statistics**. Furthermore, in the Republic of Moldova, 18 representatives of the National Statistics Office, the People's Advocate Office and the Equality Council, participated in a three-day workshop, "Human rights-based approach to data and indicators for SDG and human rights reporting in Moldova," which was organized by UN Human Rights. A concrete action plan was agreed upon that includes development and piloting of the methodology for contextualizing human rights indicators and building the capacity of public servants to apply an HRBA to data. The action plan will be implemented in 2022 with support from OHCHR.

In **Kazakhstan**, UN Human Rights' long-term work on **adopting indicators** resulted in the integration of human rights indicators into a government Plan of Priority Action on Human Rights and the 2020-2030 Legal Policy Concept Paper. In collaboration with the Bureau of National Statistics, UN Human Rights completed the work to link OHCHR's illustrative indicators with national SDG indicators. The Plan of Priority Action on Human Rights provides for the gradual introduction of national human rights indicators. UN Human Rights will continue this work in 2022.

Support for resettled communities in Cambodia

“I don’t want others to be affected like I was,” said a community representative while welcoming the launch of an OHCHR study on the human rights situation of communities living in resettlement sites in Cambodia and a set of draft guidelines on evictions and resettlement, on 7 March.

The results of the study are based on research conducted by UN Human Rights in 2019 and 2020 with government representatives, NGOs and leaders of 37 communities that have been resettled in 17 different sites. It is one of the most in-depth quantitative and qualitative studies that has been undertaken on the impacts of evictions and resettlement in Cambodia.

According to the findings, there are significant gaps in the fulfilment of fundamental

human rights, including the right to adequate housing, access to health care and access to education.

“Evicted communities report that the places where they are resettled are not fit for purpose. They are frequently far from educational sites, work opportunities and health care facilities or are not connected to basic amenities, such as water and electricity. This makes it hard for communities to adjust and falls short of the human rights obligations of duty-bearers to guarantee the rights to education, health, water and sanitation and an adequate standard of living,” said Pradeep Wagle, UN Human Rights-Cambodia Representative.

UN Human Rights has advocated for adequate housing for many years, yet the

study underscores that many challenges remain. As noted by Chak Sopheap, Executive Director of the Cambodia Centre for Human Rights, “There is a clear interdependence between the right to adequate housing and the enjoyment of other human rights, including the right to education, the right to work and the right to the highest attainable standard of health.”

Women and indigenous peoples face particular challenges in each of these areas. For instance, despite the right of every child to education, one-fifth of households in Cambodia, half of which are indigenous peoples, keep their children out of school so that they can work. In addition, while every person has the right to food, which is an underlying determinant of health, roughly 25 per cent of households do not have access to sufficient food. Further, most households indicate that the responsibility for acquiring food falls on women, which puts them at a disadvantage as they are usually the first to sacrifice their food intake to their families.

UN Human Rights-Cambodia is hopeful that the Government will pay heed to the results of the study and draft further guidelines and implement stronger protections for potentially resettled communities. This can be achieved through consultations and the provision of care for those in vulnerable situations, particularly those facing intersectional forms of discrimination, such as certain groups of women, children and persons with disabilities.



An elderly woman looking at a resettlement site. © NGO CUFA

Photo story on climate change and migration



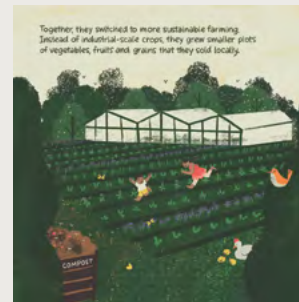
Many harmful narratives surrounding climate change and migration focus on the threat posed by climate change-induced migration. But these narratives can be divisive and trigger fear.

UN Human Rights is working to change the narrative on migration and climate change by promoting hope-based stories of migrants and communities that are working together to address the adverse impacts of climate change.

Magda Castría, a feminist illustrator and graphic designer from Argentina, is devoted to spreading hope to make the world a better place for all species. She produces editorial, animation, motion graphics and digital media projects that are focused on defending human rights and created a series of hope-based illustrations.

OHCHR believes that stories like these and celebrating the power of community can be instrumental in developing collective local solutions to climate change.

To find out more about how to help change the narrative on migration and migrant human rights, visit the [UN Human Rights Toolbox](#).



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Peace and Security (PS)

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



CONFLICT PREVENTION, EARLY WARNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY



Emergency deployments

13 staff deployed

(in 7 countries with deteriorating human rights situations)



Emergency Response Teams (ERTs)

6 teams established (in Central Africa, South Africa, West Africa, Central America, South America and South-East Asia. Three additional ERTs to be established in East Africa, Central Asia and Pacific in 2022)



Humanitarian-Development nexus

2 UN Humanitarian Country Teams supported

(in Chad and Niger to reach collective outcomes and the long-term realization of all human rights)



Investigations

11 Investigative and accountability mandates supported

(8 independent investigations by commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions to Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, the State of Palestine,* South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela and Yemen; and 3 OHCHR examination and accountability projects on Belarus, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and Sri Lanka)

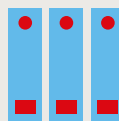
PEACE OPERATIONS



Role of human rights components

1 comprehensive study/strategic document

(analysing how to further strengthen the support they provide to the implementation of the mandates of UN peace operations)



Public reporting

14 reports by human rights components



Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP)

32 UNCTs,

13 UN peace operations

and **3** regional offices supported



Guidance and technical support

Human rights integrated into

26 DPPA-DPO-DOS policy and guidance documents for UN peace missions

* All references to the State of Palestine should be understood in compliance with General Assembly resolution 67/19.

Victims of sexual torture seek justice in Uruguay

“That was the first time he raped me,” said Ana Amorós, now 72, about the day she was taken to her prison barracks by a colonel after she refused to answer his questions. Amorós is one of a group of 28 women who are former political prisoners pursuing justice for torture and sexual offences that were perpetrated by the military regime that controlled Uruguay between 1973 and 1985.

UN Human Rights has documented numerous human rights violations committed during the Uruguayan dictatorship, including torture, killings and enforced disappearances. Many of the victims were women.

The Uruguayan dictatorship banned all political parties and unions and anyone belonging to a rival group could be detained. Amorós was imprisoned for being a member of an anarchist group. She was stripped naked, tortured with a riding crop and raped. She was blindfolded, but could sense that there were men in the room.

“I always thought that...that if one day that happened, I would bite him,” Amorós said. “I would scratch him. I would hit him in the genitals. I thought I could defend myself. I did nothing. Nothing.”

After the regime fell in 1985, the 1986 Expiry Law was adopted, preventing victims from holding perpetrators accountable. The Law provided complete impunity to military, police personnel and civilians who had committed systematic human rights violations during the dictatorship. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights repealed the Law in 2011.

As a result, the Law could no longer be used as a shield to stop investigations of past crimes.

Twenty-five years later, victims were finally free to seek justice. In 2011, they filed a criminal complaint with Uruguay’s courts against more than 100 people for sexual violence and rape. UN Human Rights met with and listened to the women and raised awareness about the issue, including with the human rights treaty bodies.

In March 2021, the women finally had the opportunity to present their case to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. “This is a case of 28 courageous women who denounced the human rights violations they suffered for being women,” said Jan Jarab, UN Human Rights Regional Representative for South

America. “It’s a clear example of why a gender perspective is urgently needed in the investigation of such crimes, past and present.”

UN Human Rights provided the women with support during the public hearings and followed up with authorities. “Immediately after the hearing, there were signs of progress in the case. These were the first signs of activity in years. We need to ensure that the attention of the entire human rights community, not just UN Human Rights, remains focused on further developments,” he said.

Jarab notes that the case is a starting point for the Government to address other human rights violations that occurred during the dictatorship. He also hopes that victims of the dictatorship will be inspired to come forward.



Thousands of Uruguayans took part in the Marcha del Silencio, in Montevideo, Uruguay, which takes place every 20 May to remember the victims of the military dictatorship and to combat human rights violations. © EPA

Highlights of pillar results

Peace and Security (PS)

The United Nations Charter identified international peace and security as one of the founding pillars of the United Nations system. Situations of conflict and insecurity invariably lead to violations of human rights, which are among the root causes of conflict and insecurity. UN Human Rights has a global mandate to promote and protect human rights and

a specific responsibility to mainstream human rights throughout the work of the UN. When violence and conflict occur, the promotion and protection of human rights is not only essential for the protection of rights-holders, especially civilians, it is also essential to rebuilding peace in accordance with the rule of law and preventing reoccurrence. Human rights are a

powerful tool for conflict prevention and provide a sound basis for addressing issues of concern, which, if left unaddressed, can result in conflict. International, regional and national human rights mechanisms can support early warning and accountability and inform UN peace and security efforts.

PILLAR RESULTS / SHIFTS / SDGs

PS1 – PROTECTION of CIVILIANS, CONFLICT and PEACE

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



RESULTS / SPOTLIGHTS



In **CAR**, UN Human Rights provided financial and technical support to civil society, early warning networks, local human rights forums and the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights. The objective was to develop a **national capacity for monitoring and data collection of human rights violations and abuses**, contribute to early warning alerts on the protection of civilians and establish platforms for human rights dialogue at national and local levels. UN Human Rights supported 77 workshops and trainings on human rights and international humanitarian law, reaching 13,972 people, including 6,075 women, and undertook 30 field missions to NHRIs. This enabled the identification and establishment of focal points in field locations to provide early warning alerts on human rights violations and the protection of civilians.

In 2021, the MINUSMA Human Rights and Protection Division (HRPD) published two notes on trends of human rights violations and abuses that were committed in **Mali**, which documented violations and abuses of international human rights law or violations of international humanitarian law. The HRPD brought documented cases to the attention of relevant authorities and actors, along with recommendations on actions to address them. Other issues discussed included contemporary forms of slavery in the Kayes region, the lack of effectiveness of the formal judicial system in the northern regions and the consequential negative human rights impacts. Following these discussions, the Minister issued a **directive to Prosecutors at the Courts of Appeal**, in Mali, on 11 November, to undertake “all necessary measures” to bring to justice any persons accused or suspected of involvement in acts linked to descent-based slavery, within the framework of existing laws, especially the Penal Code. The Minister also noted that the protection of victims of slavery should be given utmost consideration during the judicial processing of each slavery-related case.

In **Yemen**, between January and September, UN Human Rights referred 208 victims to protection partners for assistance, including legal aid, medical assistance, access to shelter, non-food items, psychosocial support and financial support. From January to November, UN Human Rights documented a total of 1,420 human rights violations and 643 incidents, including 883 civilian casualties, 290 cases of arbitrary detention, six cases of enforced disappearance, 29 violations of the rights to freedom of opinion and expression, 24 cases of gender-based violence and 188 attacks against civilian objects.

PS2 – Counter-TERRORISM and preventing VIOLENT EXTREMISM

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



The **G5 Sahel Joint Force's** response to allegations of sexual violence by the Chadian Battalion in Téra, Niger, in March and April, was in accordance with the requirements of the Compliance Framework. In cooperation with the NHRI of Niger, UN Human Rights quickly collected information on the allegations and shared it with the Project Team in Bamako. The G5 Sahel Team shared information about the allegations with the Force Commander and advised on a course of action. This included the establishment of an internal commission of inquiry; the deployment of a delegation that was led by the Commander of Sector Centre to instruct the troops in Téra and meet with departmental authorities and community leaders to reassure the local population; and the issuance of a press release confirming the reports of sexual violence and announcing a series of measures, including the opening of an investigation into the involvement of Force members and any subsequent disciplinary and legal action. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chad issued a press statement noting that immediate action had been taken to **investigate and hold Chadian soldiers accountable**.

Largely due to the strategic engagement of UN Human Rights during the seventh review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the Office significantly increased its engagement and normative leadership role in relation to counter-terrorism and human rights among Member States and within the UN counter-terrorism system. This resulted in the **inclusion of strengthened language on civic space, the rights of the child, women's rights and gender equality**. OHCHR also informed the development of various thematic initiatives launched by UN entities, including strategies for prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration for terrorist suspects; model legal provisions on victims of terrorism; and the global framework for repatriation of third country nationals held in Iraq and in the Syrian Arab Republic. OHCHR was the lead author of the Secretary-General's report on terrorism and human rights, which provides Member States with **authoritative guidance on an HRBA to counter-terrorism**.

PS3 – HUMAN RIGHTS protection in PREVENTION/RESPONSE

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



In **Libya**, technical support provided by UN Human Rights to the human rights component of the United Nations Support Mission led to the establishment of the **Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements (MARA)**. This is one of the structures set up by the Security Council through resolution 1960 (2010) to ensure the timely documentation of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), to better coordinate UN responses and ultimately inform the actions of the Security Council.

In the context of the general elections that were held in **Honduras**, in November, UN Human Rights implemented a strategy that contributed to achieving an overall peaceful and participatory election. This was partially due to the deployment of teams, in cooperation with over 40 NGOs, security forces and the NHRI, to monitor the human rights situation on the ground and identify trends that informed early warning and advocacy actions. In addition, the Office provided technical assistance to electoral institutions and the Attorney General's Office. This resulted in the nationwide deployment of more than 400 prosecutors to **prevent and prosecute electoral crimes**, including the use of excessive force by security agents.

UN Human Rights participated in the mandate renewal of 11 **peace operations to strengthen and preserve human rights language** in relevant resolutions and to **increase human rights impacts** across mission contexts. This was primarily accomplished by coordinating with human rights components and responsible departments and strengthening engagement with Security Council members and penholders. For instance, strong human rights language on the implementation of transitional justice mechanisms was included in Security Council resolution 2621 on MONUSCO’s mandate, which was adopted on 20 December. Further, UN Human Rights reviewed and provided inputs to 26 guidance documents for UN peace missions, including on: conducting peacekeeping training needs assessments that were issued in October; planning and coordination considerations related to improvised explosive device threat mitigation in missions context that were issued in August; and standard operating procedures for the review and appraisal of performance of UN individual police officers that were issued in November.

UN Human Rights continued to work with EU stakeholders on the **integration of human rights into the EU’s engagement on peace and security**. In 2021, political buy-in was secured in the key areas of tripartite engagement (African Union-UN-EU) on compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law and the integration of human rights actions into the UN-EU priorities for 2022-2024, which were developed under the UN-EU Partnership on conflict and crisis management. This political buy-in will be critical to future work. Engagement with non-traditional partners, including the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) directorates at the European External Action Service (EEAS), the European Parliament’s Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE) and the European Commission’s Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), was established or strengthened. This engagement will be key to sustaining concrete policy and programmatic developments.

PS4 – Transitional JUSTICE and ACCOUNTABILITY

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



In **Colombia**, the Constitutional Court extended the mandate of the **Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-recurrence (CEV)** until August 2022 to enable the widespread dissemination of its final report, which will be published in June 2022. UN Human Rights contributed to strengthening the capacities of the CEV to ensure it incorporated international standards into its final recommendations, including in relation to security, justice, extrajudicial executions, education and culture, State presence, corruption, victims and land. UN Human Rights also increased the understanding of regional and national officials of the CEV about human rights violations, with a territorial perspective, by facilitating 35 technical assistance sessions on international norms and standards. In addition, UN Human Rights provided technical assistance to the CEV to facilitate the organization of regional truth-seeking dialogues and consultations with communities and victims. The CEV undertook 1,750 dialogues and consultations, including with individuals and groups. As a result, the views and perspectives of 4,554 people were heard.

In the **Central African Republic**, MINUSCA and UN Human Rights supported the Government in taking an important step towards **the operationalization of the Truth, Justice, Reparations and Reconciliation Commission (CVJRR)** with the appointment of 11 commissioners. A retreat was organized to begin drafting the CVJRR’s internal rules of procedures. A second strategic retreat was held to focus on substantive matters to enable the CVJRR to implement its mandate, including operationalization, communications, investigations, public hearings, reparations, complementarity with the special criminal court and gender issues. The second retreat was co-facilitated and attended by commissioners and experts from the Gambia, Libya, Mali, Peru, Sierra Leone, Togo and Tunisia. A third retreat was held to finalize the CVJRR’s internal regulations and organigram.

In **Maldives**, following UN Human Rights' engagement with the Attorney General's Office, the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Maldives Police Service and the Maldives Correctional Service, an important milestone was reached on accountability with the **adoption of the Transitional Justice Act** and the formation of the Office of the Ombudsperson for Transitional Justice (OTJ). UN Human Rights is providing technical assistance and capacity-building, including on transitional justice and investigation methodologies to the OTJ and the Attorney General's Office.

In **Sudan**, UN Human Rights offered technical advice to the Ministry of Justice on the draft **law establishing the Transitional Justice Commission (TJC)**. During a series of eight working sessions, UN Human Rights assisted the Ministry in compiling the consultation outcomes and integrating relevant concerns and recommendations of the CSOs into the final draft. The technical advice focused on ensuring minimum guarantees for the independence and autonomy of the TJC, strong civil society representation and a minimum representation of at least 40 per cent women on its Board. The TJC legislation was adopted on 24 April and outlined the TJC's clear mandate to lead consultations on defining transitional justice approaches for the Sudan.

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.



With support from UN Human Rights, the UNCT adopted a **Prevention Strategy for Jordan**, in May, to preserve its stability and meet its commitments under the 2030 Agenda. The Prevention Strategy is aligned with the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights and seeks to strengthen the UNCT's initiatives on social and economic inclusion, particularly for youth and women. The Strategy includes 11 action points to accelerate preventive action. A number of practical steps were taken during the reporting period to implement the Strategy. For example, risk assessments related to the Common Country Analysis were updated and a Regional Monthly Review was conducted in October, which emphasized the importance of an HRBA to achieving stability and inclusion.

In **Nicaragua**, UN Human Rights' **early warning activities** focused international attention on the political repression that occurred in the context of the elections, including the detention of 39 HRDs, political opponents and journalists. In its report to the Human Rights Council and the oral updates it delivered in June, September and December, UN Human Rights warned that an increasing number of human rights violations were inhibiting the free exercise of civil and political rights during the electoral process. Following these reports, the international community responded with sanctions and statements issued by Member States and international organizations that condemned the Government's actions and demanded the liberation of imprisoned social and political leaders. Through its analysis and public statements, UN Human Rights served as an early warning voice for the international community on the deteriorating human rights situation in Nicaragua. It also prepared daily internal reports with a particular emphasis on the electoral process.

In Southern Africa, the Emergency Response Team (ERT) provided technical support to UNCTs in **Botswana, Eswatini and Zambia** in the development of their respective **Common Country Analyses and United Nations Sustainable Development Compliance Frameworks**. The ERT contributed to an LNOB analysis of Zambia's CCA, provided inputs on civil and political rights-related risks and concerns and developed a multidimensional risk analysis framework/matrix. Further, the ERT produced three human rights analytical updates on human rights concerns and key issues to watch, including during the electoral period, as well as on socio-economic risks due to COVID-19, which were widely disseminated by the Resident Coordinator to relevant stakeholders. The ERT produced two country risk assessment and timelines of events for Angola and Eswatini and nine media monitoring reports of the situation in Eswatini were produced for OHCHR's internal use. The ERT also contributed to the UN Operations and Crisis Centre's (UNOCC) enhanced monitoring before and after the elections in Zambia.

In 2021, UN Human Rights doubled the number of Emergency Response Teams (from three to six), which **strengthened the capacity** of some of its regional offices (in Bangkok, Dakar, Panama City, Pretoria, Santiago de Chile and Yaoundé) **to undertake early warning and analysis** and to incorporate a stronger prevention component into their support on SDG implementation and LNOB. In 2022, OHCHR aims to establish additional ERTs in Addis Ababa, Bishkek and Suva.

UN Human Rights advocated for the access of humanitarian agencies to places of detention and prison facilities, called for the return of humanitarian agencies into the **Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)** and emphasized the importance of reversing the DPRK's isolation. In September, UN Human Rights organized a panel discussion on the human rights-humanitarian-development nexus at the Korean Global Forum for Peace, during which it presented its discussion paper entitled *Implications of the right to development for the DPRK and other Member States*. The Office was subsequently invited to deliver presentations about the human rights-humanitarian-development nexus at different forums, including those organized by humanitarian agencies. This enabled UN Human Rights to **advocate for the improved integration of human rights into humanitarian action** in the DPRK.

In **Honduras**, UN Human Rights conducted 190 field missions, including 92 onsite missions to verify the human rights situation and 98 missions to places of detention. This enabled the Office to **strengthen and adapt its monitoring system** to provide real-time information and an accurate analysis of the human rights situation in various locations. UN Human Rights also adopted and implemented innovative digital tools to register collected quantitative and qualitative information, which ensured that it was better prepared to promptly respond to and address human rights challenges.

PS6 – HUMAN RIGHTS DUE DILIGENCE POLICY

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



In collaboration with the Asia Pacific Forum of NHRIs (APF), UN Human Rights developed and conducted a pilot training project to **strengthen the capacities of NHRIs in the region to protect human rights in the context of humanitarian action**. This is particularly important as the Asia-Pacific region is facing increasing risks of humanitarian crises due to disasters, climate change, disease and situations of violence. As national actors, NHRIs are uniquely placed to protect human rights through their mandates to, for example, address complaints and violations, provide advice to governments and strengthen participatory approaches and public information. The training content was delivered using a mobile phone app and was supplemented by live webinars.

UN Human Rights 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 contributed to advancing the peace and security agenda. In 2021, UN Human Rights' technical cooperation resulted in the gradual establishment of "light" HRDDP mechanisms in missions that did not have them, including UNAMA, UNAMI and UNMIK. UN Human Rights also participated in DPPA/DPO-led assessments of MINUSMA's support to the G5 Sahel Joint Force and the UN's support options to the Joint Force, thereby ensuring a thorough review of the application of the HRDDP, in close coordination with DPPA/DPO and DOS.



Staff of the Legal Aid Service of Georgia participate in training on international standards on torture prevention, in Batumi, Georgia. © OHCHR

Non-discrimination (ND) Enhancing equality and countering discrimination



LAWS, POLICIES AND PRACTICES



Combating discrimination in all its forms

680 participants from 50 countries in the 14th session of the **Forum on Minority Issues** (held in hybrid format for the first time, with a focus on conflict prevention and the protection of the human rights of minorities)



Acting upon complaints:

Women

151 communications (sent by the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls)

People of African descent

21 communications (sent by the Working Group of experts on people of African Descent)

CIVIL SOCIETY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



Preparation of the High Commissioner's Agenda Towards Transformative Change for Racial Justice and Equality

23 consultations held online with over **340** persons (over 65% women, mostly people of African descent)

Follow-up to the Agenda:

7 consultations with over **110** people (mostly people of African descent)

CAPACITY-BUILDING



Fellowship Programmes: Training provided to

18 people of African descent (12 women and 6 men, from 12 countries)

25 indigenous persons (13 women and 12 men, from 17 countries)

21 persons from minority groups (11 women and 10 men, from 14 countries)



CALL FOR EQUALITY AND TOLERANCE

Public campaigns:

Disability #WeThe15

(as part of a consortium of 20 international organizations)

2.5 billion impressions on Twitter

Over **225** landmarks turned purple on 19 August (opening of Paralympics)

9.5 million interactions on Instagram and Facebook

878 million views on TikTok

'I stand for Gender Equality' or 'I stand up to racism'

2,800 people from 133 countries (shared photos on social media in support)

Women's Day (8 March)

5 videos of women human rights leaders and video interview with the High Commissioner (80,000 views)

Instagram 'grid' of **9** illustrations on social justice, SGBV, participation, economy, health care and environment (over 20k likes)

#FightRacism Day (21 March)

#FightRacism posts across platforms (2.4 million views and 98k engagements)

Albinism Day (13 June)

Albinism Day posts (123k views and 3.8k engagements)

International Migrants Day (18 December)

Stories, photo essay, video message and podcast (over 25,000 views)

Upholding the rights of every child, including children with disabilities (Moldova)

“I want every child, including children with disabilities, to be happy and active members of our society, with all of their rights respected, protected and fulfilled. I also want to know that every parent that has a child with a disability is supported, has accepted the disability of their child as soon as possible and does not encounter discrimination.”

Ludmila Adamciuc is the mother of a four-year-old girl with Down syndrome, and a vlogger and advocate for children with disabilities. She is the founder of an NGO, Prietenamea, that raises awareness and promotes the acceptance of persons with disabilities. She has built an impressive community of followers on social media (57,500 on Instagram, 5,000 friends on her personal Facebook page and 13,000 friends on the Prietenamea page).

Ludmila began advocating for the acceptance of children with disabilities in 2018, when her daughter was born. She was initially depressed and found limited information about the development of children with Down syndrome, supporting her child and accessing available services. Through research and with the support of her family, she accepted her daughter’s disability and was inspired to offer similar support to other parents of children with disabilities. She dedicated herself to raising awareness and advocating for the social acceptance of children with disabilities and their families.

Ludmila began by posting pictures and videos on Facebook and Instagram that promoted acceptance and diversity. She then created a blog (<https://prietenamea.com/>) where she shared stories and lessons

learned. She also led a campaign that invited people to wear blue and yellow clothes and socks of different colours as symbols of acceptance of Down syndrome.

In June 2019, UN Human Rights invited Ludmila to join the Network of Parents of Children and Youth with Disabilities. Through the Network, Ludmila and 14 other parents are benefiting from UN Human Rights’ support, which includes access to a psychological empowerment and training programme on human rights, which promotes a human rights-based approach to disability and advocacy.

Encouraged by these activities and UN Human Rights’ mentoring, Ludmila decided to apply her knowledge and advocacy skills and formally registered “Prietenamea” in early 2021.

UN Human Rights immediately partnered with Ludmila’s NGO in the context of World Down Syndrome Day to organize a campaign, #WeAreAllDifferent, that ran from 21 March to 21 April. The campaign promoted the equality of rights and acceptance of children and persons with Down syndrome and other disabilities. Videos and articles on equality and non-discrimination of persons with Down syndrome were featured and awareness-raising activities were delivered to all levels of educational institutions. Furthermore, from October to December, OHCHR offered guidance to Ludmila and Prietenamea to implement a “Friendship and acceptance month” campaign, which included awareness-raising stories for children and information sessions on equality and non-discrimination, access to education and psychological



Ludmila Adamciuc and her family.
© Ludmila Adamciuc



Awareness-raising campaign promoting acceptance and diversity. © Ludmila Adamciuc

empowerment for parents. Both campaigns had a wide reach that included the participation of 528 children and youth from 20 educational institutions and resulted in more than 513,076 visualizations of videos, 1,904 shares, 19,770 likes, 15,000 read articles and the attendance of 3,100 participants in online sessions.

“I’m very thankful to UN Human Rights for the support provided since 2019. I feel empowered and I believe this will enable me to empower other parents.”

Highlights of pillar results

Non-discrimination (ND)

Enhancing equality and non-discrimination for all is at the core of international human rights law. With a call to Leave No One Behind, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development created an ‘equality’ momentum. Taking advantage of this opportunity, UN Human Rights

seeks to remove the structural barriers that exacerbate and perpetuate discrimination, exclusion and inequalities. The Office supports efforts aimed at strengthening laws, policies, institutions, practices and attitudes conducive to equality and non-discrimination. It strives to increase

public support for diverse and inclusive societies and enhance coherent and rights-based UN responses to exclusion and discrimination. The SDGs provide a common reference for this work, including through linkages with economic, social and cultural rights.

PILLAR RESULTS / SHIFTS / SDGs

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.



RESULTS / SPOTLIGHTS



Through its active role in promoting equality, following up on Human Rights Council resolution 43/1 and combating discrimination against Roma people in the EU, UN Human Rights supported the implementation of multi-year strategies and action plans that were adopted in 2020 on a wide range of non-discrimination issues. In March, the **Council of the European Union adopted a recommendation on Roma equality, inclusion and participation**, which takes UN Human Rights’ advocacy into account and urges EU member states to adopt Roma National Strategies by the end of the year. By end of 2021, 11 countries had presented or adopted their plans. The recommendation also includes indicators that are modelled on UN Human Rights’ anti-discrimination indicators. In 2022, the European Commission and CSOs will jointly assess progress made in implementation at the national level. Finally, the EU **appointed the first EU Anti-Racism Coordinator in 2021** and the Commission **issued its first draft guidelines on National Action Plans against Racism (NAPARs)** for EU member states.

In May, UN Human Rights organized a **Middle East and North Africa** regional virtual symposium on the **compliance of national legislation with CRPD**. The symposium discussed the compliance with CRPD of national legislation in Arab countries, highlighted the current situation of persons with disabilities and provided recommendations and good practices for the fulfilment of the rights of persons with disabilities in the region. The symposium was attended by 128 activists, experts, academics, government officials, members of NHRIs and individuals, including 60 women, from Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, State of Palestine, Sudan, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and the United States of America.

ND2 – JUSTICE SYSTEMS investigate DISCRIMINATION

Justice systems and related institutions increasingly monitor and investigate discrimination and provide redress to victims.




In July, the High Commissioner presented her report and a conference room paper to the Human Rights Council in which she outlines a **four-point agenda towards transformative change for racial justice and equality**. The report builds on decades of work undertaken by international and other human rights mechanisms, as well as a wide consultation process that focused on the lived experiences of people of African descent. Throughout the process, UN Human Rights strengthened advocacy to: address systemic racism and ensure the accountability of law enforcement officials for human rights violations against Africans and people of African descent; take action to ensure that the voices of people of African descent are heard and that their concerns are acted upon; and confront past legacies and deliver reparatory justice. The launch of the report was accompanied by a series of media and communications products to enhance the visibility of its findings. Subsequently, the Council **established an international independent expert mechanism to advance racial justice and equality in law enforcement** and requested that UN Human Rights enhance and broaden its monitoring in order to report on these issues and promote global action to bring about transformative change for racial justice and equality.

Following two years of collaboration and consultations, UN Human Rights and the Equal Rights Trust prepared a publication entitled **Protecting minority rights: A practical guide to developing comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation**. After its publication in 2022, the publication will serve as the leading guidance on anti-discrimination legislation and the right to equality.

ND3 – WOMEN'S 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.



 In **North Macedonia**, the **Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GBV Law)** was adopted after more than two years of preparatory work. The adoption of this legislation serves as an important milestone in promoting the autonomy of women and girls and safeguarding their right to a dignified life that is free from fear and violence. UN Human Rights provided the drafting working group with expert advice to ensure the Law's compliance with international human rights standards and the integration of all aspects related to prevention, protection and the reintegration of victims. The Law is aligned with the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention, CEDAW's general recommendations and other international human rights standards.

 In **Somalia**, UN Human Rights continued providing technical support to Somali counterparts to establish measures for equal opportunities and protection, secure redress for violations and build the capacities of formal justice institutions to **address sexual violence cases**. On 10 January, the UNSOM Human Rights and Protection Group (HRPG) convened a meeting, in Somaliland, with the Somaliland National Human Rights Commission (SLNHRC), as part of joint advocacy efforts against the Rape, Fornication and Other Related Offences Bill, which is contradictory to international and regional human rights standards. The Commission engaged with Somaliland ministries to jointly advocate for a common position on recommendations that were proposed by different stakeholders. Subsequently, a member of the Special Taskforce, which is headed by the SLNHRC, reported that assurances had been secured from the Somaliland Minister of Religion and Endowment and the Somaliland Upper House of Parliament (Guurti) that the Bill would be opposed and replaced with the Sexual Offences Bill of 2018.

 In the **State of Palestine**, UN Human Rights increased its monitoring of women's rights in priority areas, including the **gendered impacts of the occupation** in terms of violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, women human rights defenders (VHRDs), women in detention and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). UN Human Rights continued to gather **disaggregated data on women in Israeli and Palestinian detention**. It carried out four visits to women in detention in Gaza and the West Bank and to a shelter in the West Bank. UN Human Rights engaged

with Palestinian security agencies and authorities in Gaza and the West Bank to follow up on cases of concern and identify wider patterns of discrimination against women, including discriminatory movement restrictions in Gaza. OHCHR also delivered trainings on a human rights-based approach for staff of gender units based in Palestinian ministries.

As part of its technical support to address **GBV in the Southern Africa region**, UN Human Rights strengthened its partnership with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Parliamentary Forum on the development of the **SADC Model Law on GBV**. The Model Law is a critical tool for triggering policy reform and the development or revision of substantive laws in the SADC Member States and SADC Parliamentary Forum-affiliated parliaments. It will also serve as a tool to inform, guide, improve and strengthen the implementation of national legislation and policies on GBV. As a member of the technical working group, the Regional Office for Southern Africa (ROSA) supported the consultation process on the Model Law with various stakeholders, including women’s rights organizations, law enforcement, GBV survivors, faith-based organizations, NHRIs, judicial actors, lawyers, youth organizations and UN agencies. The Model Law was adopted at the fiftieth Plenary Session of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, on 11 December.

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.



UN Human Rights furthered the debate on ways to **promote and protect the rights of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations** through the presentation of a report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/48/32, mandated by resolution A/HRC/RES/45/28) and an interactive dialogue between the High Commissioner and the Human Rights Council.

ND5 – DIGITAL SPACE

Principles and practices effectively counter discrimination and hate speech in the digital space.

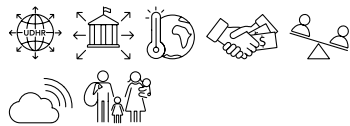


UN Human Rights continued to innovate its methodology and implement technology tools for **monitoring hate speech and incitement**, including in relation to online attacks against HRDs. After applying network, account and content analyses, UN Human Rights was better situated to identify online incidents and trends and apply the Rabat Plan of Action threshold test. This strengthened its evidence base and informed its work on protection cases and engagement with social media platforms and other stakeholders on freedom of expression and content moderation. For example, following its monitoring and advocacy with Twitter, the company removed content related to online attacks against an NGO that was providing support to migrant children in Israel.

UN Human Rights undertook advocacy with different **social media platforms** and encouraged them to increase their efforts to meet their human rights responsibilities under the UNGPs and apply the Rabat Plan of Action threshold test. In 2021, UN Human Rights collaborated with Facebook, Google, YouTube and Twitter, with a view to better **protecting minorities and human rights defenders** and responding to content that could constitute incitement to hostility, discrimination or violence. As a result, the Facebook Oversight Board applied the Rabat Plan of Action threshold test in several decisions.

ND6 – MIGRATION

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



In **Central America**, the monitoring of migrant human rights violations developed and evolved due to the efforts of UN Human Rights to strengthen the capacity of NHRIs and CSOs to confront the migration crisis. It also highlighted the actions that States need to undertake to meet their international obligations, particularly in relation to demographic groups with pre-existing vulnerabilities. UN Human Rights encouraged the integration of key standards into regional migration policies and programmes. It monitored and analysed regional migratory trends throughout 2021, which were published in an informative bulletin. The bulletin provided a **regional analysis of trends and human rights violations against migrants**. It also outlined a series of recommendations to inform decision makers and promoted the mainstreaming of human rights into public policies and governance of migration. In addition, evidence-based technical assistance was provided to authorities in the subregion.

The European Union Pact on Asylum and Migration, which was proposed by the European Commission in 2020, continued to be negotiated by the European Parliament and EU member states. Despite limited progress in negotiations, the EC took advantage of opportunities to move forward on various initiatives proposed in the Pact, such as the **EU Strategy on Voluntary Return and Reintegration and the EU Action Plan against Migrant Smuggling 2021-2025**. UN Human Rights advocated for the establishment of independent monitoring mechanisms in EU member states. Meanwhile, Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, continued to fulfil its responsibilities outlined in its 2019 Regulation, including the operationalization of the Standing Corps and the creation of **policies and procedures to safeguard human rights** in Frontex activities. As a member of the Frontex Consultation Forum on Fundamental Rights, UN Human Rights provided expertise in this regard. For instance, it participated in the recruitment of an independent fundamental rights officer, the training of newly recruited fundamental rights monitors, the development of a procedure to report alleged human rights violations and the adoption of a Frontex Fundamental Rights Strategy and Action Plan.


In **West Africa**, a joint project of OHCHR and UNODC, known as PROMIS, aimed to strengthen the capacities of West African States to develop a human rights-based response to the smuggling of migrants. OHCHR contributed to updating legal frameworks and increased protection capacities in the West African region to ensure the efficient **promotion and protection of the human rights of migrants** in their countries of origin and during their migratory movements. More specifically, PROMIS supported the elaboration and validation of laws related to the smuggling of migrants in the Gambia, in alignment with international human rights standards, and assisted the Ministry of Justice of Niger with the revision of Law No. 2015-36 on the smuggling of migrants. Furthermore, six grantees completed their projects after receiving financial and technical support over 18 months, which led to improved access to justice for 3,688 migrants in Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Niger and Senegal.

UN Human Rights actively supported the **Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Migration**, in March, and ensured that the discussions were founded on a human rights-based framework. OHCHR took a leadership role in engaging regional stakeholders in the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM). To this end, it co-hosted a region-wide consultation for more than 100 stakeholders. It briefed CSOs and other partners on the 2022 International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) and sought their views on future engagement with the regional network. The consultation was preceded by 12 small-group consultations that were composed of various stakeholders' groups, including NHRIs, the media, academia and parliamentarians.


ND7 – PUBLIC MOBILIZATION for INCLUSION

Public support increases for equal, inclusive and diverse societies, without discrimination.



 In the **State of Palestine**, UN Human Rights increased its work on the rights of persons with disabilities by providing technical assistance to government institutions, strengthening civil society engagement with the international human rights mechanisms and increasing **awareness-raising and advocacy campaigns on disability rights**. In February, UN Human Rights launched an awareness-raising campaign to disseminate COVID-19-related information in accessible formats for persons with disabilities and their families, including information on psychological and social support services that are provided by the Government and CSOs. The campaign was developed and implemented in cooperation with OPDs, the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Health. The campaign registered more than 230,000 views on the social media channels of OHCHR, Palestinian Television, the Government and CSOs. On the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December), OHCHR partnered with the Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO) to produce a video featuring the experiences of Ms. Rabab Nofal, an activist from Gaza, who speaks about the daily challenges, stigma and discrimination she faces as a woman living with a disability and the lack of available services in Gaza. The video has amassed more than 200,000 views.

In **Guatemala**, as a follow-up to the capacity-building process carried out by UN Human Rights in 2020, 12 new workshops were held for communications officers working for indigenous organizations (15 women, 11 men). The workshops focused on international human rights law, the design of communications campaigns, international human rights protection mechanisms, the preparation of press releases and access to information. In addition, UN Human Rights provided technical assistance to organizations of indigenous peoples to enable them to update their communications strategies and effectively implement specific **communications campaigns highlighting indigenous rights**, particularly regarding the implementation of judicial sentences related to the rights of indigenous peoples.

 Since early 2020, UN Human Rights has worked with the mediation process of the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) of Christian and Muslim leaders to address a long-standing dispute between Christian schools and Muslim communities in the **South of Malawi** wherein girls were denied access to education if they wore a hijab. Following these efforts, the PAC members concluded a Memorandum of Understanding that permits all Muslim girls attending Christian schools to wear a hijab in accordance with their personal choice. The MoU includes a specific commitment to **respecting the rights of students to education and freedom of religion, with a particular emphasis on the rights of the girl child**. The PAC members also made recommendations to the Ministry of Education to ensure that Muslim girls are not subject to discrimination on the basis of their religion. UN Human Rights used the international human rights framework to guide the dialogue and conflict resolution between the Christian and Muslim communities. The process received a high level of public attention, including through the media, and was closely followed by the President of Malawi.

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.



UN Human Rights actively supported the co-facilitators of the consultation process on the operationalization of the Permanent Forum of People of African Descent, namely, Chad and Costa Rica, in hosting a series of intergovernmental discussions and engagements with civil society constituencies. This consultation process led to the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 75/314, in August, which formally **operationalizes the Permanent Forum for People of African Descent**. The Permanent Forum will serve as a consultative mechanism for people of African descent and other relevant stakeholders, as well as an advisory body to the Human Rights Council, in line with the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent. In December, five of the 10 members of the mechanism were elected by the General Assembly and the remaining five were appointed by the President of the HRC in the first quarter of 2022. UN Human Rights has been working towards the creation of a Permanent Forum since 2014, when it was mandated to do so by General Assembly resolution A/RES/69/16.

As part of the UN Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, UN Human Rights supported the development of the **UN Checklist to strengthen UN work at country level to combat racial discrimination and advance minority rights**, which was launched in March. It also contributed to the development and delivery of the first online training on addressing racial discrimination and strengthening the protection of minorities in UN programming processes. A total of 41 staff members from 13 UNCTs received the training over a four-week period.

“The blood we sacrificed was worth it” (South Africa)

Selinah Mnguni was 23 years old and three months pregnant when she was injured during the Sharpeville massacre on 21 March 1960. Selinah and thousands of other young people were attending a protest in peaceful defiance of the apartheid regime and the pass laws that were adopted to restrict and control the movement and employment of millions of Black South Africans.

Selinah was shot in her leg but survived. Many others were not so lucky. A total of 69 unarmed and non-violent protesters were gunned down by the South African police and nearly 200 more were injured. Protestors as young as 12 and 13 years of age were killed.



Selinah Mnguni, a Sharpeville massacre survivor.
© OHCHR

The Sharpeville massacre sparked mass protests by Black South Africans across the country, many of which were ruthlessly and violently crushed by the military and South African police. The moral outrage of the international community led the United Nations General Assembly to pronounce 21 March as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

The massacre was among a series of events around the world that inspired the development of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which entered into force on 4 January 1969. The Convention reaffirms the dignity and equality of all human beings and obliges States Parties to ensure that all appropriate measures are undertaken, including in policy and practice, to eliminate racial discrimination.

This year, the UN and UN Human Rights joined South Africans to mark the sixty-first anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre. “Youth standing up against racism” was the theme, aiming to foster a global culture of tolerance, equality and non-discrimination that calls on everyone to stand up against racial prejudice and intolerant attitudes. The campaign #FightRacism was launched to promote awareness about these critical issues.

The UN Human Rights Regional Office for Southern Africa produced a series of digital stories on the Sharpeville massacre and young people’s concerns about their human rights. It also contributed to the

headline story at the Anti-Racism Live Global Digital Experience, held on 21 March, which featured acclaimed artists, actors and prominent speakers from South Africa, including Thuli Madonsela, Zulaikha Patel and Zwai Bala.

Abigail Noko, the UN Human Rights Regional Representative, used the opportunity to call on decision makers to invite youth to participate in discussions on human rights and eliminating racial discrimination. “We need the voices of young people to break through the silence that locks in discrimination and oppression. We must listen to them, learn from them and work with them to build a better future,” she said.

Perseverance and determination are also needed to build on the lessons learned from the Sharpeville tragedy and to repair the injustices of the past. A robust human rights framework is the only way to provide a remedy for those injustices and to combat inequality and the underlying structural differences that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

At 84 years of age, Selinah is proud of her efforts to end apartheid. “I know that the democracy we have today was achieved in part because of our actions. The blood we sacrificed was worth it,” she says.

A strengthened UN anti-racism human rights architecture for people of African descent

In 2021, significant international developments took place in the long-standing fight to end racism against people of African descent. Following the Council's June 2020 adoption of a resolution in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd, the High Commissioner presented a comprehensive report on systemic racism, human rights violations committed by law enforcement agencies against people of African descent and government responses to peaceful anti-racism protests.

Building on decades of work undertaken by the UN and other human rights mechanisms, written submissions and broad consultations centring on the experiences of people of African descent, the High Commissioner's report seeks to contribute to accountability and redress for victims and outlines an agenda to facilitate transformative change for racial justice and equality. The agenda is based on four interconnected pillars:

- “STEP UP:” Stop denying and take steps to dismantle systemic racism.
- “PURSUE JUSTICE:” End impunity and foster trust.
- “LISTEN UP:” Ensure that people of African descent and those who stand up against racism are protected and heard and that their concerns are acted upon.
- “REDRESS:” Confront past legacies, undertake special measures and deliver reparatory justice.

The High Commissioner urged Member States to “show stronger political will to accelerate action for racial justice, redress and equality through specific, time-bound

commitments to achieve results.” The report underlines the need for “a transformative approach that tackles the interconnected areas that drive racism, and lead to repeated, wholly avoidable, tragedies like the death of George Floyd.”

The Human Rights Council and the General Assembly acknowledged the report with appreciation. CSOs and impacted family members welcomed the report and the American Civil Liberties Union and Mothers against Police Brutality described it as “historic.”

In July, the Council adopted a follow-up resolution, by consensus, to establish an international independent expert mechanism to advance racial justice and equality in law enforcement. The mechanism will have a three-year mandate. Its three members were appointed in December and their work is scheduled to begin in 2022. The resolution also calls on OHCHR to enhance and broaden monitoring to report on these issues and promote global action to promote racial justice and equality.

In August, the General Assembly adopted a resolution, also by consensus, operationalizing the Permanent Forum of People of African Descent, representing a milestone in the implementation of the Programme of Activities for the International Decade for People of African Descent. The Forum will serve as: a consultative mechanism for people of African descent and other relevant stakeholders; a platform for improving the safety and quality of life and livelihoods of people of African descent; and an advisory body to the Human Rights Council. In addition, the Forum is mandated “to consider the elaboration of a United Nations declaration on the promotion, protection and full respect of the human rights of people of African descent.” This stand-alone, 10-member expert body will begin its work in 2022.

Together, these actions mark a renewed opportunity to place racial equality and justice for people of African descent at the centre of international, regional and national processes and agendas.



#FIGHTracism banner. © OHCHR



Accountability (A)

Strengthening the rule of law and accountability for human rights violations



JUSTICE SYSTEMS, TRIALS AND PRISON CONDITIONS



Trials

611 court cases monitored



Places of detention

1,852 visits undertaken



Detainees

3,047 persons released (upon action from UN Human Rights, including 397 women, 2,487 men and 163 children)



Monitoring missions

4,612 human rights situations documented
(43% in person and 57% remotely)

NON-JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS



Human rights mechanisms

85 opinions adopted by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (53 urgent appeals, 198 allegation letters and 8 other letters initiated or joined)

99 communications sent by the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (486 new cases transmitted to States, including 50 under its urgent action procedure)

216 communications sent by the Working Group on Business and Human Rights (including 172 joint allegations letters, and 44 other joint letters)



Paris Principles-compliant national human rights institutions (NHRIs)

128 countries with established/enhanced NHRIs
(including 86 accredited with A status, 32 with B status)



Human rights-based approach to data and indicators

operationalized in **11** countries
(following agreements between NHRIs and national statistical offices and other government agencies)

Strengthening prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence in Kenya

As monitoring efforts have demonstrated, cases of sexual and gender-based violence in Kenya consistently increase during election periods. UN Human Rights worked closely with UN Women to strengthen the prevention of and response to SGBV. The objective of their efforts was to empower community-based WHRDs and enhance their engagement with duty-bearers.

ASSISTING SURVIVORS OF SGBV

Fatuma Wambui is the founder and Volunteer Coordinator of the Winam Social Justice Centre, with more than 15 years of experience in SGBV response work. As a survivor of domestic violence, Fatuma is motivated to protect other survivors from the same experiences she endured.

“During the 2017 elections, I handled 19 cases of SGBV. They were reported to the Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA), but the perpetrators were the police. We are now heading to the next elections and none of these cases have been investigated. Survivors are still receiving psychosocial support. They are still being intimidated and not being believed. It can be such a long process,” notes Fatuma.



Fatuma Wambui, Volunteer Coordinator of the Winam Social Justice Centre, assisting clients/survivors of gender-based violence. © OHCHR

EQUIPPING HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Caren Kiare Omanga is the founder and Chair of the Nyando Social Justice Centre, situated in western Kenya. “It’s one of the most dangerous jobs to do in Kenya. You need a hard heart. Cultural values in this region and human rights do not go together. We are empowering women, but according to many community elders, we are inciting women against men.” These challenges take a toll on HRDs, often translating into burnout.

To combat these challenges, UN Human Rights and UN Women trained 38 HRDs in four target counties in western Kenya and Nairobi. Consequently, a total of 650 SGBV survivors received counselling and accessed legal aid in 2020-2021. UN Human Rights also facilitated the provision of psychosocial support to WHRDs to help prevent burnout when assisting survivors.

Goretti Ondola is a survivor who received justice after being supported by HRDs who were trained by UN Human Rights. For over 20 years, the family of Goretti’s late husband subjected her to psychological abuse, culminating in a brutal attack that led to her hospitalization. She reached out to the Nyando Social Justice Centre and, with Caren’s assistance, obtained land rights and a physical boundary that protects her and her son.

“The WHRDs at the Centre helped me get medical care and report the case to the police, which I was not comfortable doing,” says Goretti. Like Caren and



Caren Kiarie Omanga, Chair of the Nyando Social Justice Centre and WHRD. © OHCHR

Fatuma, Goretti now assists other women by referring them to social justice centres.

ENGAGEMENT WITH DUTY-BEARERS

UN Human Rights also works with rule of law and justice system actors to pursue accountability for human rights violations as an important element of prevention. For example, UN Human Rights supported a Tripartite Task Force, under the leadership of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, to develop the Standard Operating Procedures on the Investigation and Prosecution of Serious Human Rights Violations Committed by Police Officers, which were launched on 8 June.

In addition, UN Human Rights is strengthening connections between HRDs, the IPOA and the justice system to ensure a survivor-centred approach is incorporated into any responses to SGBV perpetrated by police officers.

Highlights of pillar results

Accountability (A)

The legal protection of all human rights requires various actors to uphold their obligations to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. This includes States as the primary duty-bearers, as well as private actors, armed groups, other non-State actors and individuals who, under certain circumstances, can be held criminally accountable for their actions. To

enhance accountability and promote peaceful, prosperous and inclusive societies, UN Human Rights helps to build human rights-compliant institutional frameworks. It supports the adoption of regulations that domesticate international human rights law and promotes policies and practices that guard against transgressions (i.e., misuse of criminal

law, arbitrary detention, torture, gender-based violence and censorship). UN Human Rights also supports the establishment of independent, impartial and fair courts and non-judicial accountability mechanisms that address claims and grant remedies, including commissions of inquiry, fact-finding missions and other investigations.

PILLAR RESULTS / SHIFTS / SDGs

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.



RESULTS / SPOTLIGHTS

Spotlights: Disabilities Women Youth

During 2021, in accordance with a protocol created in cooperation with the Government, UN Human Rights visited 14 detention centres in **Venezuela** and interviewed 183 detainees, 33 of whom were women and 23 of whom were children. In March, UN Human Rights undertook its first visit to a pretrial detention centre in Caracas, managed by the Bolivarian National Police. Four more pretrial detention centres were visited in the following months. After each visit, UN Human Rights submitted a confidential report to authorities containing **recommendations to improve compliance with international detention standards and address urgent individual cases** regarding the rights to due process and health. Some of these recommendations were subsequently implemented, including the resumption of visits of relatives and lawyers, calls to family members and improved physical conditions, in particular related to hygiene. UN Human Rights also undertook advocacy with authorities regarding the individual cases of some detainees that required immediate solutions, including in relation to health care, judicial delays and the non-execution of judicial release orders. These efforts led to the **release of 85 persons**, 13 of whom were women.

In **Georgia**, UN Human Rights strengthened the capacity of the State Inspector Service and supported the advancement of policies, laws and practices that enhance independence of the Service, especially with regard to **investigations of alleged human rights violations committed by law enforcement agencies**. Following the findings of a study supported by UN Human Rights, a package of legislative changes was submitted to the Parliament of Georgia for endorsement. UN Human Rights also cooperated with the Ministry of Justice to establish a national mechanism for supporting the rehabilitation of victims of torture and other ill-treatment. UN Human Rights undertook a study on the existence of rehabilitation systems for victims of torture in different countries that was used as an advocacy tool to encourage the Government of Georgia to make a policy decision on the creation of such a mechanism.

UN Human Rights **strengthened the institutional capacity** of the **Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights** (IHCHR), particularly at the governorate level, by working on issues related to enforced disappearance, the prevention of torture, the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. With support from UN Human Rights, the IHCHR organized a series of workshops throughout the year for personnel from the Ministry of Interior to enhance their capacities to protect human rights during

their operations. Despite concerns over its independent functioning, the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) accredited IHCHR with “A” status, in July.

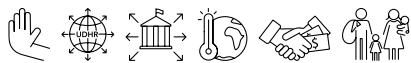
 In **Libya**, UN Human Rights mobilized national partners, in particular the Committee of Libyan Experts on Combating Violence Against Women, to conduct a **comprehensive review of the draft law on violence against women** to ensure its compliance with international human rights standards. Following a series of consultations, the draft law was presented by the Ministry of Women's Affairs to 19 women Members of Parliament and other national partners. An advocacy campaign will be launched to support its endorsement. In addition, UN Human Rights conducted an assessment mission on the needs of women and children detained at the Mitiga Detention Centre in Tripoli. As a result of advocacy efforts, the Prosecutors Legal Review Committee, established by the Attorney General, reviewed and brought before the court the legal cases of 2,845 inmates, 2,150 of whom were subsequently released.

UN Human Rights led or participated in 10 Joint Investigation Teams (JITs), nine Joint Assessment Missions (JAMs) and 10 investigation or monitoring missions, primarily in the provinces of Ituri, North and South Kivu, Kasai, Kasai Central and Tanganyika in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, in collaboration with civilian and judicial military authorities, to **fight against impunity**. Seventeen mobile courts were supported to address emblematic cases. UN Human Rights also provided technical assistance to judicial authorities regarding the handling of cases of international crimes. A total of 175 convictions were recorded as serious human rights violations.

UN Human Rights contributed to the adoption by the **European Commission** of stronger language on rule of law backsliding through the submission of a comprehensive analysis during the Commission's consultations on the **2021 rule of law report**. The submission was based on relevant findings issued by the international human rights mechanisms and UN Human Rights from 2018-2021 in relation to all 27 EU member states. It also highlighted engagements and common messaging with partner organizations, such as the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions. In the development of its forthcoming 2022 report, the European Commission expanded its methodology and referred to previous submissions and reactions to its second 2021 rule of law annual report. Its objective is to craft a more effective response to rule of law challenges that are taking place in the context of an increasingly polarized landscape.

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.



UN Human Rights advocated for the establishment of a **mechanism to address the fate and whereabouts of missing persons in Syria** and provided support to their families through the High Commissioner's statements and speeches, outreach to Member States and the oral update to the Human Rights Council, in September. This contributed to the Third Committee of the General Assembly passing a resolution, in November, calling on the Secretary-General to conduct a study on how to bolster efforts to clarify the fate and whereabouts of missing persons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

On 25 May, Somalia's Minister of Defence adopted a **human rights policy for the Somali National Armed Forces (SNAF)**, which reaffirms the promotion and protection of human rights and urges their compliance to prevent all forms of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). The document reflects Human Rights Due Diligence Policy measures, which were highlighted as critical to strengthening oversight and accountability in a risk assessment that was sent to the Ministry of Defence and the SNAF in 2016 and 2021, respectively.

In December 2020, 11 violent riots that took place at prisons in **Ecuador** resulted in 418 deaths, the destruction of facilities and the reported rape of a policewoman. In this context, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, UN Human Rights and UNODC undertook a baseline study and developed a proposal for comprehensive penitentiary reform that is founded on a human rights-based approach. UN Human Rights analysed the gathered information and prioritized two key initiatives to promote an HRBA in response to the crisis. First, a technical mission was undertaken to strengthen the capacities of the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) and advocate for the importance of its role. Second, expert advice was provided for the development of the new public policy on social rehabilitation, at the request of the Secretariat for Human Rights. As a result, the Head of the NHRI **reviewed the structure of the NPM, with a view to ensuring its independence.**

Following the publication of the findings of the joint UN Human Rights-Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) report on the human rights situation in Tigray, on 3 November, the Government of Ethiopia announced the **establishment of an Interministerial Taskforce to implement the recommendations of the joint OHCHR-EHRC report.** The Interministerial Taskforce established four committees dedicated to investigations, SGBV, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) and resource mobilization. UN Human Rights and the EHRC were invited by Ethiopia's Ministry of Justice to provide capacity-building and technical advice to the Interministerial Taskforce and key government officials.

A3 – Investigation of GENDER-related CRIMES

Justice systems investigate and prosecute gender-related crimes more effectively.



As a member of the **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 crimes in conflict and post-conflict settings**. For instance, in the Central African Republic, the ToE deployed a specialist to provide mentoring and capacity support to national authorities. This resulted in the finalization of two field investigation reports regarding serious incidents in Kaga Bandoro and Bossangoa. The two cases involving 264 and 150 victims of CRSV, respectively, were referred to the Office of the Prosecutor in Bangui and Kaga Bandoro's High Court. UN Human Rights also led the development of a joint United Nations amicus curiae brief to the International Criminal Court in relation to the case of *The Prosecutor v. Dominic Ongwen*. Dominic Ongwen was found guilty of 61 crimes against humanity and war crimes, including sexual and gender-based crimes, which took place in Northern Uganda between July 2002 and December 2005. This case marked the first time that the crime of forced marriage was considered by the Court. On 6 May, he was sentenced to 25 years in prison.

In **Mexico**, UN Human Rights developed a **methodology for specialized prosecutors working on femicide cases** to ensure that the due diligence principle includes a gender and human rights perspective. In accordance with an agreement with the General Prosecutor of Mexico City, the methodology will be implemented in 2022.

In **South Sudan**, UN Human Rights assisted with the development and consolidation of the Joint Action Plan and provided technical support to the Joint Implementation Committee (JIC) of the Joint Action Plan of the Armed Forces on CRSV, which is composed of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF), the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) and the South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA). The Committee was officially launched on 30 November. UN Human Rights provided technical assistance and facilitated a series of meetings to assist the JIC in developing approaches and strategies to fulfil its mandate to lead and oversee the implementation of the Joint Action Plan.

In **Kenya**, UN Human Rights initiated plans to engage WHRDs in Kisumu, Vihiga and Bungoma counties under Phase II of the "Let It Not Happen Again" joint project, which is being implemented in cooperation with UN Women, in order to strengthen the **prevention of and response to election-related sexual violence**. UN Human Rights trained 15 HRDs (11 women, four men) to enable them to provide facilitated access to medical and justice services by SGBV survivors and identify the delivery of services by duty-bearers to enhance effective prevention and response to gender-based violence. As a result of the training, the participating HRDs subsequently assisted 139 GBV survivors (135 women, four men) with reporting their cases to the police and accessing medical and psychosocial services. UN Human Rights also provided psychosocial services to HRDs to protect them from burnout when assisting GBV survivors.

A4 – ACCESS to INFORMATION

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



In collaboration with the human rights programme of the National Autonomous University of **Mexico**, UN Human Rights defined, contextualized and **validated a set of indicators for the Escazú Agreement**, which the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs adopted as the Agreement’s reporting framework. In addition, federal authorities validated and adopted a set of 108 indicators on water and sanitation for Mexico, which were developed by UN Human Rights in collaboration with the National Institute of Water Technologies.

A5 – UN ACTION on RULE of LAW

UN efforts with regard to the rule of law, justice, counter-terrorism and accountability put human rights at the core.



Due to UN Human Rights’ strategic advocacy for the **seventh review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy**, some of OHCHR’s inputs were incorporated into the review resolution (A/RES/75/291), which include: a reference to the UN Guidance Note on the promotion and protection of civic space; a call for the creation of an enabling environment for civil society; an explicit reference to OHCHR and the integration of the reports and recommendations issued by the human rights treaty bodies, the special procedures and the UPR; recognition of the differential impact of terrorism and counter-terrorism measures on women and girls; and an explicit reference to freedom of expression and association.

UN Human Rights remained involved in the development of the **Global Framework for UN Support on Syria/Iraq Third Country Returnees**, until its official launch, in September. UN Human Rights will continue to play an active role in its implementation, stressing the need for mainstreaming human rights principles and gender perspectives into every stage of the return process.

The UNCT in **Myanmar** demonstrated its responsiveness to human rights concerns by undertaking targeted actions, both internally and publicly. During the present crises, UN Human Rights provided support to the UNCT by **promoting coordinated, coherent and consistent human rights messaging and a condemnation of violence** used against peaceful protesters and mass detentions. Furthermore, as a result of the suspension of all programmes that were being delivered through the mechanisms of the Government, the UN reoriented its programmes to support locally-based solutions and mechanisms instead of State apparatuses that were controlled by the military. In implementing these engagement principles, the UN assessed human rights risks for their programmes and, where possible, repurposed their efforts in support of human rights protection. Furthermore, the UNCT undertook significant efforts to steer future programming towards meeting the needs of the most vulnerable through humanitarian and socio-economic responses.

Strategic litigation: A force for gender justice

A group of lawyers, academics, legal practitioners and activists across Latin America have united under the belief that strategic court cases can bring justice, reparations and healing to SGBV survivors.

“The Latin American Network for Gender-based Strategic Litigation (ReLeG) was established in 2021 to advocate for and strengthen accountability efforts for gender-based crimes in Latin America and provide a platform for advocates to disseminate and exchange good litigation practices across the region,” said Susana SáCouto, one of the group’s organizers.

“We saw that many organizations and victims’ advocates were working in isolation, unaware of similar cases being litigated in the region or of successful jurisprudential advances and strategies,” she said.

“Strong peer networks are indispensable to sharing lessons learned,” added Seoane, another organizer. “It is generally an advocacy process, not single interventions, that contributes to positive change. We hope this network will support participants in these initiatives.”

FROM A WORKSHOP TO A COALITION

It all began with a workshop in Bellagio, in 2017, during which advocates exchanged information, good practices and common challenges faced in their cases and projects. With the assistance of UN Human Rights, the group became more formalized. UN Human Rights sponsored a

roundtable discussion on strategic litigation of gender-based violence cases in Latin America. The subsequent report laid a foundation for the group’s advocacy work.

“ReLeG is a platform that reflects a diversity of experiences and backgrounds and can be used to disseminate and exchange good practices, academic research and expertise on specific GBV cases. More broadly, it can help users find creative solutions to advance gender justice and gender equality,” said Georgina Mendoza, a UN Human Rights Officer. “For UN Human Rights, it is important to support collective efforts that are focused on societal transformation.”

STRATEGIC LITIGATION MEANS STRUCTURAL CHANGE

“Strategic litigation includes bringing cases before judicial and quasi-judicial bodies that aim to have a lasting impact beyond addressing the harm suffered by those victims,” said Kravetz, a co-organizer of ReLeG.

One of the best examples of this was Guatemala’s groundbreaking 2016 Sepur Zarco court case, which dealt with CRSV against indigenous women during the country’s civil conflict. The trial resulted in the conviction of former military members, as well as transformative reparations that included monetary compensation, restitution and rehabilitation. The reparations sought to strengthen access to health and education in the communities of the litigants and supported the development



March against gender-based violence in Lima, Peru. © EPA-EFE

of cultural projects for the women of Sepur Zarco. The judgment was translated into the 24 Mayan languages.

A NETWORK OF JUDICIAL ADVOCACY FOR ALL SURVIVORS

The focus on SGBV for strategic litigation in Latin America is an attempt to end impunity for these crimes.

“We expect that this platform will facilitate our work as a coalition and increase our capacity to break the existing patterns of impunity regarding SGBV,” said Claudia Martin, a group organizer. “We believe that ensuring past perpetrators are held accountable for SGBV in conflict or situations of political repression is necessary to addressing new forms of gendered violence. Present day violence reproduces historical patterns of discrimination and is committed by States and private actors.”



Participation (P)

Enhancing participation and protecting civic space



PUBLIC MOBILIZATION



Global campaigns

10.5 million followers on social media
(across all UN Human Rights platforms, 8.2% more than in 2020)

9,400 persons from over **160** countries expressed support (by sharing photos on social media with a filter inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

374 video stories (including 175 video messages from the High Commissioner)

110 feature stories
(UN Human Rights website and social media)



In the field

557 advocacy campaigns

2,226 press releases/statements

Data coverage in **88** countries (215% increase compared to 41 in 2015, on global reporting on killings and enforced disappearances of HRDs, journalists and trade unions)

INFORMATION AND OUTREACH MATERIALS



Publications

6.99 million visits to online publications
(13% increase from 2020)

Over **298,000** publications/advocacy materials distributed (to 85 countries)

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS



With CSOs

1,285 women's rights organizations

615 youth-led organizations

581 organizations of persons with disabilities

ENGAGEMENT WITH UN HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS



HRC and UPR Voluntary Trust Funds

3 delegates of **3** States supported to attend UPR reviews (out of a total of 41 States reviewed)

108 requests processed by the HRC Help Desk for Small States (during regular sessions of the HRC)



Intimidation and reprisals against those cooperating with the UN

New cases/developments from **45** countries



Social Forum

Over **500** participants attended online and in person (focusing on "good practices, success stories, lessons learned and challenges in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic")

“To defend water is to defend life itself” (Honduras)

“I don’t understand how it is that we can be given awards abroad [for our work], while at home, in Honduras, we are persecuted [for it],” expressed a perplexed Juana Zúniga when talking about the backlash against her community.

In 2018, the Government granted a concession for the Rivers of San Pedro and of Guapinol, located in the Carlos Escaleras National Park, to the mining company, Inversiones Pinares. The concession was marked by irregularities, such as legislation that reduced the Park’s core area by 200 hectares to allow the mining company to more fully exploit its mineral rights.

When the Guapinol and other nearby communities realized that the mining activities were polluting their main water supply, they filed a lawsuit against the Government.

“The right to water and to a healthy environment are social rights and the community is very clear about this. As citizens, we have the duty to defend the environment because we all need water; humans, flora and fauna,” said Guapinol defender Kelvin Romero.

Since then, artists and human rights defenders have set up protest camps and participated in demonstrations, concerts and other events. Protests in 2018 were marred by acts of violence, which the Government blamed on protestors and community activists.

The Government’s subsequent accusations of arson and damage to private property against 31 people resulted in the detention of 12 leaders of the movement, eight of

whom remain in pretrial detention. The prosecution asserts that the activists are part of a criminal group, not HRDs.

UN Human Rights staff members visited the defenders in prison in October 2020 and November 2021. During those visits, the HRDs shared concerns about safety for themselves and their families. A Guapinol defender was murdered in suspicious circumstances outside his home.

The trial against the HRDs has been postponed several times, denying them their right to justice. During the last hearing, in December, the prosecution introduced a new charge of aggravated damages. This charge is under review by the Court of Appeals.

As a result of these delays, the HRDs have been in pretrial detention for more than two years. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued an opinion that the detention is arbitrary and contrary to Honduras’ human rights obligations. Furthermore, the HRDs have

been repeatedly denied their visitation rights, including to meet with their legal representatives. Four special rapporteurs have requested the Government to immediately release the defenders.

UN Human Rights conducted advocacy and provided legal support related to international human rights standards, including on HRDs, criminalization and excessive preventive detention to judicial and prosecutorial authorities. It also provided legal support to victims and their legal representatives.

Following widespread smear campaigns that attempted to delegitimize their work as HRDs, UN Human Rights offered public support, emphasizing their roles as HRDs who are fighting for the well-being of their community and their region.

“To defend water is to defend life itself. We are fighting for the survival of our way of life and that of our community as a whole,” said Guapinol defender Arnold Alemán.



UN Human Rights Honduras Representative and team by the Guapinol River with families and community members.
© OHCHR

Highlights of pillar results

Participation (P)

Meaningful, inclusive and safe participation of people and communities, including those who are most underrepresented, is key to realizing the human rights for all people and advancing peace and development. When civil society engages freely and actively in policy development and implementation, policies are more informed, effective, efficient and sustainable. CSOs are instrumental in providing

legal, medical, social and financial support to victims of human rights violations, yet they face major obstacles at all levels, including at the country level and within UN forums. Legal and policy restrictions, negative narratives, attacks and intimidation, both online and offline, affect their ability to debate and mobilize. While new technologies facilitate the expansion of civil society networks, they also create

new avenues for control of their speech and activities, often under the pretext of security. UN Human Rights is uniquely placed to monitor the situation of those who speak up, open doors for effective civil society engagement and advocate for approaches that preserve and expand civic space.

PILLAR RESULTS / SHIFTS / SDGs

P1 – ENABLING NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK for civil society

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



RESULTS / SPOTLIGHTS

Spotlights: Disabilities Women Youth

In **Colombia**, during the national strike that began on 28 April, UN Human Rights observed that dialogue between authorities, protesters and other actors constituted the most effective tool and good practice to prevent, avoid or neutralize situations of violence, including in response to roadblocks. UN Human Rights participated in seven working groups to **promote dialogue between protesters and local authorities**, specifically in the district of Bogotá and the municipality of Cali. Furthermore, after participating in capacity-building activities that were facilitated by UN Human Rights, HRDs highlighted human rights standards during their interactions with local and national authorities. On 10 December, the Ministry of the Interior presented the “Public policy on guarantees and respect for the work of human rights defenders and social leadership.” Before its publication, UN Human Rights shared with the Ministry its observations and recommendations, some of which were taken into account, especially those related to the incorporation of an HRBA.

In the **Pacific region**, UN Human Rights actively engaged with women human rights defenders, in particular with those from rural and remote areas. **A report on the situation of HRDs** was finalized and launched, highlighting the situation of WHRDs in Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The launch was preceded by a validation workshop of findings and recommendations, based on scoping missions conducted in seven countries. The report presents recommendations for action by national institutions, regional bodies and international organizations, as well as HRDs. In 2022, UN Human Rights will work on a protection strategy for WHRDs and continue its capacity-building work.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, UN Human Rights focused on assessing the situation regarding civic space, including freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association and the right to participate in public affairs. Contacts were established with CSOs to assess the challenges they face in different parts of the country. Additionally, preliminary research on hate speech was undertaken and UN Human Rights coordinated the elaboration of a **UN Plan of Action on hate speech**, which includes monitoring, advocacy and capacity-building.

UN Human Rights contributed to ensuring that human rights perspectives were integrated into global discourses about **effective ways to moderate online content while respecting freedom of expression**. For instance, on 14 July, a **press conference** highlighted related developments in a variety of countries, including Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, France, the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)/Israel, Singapore, Tanzania and the United States of America. Issues covered were broadly picked up by the press and social media. For instance, one post on Internet shutdowns was viewed over 335,000 times on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

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.



In **Guatemala**, UN Human Rights launched an **online educational platform** (www.participapromueveprotege.org), which seeks to strengthen the knowledge of State institutions and civil society actors on the promotion and protection of human rights. UN Human Rights also facilitated a six-week workshop about the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders for 20 officials (14 women, six men) from the Attorney General's Office, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Energy and Mining, the National Civilian Police, the General Procurator's Office and the judiciary. Through two virtual sessions, UN Human Rights strengthened the knowledge of 16 staff members (nine women, seven men) from the Presidential Commission on Human Rights (COPADEH) regarding the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and the right to defend human rights. At the regional level, UN Human Rights and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights worked closely to strengthen the capacities of 25 people (12 women, 13 men) from CSOs and State institutions from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua on the protection of HRDs.

In **Bangladesh**, through training and outreach, UN Human Rights **strengthened the knowledge of civil society actors about the international human rights mechanisms**. As a result, civil society increasingly used the recommendations issued by the special procedures, human rights treaty bodies and UPR in their advocacy. They also made greater use of UN tools to monitor and report on human rights violations.

In **South Sudan**, in engaging with NHRIs, UN Human Rights provided technical support to the South Sudan Human Rights Commission (SSHRC), human rights defenders and CSOs to undertake human rights field monitoring, investigations and reporting missions. In particular, the SSHRC was supported to develop a **human rights field investigation and monitoring toolkit** with a checklist. It carried out three field investigation missions to Yei, Malakal and Rumbek and drafted the mission reports with recommendations. The reports will be shared with the Government and used as an advocacy and engagement tool for addressing the identified human rights violations and abuses, as well as raising awareness about the need for accountability of identified perpetrators. UN Human Rights will continue to support the SSHRC by strengthening its monitoring and investigation capacities.

P3 – PUBLIC SUPPORT for CIVIC SPACE

Business, policymakers and the public at large increasingly value and support civic space.



On the occasion of the launch of its **Guidance on the protection of human rights defenders**, UN Human Rights supported the UN Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises in holding two regional dialogues in Latin America, in September. One dialogue gathered 150 HRDs to discuss collaborative strategies to counter the phenomenon of legal claims against HRDs working on the issue of business and human rights. The other dialogue brought together 400 representatives of business, CSOs, communities and governments to discuss the situation of HRDs working on business and human rights. The discussion pushed for new commitments from governments and the business sector to protect the work of HRDs. The Guidance is being **integrated into CSO advocacy and government policies for the protection of human rights defenders**, notably the protection mechanism for human rights defenders in Peru, the Attorney General of Peru’s Protocol for the protection of human rights defenders and the Policy on protection of social leaders of the Ministry of Mines and Energy of Colombia.

P4 – ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS

Civil society assistance to victims of human rights violations is strengthened.



In **Azerbaijan**, UN Human Rights launched a new three-year project with the aim of protecting the human rights of vulnerable groups. Within the framework of this project, UN Human Rights will deliver **systematic capacity-building programmes** on a wide range of human rights topics and will ensure continued support for the engagement of national actors in international and national human rights advocacy. The project will also contribute to improved access to justice for vulnerable groups by advocating for the **establishment of a civil legal aid system** in the country and the extension of free legal aid to members of vulnerable groups and other persons affected by the pandemic. Furthermore, in cooperation with the Ombudsperson and the Bar Association, UN Human Rights provided **legal assistance to members of vulnerable groups** in Baku and other regions and promoted the pro bono culture among private legal professionals. This assistance was extended to the five regions of Azerbaijan and will be available on a permanent basis. Due to these efforts, 1,549 individuals (719 women, 830 men) from vulnerable groups benefited from legal assistance in 2021. The cases primarily focused on women’s rights, housing rights, social security rights, labour rights and administrative law.

UN Human Rights engaged with **North Koreans living in the Republic of Korea (ROK)** and organized regular meetings with two core groups of North Korean civil society actors in the ROK. The meetings served as a platform for consistent interaction and engagement and facilitated the provision of **support on human rights issues, including through monitoring and documentation, victims’ protection and engagement with the UN**. Eight field missions were undertaken to provinces outside of Seoul and visits were organized to the Hanawon Resettlement Support Centres to engage with DPRK escapees who maintain contacts inside the DPRK, enabling them to receive up-to-date information on the human rights situation.

In **Syria**, UN Human Rights provided technical and financial assistance and mentoring to organizations implementing **community-level HRBA projects** in government-held areas. Selected projects addressed issues such as social cohesion, women’s rights and child protection. UN Human Rights organized a series of roundtables for CSOs on: the rights of the child and their protection; effective advocacy strategies, including social media; international human rights mechanisms and resolutions for the promotion, protection and advancement of women’s rights; and risk assessment/analysis/security training. A total of 66 individuals (49 women, 17 men) participated in the roundtables. In 2022, UN Human Rights will build on this work by organizing a new round of sub-grants to support grassroots CSO programming.

P5 – CIVIC SPACE MONITORING

More systematic monitoring of the environment for civic space, including threats to it, takes place.



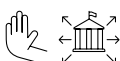
In **Honduras**, through its monitoring and reporting work, UN Human Rights brought **cases of human rights violations to the attention of relevant authorities** and advocated for them to be addressed. UN Human Rights also implemented **a monitoring and documentation protocol** to register and analyse attacks and grave violations against HRDs, journalists and demonstrators. UN Human Rights used the new system to register 362 victims of attacks during 2021, including 10 violent deaths. It also intervened in many of these cases and facilitated contact between victims or their families and the NHRI or the NPM and provided NGOs with support in bringing cases to the attention of the international human rights mechanisms.

In **Cambodia**, UN Human Rights **monitored the civic and democratic space** of at least 25 peaceful protests and gatherings. It also provided protection support and referrals in relation to 26 situations involving HRDs and CSOs and seven cases involving journalists. Further, UN Human Rights **monitored and provided protection support and referrals** in relation to 20 cases involving members and activists of the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), including the killing of an activist in Phnom Penh and the deportation of five Cambodian political refugees affiliated with the CNRP from Thailand. Throughout the year, regular briefings were organized with CSOs to discuss protection concerns and civic and democratic space. Moreover, UN Human Rights facilitated four virtual meetings between the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, CSOs and at-risk HRDs.

Through the development of an internal toolbox and collaborative projects with universities to collect **real-time data on disruptions** (i.e., in Burkina Faso, Honduras, Sudan and Venezuela), UN Human Rights is taking steps to strengthen the monitoring and reporting of Internet shutdowns, with a view to raising awareness about adverse human rights impacts and how they can be prevented.

P6 – PEOPLE HAVE A VOICE

The voices of people affected by decisions, particularly victims and those who face discrimination, are more clearly heard.



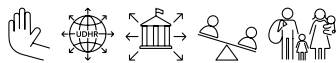
In **Mexico**, UN Human Rights advocated for the **adoption and implementation of international human rights standards on the rights of indigenous peoples** before several ministries, institutions, companies and embassies. In the emblematic case of a series of agreements on community water management that were concluded between Zapotecan communities (Oaxaca) and federal authorities, UN Human Rights played a crucial role in promoting the inclusion of relevant international standards during the dialogue process. On 24 November, the President of Mexico signed a decree recognizing the rights of indigenous communities and ensuring their access to water.

In the **Pacific region**, UN Human Rights collaborated with UNFPA, ILO and UNICEF to re-activate the UN Youth Inter-Agency Working Group, which was established to address youth development in the Pacific region. It also co-organized the commemoration of International Youth Day, on 12 August, with an event in the Federated States of Micronesia and across the region, focusing on the need for **youth inclusion and participation in the development space**, contributing to the preparation of policy and strengthening youth structures and the use of digital space. Other issues included challenges related to climate change and the impacts of COVID-19 on food security. Youth priorities and recommendations shaped the outcome statement of the event, which was presented at the World Food Systems Summit, in September.

Following technical advice and advocacy by UN Human Rights and the special procedures, in collaboration with UN **Malawi** and development partners, the Government **revised the NGO Amendment Bill** so that it complies with international standards, including by guaranteeing the protection of the rights to freedom of association, assembly, expression and opinion. In early 2021, UN Human Rights submitted to the Government a detailed human rights analysis of the NGO Act and the NGO Amendment Bill 2020. The analysis was jointly supported by the UN and seven development partners and included comments made regarding previous amendment bills by UN Human Rights and the special procedures, with an emphasis on the need for a vibrant civic space that respects and promotes human rights. In March, the Government responded positively to the joint submission and indicated that it would reflect 80 per cent of the comments in its review of the regulatory system. The remaining comments will be considered during a comprehensive review of the NGO Act by the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC), as recommended in the joint UN submission. At the end of the year, the NGO Amendment Bill was presented to the Parliament for debate but it was not yet tabled. It is anticipated that the Bill will be tabled in a session in early 2022.

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.



In **Tunisia**, under the Memorandum of Understanding between UN Human Rights and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, UN Human Rights supported the Ministry and the Union of Imams in organizing a series of three workshops dedicated to **freedom of expression and countering hate speech** for imams and professional worship staff from across the country. The workshops aimed at reinforcing the understanding of the imams about international standards on freedom of expression and the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. It also sought to enhance their ability to identify, prevent and/or counter hate speech, thereby contributing to the **promotion of pluralism and non-discrimination** within their communities.

UN Human Rights developed and implemented a Member State **engagement action plan on counter-terrorism and human rights**. UN Human Rights tracked and documented engagement with Member States and formulated key messages for specific occasions, such as meetings with Azerbaijan, Belgium, Egypt, India, Morocco, Norway, Pakistan, Sweden and the EU. These advocacy efforts enhanced Member States' awareness of OHCHR's work on counter-terrorism and human rights.

Online course inspires participation in decision-making and the promotion of the right to development

Srruthi is a 21-year-old activist who grew up facing economic hardship in Puducherry, a small union territory in India. Motivated by concerns about injustice and human rights violations and a desire to foster social change, she decided to get involved in shaping the decisions impacting her city and came across the e-learning module, “Operationalizing the right to development in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.”

Jamila, a young British Palestinian woman who lives in East Jerusalem with her husband and three kids, lost her job at the UNRWA Field Legal Office due to political tensions. She was the primary breadwinner and could not find other work. As her family’s financial difficulties continued, she enrolled in the same e-learning module.

The module was developed by UN Human Rights, in partnership with the University for Peace (UPEACE) in Costa Rica and the UN University’s International Institute for Global Health in Malaysia and was launched in 2018. It is based on the contributions of 10 experts from around the world with a shared commitment to advancing the right to development by providing information in an understandable format, using case studies and concrete examples of how to implement this right.

“I understood what a participatory process was, how to create one and why it was so important for sustainable development...I also realized there was a gap in that respect in my own city,” said Srruthi. “This module provided interesting case

studies and knowledge that I could use in my own projects.”

“What captured my attention was a case study from Afghanistan where students were taught negotiation and conflict resolution skills and how that helped their community to share development resources,” said Jamila. “I was facing similar problems and conflicts where I was living and I thought that I could replicate some of the success stories I learned about,” she added.

Both women founded organizations to help realize the right to development and build the capacity of their communities to claim and defend their rights.

Jamila founded an NGO known as the Women, Youth & Kids Empowerment Initiative for Sustainable Peace & Development, to teach disadvantaged children living in East Jerusalem about their rights and how they are linked to

development issues. She established partnerships with two other organizations and now works with 11 volunteers and a network of technical experts and professionals from various countries.

Srruthi set up Polity Link, an NGO working with governments and CSOs to promote the involvement of young people in developing policies to tackle issues, such as inequality and sustainable development. More than 120 students and civil society activists are now taking part in Polity Link’s activities on a biweekly basis. They are often contacted by the Puducherry local government to ensure that the voices of youth are taken into account in decision-making processes. Srruthi hopes to expand her work to other cities, primarily through capacity-building programmes that will highlight human rights and international cooperation for development.



Srruthi Lekha Raaja Elango (left) and Jamila Al-Abbasi (right). © OHCHR

Mongolia: New law to protect human rights defenders

The Mongolian Parliament recently adopted a new law for human rights defenders, making it the first country in Asia to provide a framework of protection for people who speak out on human rights concerns and violations.

The Law on the Legal Status of Human Rights Defenders entered into force on 1 July. It is the result of a years-long collective effort of UN Human Rights, CSOs and the Government, in cooperation with the UN presence in Mongolia. Under the Law, the critical voices and actions of HRDs are now legally protected and their rights are respected, promoted and fulfilled.

“This is a major achievement for Mongolia, signalling its clear commitment to human rights,” said the High Commissioner for Human Rights. “This Law will resonate within and beyond Mongolia’s borders.”

The High Commissioner added that as the eyes of the region will be watching the next steps, it will be important that the Law is implemented in compliance with international standards and overseen by an independent, effective and fully resourced mechanism.

For the last several years, UN Human Rights has been supporting Mongolia to implement the recommendations

emanating from the UPR process. As part of this process, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders provided a number of recommendations to the Government of Mongolia.

A MOVE TO A “SAFE AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT”

Historically, although HRDs in Mongolia live in a relatively safe environment, they face numerous obstacles, such as pressure, stigmatization and hate speech on social media related to their advocacy on media freedom, climate justice, disability rights, access to housing and discrimination against LGBTI persons.

In 2019, a [visit report](#) from the Special Rapporteur highlighted cases of discrimination, harassment and intimidation. Some HRDs were reported to have died in circumstances that were not properly investigated.

“The adoption of this Law is a welcome and critical move to create a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders...and a progressive step towards full protection for their vital work,” stated the High Commissioner. “It will serve to acknowledge their crucial work, bring the perpetrators of attacks against them to justice and end impunity.”

UN Human Rights will continue to provide technical support to Mongolia as it implements the legislation.



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Women human rights defenders at a workshop during the soft launch of the OHCHR report on the situation of human rights defenders, in Suva, Fiji. © OHCHR