

COLOMBIA ANNUAL REPORT 2024

STORIES OF CHANGE
FROM THE GROUND



This front page illustrates the Regional NHRF Grantee Partner Encounter: "Women Defenders: Human Rights, Environment, and Peace" in Montes de María, Colombia. 2024.



NORWEGIAN
HUMAN RIGHTS FUND

Let us keep walking alongside those who resist in times of uncertainty



Ingeborg Moa,
Executive Director



Katrine Ringhus,
Country Director in Colombia

In 2024, we supported 79 projects led by 76 civil society organizations across different regions of Colombia. These organizations and communities work daily to promote and protect human and environmental rights in a national context that is increasingly complex.

Colombia faces a dual situation: on one hand, there are growing political opportunities to advance human rights and political participation; the other, structural limitations persist. All of this unfolds within a context of armed conflict, territorial humanitarian crises, and political transition. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), at least eight armed conflicts remained active in Colombia in 2024. In addition, the Peace Agreement signed in 2016 has made limited progress, with only 32% of its provisions implemented by 2023.

The Constitutional Court declared a “state of unconstitutional affairs” regarding the protection of human rights defenders and social leaders, highlighting the ineffectiveness of public policies in addressing the ongoing killings and threats they face. Colombia remains the most dangerous country in the world for those who defend human and environmental rights.

Despite this situation, many people continue their work with courage, facing constant risks. Their efforts are essential for building a more just, equitable, and peaceful society. While we often speak about the resilience and strength of human rights defenders, we must avoid doing so in a way that absolves us of responsibility. Recognizing and learning from their resilience is important, but even more crucial is reaffirming our solidarity and, above all, clearly expressing how we will actively support them.

This commitment is even more relevant in an adverse international context. As we prepare this annual report, several governments are announcing cuts in their cooperation budgets, directly affecting human rights initiatives. The most drastic cuts came from the United States, significantly impacting Colombia and weakening the capacity to defend human rights. We are facing structural changes in our sector, where authoritarianism and the shrinking of civic space are advancing, and the willingness to support the work of human rights organizations is decreasing.

At the NHRF, we firmly believe in the importance of strengthening direct support to the self-defined agendas of human rights organizations and local communities around the world. As you read through the pages of this report, we hope you will find inspiration in the stories of resilience that marked 2024 in Colombia. Above all, we hope you will choose to continue walking with us — and with our partner organizations — with courage, flexibility, and solidarity.

2024 at a glance

79

Projects under implementation

11

Strategic partners

44

Women-led organisations

57%



61.827

people participated in 2024 projects

20.021

are human rights defenders

33.729

participants are women

12.774

are women human rights defenders

The work of our grantee partner organizations is oriented towards three Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

13



5



16



13. Climate Action

48%

5. Gender Quality

49%

16. Peace, justice and strong institutions

63%

Where we are

This map shows the **coverage and implementation of our partner organizations** by departments and municipalities in Colombia.

of departments reached

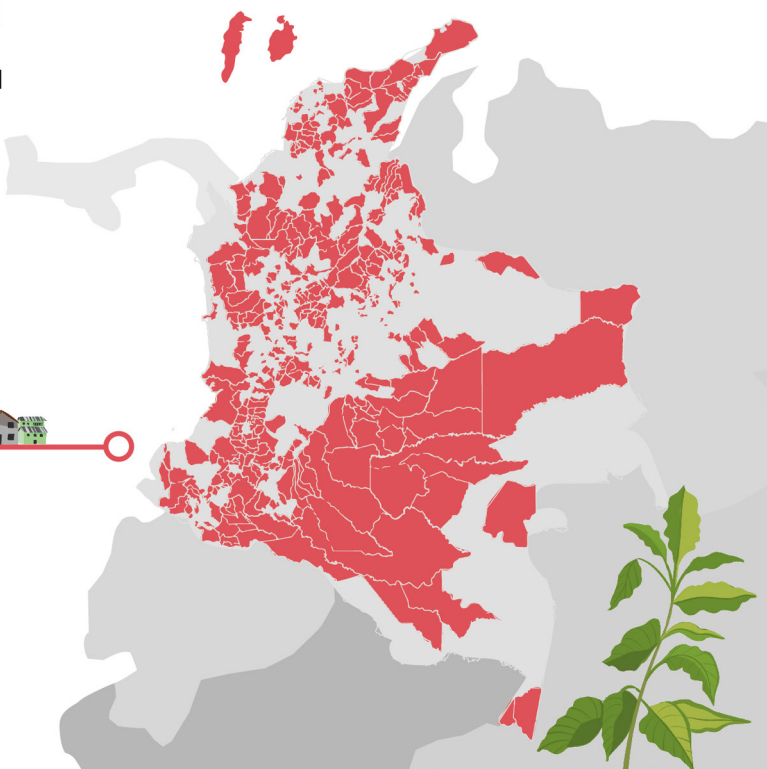


32

of municipalities reached



389





STORIES OF CHANGE FROM THE TERRITORIES

We invite you to discover **five inspiring stories of people who courageously defend their rights**. With the Norwegian Human Rights Fund (NHRF) support, these struggles have been strengthened through direct financial support, network and capacity building, as well as through our support in communication, advocacy, and the strategic alliance building—contributing to significant changes in the lives of each person and their territories.



May these voices inspire you to continue supporting and standing alongside the social organizations that build a more solidary future every day.

Rosa Nidis Botina, an Indigenous leader from the Piedra Sagrada la Gran Familia Los Pastos reserve in Putumayo, Colombia, transformed her life through the “Guardians of the Forest” project supported by the NHRF. From gaining the confidence to speak in public to becoming the community's Governor, Rosa now promotes women's empowerment and participation, while defending her territory against threats such as deforestation and mining. Together with other women from the Pastos, Yanacona, and Embera Chamí peoples—strengthened by the NHRF-supported partner **Mujeres Hiladoras de Vida**—they have become changemakers. These women manage funds to sustain their livelihoods and take part in dialogues with authorities and companies to protect their territorial sovereignty. Rosa's leadership marks a shift in gender roles, community leadership, and the defense of ethnic, territorial, and environmental rights. She is now recognized as a legitimate authority within her community.

Bibiana Rivera Cuellar, a member of **ASMUPROPAZ**—an organization of peace signatories based in the Héctor Ramírez ETCR (Territorial Training and Reincorporation Space) in Caquetá, Colombia—leads efforts alongside campesino and Indigenous communities to defend their territory. Through the project “Path of Reconciliation to the Miraflores Páramo,” Bibiana has deepened her knowledge of biodiversity in the Amazonian foothills, human rights protection frameworks, territorial conservation, and civic participation. The project promotes agroecological practices such as the cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants and community-based environmental monitoring, strengthening sustainable production models. These efforts have helped weave stronger social ties, boost community resilience, and enhance participation in local, national, and international decision-making spaces. Bibiana emphasizes that the initiative fosters reconciliation between nature, peace signatories, and campesino communities—promoting community leadership and peacebuilding in Caquetá.

Nelly Rodríguez is part of the **Interethnic Network of Young Guardians of the Atrato**, an initiative that brings together ethnic and campesino organizations from the Atrato River basin, including **FISCH**. This initiative promotes the active participation of youth in the implementation of Ruling T-622 of 2016, which recognizes the Atrato River as a subject of rights and its communities as the river's guardians. Through training and knowledge exchange, Nelly developed a deeper understanding of local ecosystems and their connection to her community's collective identity. As a result, she has become an environmental leader, sharing this knowledge and promoting the defense of the environment and cultural heritage. The initiative also seeks to strengthen emerging youth leadership to ensure the sustainability of ecosystem protection and the preservation of cultural identity.

Luz Myriam Restrepo, an artisanal fisher and social leader, has dedicated 14 years to defending her territory through the organization **ASOQUIMBO**. Following the construction of a dam, Luz Myriam and many other fishers and campesinos lost their livelihoods, faced displacement, and endured severe environmental damage. After being displaced to Neiva, Luz strengthened her leadership, completed her education, and trained as a human rights defender—sharing her knowledge with her community. Through ASOQUIMBO, she fights for the right to defend the environment and to remain on their ancestral land. In 2024, ASOQUIMBO secured the return of 941 hectares of land and received Colombia's National Human Rights Award—a major milestone in the pursuit of justice and reparations for communities affected by transnational investment projects.



Scan the QR code to hear Nelly's own words—how defending the river is also about defending life, territory, and the future of her community.



Scan the QR code to hear directly from Bibiana—how reconciliation, territorial defense, and grassroots leadership come together in the daily lives of those building peace in Caquetá.

For **Alejandro Taba**, a member of the **Asociación de Mujeres Afrodescendientes del Norte del Cauca – ASOM**, supported by **Ilex Acción Jurídica**, a groundbreaking project to incorporate ethno-racial data into violence monitoring systems for social leadership has shed light on the differentiated impacts faced by Afro-descendant leaders in the context of Colombia's armed conflict. For years, violence against these communities has been rendered invisible in official records. Their ethnic identity is not acknowledged, nor is the fact that their leadership is deeply rooted in the defense of territory and the rights of their communities. Through joint work between grassroots organizations and institutions, the project identified major flaws in institutional records, the disconnection between protection policies and territorial realities, and the urgent need to design collective, comprehensive, and culturally appropriate protection measures.



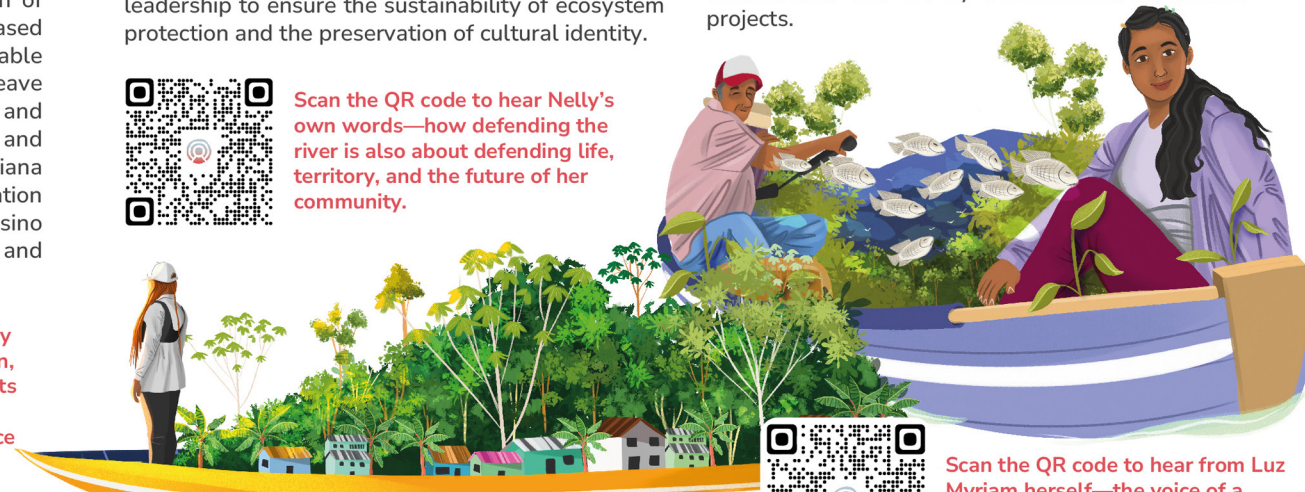
Scan the QR code to hear from Luz Myriam herself—the voice of a community that continues to rise and speak out.



Scan the QR code to hear, in Alejandro's voice, how Afro-descendant communities are transforming the country from their roots.



Scan the QR code to hear directly from Rosa Nidis - her voice, her story, and her unwavering commitment to her people's struggle.



CAPACITY BUILDING FOR COLOMBIAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

 **10**
experience
exchanges

 **71**
organizations
strengthened

 **17**
organizations linked
to national or
international actors

Capacity building to ensure the continuity of those who defend rights

At the Norwegian Human Rights Fund (NHRF), we believe that capacity building is essential for human rights organizations to sustain their work overtime, face risks, and increase their impact. That is why, **beyond financial support, we accompany our grantee partners with strategic actions that reinforce their sustainability and autonomy.**

We work in close dialogue with each grantee partner, understanding their contexts, organizational cultures, and priorities. **We support tools and resources to strengthen their administrative and financial management, improve their security and protection strategies, and consolidate their organizational development.** This work seeks not only legal compliance and transparency but also to shield them from financial and operational risks.

An important example of this work is the strengthening process undertaken with **Asociación Municipal Campesina de Trabajadoras y Trabajadores de Piamonte Cauca - ASIMTRACAMPIC**, a grassroots organization committed to defending campesino rights. With our support, ASIMTRACAMPIC was able to strengthen its administrative and accounting structure without losing sight of its organizational identity or community roots.

Through an organizational assessment and a pedagogical audit, together with a jointly agreed improvement plan, **the grantee partner was enabled to move forward with**

greater strength in managing its resources and sustaining its work in the ground.

To contribute to the sustainability of human rights organizations and facilitate direct support to them, organizational strengthening is key. That is why, **at NHRF, we continue to prioritize close and ongoing support to ensure that each partner has the necessary tools to sustain their work, diversify their funding sources, and secure the continuity of their struggle.** We invest in installed capacities because we know that a strengthened organization is one that endures and transforms.





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 Colombia, and others for their generous support in 2024.

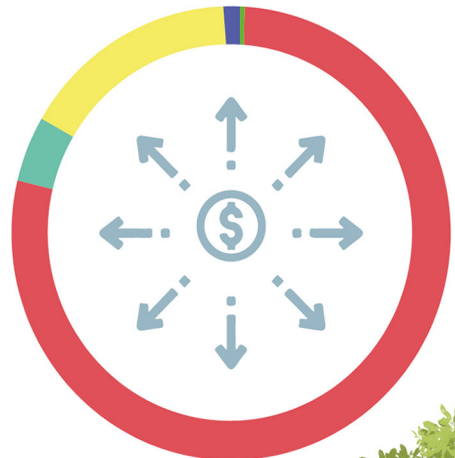
Funding to grantee partners per programme

Colombia	67,2%
Protection of HRDs and the right to defend rights, global	15,5%
Mexico	4,3%
India	3,2%
Sri Lanka	3,1%
Indonesia	2,4%
Pakistan	2,3%
Thailand	1,9%
Total	100%



Accounts and distribution in Colombia

Direct financing to grantee partners	76,7%
Project costs (excluding transfers)	4,8%
Personnel costs	16,4%
Admin costs	1,7%
Communications	0,4%
Total before overhead	100%

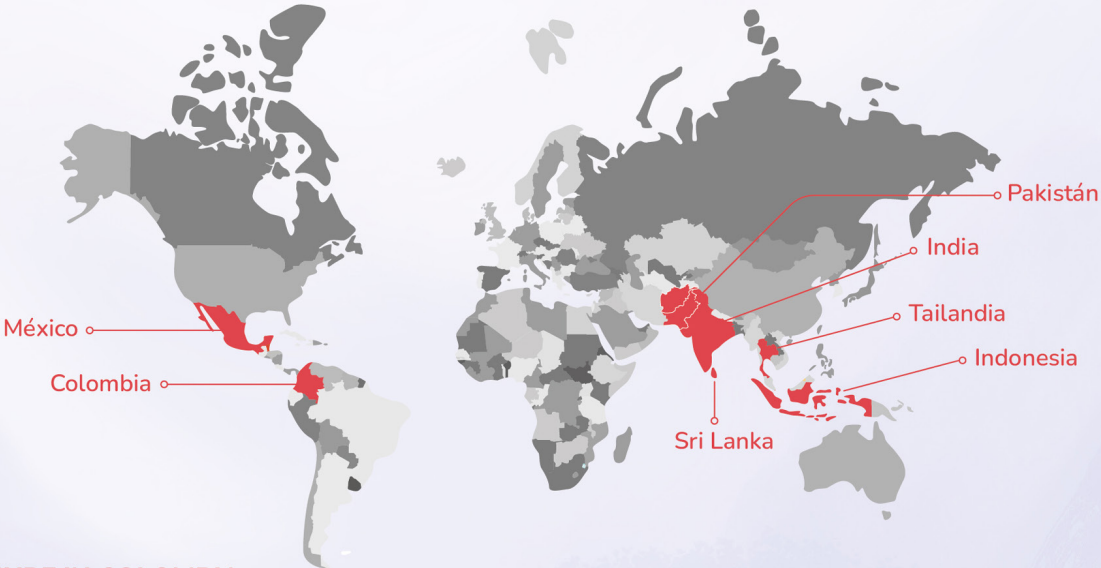


ABOUT NHRF

The Norwegian Human Rights Fund (NHRF) was established in 1988 by Norwegian civil society, academia, and trade unions. Our mandate is to protect and promote human rights internationally by supporting local, frontline organizations and movements defending these rights. NHRF strives to be a courageous and flexible ally, standing in solidarity with grassroots initiatives and human rights defenders across regions of the world.

In 2024, our board was composed of the following members (affiliated organizations in parentheses): 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 (Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations), and Amitabh Behar (independent board member).

We work in seven priority countries and, additionally, in other countries, we support organizations and projects focused on the protection of human rights defenders and the right to defend rights.



NHRF IN COLOMBIA

NHRF has been active in Colombia for over three decades by directly funding local organizations that defend human rights. We complement this financial support with networking, capacity building, communications, advocacy, and strategic alliance-building.

Graphic design, layout, and illustration: Behance.net/Kevvalenzuela

Support those who defend human rights. Your contribution goes directly to local organizations advocating for human rights worldwide.



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