Annual Report 2014

Direct support to human rights defenders
Introduction by the Chair of the Board

BY CECILIE FIGENSHOU BAKKE, NORWEGIAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

IT IS THE PRIVILEGE of the Norwegian Human Rights Fund (NHRF) to be able to work with dedicated human rights defenders and activists across the world. With direct financial support, the NHRF supported local human rights organisations in eleven countries on three continents in 2014. In this annual report we highlight some of the impressive results achieved by the grantee organisations during the year that has passed.

THE UNITED NATIONS (UN) is giving increasing attention to human rights defenders who play a key role in promoting and protecting human rights worldwide. Therefore, in 2014, the Human Rights Council decided to continue its important mandate on human rights defenders for a new period of three years. Support from the UN and other international organisations is of vital importance as we see states adopting policies restricting the ability of progressive civil society organisations to promote implementation of human rights for vulnerable and marginalised groups. The level of insecurity with threats and attacks against human rights defenders is high in many parts of the world, including in NHRF focus countries such as Colombia, Mexico, Pakistan and Nigeria. To meet these new challenges, the NHRF in 2014 finalised a new set of guidelines on security for grantee organisations. The guidelines aim to mitigate risks for exposed human rights defenders linked to projects supported by the NHRF.

We are experiencing a global trend in civil society organisations and activists increasingly adopting human rights as a tool in their struggle for justice and dignity. The international human rights regime helps strengthen social movements’ demands to hold authorities accountable and reinforces the human rights discourse on a global scale. The number of high quality applications received during 2014 clearly shows the continued relevance of the NHRF and the need for direct and small scale financial support to enable local human rights defenders to carry out their important work.

It is crucial for the NHRF to continuously assess its relevance and adapt to changing circumstances and conditions. With 2015 being the last year in the current strategic plan, the Board has initiated an external evaluation of the NHRF’s work. The evaluation will focus on results achieved and lessons learned, and ensure the continued relevance of the NHRF activities and funding scheme in the coming years.

The mandate of the Norwegian Human Rights Fund (NHRF) is to promote human rights internationally. The NHRF provides direct support to organisations working in the first line of defence for human rights and supports projects that aim to promote and protect the rights of marginalised and vulnerable groups.

The NHRF is anchored in Norwegian civil society organisations, which contribute both financially and professionally to human rights projects and the operations of the NHRF. In 2014, the following were the owner organisations: Amnesty International Norway, the Atlas Alliance, the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions, the Church of Norway on Ecumenical and International Relations and the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights.

The NHRF aims to support projects that can all help fulfil the strategic goal of increased respect for vulnerable and marginalised individuals and groups as a result of the NHRF support.

NHRF strategic goal 2011–2015

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS IN 2014

- 35 organisations in 11 countries received support
- Annual seminars organised in Colombia, Pakistan, India and Libya
- Country visits undertaken to NHRF priority countries Colombia, Pakistan, India and Libya, and to NHRF eligible country Mexico
- Assessment visit undertaken to Nigeria with a decision from the Board to open for support to organisations in the country from 2015
- Networks in Norway: the NHRF continued to be involved in the Colombia forum; Forum 1325 on women, peace and security; the NGO forum for Human Rights; and the Norwegian Dalit Solidarity Network
- International networks: Cooperation with the International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN) and joint participation in Geneva, and close networking with organisations working on security and protection of human rights defenders at risk
- Hosted visits in Norway by key representatives from two grantee organisations, and by Dalit women from India and Nepal through the IDSN network
- Participated in Nordic donor meeting in Stockholm in December
- Finalised the document «Guidelines on security for grantees in fields..."
In three projects in the Middle East and South-east Asia. In addition, the NHRF also supported projects in Sri Lanka, Mexico, India and Pakistan with specific attention to the protection of human rights defenders at risk. In the two latter countries, the NHRF supported national level efforts to strengthen the capacity of local organisations to enhance their own protection.

Guidelines on security
In December 2014, the NHRF finalised its «Guidelines on security for grantees in the field». The guidelines have first and foremost been developed for NHRF grantees and their networks, and constitute an important part of the NHRF’s concrete efforts to address issues of security faced by organisations supported by the NHRF. The development of the guidelines has also been an internal process, through which the NHRF has expanded its network and contact with persons and organisations working specifically on the protection of human rights defenders.

Positive growth
At the end of 2014 several owner organisations signalled an increase in their contribution to the NHRF as of 2015. With these positive steps, and with an inbuilt increase in the framework agreement with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the support from NORAD, it will be possible for the NHRF to continue the development of its funding scheme and remain an important contributor to grassroots human rights defenders and organisations in the frontline of defence for human rights in 2015.

Executive summary
In 2014, the NHRF secretariat handled a total of 159 project proposals, out of which 35 organisations were granted support. A few organisations received second instalments on grants already issued in 2013. As in previous years, the secretariat communicated and corresponded with many more organisations in regard to their request for funding to human rights projects and in connection with issues linked to security and protection.

According to the multi-annual strategy, the NHRF is to provide closer follow-up of grantees with regard to capacity building in its priority countries Liberia, Colombia, Pakistan and India. Throughout the course of 2014, annual seminars for NHRF grantees were organised in all four of these. In cooperation with other stakeholders, the NHRF also facilitated visits to Norway during autumn for two grantees organisations that work under particularly difficult circumstances. 66% of the grants in 2014 were allocated to 24 organisations in priority countries. Furthermore, the NHRF has over the last few years received an increasing number of applications from Mexico. Thus, in 2014 13% of the grants were allocated to Mexican organisations. In total, 13% of the NHRF’s funding were given to organisations in eligible countries in Asia: Thailand, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and China. As part of implementing the NHRF’s strategy and the framework agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the NHRF also opened for support to one new country in Africa. After a consultation process and a country visit by the secretariat in October, the Board decided to include Nigeria in the group of eligible countries.

8% of the NHRF’s funds were allocated to projects in line with the NHRF’s thematic focus on protection and security of human rights defenders at risk in three projects in the Middle East and South-east Asia. In addition, the NHRF also supported projects in Sri Lanka, Mexico, India and Pakistan with specific attention to the protection of human rights defenders at risk. In the two latter countries, the NHRF supported national level efforts to strengthen the capacity of local organisations to enhance their own protection.

In 2014 the NHRF increased its focus on security for the human rights defenders also in priority countries. Here from a capacity building workshop in Pakistan for local organisations to enhance their own protection.
Launching NHRF’s Guidelines on security

We are proud to launch the NHRF’s «Guidelines on security for grantees in the fields», which is an important part of our increased focus on security for the organisations we support and their networks, says Executive Director Sandra Petersen.

THE MAIN TASK and stated ambition of the NHRF is to enable local organisations to carry out human rights work through financial support. For more than 25 years, the NHRF has provided direct support to organisations working in the frontline of defence for the rights of marginalised and vulnerable groups. At the same time, an external evaluation of the NHRF in 2009 pointed to the need for an increased focus on security of persons involved in NHRF funded projects. In addition, the evaluation suggested that the NHRF should expand its focus to becoming better equipped to act when its grantee organisations are at risk.

«AS PART OF our strategic plan for 2011 to 2015, we have therefore increasingly focused on the security of human rights defenders in the projects we support, in both our priority countries and in countries eligible for support. We have also increased our open funding available for the protection of human rights defenders globally», says the NHRF’s Executive Director Sandra Petersen. She explains that the document has first and foremost been developed for the NHRF’s grantees and their networks and constitutes an important part of the NHRF’s concrete efforts to address issues of security concerning its grantees. «Through increasingly more structured discussions with our grantees, we discovered that their capacity to respond to security risks and their ability to make use of both national and international human rights mechanisms vary. While some have already developed necessary security plans, others take great risks in order to document human rights violations committed against their local communities. And while some are able to connect their local work to both the national and international levels, many are in need of capacity building in this field. In particular, the UN is seen as distant by several of the local actors we supports», Petersen explains. She continues: «With these guidelines we aim to increase our grantee’s awareness about security and how to mitigate risks, increase their knowledge of the normative framework and available support mechanisms for defenders at risk, and describe the roles and responsibilities of both our grantees and the NHRF with regards to addressing and communicating issues of security».

THE GUIDELINES ARE the result of a long process of consultations and discussions with the NHRF’s grantees and local consultants, as well as with international actors with wide experience with work in this field. As such, the development of the guidelines has also been an internal process, through which the NHRF has expanded its own network and contact with persons and organisations working specifically on the protection of human rights defenders. «We consider all of these efforts, including the guidelines, as part of a strategy to increase local human rights defenders’ capacity to undertake human rights work without fear, threats and danger, help them build stronger networks, and strengthen their ability to make use of the mechanisms available to them», Petersen says.

THE NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK for the NHRF’s guidelines is the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, which was unanimously adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1998. The Declaration is the first UN instrument which recognises the importance and legitimacy of human rights defenders, as well as their need for better protection. Although not legally binding, it draws together provisions from those legally binding instruments that are most relevant to human rights defenders, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The Declaration provides specific protection to human rights defenders and outlines specific duties of states with regard to defending human rights. As the Declaration was adopted by consensus, it constitutes a clear commitment on the part of all UN Member States to respect the rights of human rights defenders at the national and international levels.

DURING THE FIFTEEN years since its adoption, and with systematic efforts at the international level to acknowledge, protect and support the work conducted by independent civil society actors, there has been an increased focus by multiple stakeholders on human rights defenders and their role in human rights work. Several countries have also followed up the international work with national action plans, and some have established specialised protection mechanisms. With input and support from civil society actors, some national governments and regional institutions have adopted guidelines for their own efforts to protect and support human rights defenders around the world», Petersen explains. However, she underlines that the grim reality which many human rights defenders and organisations around the world face today, as they are targeted, criminalised and hindered in their work by both state and non-state actors, clearly shows the implementation gap which still exists between words and actions in this field. «Human rights defenders working peacefully for human rights are therefore in great need of concrete support and targeted response», she says. «Continuous efforts are necessary to ensure that words and high level diplomacy are transformed into concrete actions which yield real results on the ground. We hope that our guidelines can be of both institutional and practical use for our grantees and their networks, by helping them to strengthen the link between different levels of engagement and make use of the various mechanisms which are there to support them».

THE GUIDELINES INCLUDE a full chapter on personal and organisational security. This chapter refers to existing work by the organisation Front Line Defenders and covers issues such as risk assessment and threat analysis, psychological aspects of security (such as how to handle stress), and finally digital security. «The assistance from Front Line Defenders was both important and necessary for the guidelines as a whole, and we are very grateful for their help», says Project Coordinator Liv H. Kauning who coordinated the writing of the document. She also explains that building stronger networks has been a part of the process and notes: «Sectors of the document are needed if this is to be communicated to us by the organisation, and we will always check with them before setting the wheels in motion». Kauning underlines.

PETERSEN ADDS that although the guidelines are new in place, they are part of a larger process. They will be used together with other capacity building efforts and with increased attention from the NHRF’s local consultants in priority countries. «This is a living document in the sense that we want our grantees to use it. It will be a central part of our upcoming annual seminars for grantees in priority countries, combined with capacity building in relevant areas. In many ways, the real work starts now», she concludes.
NHRF network participation

In addition to information sharing with other relevant human rights actors, the NHRF participates in networks to share experiences from NHRF grantees’ perspectives and connect these local experiences to the national and international levels. In this section we highlight some of the work conducted in 2014 in the context of two of these networks: the Norwegian Dalit Solidarity Network and the Colombia Forum.

The NHRF is currently active in five networks in Norway:
- NGO forum for Human Rights
- Colombia Forum
- Forum for Central America
- Forum 1325 on Women, Peace and Security
- NGO forum for Human Rights

In addition, the NHRF has regular meetings with owner organisations and resource persons in Norway with special competence related to the NHRF.

Focus on Dalit women

The NHRF’s Executive Director coordinated the Norwegian Dalit Solidarity Network (DSN-Norway) from 2012 till the end of 2014. DSN-Norway currently has eight Norwegian member organisations and aims to influence Norwegian actors involved in activities in caste-affected countries. DSN-Norway can promote awareness of caste-based discrimination and how Norwegian business actors and others can contribute positively to the elimination of such discrimination. The network has worked in close cooperation with the Initiative for Ethical Trade (IET) on business and human rights for the past few years.

During 2014, the network focused on the situation for Dalit women in particular and contributed to activities both in Norway and the UN highlighting this issue. In May, Asha Kowtal, leader of the All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Maha (AIKMF) in India, and filmmaker Thenmozhi Soundararajan from the USA visited Norway as a part of their European tour focusing on the issue of violence against Dalit women. The tour was an extension of a full-month march in India called “the Dalit women self-respect yatra”. With this yatra Dalit women in India demanded justice to fight the vicious cycle of caste and gender discrimination that severely restricts the lives of Dalit women and subjects them to violence, rape and violations of their basic human rights in almost every sphere. The march aimed to empower other Dalit women to stand up for themselves and join in the struggle for justice.

During Kowtal’s and Thenmozhi’s visit to Norway, DSN-Norway and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) jointly arranged a seminar on the work against intersecting forms of discrimination and caste-based discrimination. Participants included Marjorg Skarpengard from NORAD, Gro Lindstad from the Forum for Women and Development (FINOD), and XP Abid Raja from the Liberal Party. Kowtal and Thenmozhi showed film clips during the seminar from the women’s yatra, which had visited states of atrocities such as gang-rape, violence and murder of Dalit women in the states of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa and Maharashtra.

In September 2014, Durga Soli from the Feminist Dalit Organization (FEDO) in Nepal visited DSN-Norway and had a roundtable meeting with NGOs working with Dalit women. The situation for Dalit women in Nepal was discussed. The meeting was followed up with meetings in Nepal in November by several of DSN-Norway’s members.

The peace process

The NHRF continued its involvement in the Colombia Forum in 2014. This forum of various Norwegian civil society actors with activities in Colombia has become increasingly active and relevant with the ongoing Colombian peace talks, facilitated in part by Norway. During 2014, the Colombia Forum regularly met to discuss the political situation and provided input to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the human rights situation in Colombia through periodic meetings.

NHRF’s contribution to Norway’s white paper on human rights

On December 12th, 2014, Norway presented its white paper “Opportunities for All: Human Rights in Norway’s Foreign Policy and Development Cooperation”, which is the first Norwegian policy document on this subject for 15 years.

As part of the process a range of Norwegian civil society actors were invited to participate. The NHRF provided a written contribution highlighting how human rights today are under attack in both democracies and non-democracies, as well as in low, middle and high-income countries. The NHRF also underlined how human rights defenders in Asia, Africa and Latin America are faced with similar challenges regardless of whether their focus is civil and political or economic, social and cultural rights, as defenders are subjected to threats and attacks from both state and non-state actors motivated by self-interest.

In light of this the NHRF has encouraged the Norwegian government to:
- Ensure systematic follow-up of the UPR mechanism vis-à-vis all countries (including all recommendations given by Norway)
- Use recommendations from UN Committees in bilateral talks with relevant countries
- Facilitate the participation of delegations from civil society and representatives from marginalised and vulnerable groups in advocacy work related to the UPR and UN processes
- Strengthen the Special Rapporteurs’ mandate by actively supporting and making use of their reports and recommendations in international fora and in bilateral talks.

Furthermore, in order to strengthen the role of human rights in Norway’s foreign policy and development cooperation, the NHRF has called for the government to:
- Strengthen its support to human rights defenders on the ground in their home countries, cross-cutting conventions and income levels and with a focus on marginalised and vulnerable groups where the situation is critical
- Ensure support for human rights in countries where Norway has large business interests
- Ensure that Norway’s guidance on support to human rights defenders is actively used by the Norwegian foreign service
- Ensure experience sharing between Norwegian foreign missions regarding support to human rights defenders, as well as between the missions and Norwegian civil society
- In a systematic manner follow the developments of NGO laws that restrict foreign funding to legitimate human rights work by NGOs, and address this issue in the UN slide and in bilateral discussions with the countries concerned.

The NHRF also contributed to the white paper through DSN-Norway, as a separate written contribution was sent by the network.

Results of NHRF activities in 2014

The purpose of the NHRF funding scheme is to support and enable local organisations to continue their work in the frontline of defence for human rights. The NHRF regularly witnesses the important results achieved by the grantee organisations through their reports, assessments by local consultants and during the secretariat’s field visits.

The target group for the NHRF is local organisations operating on a grassroots level, often addressing complex human rights issues. The NHRF acknowledges the complex and time-consuming nature of the human rights work of local organisations, and that overall improvements of the human rights situation often depend on political change. Organisations’ ability to work and achieve positive results in terms of ‘rights change’ for marginalised individuals and groups also depends on the space for civil society to carry out their work. Many of the NHRF-grantee organisations operate in demanding environments with limited space and freedoms. While NHRF support can bring a boost to organisations’ work and immediate relief, the NHRF support must be seen as a contribution to wide and long-term struggles.

The NHRF can provide support for a single year to campaigns and targeted projects. In these situations, grantee organisations are only able to report on immediate and short-term results (out-puts). However, in countries eligible for support and in priority countries, grantees can receive up to a maximum of three and five grants respectively. This allows them to engage in more long-term work for sustainable results, and for positive outcomes with regard to the human rights situation on both local and national levels. The NHRF conducts an effort to the extent possible, to assess how and at what level the NHRF’s grant allocations contribute to the documentations of the results achieved.

In the following pages, we present examples of the results achieved and reported by organisations in 2014. We have tried to highlight selected results from each priority country. The grants have not been equally distributed and the NHRF has not yet received final reports for all projects supported in 2014. The majority of the examples presented, therefore, represent a cross-section of supported projects, where at least part of the work was carried out in 2014.
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C olom bia has been a priority country for the N H R F since 2002

THE N H R F IN C OLO M BIA

Since 2013, the N HRF has organised annual seminars for grantees

In 2014, the NHRF support in Colombia

Priority is given to projects working to end impunity and for justice

In 2014, the NHRF provided renewed support to Madres y Familiares de los Casos de Fallos Positivos de Soacha y Bogotá (Madores) in 2014. Madores is an association of mothers and relatives of victims of extrajudicial killings carried out during the armed conflict. The NHRF support has allowed Madores to continue their work. The project is now focusing on

SELECTIONS FROM THE N HRF’S WORK IN COLO M BIA

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Protecting the rights of marginalised groups

The NHRF supports the work of Corporación Regional para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (CREDHOS) to defend the rights of marginalised groups in the Magdalena Medio area, which is particularly affected by the armed conflict. During last year, CREDHOS provided legal aid to 447 persons through their office in Barrancabermeja, including in cases of serious human rights violations such as displacement and disappearances. In one incident, CREDHOS assumed the case of a disappearance of a young girl at the request of her parents. Following their protest for disappearances, CREDHOS activated a mechanism of urgent search under the local authorities and conducted investigations together with the relatives accompanied by the police. After 48 hours, CREDHOS staff identified the girl in a marginalised community, where youths are regularly recruited to prostitution, criminal organisations and drug trafficking.

The practice of falsos positivos – extrajudicial killings of civilians carried out by government forces – has declined, but according to Human Rights Watch, there were credible reports of new cases in 2014. Human rights defenders demanding justice for victims of this crime are particularly exposed to threats and attacks as a consequence of their legitimate work. In 2014, the authorities continued to push for the transfer of cases of human rights abuses, including falsos positivos, committed by military personnel from civilian prosecutors to the military justice system, which is less transparent and has long failed to hold perpetrators accountable.

The security situation for human rights defenders remains critical, and despite the existence of a national protection mechanism, shows few signs of improving. Front Line Defenders recorded 47 killings of defenders in 2014, making Colombia one of the most dangerous countries in the world in which to defend human rights. In late 2014, there was a surge of death threats issued by paramilitary groups, and threats and killings continued into early 2015. In January 2015, the prominent activist Cartes Federa was murdered north of Bogotá, and Janettina Aúa, father of five and member of former NHRF grantee Zona de Reserva Campesina del Valle del Río Cimitarra, was murdered in the Antioquia Department.

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**NHRF support in Liberia**

**THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN LIBERIA**

In 2014, the outbreak of the Ebola virus disease in West Africa heavily affected Liberia, with almost 4,000 documented casualties. The outbreak led to a near collapse of the health care system and damaged the social fabric of Liberian society. In August, the authorities imposed a state of emergency suspending some civil liberties, closed schools and imposed curfews and quarantines. According to investigations carried out by local human rights groups, including a former NHRF grantee, the Liberian authorities committed serious human rights violations in the West Point community in Monrovia during the state of emergency period. The violations included torture and illegal detention, excessive use of force leading to the death of two persons aged 16 and 22, and threats and extortion.

In the period 1989 to 2003, civil war claimed the lives of more than 200,000 people, displaced 1 million people and destroyed Liberia’s infrastructure and economy. Liberia has since stabilised politically, but the peace remains fragile. The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) is currently in the process of reducing their military presence. Several root causes of the conflict remain unresolved, including ethnic divisions, systemic corruption, economic grievances and impunity for perpetrators of violence. Corruption is rampant at all levels of society and political life, and remains a source of frustration to ordinary Liberians. Police corruption is widespread, in effect denying citizens equal protection by the law and violating human rights. Poverty remains deep and widespread, with Liberia ranking 175 out of 187 countries on the 2014 UN Human Development Index.

Violence against women remains a serious human rights challenge in Liberia, especially beyond Monrovia. According to the WHO, 72% of Liberian women were raped during the war, and incidents of rape are still common. A UN report documented an increase in incidents of rape in late 2013, suggesting that current efforts fail short to combat the problem. The persistence of the problem can be partly attributed to continued impunity for perpetrators, as there are a number of shortcomings in the police and justice system.

**SELECTED RESULTS OF THE NHRF’S WORK IN LIBERIA**

In 2014, seven Liberian human rights organisations received financial support from the NHRF. The geographical focus is diverse, with grantees operating in seven different counties. All supported projects focused on women’s and children’s rights, with the main focus on gender-based violence and female genital mutilation. The work of several grantee organisations was affected by the Ebola crisis during 2014, and one grantee was allowed to carry out Ebola response activities with NHRF funds. Below are some examples of the results achieved by the supported organisations in 2014.

**Reinforcing women’s rights in Kpai district**

In March, the organisation Rural Women Rights Structure (RWRS), based in Palmak, Kpakol district, Bong County, received its first grant in a two-year project. This allows RWRS to plan their long-term intervention with increased predictability and security. The NHRF has previously supported RWRS with two smaller grants, with encouraging results. The aim of their current project is to reduce the physical and psychological violence against women and girls in RWRS’ target area.

At the end of 2014, RWRS reported that despite the challenges faced due to the Ebola outbreak, they had conducted their activities, but with the necessary adjustments so as not to expose their target community or themselves to unnecessary risks. As a result of their advocacy strategy, RWRS reported that the number of cases of violence against women (VAW) in their target area had decreased from 6–7 to 2–3 cases per day by the end of 2014. The organisation has assisted victims and their families in 33 cases of violence, which have resulted in jail sentences for the perpetrators, reparation, reparation or economic compensation to the victims. Some of the cases are still pending trial due to the Ebola situation.

RWRS is also gathering data for a database on the situation for women in Kpai with regard to physical and psychological violence. The database will be completed by the end of the year and is welcomed by all duty bearers and stakeholders. RWRS has also set up a resource centre for capacity building and interaction for male and female students, teachers, activists and local government representatives. Furthermore, RWRS conducted 28 advocacy outreach sessions in 21 communities, and five training of trainers for 220 relevant stakeholders. These included town chiefs, paramilitary chiefs, commissioners, law enforcement officers, leaders of women’s groups, youths and elders. The organisation is currently implementing the activities of the project’s second year.

**The struggle against sexual and gender-based violence in West Point**

The organisation West Point Women for Health and Development (WPWH&D) is based in Monrovia and works for the rights of women and children in their target area. WPWH&D received their first NHRF grant in 2013 for their work against sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in the West Point community through a combination of advocacy, legal work and awareness-raising on domestic violence. As the Ebola crisis escalated, WPWH&D also became actively involved in raising awareness about the deadly disease, and was allowed to shift their focus to Ebola response with NHRF support during the last two months of 2014. This included providing daily day-to-day counselling to Ebola survivors; refresher training for social workers at the women’s centre; education on Ebola stigma; and support to Ebola survivors. In this period, West Point Women were able to assist 15 Ebola survivors (orphans and caretakers) with immediate support and relief.

Members of Rural Women Rights Structure and the NHRF met in Palala, Bong County, in January 2014. The organisation has mobilised a large number of women in the area to defend their rights and reduce incidents of violence against women.
THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN INDIA

India elected a new government in May 2014. After ten years in opposition, the Hindu right Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won a decisive mandate with a significant majority in Parliament and former Chief Minister of Gujarat Narendra Modi as the new Prime Minister. India’s Constitution (1948) ensures equality before the law, explicitly prohibits discrimination based on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and stresses equal opportunity in matters of public employment. Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. Furthermore, the Protection of Civil Rights Act (No. 22 of 1955) prescribes punishment for the preaching and practice of ‘untouchability’, and the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) Prevention of Atrocities Act (1989) was enacted by the Indian Parliament to prevent atrocities against SCs and STs.

Neglect of tribal communities is a continuing problem in India, as they face discrimination and severe difficulties in obtaining justice. Sexual abuse and other violence against women and children remain a serious challenge despite legal reforms introduced in the aftermath of the New Delhi gang rape and murder in 2012. In June 2014, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child identified several areas in which the Indian government had failed to ensure protection of children from discrimination, harmful practices, sexual abuse, and child labour. With the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Kailash Satyarthi, the fact that millions of children in India are still engaged in the worst forms of labour received international attention. It remains to be seen whether the implementation of India’s legal framework for the protection of marginalised and vulnerable groups will be strengthened in 2015.

SELECTED RESULTS OF THE NHRF’S WORK IN INDIA

The NHRF’s country strategy on India focuses in particular on the protection and promotion of the rights of marginalised and vulnerable groups such as SC and ST communities. In particular, the NHRF funded groups and organisations work on issues such as land rights, documentation of atrocities and legal follow-up of selected cases, Safakarmachar (‘manual scavengers’), and labour rights. Most of the organisations use advocacy alongside legal action as raising in their work, and many are advocating for policy change at the state level. In 2014, six organisations and one national human rights defenders network received support from the NHRF. Below are a few examples of results achieved by organisations which implemented projects during the year.

In pursuit of land rights and social security in Chittoor district

The organisation Marpu received its second grant from the NHRF in August 2014. The project has a strong emphasis on mobilising those who need access to land and social rights to which they by law are entitled. Marpu’s target community is 200 Dalit families in Chittoor district, Andhra Pradesh. During their first year of support Marpu reported on the establishment of a union and a structure of committees at the panchayat and mandal level, consisting of both men and women. They have conducted a door-to-door survey in their project area, collecting statistical data on the Dalit population, land distribution and employment under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act Scheme (MGNREGS). The survey resulted in comprehensive data of the target community, and the identification of 50 acres of Dalit agricultural land which was under illegal enjoyment of landlords. After Marpu’s prolonged struggle and meetings, 50 Dalit families were subsequently given possession of the land. Furthermore, 412 persons have been provided with secure job cards under MGNREGS, taking the total to 1546 persons across more than ten different villages in Ramasamudram Mandal, Chittoor district.

Support to human rights defenders network in India

In 2014, the NHRF started its support to a network of human rights defenders in India. The project included regional training of trainers (TOT) followed by state level trainings of human rights defenders. The trainings focus on networking among human rights mechanisms, legal resources, strategic advocacy actions, and remedies. A manual on human rights defenders is also being developed in both Hindi and English. Participants are carefully selected so that gender and geography are taken into account, and marginalised and vulnerable groups are represented. Participants become associated with the Working Group on Human Rights in India and the NHRF. They also become members of two important national networks: the Indian Human Rights Defenders Alert (IHRDA), which is a national platform created to extend solidarity and assistance to human rights defenders in trouble/at risk, and the All India Network of NGOs and Individuals working with National Human Rights Institutions (AANHI). Through these national networks the participants are in turn linked with two large regional networks: the Asian Regional Human Rights Defenders’ Forum (ARHRDF) and the Asian Network of NGOs working with NHIs (ANNI).

Marpu also follows up atrocity cases in their target area, including one case of sexual abuse of a 17 year old Dalit girl and the rape and murder of a 13 year old Dalit girl. Marpu reported that due to their intervention, criminal cases have been filed and both cases are currently pending trial. Marpu has also intervened in two cases of ‘untouchability’ affecting local Dalit communities, where acceptable solutions have been found in cooperation with the local police. The organisation is engaged in lobbying and advocacy work against caste discrimination at the district and state levels. Marpu reported that as a result of this, the state level Human Rights Commission in Andhra Pradesh has directed the local police in Ramasamudram Mandal to enquire into issues of caste discrimination and take needful remedial measures, and perpetrators have in turn been warned by the police of serious action against them if the practice is continued. With its second year of NHRF support, Marpu is continuing the struggle for both land rights and social security for their target community in Chittoor.

The struggle for Nomads’ rights in Tamil Nadu

The Empowerment Centre for Nomads and Tribes (TENT Society) received its fifth and final NHRF grant in May 2014. Founded in 2003 by a focused group of representatives from different Nomad communities, TENT Society managed to establish a Nomad Federation in Tamil Nadu with its first grant in 2009, and has steadily grown to cover 15 districts with 15 leaders representing different groups of Nomads. These communities often face discrimination, lack of access to education, and lack of recognition of their livelihoods and heritage.

In their final year of support TENT Society has so far conducted three marches to draw the attention of the government and local administration in Madurai on demands such as education for Nomad children, community certificates, and sanctions on house plots. According to TENT Society, this has resulted in more than 400 Nomads getting access to community certificates from the government and more than 150 students receiving education aid and other facilities for schooling.

On December 19th and 20th, 2014, TENT Society conducted a two day national conference entitled ‘Economic Tribes: Challenges and Prospects’ at Lady Doak College in Madurai. The aim was to share, discuss and debate the situation for Nomads, as well as to push for the establishment of a Department for Nomads in every Indian state. Academics, politicians, commissioners, media officials, scholars, students, Indian and foreign journalists, and religious leaders. The book is meant to be a reference manual for the state and central government and future generations, and addresses issues such as the origins of Nomads, the effects of communities and castes on Nomads, as well as challenges and advantages of constitutional provisions and India’s legal framework.

After five years of NHRF support, TENT Society’s leader P. Maheswar says that their greatest achievement is access to education for Nomad children; the allocation of community certificates; ration cards, milk animals and free house plots allocated to Nomads by the government after intense lobby work; as well as how the all India Nomad Federation, which is the umbrella organisation of all regional and national Nomad organisations, was established in 2012. The Federation works to increase the number of Nomads, the number of leaders, the number of members and the number of organisations. Furthermore, the Federation activities have been decided upon by the various regional and national Nomad organisations, and the Federation, along with its regional and national networks, has become a voice for the Nomads.

Support to human rights defenders network in India

In 2014, the NHRF started its support to a network of human rights defenders in India. The project included regional training of trainers (TOT), followed by state level trainings of human rights defenders. The trainings focus on networking among human rights mechanisms, legal resources, strategic advocacy actions, and remedies. A manual on human rights defenders is also being developed in both Hindi and English. Participants are carefully selected so that gender and geography are taken into account, and marginalised and vulnerable groups are represented. Participants become associated with the Working Group on Human Rights in India and the NHRF. They also become members of two important national networks: the Indian Human Rights Defenders Alert (IHRDA), which is a national platform created to extend solidarity and assistance to human rights defenders in trouble/at risk, and the All India Network of NGOs and Individuals working with National Human Rights Institutions (AANHI). Through these national networks the participants are in turn linked with two large regional networks: the Asian Regional Human Rights Defenders’ Forum (ARHRDF) and the Asian Network of NGOs working with NHIs (ANNI).

Members of the organisation Marpu in Andra Pradesh performing a role play on their struggle for land rights during the NHRF’s visit in May 2014.

NHRF support in India

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NHRF support in India

ANNUAL REPORT 2014 THE NORWEGIAN HUMAN RIGHTS FUND

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NHRF support in India
In 2014, all NHRF grantees were included in capacity-building on protection and security.

The NHRF has had a local consultant in Pakistan since 2004. This consultant is based in Lahore and is responsible for the daily operational activity in the field. The consultant carries out regular visits to the country. In accordance with the NHRF strategy, support is given to organisations working for the rights of vulnerable groups, including women, children, workers and minorities. In 2014, a total of forty-five projects received support. In addition, several organisations that were granted support in 2013 carried out their projects during 2014. The organisations focused on issues such as protection of human rights defenders, banned labour, child marriage, disabled people’s rights, and religious and sexual minorities’ rights. Below are two examples of results achieved by organisations that implemented projects in 2014.

SELECTED RESULTS OF THE NHRF’S WORK IN PAKISTAN

Pakistan has been a priority country for the NHRF since 2002 and the secretariat conducts regular visits to the country. In accordance with the NHRF strategy, support is given to organisations working for the rights of vulnerable groups, including women, children, workers and minorities. In 2014, a total of forty-five projects received support. In addition, several organisations that were granted support in 2013 carried out their projects during 2014. The organisations focused on issues such as protection of human rights defenders, banned labour, child marriage, disabled people’s rights, and religious and sexual minorities’ rights. Below are two examples of results achieved by organisations that implemented projects in 2014.

Early and forced marriages in Pakistan

Child marriage is a rampant problem in Pakistan. For the past four years, the Dada based organisation Sunjag Sansar Organization (SSO) in Sindh, a Bahria Town based organisation, continued to work in this area. SSO has been mobilising key stakeholders with innovative techniques and targeted advocacy work to reduce the incidence of child marriages in the province of Sindh. In total, the organisation has reported that 35 marriages have been averted and that key stakeholders are now taking preventative measures and mobilising against the practice.

During the four years of NHRF support, the local community, performers of marriage rituals (Nikahkawans), media persons, line departments, and civil society organisations have been engaged in SSO’s activities to end the practice of child marriage. SSO has also held regular meetings with parliamentarians. According to the organisation’s 2014 report, SSO created a momentum which was working with ten local community-based organisations (CBOs). Through this effort, SSO managed to reach more communities in five districts of Sindh and a total of 50 workshops was organised with the local communities. The organisation hopes that these efforts will make the work more sustainable and bring more engagement to the cause.

SSO has actively been advocating for a new law in Sindh together with other like-minded organisations, and by the end of the year they reported that the Provincial Assembly of Sindh had finally passed the “Child Marriage Restraint Acts 2013”. In October, the organisation and the NHRF’s local consultant were invited by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to speak to parliamentarians from Punjab about SSO’s advocacy work and awareness-raising on this crucial issue, as well as the results achieved in terms of the passing of new legislation and reducing the child marriage ratio. The organisation has also been sharing its work with the global network “Girls Not Brides” and participated in the “Girls Summit in London in 2014.” Since 2015, SSO will receive a fifth and last grant from the NHRF that will focus on the implementation of the new law through awareness and advocacy in Sindh. At the end of 2014 the NHRF also gave a first grant to the organisation Awakening, working on the issues of customary practices such as SHARA (where a girl is being married as a compensation to resolve a blood feud between clans), and early and forced marriages in Swat.

Protection of human rights defenders

At the end of the year the report Human Rights Defenders Organizations in Pakistan: Risks and Capacity Assessments was launched. This marked the end of the 21-month long pilot-project that was undertaken by the Democratic Commission for Human Development (DCHD) in strategic partnership with the NHRF.

The project’s objective was to provide empirical data regarding the severity of human rights defenders operating in Pakistan; to assess and highlight the risk faced by defenders and their capacity to deal with it; to ensure that defenders operating in Pakistan are protected; and to lay the foundation for a national human rights defenders network. During the launch of the report in December, key representatives from the government and civil society were present. The project’s findings were covered in the national media and highlighted that 62% of the human rights defenders organisations from a sample of 408 faced serious risks, such as threat to life. During the first phase of the project, consultations were held in three provinces with a total of 94 human rights defenders participating. 408 organisations responded to a questionnaire that was later used as the baseline for the report. In addition, the high-risk organisations in all the four provinces were selected for a five-days’ capacity building training. Two parallel trainings were held in Lahore and Karachi with a total of 77 participants from 39 organisations.

In 2015, the 39 organisations had developed security protocols. Follow-up visits, before and after the training, showed significant operational changes in the organisations, including measures such as ensuring that mobile phones are charged, maintaining a minimum call balance in the mobile; attendance register for visitors; and establishing better routines in the office when it comes to receiving visitors. During a debriefing held in Lahore in December, some organisations explained they had made changes in how they use the social media and felt that this made them less vulnerable. One woman human rights defender said that the home security session during the training had been useful, and that she had spoken with her family and children about how to discuss her work on minority issues with strangers. She felt that this made her and her family more vulnerable. Among the key recommendations from the organisations consulted was the need for a consolidated human rights defenders protection network in Pakistan.
The NHRF support is divided between the four priority countries described earlier in this report, and various countries eligible for support. In 2014, Mexico, China, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Indonesia were eligible for support, with the Board recently including Nigeria to the list.

Additionally, the NHRF supports projects for the protection of human rights defenders and proposals forwarded by owner organisations and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs regardless of geographical focus.

**THE NHRF IN MEXICO**

The NHRF opened for support to Mexican human rights organisations after a 2012 assessment visit concluded that there is a need for increased efforts in the context of the difficult human rights situation in the country. In 2014, the NHRF visited Mexico to evaluate the experiences and collect first-hand information about the human rights situation in the country. Based on the findings, the Board decided in March 2015 to give Mexico status as priority country for the NHRF funding scheme.

Mexico’s current human rights situation received increased international attention with the murder of six and disappearance of 43 students from Ayotzinapa Teachers’ College in Guerrero State in September 2014. The incident and its aftermath highlighted various structural problems at the root of Mexico’s human rights crisis, including the direct complicity of authorities and security forces at various levels in killings and disappearances, impunity for perpetrators of violence and the criminalisation of social protest. The military offensive against the drug cartels launched under the Calderon government in 2006 has led to massive human rights violations, including a 600 percent rise in cases of torture according to a 2014 Amnesty International report. The security forces act largely with impunity, as demonstrated by the lack of proper investigations into a massacre of 22 persons in Tlatlaya in June 2014 at the hands of Mexican soldiers. More than 25,000 persons are thought to have disappeared in Mexico since 2006.

Human rights defenders and journalists continue to be particularly exposed in this climate of fear and violence, with a 2013 report from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights documenting 88 attacks against human rights defenders during the previous two years. Several human rights defenders involved in projects supported by the NHRF continue to receive serious threats and are subject to harassment as a consequence of their legitimate work. There is consensus in the human rights community that the protection mechanism set up in 2012 by the government for human rights defenders and journalists so far has had a marginal impact on the security situation.

**SELECTED RESULTS OF NHRF’S WORK IN MEXICO**

Since 2012, the NHRF has supported eleven human rights projects in Mexico. In 2014, the NHRF supported five organisations, two of which had received support previously. The projects focus on the rights of migrants, indigenous people, women and the security of human rights defenders.

**Comisión Independiente de Derechos Humanos de Morelos A.C.**

Since 2012, the NHRF has supported eleven human rights projects in Mexico. In 2014, the NHRF supported five organisations, two of which had received support previously. The projects focus on the rights of migrants, indigenous people, women and the security of human rights defenders.

In 2014, the organisation Comisión Independiente de Derechos Humanos de Morelos A.C (CIDHM) finalised their first project supported by the NHRF to increase security for women human rights defenders. Under the project, CIDHM collected and systematized information about harassment and attacks against women human rights defenders in close cooperation with key human rights organisations in 15 Mexican states. Based on the results and a comprehensive review of policy documents and reports, CIDHM has established a national database with aggressions against women human rights defenders and published a report analysing the findings and providing recommendations to the government on how to improve security.

