

Change *Accountability*
Human rights *Protection*
Local **defenders**
Empowerment **Dignity**
Mobilisation

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Right page picture: Representatives from grantee organisations and resource persons at the NHRF's annual seminar in Monrovia, Liberia, October 2015.

All photos by the NHRF or grantee organisations, unless otherwise accredited.

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 protect and promote 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 2015, 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.**

Introduction by Chair of the Board



Gina Lende
Chair of the Board,

Council on Ecumenical and International Relations, Church of Norway.

The Norwegian Human Rights Fund (NHRF) has the great privilege of working closely with dedicated human rights defenders across the world. We do this primarily through providing small-scale, direct financial support to local human rights defenders. The NHRF strives to be a competent, flexible and effective donor in supporting local, on-going struggles for the human rights of vulnerable and marginalised individuals and groups. In this report, we highlight some of the impressive results achieved by the grantee organisations during the last year.

In 2015, we have supported the work of local human rights defenders in 12 countries in three continents. 27 years after the creation of the NHRF, the support for human rights has never

ceased being important, but the working conditions and challenges to human rights defenders across the world are changing constantly. Our grantees are at the front line and experience these changes first hand, for good and for bad. The NHRF needs to keep abreast of these changes in order to give effective support. The level of insecurity for human rights defenders continue to be high in several of the NHRF's priority countries, including Colombia, Mexico and Pakistan. Defenders frequently face threats, harassment and attacks by both state and non-state actors, and new legislation restricts basic civil rights in the name of security in many countries. In 2015, the NHRF introduced a set of guidelines to assist the grantee organisations in analysing risks and improving their security. Safe working conditions are essential for the ability of human rights defenders to carry out their work, and the NHRF will continue to prioritise this work in the coming years.

At the same time, the international efforts to ensure recognition and protection for defenders is advancing. In December, the UN General Assembly adopted a new resolution on



Activity highlights in 2015

- 37 organisations in 12 countries supported with grants
- Seminars organised in Colombia, Mexico, Pakistan, India and Liberia
- Five country visits carried out to NHRF priority countries – Colombia, Mexico, Pakistan, India and Liberia
- Networks in Norway: 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 networking with organisations and mandates working on security and protection of human rights defenders at risk
- Participated in Adriane and IHRFG donor meeting in Berlin in June; «Workshop on Shrinking Space for Civil Society», and Nordic donor meeting with a focus on experience sharing
- Joint sharing and strategy meetings in Oslo for NHRF staff and consultants in August
- External evaluation of the NHRF conducted by Rightshouse, Sweden
- Strategy process undertaken, with a new strategy (2016-2020) to be approved in March 2016

carry out their work and contribute to important results from a human rights perspective.»

In order to meet the challenges and needs of human rights defenders, the NHRF continuously seeks to adapt and adjust our funding scheme. The evaluation provided a number of useful observations and recommendations to the planning of a new strategy for the period 2016–2020.

It has been a great privilege to serve as Chair of the Board in 2015. As clearly stated in the external evaluation, the NHRF is a relevant and effective human rights actor. This has been possible given a wide network of supporters, advisers and partners; including the owner organisations, the donors and the cooperation with other local, regional and international human rights institutions where we work. In particular, I want to thank the highly competent and very dedicated staff and consultants in Oslo and in the field.

Chair of the Board,
Gina Lende

human rights defenders with a majority of 117 states voting in favour. While the resolution is an important step forward, there is cause for concern that 14 states voted against and 40 abstained from voting. Opposition to international human rights standards is evident in many countries across the world. However, there is also an increasing number of organisations and individuals adopting human rights as a tool for advancing dignity and justice for vulnerable groups. The highly recommendable work done by the many NHRF grantees is a testimony to the possibilities of translating international human rights into improved realities on the ground.

2015 marked the last year of the current overall strategic plan, and the NHRF commissioned an external evaluation to study the results achieved and provide recommendations for future work. Following visits to Norway and NHRF priority countries, the Swedish consultancy firm Rightshouse concluded that: «The NHRF has succeeded in meeting its objectives. It has with a high level of accuracy managed to select relevant and effective grantees. In a cost effective manner it has supported these grantees to

«Increased respect for the human rights of vulnerable and marginalised individuals and groups resulting from NHRF support.»

The NHRF's strategic goal 2011–2015

Executive Summary

In 2015, the NHRF secretariat handled 121 project proposals, out of which 37 projects received support. A few organisations received second instalments of grants approved in 2014. The NHRF communicated and corresponded with a large number of organisations regarding opportunities for funding to human rights projects and follow-up of grants. The NHRF was also engaged in dialogue with organisations on issues of security and protection.

Distribution of grants

A total of 71% of the funds were allocated to 25 organisations working in the NHRF's five prioritised countries: Colombia, Mexico, Liberia, India and Pakistan. In addition, 20% of the funds were distributed to organisations in eligible countries in Asia: Thailand, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. 9% of the funds were allocated to projects within the NHRF's thematic focus on protection and security of human rights defenders, independent of the geographic priorities.

Closing space

There is broad consensus that the space for human rights defenders has decreased in recent years. According to the organisation Front Line Defenders, the growing global backlash against human rights defenders has now reached a crisis point. The backlash

includes adoption of laws that undermine the space for human rights defenders and civil society organisations. Other concerning trends include surveillance of activities, neglect and downplay of threats against human rights defenders, impunity for attacks against them, fabrication of criminal charges, and stigmatising rhetoric that brands human rights defenders as «anti-state campaigners», «working against national interests», «planted by foreign governments» or «hampering development».

The NHRF is attentively seeking ways to manoeuvre in this landscape, in order to support local human rights defenders. Closer contact with other human rights donors, direct support to work that addresses these challenges, and linking local activist to national and international actors promoting safe working environments for human rights defenders are important measures in this regard. The NHRF acknowledges that more strategic thinking and proactive work need to be undertaken to counter these trends and narratives, and to meet the challenges of the changing environment for human rights work.

Support to protection of human rights defenders

The NHRF has different ways of giving support to human rights defenders at risk or in relation to their safe working

conditions. If one includes the grants provided in the NHRF's priority countries – Mexico, Pakistan, India and Indonesia – to protection of human rights defenders at risk, a total of 27% of the NHRF project budget was allocated for this purpose in 2015.

The ultimate adversity is the killing of human rights defenders. Front Line Defenders reported that 54 human rights defenders had been killed in Colombia by November 2015, in spite of positive steps in the peace negotiations. Each number represents a deep tragedy and loss for the human rights community and for families left behind. In January 2016, unidentified gunmen killed human rights defender Nelly Amaya in the Norte de Santander Department. Amaya was the mother of three children and a member of the peasant organisation ASCAMCAT, one of the member organisations in the NHRF's grantee network ANZORC. Due to ANZORC's vulnerability, the NHRF provided the network with extra support in 2015 for security training and other security measures in the coming year, to better equip them to face the daunting realities on the ground.

In addition to grants, the NHRF strived to implement its «Guidelines on security for grantees in field» throughout the year and had regular contact with protection organisations, embassies and diplomatic staff, as well as relevant organisations and actors, in order to strengthen the support to local human rights defenders at risk.

Strengthening cooperation

Throughout the course of the year, the NHRF organised annual seminars for grantees in all the NHRF's priority countries and, for the very first time, in Mexico. The NHRF is very pleased to have had two owner organisations, Amnesty International Norway and the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions, participating in country visits to Mexico and Colombia this year.

Evaluation

Early in 2015, the board commissioned an external team for an evaluation of the



Key panelists in the NHRF funded national consultation in Islamabad, October 2015, on establishing a protection mechanism for human rights defenders at risk (see page 21).

NHRF's work. Key areas for the evaluation included a review of the NHRF's support scheme in a larger political context, examining results achieved in the period 2011–2015 and providing key recommendations for future work and strategic planning. The NHRF is pleased with the conclusion of the evaluation, which states that: «There is no doubt a very strong need for the type of support provided by the NHRF, both from a structural perspective and from the perspective of thousands of individuals' more immediate safety and security.»

The evaluation termed the NHRF a «fairly unusual donor». It highlighted some key features which give the NHRF added value. These include the ability to: provide small grants to local actors; be flexible and quickly change its priorities; give priority to vulnerable and marginalised groups who themselves organise and mobilise in pursuit of their

rights; provide support in countries where there are few other funding sources available; and target issues of key strategic importance. The evaluation made a list of some key action points which the NHRF will use as important discussion points in its work to further develop the NHRF during the next strategy period.

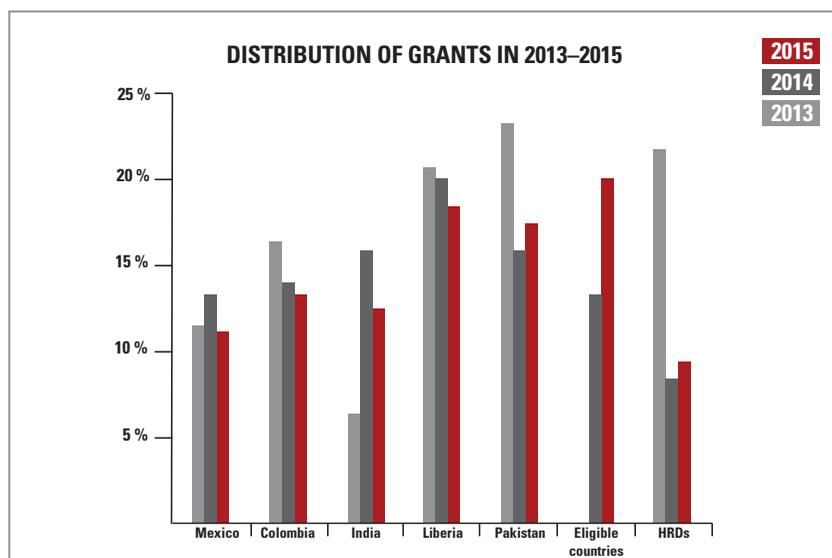
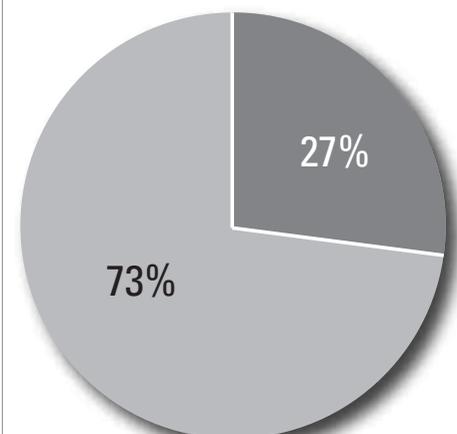
Looking ahead

In 2015, the owner contributions increased by 30% from 2014. In addition, with support from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and an increase in the support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the NHRF achieved its targets for fundraising during the strategy period 2011–2015.

In the new strategy process initiated in 2015, with the assistance of consultant Trygve Nordby, the NHRF acknowledges a need to further develop its fund-

raising strategy in order to ensure that the NHRF will remain an important supporter of local human rights defenders throughout the new strategy period (2016–2020). ■

SUPPORT TO HRDS AT RISK OUT OF TOTAL GRANTS 2015



Overview of funded projects active in 2015

This current list provides an overview of active projects in the NHRF portfolio during 2015:

Organisation	Country	Project Description
1. Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (CPDH)	Colombia: Huila/ Boyacá	Strengthening the human rights work of social grassroots organisations favouring the construction of peace
2. Corporación Regional para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (CREDHOS)	Colombia: Magdalena Medio	Strengthening capacity of social organisations to make use of legal mechanisms for the defence of civil political and ESC rights
3. Familiares de los Desaparecidos del Palacio de Justicia (FDPJ)	Colombia: national	Strengthen actions to demand justice and preservation of memory for the disappeared from the Justice Palace
4. Fundación Guagua (GUAGUA)	Colombia: Cali, Valle del Cauca	Access to justice mechanisms in cases of forced disappearance, extrajudicial killings and displacement
5. Observatorio Regional Surcolombiano para la Promoción y Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (OBSURDH)	Colombia: Huila	Strengthening of the information system unit of political and social violence
6. Asociación nacional de zonas de reserva campesina (ANZORC)	Colombia: national	Human rights plan for Asociación Nacional de Zonas de Reserva Campesina
7. Comité De Integración Social Del Catatumbo (CISCA)	Colombia: Catatumbo	Construction of proposals and empowerment of communities organised in CISCA
8. Madres y familiares de los casos de falsos positivos de Soacha y Bogotá	Colombia: Soacha and Bogotá	Political advocacy, preservation of the historic memory and psychosocial accompaniment in cases of extrajudicial killings
9. Confluencia de Mujeres para la Acción Pública	Colombia: national	Strengthening capacities to systematise, denounce, visualise and advocate in cases of human rights violations
10. Asociación red juvenil de Suroccidente de Barranquilla	Colombia:	Empower youth for advocacy in decision making processes, promoting inclusion and youth participation for the defence of their human rights
11. Sanchaya Nele	India: Karnataka	Defending the rights of Dalit women and girls
12. Centre for Promotion of Social Concerns	India: National	Empowering human rights defenders
13. K.G.F. Women's Association	India: Karnataka	Domestic workers – labour rights and dignity project
14. Evidence	India: Tamil Nadu	Monitoring Dalit rights – promoting social justice
15. Marpu Society	India: Andhra Pradesh	Struggle of Dalits to achieve the denied human rights
16. Prarambha	India: Karnataka	Using human rights to right a wrong – empowering manual scavengers
17. The Empowerment Centre of Nomads and Tribes (TENT)	India: Tamil Nadu	Empowering Nomads in 15 districts through human rights advocacy
18. The Solidarity for Human Rights Violation Victims Central Sulawesi (SKP-HAM)	Indonesia: Central Sulawesi	Empowering victims to advocate and access local government services in the city of Palu
19. