

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

STORIES OF RESILIENCE



NORWEGIAN
HUMAN RIGHTS FUND

Words from the Executive Director and the Chair of the Board



Ingeborg Moa,
Executive Director



Marit Sørheim,
Chair of the Board

In this year's annual report, we share stories of resilience.

The human ability to overcome challenges and transform suffering into purpose is inspiring. This said, a focus on resilience alone risks “glorifying” human rights defenders without acknowledging the personal cost of their work.

When we speak about the resilience of human rights defenders, we should do it in a way that does not absolve us of responsibility. In the same breath as we talk about their impressive resilience, we must emphasize our solidarity and how we will actively support them.

While we have been preparing this annual report, several governments have announced cuts to their aid budgets, including cuts to human rights work, with the US cuts being the most dramatic.

How can we maintain hope in the face of rising authoritarianism combined with a decrease in the willingness to support the work of human rights organisations? Through viewing hope as something we actively insist on! Australian artist Nick Cave has said that ‘hope is optimism with a broken heart’. Hope is not seeing the world through rose-tinted glasses. Hope is a strategy. It is something we actively decide to have, to fuel our human rights work. Much of today's world may break our hearts, yet we choose to keep hope alive by actively showing solidarity and supporting those on the frontlines of human rights.

In 2024, the NHRF supported 138 local human rights organizations worldwide. We hope you find inspiration in their 2024 stories of resilience and continue to stand with us and them in solidarity!

2024 AT A GLANCE

148 projects with

138 grantee partners supported



of our grantee partners are women-led organisations



We work in **7** priority countries

Number of grantee partners

Colombia	76	Indonesia	6
Mexico	10	Pakistan	5
India	10	Thailand	4
		Sri Lanka	5

In addition, we support organisations and projects focused on the protection of human rights defenders and the right to defend rights also outside of our priority countries (**22 grantee partners**).



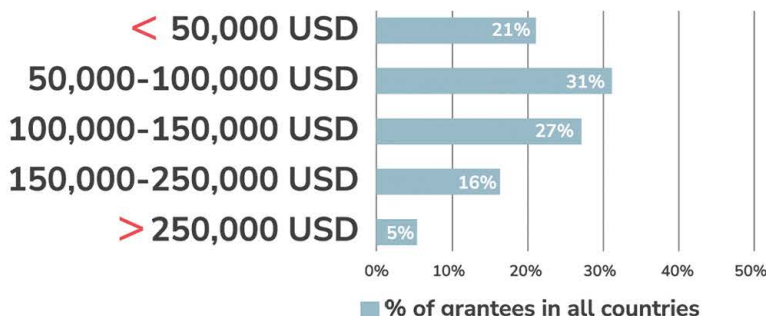
25.740 human rights defenders supported

of which at least **60%** were women human rights defenders.

While our grantee partners' work aligns with many of the **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, the most prominent ones are:



At the NHRF, we support organizations of various sizes. The chart below illustrates the annual total budget size (in US Dollars) of the organizations we fund. The funding from the NHRF is a part of this total.



STORIES OF RESILIENCE FROM OUR GRANTEE PARTNERS

The Norwegian Human Rights Fund channels its support through three interconnected thematic areas: 1) **the fight against impunity and for access to justice**, 2) **dismantling discrimination, inequality, and marginalisation**, and 3) **protecting human rights defenders and the right to defend rights**.

In **2024**, the stories from our grantee partners highlight the impact of this work—showcasing the resilience needed to improve the human rights situation in their communities.

Colombia

The peasant communities of the **Asociación de Afectados por el Proyecto Hidroeléctrico El Quimbo (ASOQUIMBO)**, grantee of the NHRF, have for 15 years faced the negative impacts of the El Quimbo Dam in southwest Colombia. The construction of the dam led to the forced displacement of the communities, the loss of their productive land and the contamination of one of Colombia's most important rivers, the Magdalena. They have faced serious risks due to their work, including the killing of several of their members in the last two years. In 2024, ASOQUIMBO finally received 941 hectares of land in a public event with the President of Colombia as part of the comprehensive rural reform, part of the Peace Agreement. In addition to this historic event, ASOQUIMBO was also honored with the National Human Rights Award in 2024. All of this represents a breakthrough for Colombia in terms of reparation and justice for the rights of peasants, victims of transnational investment projects and support of the courage of people who defend land and environmental rights.

Mexico

Our grantee partners successfully launched community radios in indigenous communities in Mexico. The radio programmes focus on the defence of their territory, indigenous rights, and women's rights. **Tequio Jurídico** supported the community Radio station Jilulalay Tsomé, led by Chontal men and women in Oaxaca. **La Red de Comunicadores Boca de Polen AC** helped establish a radio in Zinacantán, Chiapas, where Tsotsil youth promote art and culture. These initiatives strengthen community communication and indigenous identity and also build political and organizational structures for long-term impact.

Indonesia

A community supported by our grantee partner **Genesis Bengkulu** has been working against land encroachment and environmental degradation due to the presence of a palm oil plantation for several years. In 2024, the community finally received a certificate of land rights recognizing their rights to land measuring up to 288.77 hectares. Led mostly by women human rights defenders, the community saw this success after 9 years of struggle through interventions ranging from litigation to advocacy, and taking on strategic political roles in their villages.

Pakistan

Labour Education Foundation (LEF) successfully promoted women's participation in advocacy and unions, empowering them to demand fair wages and better conditions. Through gender equality sessions for workers and union representatives, and empowerment sessions for women, more women joined unions and ran for leadership. Notably, a female worker was elected Union President in Lahore, and three women joined the provincial union's executive committee. This strengthened the union by increasing membership and led to the inclusion of women in a social protection scheme.

India

The **Rural Women Development Trust (RWDT)** has made remarkable progress in empowering women workers in the textile industry in Tamil Nadu. The workers have experienced a decline in harassment and exploitation cases, better economic stability and increased awareness of gender equality and labour rights. RWDT engaged government officials and organized a District-Level Women Workers' Conference. As a result, the government has begun to put pressure on employers to comply with minimum wage laws and ensure a safe working environment for women workers.

Thailand

In northeastern Thailand, grantee partner **Campaign for Public Policy on Mineral Resources (PPM)** empowers grassroots communities. They work especially with women, who are at the heart of the local economy and preserving water, caring for land, and protecting natural resources, to defend their community forest and land from destructive mining. Their years of efforts led to the cancellation of a stone mining permit. In 2024, they achieved further protection from new mining concessions preserving their community forest and land. The community continues to work towards sustainable alternatives for the community to thrive, after the closure of the mine. They are also working to inspire other communities similarly affected, through storytelling.

Sri Lanka

Our grantee partner, the **Law and Human Rights Centre (LHRC)**, has empowered women in the Jaffna District through workshops to increase engagement in the electoral process and encourage women to run for public office. As a result, women's active participation in campaign efforts has increased, mobilizing their communities and advocating for greater female representation in Parliament. This effort has contributed to a historic milestone—the election of 21 women to Parliament in 2024.

BREATHING SPACE CITY 2024

Oslo as a Breathing Space City for human rights defenders



is an initiative with the aim of creating a breathing space for human rights defenders at risk.



The goal is that human rights defenders come to **Oslo for a three-month stay** to take a break from their everyday life,



and then return to their home countries with a larger and stronger network, having rested and recovered, and carrying feelings of solidarity and support with them.

The **Breathing Space City** programme was launched in 2023 by Amnesty International Norway, the Human Rights House Foundation, the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, the Rafto Foundation, and the Norwegian Human Rights Fund, which serves as the secretariat.

In 2024, the programme successfully concluded its pilot phase, with the NHRF welcoming four new human rights defenders throughout the year. The four defenders work as human rights lawyers, activists, defend women's rights and LGBTQI+ rights, and they were all in need of a space to breathe and re-energize, which Oslo was able to provide through the programme.

Suren attended the programme during the spring round of 2024, and expressed that:

“As a human rights defender, I feel that I have more network to face any possible threat due to my work. The programme became a real breathing space where I got the opportunity to relax [...] and refresh my mind to reflect on my work.”

In April 2025, we welcomed the first two defenders of this year, continuing to ensure that Oslo can be a place for rest and respite for human rights defenders who live and work in challenging contexts.



Scan the **QR code** in the back to read more about the defenders and the programme!

Our teams in Oslo and Colombia at a glance

NHRF in Oslo

In 2024, the NHRF **Secretariat in Oslo** had a team of **13** staff members. Additionally, the NHRF has local consultants in **India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand, and Mexico**. Through our ongoing internship agreement with the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, we also hosted one intern during the year. For the second consecutive year, the Secretariat was recognized as a Great Place to Work following an employee survey.

NHRF in Colombia

In 2024, the **NHRF Colombia office** had a team of **16** staff members. The office in **Bogotá** was in 2024 certified as a Great Place to Work following an employee survey.



ACCOUNTS

The **NHRF** would like to thank our member organisations and donors: the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norad - The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Bogotá, Amnesty International Norway, The Council of Churches in Norway, The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), the Atlas Alliance, the Norwegian Union of Municipal and General Employees (Fagforbundet), the Municipality of Oslo, Fritt Ord, Jamette og Sverre Markussens Hjelpesfond, the KrissLee festival, and others for their generous support in 2024.

Funding to grantee partners per programme (NOK - Norwegian Kroner)

Mexico	1,888,900
India	1,407,000
Thailand	847,000
Indonesia	1,073,100
Pakistan	1,022,900
Sri Lanka	1,376,500
Colombia	29,522,800
Protection of HRDs and the right to defend rights, global	6,804,900
Total	43,943,100



Accounts and distribution



Governmental donors	91%
Foundations and others	6%
Member organisations	3%
Other income	<1%



Transfer to partners	66%
Personnel cost (excluding admin staff)	20%
Admin	7%
Project cost excluding transfer	7%
Communications	<1%
Fundraising	<1%

The Norwegian Human Rights Fund (NHRF) was founded in 1988 by Norwegian civil society, academia, and workers' unions. Our mandate is to protect and promote human rights internationally by providing support to local and front-line human rights organisations and movements. We aim to be a courageous and flexible donor and partner, acting in solidarity with grassroots organisations and human rights defenders around the world.

In 2024, this was the composition of the NHRF board, with member organizations represented showed in brackets: Marit Sørheim (The Atlas Alliance), Maria Lundberg (Norwegian Centre for Human Rights), Siri Blaser (Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions), Bjarte Økland (Amnesty International Norway), Wenche Fladen Nervold (the Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations) and Amitabh Behar (independent board member).

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