The report, Defensoras Somos Todas, was published through press conferences in the states of Morelos, Oaxaca and Mexico City, and received extensive coverage in the Mexican media. According to the findings, aggressions against women human rights defenders have increased in recent years, with the highest incidents of aggressions registered in the states of Oaxaca, Guerrero and Chiapas. Illustrating the level of insecurity, the report found that 49% of the 86 women human rights defenders interviewed had been subjected to some form of violence. CIDHM will use the findings and recommendations in the report in their advocacy work to strengthen the Mexican Protection Mechanism for human rights defenders and journalists. In early 2015, the NHRF provided renewed support for CIDHM’s work.

**Centro de Derechos Humanos Digna Ochoa A.C.**

The organisation Centro de Derechos Humanos Digna Ochoa A.C. completed their first project supported by the NHRF in 2014. Digna Ochoa is the only human rights organisation in the coastal zone in the southern state of Chiapas, where marginalised groups are subjected to a wide range of human rights violations. With support from the NHRF, Digna Ochoa has established a regional human rights defenders network consisting of representatives from 30 local communities that regularly meet to discuss strategies, security concerns and experiences in their local struggles for human rights and justice. Through twelve workshops, the participating representatives have acquired knowledge and tools to assume the leading role in this work. As a result of the capacity building and regional coordination meetings, the various communities have strengthened their position in negotiations with authorities and their demands for basic service delivery including water and electricity, as well as the right to work. Through their free legal aid service, Digna Ochoa contributes to improving access to justice for marginalised individuals and groups in the region. During last year, Digna Ochoa offered legal orientation and counselling to 150 persons, including legal aid in 99 cases. Out of these, a total of 17 cases of human rights violations were documented and accompanied by Digna Ochoa, including cases of arbitrary detention, torture, violations of the right to work and of service delivery including health, education and the provision of water and electricity. Favourable rulings restoring the respect for human rights were reached in eleven of these cases, while three are still in process. Digna Ochoa also carried out 27 advocacy campaigns in the form of letters and petitions to the authorities, press conferences, bulletins and statements. As a result of one of these interventions, 30 persons in the Huixtitan community were allowed to resume their work as transportation workers after a conflict with the local authorities, thereby restoring their right to work as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
NIGERIA: New country eligible for support

Following a consultation process to identify new eligible countries in West Africa, the NHRF conducted an assessment visit to Nigeria in October 2014. The overall purpose of the visit was to explore opportunities for the NHRF to contribute to improvements in the human rights situation in Nigeria. The NHRF visited Lagos and Abuja and met with representatives from the human rights community, the international community, academic experts and the Norwegian Embassy in Abuja. Given the significant and complex human rights challenges in Nigeria and the existence of a large number of capable human rights organisations in need of financial support, the NHRF Board decided in late 2014 to make Nigeria eligible for support. Priority will be given to projects focusing on social and economic rights, including the right to housing, and civil rights, including work against extrajudicial killings and torture.

The NHRF has extensive experience from support to Nigerian human rights organisations in the period 1990–2004, and met with several previous grantee organisations during the visit. The NHRF also met with Peter Nemi, who contacted the NHRF in the summer of 2014. In 1982, Nemi was arrested for robbery, and later convicted to death penalty by hanging. Imprisoned at the Maximum Security Prison in Kirikiri outside of Lagos, Nemi witnessed a large number of persons executed by hanging outside of his cell. After 14 years on death row, the Nigerian pro-bono lawyer Olisa Agbakoba intervened in his case, demanding that his sentence be commuted to life imprisonment on humanitarian grounds. The initial request was denied, but following an appeal by Agbakoba, Nemi had his death penalty commuted in 2000. Under an amnesty policy programme under President Olusegun Obasanjo, Nemi was released from prison in 2005, 23 years after his arrest. After finding out that the NHRF supported the work of Agbakoba that made this intervention possible, Nemi contacted the NHRF to recount his story and express his appreciation. ■

Peter Nemi’s death sentence was commuted in 2000, and in 2007 he was pardoned and released after 23 years in prison. The costs for his trial were covered by the NHRF.

IN RESPONSE TO increasing requests from organisations working under difficult circumstances, the NHRF has opened a thematic support to the protection of human rights defenders in addition to the NHRF’s usual geographical priorities. The funds allocated to projects within this category help to maintain the NHRF’s flexible nature and ability to provide support to particularly targeted projects.

In 2013, the NHRF established a strategy for support to the protection of defenders at risk for the period 2013-2015. Priority is given to projects that can avert immediate risk or give immediate relief, and to human rights organisations and defenders working under particularly challenging circumstances. This includes organisations that represent or work with vulnerable and marginalised groups, which receive little or no attention in a-given context due to their gender, caste, ethnicity, and/ or religious or professional background. Support is given to organisations and not directly to individual defenders.

In 2014, 8% of the NHRF’s grants were allocated to three projects focusing on the protection of human rights defenders in the Middle East and South East Asia. In addition, several of the projects supported in 2013 continued in 2014. The activities ranged from legal and practical assistance and support to imprisoned or vulnerable human rights defenders, to advocacy projects, strengthening networks, capacity building and empowerment of human rights defenders at risk.

One organisation which received first time support in 2014, Minority Rights Organization (MRO) in Cambodia, focuses on minorities and Khmer Krom human rights defenders in particular. The Khmer Krom is a marginalised community receiving little international attention. MRO provides legal assistance to defenders from this community and engages in advocacy work at the national and international levels.

The Human Rights Defenders Fund (HRDF) in Israel received a second grant in 2014, with the aim to protect human rights defenders promoting democracy, liberty and equality in Israel and Palestine through the provision of legal and other forms of aid. In HRDF’s 2014 report, the organisation reported that at total of 96 human rights defenders had received legal aid during the year. The NHRF has financed legal aid to ten of these, including three women activists. Eight of the cases were arrest proceedings and two were partial funding for criminal trials.

One example is the case of Maayan Dak, the coordinator of the Coalition of Women for Peace. Following peaceful demonstrations in Tel Aviv against Operation Protective Edge in Gaza in July 2014, activists, including Maayan Dak, were summoned and interrogated by the Tel Aviv police regarding the identities of the anti-war protest leaders and their upcoming activities. Represented by lawyer Gaby Lasky, Maayan Dak was released without conditions.

Mohammed Khatib, a well-known human rights defender in the West Bank and a resident of the village Bil’in, was also provided with support. Khatib was arrested on February 13th, 2015, at a weekly demonstration. The demonstration was violently dispersed and a dozen activists, including a journalist, were injured by pepper spray. Mohammad Khatib was arrested along with a British solidarity activist who was released a few hours later. However, an arrest warrant for 96 hours was requested for Khatib. At the hearing, attorney Nery Ramati from Gaby Lasky’s office filed an urgent application for his release and presented video footage to the judge which refuted the claims of the police officer and revealed police brutality. Khatib was then released on bail and no charges were filed.

Throughout the year, the NHRF has had close contact with other donors, such as the Urgent Action Fund for Women and other specialised organisations working on individual human rights defenders at risk, with regard to support and relocation.

Finally, the NHRF also has a strong focus on protection of human rights defenders in both priority and eligible countries. In 2014, three projects focusing on the protection of human rights defenders were supported in Pakistan, India and Mexico (see pages 15, 17 and 19).

«With much gratitude for being there as solid support (…) your support has been immense making me believe in human support and solidarity.»

WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER FROM INDIA AFTER SHE WAS GRANTED RE-LOCATION WITH ASSISTANCE FROM THE NHRF.
As part of the NHRF’s multi-annual strategic plan (2011–2015), the NHRF aims to increase its capacity building for grantee organisations and create spaces for mutual learning and experience sharing. In addition to feedback and visits by the NHRF’s secretariat and local consultants, the annual seminars organised in priority countries are particularly important in this work. The NHRF also benefits from the assistance of national and community resource persons and networks in its capacity building efforts and annual seminars.

ANNUAL SEMINARS:
India
The NHRF has organised annual seminars in India since 2003. In 2014 the event took place on May 27th and 28th in Bangalore. This time only current grantees participated, including those who had already concluded their last NHRF funded project but had not yet completed their reporting process. The purpose of the seminar was to address issues that are of particular concern to the NHRF’s grantees. The topics addressed were the current political context and the challenges to human rights work in India; issues of security and the importance of networking; advocacy and links between the grassroots community and the national and international levels; and the required renewal of all grantees’ Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) status by the end of 2015. External resource persons were Rev. Dr. Ambrose Pinto S.J. from St. Aloysius College-Bangalore; Henri Tiphagne, Executive Director of People’s Watch and convenor of the Working Group on Human Rights and the UN (WGHHR) and the India Human Rights Defenders Alert (HRDA); Paul Divakar, General Secretary of the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR); and Simon Rodrigues, chartered accountant and finance consultant. The seminar was organised by NHRF’s local consultant in cooperation with the secretariat and the grantee organisation Marpu.

Colombia
For the eighth consecutive year, the NHRF hosted an annual seminar for all current grantees in Colombia. The Seminar took place at the in the central Monseñor on January 13th and 14th. Grantee organisation Rural Women Rights Structure (FRWRS) was responsible for hosting the seminar in cooperation with the NHRF secretariat and consultant. The focus for the 2014 seminar was project management. Because of the large turnover in the NHRF portfolio, the seminar was dedicated to building capacity in the basic rules and procedures of managing externally supported projects, including planning, execution and reporting stages. The main sessions were facilitated by Alarc Töpke, Professor in Political Science at the University of Liberia. On January 14th, the Norwegian diplomat and representative to Liberia, Fred Rasmussen, visited the seminar and interacted with the participants. Attendance at the seminar was high with more than 20 participants.

Pakistan
In 2014, all the NHRF grantee organisations were included in the joint NHRF and Democratic Commission for Human Development (OCHD) baseline and capacity building project on security for human rights defenders (see page 17). Under the project, the grantees were invited to provincial consultations and received a five-day training session together with selected high-risk organizations, in order to be able to elaborate protection plans and strategies. The NHRF therefore invited all current grantees to the launch of the report «Human Rights Defenders Organizations in Pakistan: Risk and Capacity Assessments» in Lahore on December 12th, and to a de-briefing session on the capacity training in the evening. This enabled the NHRF grantees to take part in the important launch together with a vast number of human rights organisations. On December 13th, the NHRF held an internal workshop in Lahore for the grantees with a focus on presenting their work and working methods. The NHRF also held a session on the new document «Guidelines on security for grantees in the field» with an open dialogue on how to make use of the mechanisms available. The NHRF has continued to follow-up the financial and administrative systems of the NHRF grantees during 2014 with individual feedback.

GOALS FOR THE NHRF'S CAPACITY BUILDING EFFORTS:
- Grantee organisations’ ability to carry out human rights work is improved
- Grantee organisations in priority countries have strengthened their administrative and financial routines

ACTIVITIES IN CAPACITY BUILDING:
- Annual seminars in priority countries for mutual learning and experience sharing
- On-site interaction with organisations through visits, local consultants and/or resource persons
- In selected countries, internal audits with feedback to the organisations
- Continuous follow-up of grantees in application process and reporting

NHRF consultants
IN ORDER TO ENSURE a high level of accuracy in the selection of projects, the Board has decided that the NHRF should employ local consultants in all countries of priority. The main tasks of the consultants are capacity building of grantee organisations, monitoring of projects and advising the secretariat on strategies and project applications. The NHRF also uses international networks and references from like-minded donors and national and international human rights organisations in the selection of projects. All NHRF consultants are qualified human rights activists with extensive experience from working with grassroots organisations in their respective countries. The consultants work part time on a contract basis.

COLOMBIA: Elena Rey Maqueira Palmer was employed as a consultant in 2011. Elena is originally from Spain, but has lived in Colombia for fifteen years working with human rights.

LIBERIA: Aloysius Toe has been a consultant for the NHRF since 2004. Since 2012, Aloysius has been undertaking his master’s degree in the USA in combination with his work for the NHRF.

INDIA: Philips Mathews was employed as the NHRF’s new consultant in India in 2013. Mathews lives and works in Bangalore.

PAKISTAN: Tanveer Jahan lives and works in Lahore and has been a consultant for the NHRF since 2003.
Administration and organisation

THE SECRETARIAT

The NHRF has three full time positions in addition to a part time accountant.

Work on Asia has been shared between Executive Director Gerald Andersen and Project Coordinator Riku Fernando. Krawi, a former member of the Board, was engaged in discussions with the Board in December 2014.

Rukie Fernando engaged in discussions with the Board in December 2014.

Members of the Board of the NHRF in 2014 have been as follows (one representative for each of the five owner organisations):

- Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations: Gina Lende, Deputy board member Einar Tjelle
- Amnesty International Norway: Gerald Folkestad, Deputy board member Sidsel Stammore Andersen
- Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions: Ellen Kathrine Fauske, Deputy board member Terje Kalheim
- The Atlas Alliance: Trine Ris-Hansen
- Norwegian Centre for Human Rights: Cecile Figenachu Bakke (Chair of the Board), Deputy board member Nils A. Butenschøn

Representatives of the NHRF Board, picture from internal board seminar in January 2015.

Back row from left to right: Nils A. Butenschøn (Norwegian Centre for Human Rights), Trine Ris-Hansen (The Atlas Alliance), Gerald Folkestad (Amnesty International Norway), Kathrine Fauske (Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions), Einar Tjelle (Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations), Cecilie Figenachu Bakke (Norwegian Centre for Human Rights) and Sidsel Stammore Andersen (Amnesty International Norway).

The NHRF Board also accompanies the secretariat on country visits when this is possible. In 2014, Gina Lende joined the secretariat on a visit to Nigeria.

Strategic and focused discussions are part of the board meetings. Here, Human rights defender Rukie Fernando engaged in discussions with the Board in December 2014.

Accounts

THE TOTAL INCOME IN 2014 was NOK 7,644,467. (USD 1,005,850). The majority of the budget was covered by a general grant from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a specific grant from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) earmarked the Liberia program. The remaining part of the budget was covered by the owner organizations of the NHRF and other donations.

A total of NOK 5,210,709, (USD 685,619) was granted to human rights projects during the year.

NOK 1,932,448, (USD 254,269) was spent on salaries to staff in Norway. A total of 3 % of the total income was used for direct administrative costs such as office costs in Norway, audits, accountant, equipment, etc.

NOK 473,578, (USD 62,312) was spent on follow-up and capacity building of grantee organisations through the NHRF’s local consultants, training seminars in countries of priority, and field trips by the secretariat in Oslo.

NOK 38,953, (USD 5,125) was spent on communication and reporting.

Accounts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCOUNTS IN 2014</th>
<th>USD</th>
<th>NOK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>1,005,850</td>
<td>7,644,467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From owners</td>
<td>71,631</td>
<td>590,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Government</td>
<td>917,105</td>
<td>6,970,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other incomes</td>
<td>8,482</td>
<td>64,467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total expenses</td>
<td>1,007,327</td>
<td>7,655,688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For grants</td>
<td>685,619</td>
<td>5,210,709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For administration and salaries Norway</td>
<td>254,269</td>
<td>1,932,448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For communication / reporting</td>
<td>5,125</td>
<td>38,953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For follow-up and capacity building</td>
<td>62,312</td>
<td>473,578</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HRDs at risk</th>
<th>Eligible countries Asia</th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>Latin America</th>
<th>North America</th>
<th>Europe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible countries Asia</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview of funded projects active in 2014

The NHRF continuously updates its webpage (www.nhrf.nl) about new grants and sizes of grants categorised by year. This current list provides an overview of the projects which carried out activities or were active in the NHRF portfolio during 2014. This includes projects which were approved for support in previous years and carried out part of their projects in 2014, organisations which reported on their projects in 2014, and organisations which were provided with first time or further support during the year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANISATION</th>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (CPDH)</td>
<td>Colombia: Hola/Boyacá</td>
<td>Local formation schools of multipliers for the defense and protection of human rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Corporación Regional para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (CREDDH)</td>
<td>Colombia: Magdalena Medio</td>
<td>Strategy for training and attention for the demand of human rights with a gender and difference focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Familiares de los Desaparecidos del Palacio de Justicia (FDPJ)</td>
<td>Colombia: nacional</td>
<td>Struggle for demanding justice and preservation of the memory of the disappeared from the Justice Palace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Observatorio Regional Surcolombiano para el Promoción y Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (ORUSURC)</td>
<td>Colombia: Huila</td>
<td>Ocupational strengthening of the information system using political and social violence of the Observatorio surcolombiano derechos humanos y violencia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Asociación nacional de zonas de reserva campesina (ANZORC)</td>
<td>Colombia: nacional</td>
<td>Human Rights plan for Asociación Nacional de Zonas de Reserva campesina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Comité de Integración Social del Catatumbo (CISCA)</td>
<td>Colombia: Catatumbo</td>
<td>Construction of Proposals and Community Organisations in the Comité de Integración Social del Catatumbo (CISCA), within the framework of the Plan de la Vida y el Buen Vivir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Madres y familiares de los casos de falsos positivos de Soacha y Bogotá</td>
<td>Colombia: Soacha y Bogotá</td>
<td>Political Advocacy, Preservation of the Historic Memory and Psychosocial Accompaniment in Cases of Extrajudicial Killings to Mothers of Soacha and other emblematic causes human rights focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Confluencia de Mujeres para la Acción Pública</td>
<td>Colombia: nacional</td>
<td>Strengthening of Capacities to Systematize, Domains, Visibilise and Advocate of the Organizational Processes articulated through the Confluencia of Mujeres para la Acción Pública; Directed to Eradicating the Various forms of Violence Against Women in the Regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Sanchaya Nale</td>
<td>India: 5 districts in North Karnataka</td>
<td>Defending the Rights of Dalit Women and Girls through Effective Implementation of the Prevention of Atrocities Act in Karnataka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Centre for Promotion of Social Concerns</td>
<td>India: national</td>
<td>Protection and Promotion of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms where they are most at risk and Empowering Human Rights Defenders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. K.G.F. Women’s Association</td>
<td>India: Bangalore, Mangalorko and Belgam, Karnataka</td>
<td>Domestic Workers – Labour Rights and Dignity Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Maru Society</td>
<td>India: Andra Pradesh</td>
<td>Struggle of Dalits to Achieves the Denied Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. People’s Movement for Development</td>
<td>India: Salem, Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>Sustaining the Struggle of the Palmyra Workers of Tamil Nadu for establishing their rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Prarambha</td>
<td>India: Bangalore, Karnataka</td>
<td>Using Human Rights to Fight a Wrong - Using a Right-based Approach to Empower Manual Scavengers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. The Empowerment Centre of Nomads and Tribes (TENT)</td>
<td>India: Madurai, Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>Empowerment of Nomads in 15 Districts through Nomads Federation that are Advocating for the Respect for Civil, Social, Economic, Cultural and Fundamental Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Yaseen Asian Justice and Rights</td>
<td>Indonesia: Central Sulawesi</td>
<td>Empowering Victims to Advocate and Access Local Government Services in the City of Palu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Yayaan Kalyanamitra</td>
<td>Indonesia: Jakarta and Bandung</td>
<td>Raising Awareness of Women’s Rights based on CEDAW for Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Self Help Initiative for Sustainable Development - Liberia (SHIFSD)</td>
<td>Liberia: River Gee County</td>
<td>Fighting Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Rural Communities &amp; Schools, Year 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. The Forum for Women Rights Defense (FORWORD)</td>
<td>Liberia: Margibi County</td>
<td>Advocacy for Punitive Actions Against Abusers of women and girls – II (An Extension)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. West Point Women for Health and Development Organization (WPHIDO)</td>
<td>Liberia: Morenso</td>
<td>Fighting SBGV and Domestic Violence in West Point through Advocacy and Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Women &amp; Children Rights Organization (WOCRICO)</td>
<td>Liberia: Nimba County</td>
<td>Ineffigious Efforts to Protect Girls Against Corruption and Sexual Abuse in Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Women Actions Network (WAN)</td>
<td>Liberia: River Cess County</td>
<td>Stakeholder’s Empowerment to Combat Against Domestic Violence &amp; Traditional practices in River Cess County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Women Rights Defence Inc (WORID)</td>
<td>Liberia: Monteberry County</td>
<td>Campaign Against Women Human Rights Abuses &amp; Exploitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Women Rights Watch (WOWNWA)</td>
<td>Liberia: Grand Bassa County</td>
<td>Campaign Against Domestic Violence &amp; Gender-based Impunity in Rural Grand Bassa County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Women Solidarity Inc. (WSOIS)</td>
<td>Liberia: Lofa County</td>
<td>Promoting Girls’ Rights to Education in Traditional Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Youth Care (Youth-Care)</td>
<td>Liberia: Bomi County</td>
<td>Combating Gender-Based Violence Against Women &amp; Girls in South-Mecca District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Women’s Rights and Democracy Centre</td>
<td>Liberia: Margibi County</td>
<td>Enabling Adolescent Girls and Women Participation in Human Rights Work Rural Liberia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Centro de Derechos Humanos Dinga Ochino AC (Dinca Ochino)</td>
<td>Mexico: Chiapas</td>
<td>Strengthening the participation of the Network of Human Rights Promoters on the Coast of Chiapas 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Indígenas, Población y Defensa de los Derechos Humanos A.C.</td>
<td>Mexico: Yucatán</td>
<td>Defense of Land and Territory of the Maya Indigenous Population on the Yucatan Peninsula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Colectivo Contra la Tortura y la Impunidad</td>
<td>Mexico: national</td>
<td>Torture, Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment of Migrants in Mexico’s Migrant Detention Centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. Association of Women for Awareness and Motivation (AANAM)</td>
<td>Pakistan: Faisalabad, Punjab</td>
<td>Advocacy for Comprehensive Disability Legislation and Implementation Mechanism of CRPD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Centros de Desarrollo Humano (CDH)</td>
<td>Pakistan: Multan</td>
<td>Ensuring Rights of Bonded Labour in Multan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. SAHARA Development Foundation (SDF)</td>
<td>Pakistan: Haripur, KP</td>
<td>Promotion and Protection of Labour Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. Sindh Rural Partners Organization (SRPO)</td>
<td>Pakistan: Mirpur, Sindh</td>
<td>Stopped Forced Conversion and Marriage of Hindu Girls in District Mirpurah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. Soong Sansar Gobhaci (SSG)</td>
<td>Pakistan: Dodo, Sindh</td>
<td>Preventing Child Marriages with the Joint Efforts of Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. The Awakening</td>
<td>Pakistan: SWAT</td>
<td>Stop Early and Forced Marriages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. Good Thinkers organization</td>
<td>Pakistan: Kaser, Punjab</td>
<td>Streaming Access for 750 transgender to Justice and Basic Human Rights in Kaser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Asociación Para el Desarrollo Humano Rumanosincilipueg (ADERH)</td>
<td>Peru: Lima</td>
<td>Psycho Juridical Strategies for the Achievement of Access to Justice and Struggle Against Impunity in the Framework of the Recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Support to other countries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51. Human Rights Defenders Fund (HRDF)</td>
<td>Israel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center (BHPC)</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. Minority Rights Organization (MRO)</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, the NHRF had four active projects in its portfolio in 2014 where information is not published due to the sensitive nature of the work undertaken and security issues involved. One of those projects is in the Middle East focusing on work against torture and impunity, and the remaining are projects in Asia focusing on the protection of and better working conditions for human rights defenders at risk.
ABOUT THE NORWEGIAN HUMAN RIGHTS FUND (NHRF)

- Established in 1988, the NHRF works to protect and promote human rights internationally through direct support to organisations working in the frontline of defence for marginalised and vulnerable groups where the situation is critical.
- The niche of the NHRF lies in its ability to be a flexible donor that can take risks by supporting nascent initiatives which are targeted and smart, without intermediary links or time-consuming procedures. The NHRF can provide support in politically sensitive contexts, thereby acting as a daring contributor in the struggle for the respect for human rights.
- The NHRF is financed by contributions from owner organisations and from the Norwegian government.
- The NHRF is anchored in Norwegian civil society organisations, which contribute both financially and professionally to human rights projects and the operations of the NHRF.

OWNER ORGANISATIONS DURING 2014:
- Amnesty International Norway
- Atlas Alliance
- Church of Norway on Ecumenical and International Relations
- Norwegian Centre for Human Rights
- Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions

The Norwegian Human Rights Fund

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HOMEPAGE:
www.nhrf.no

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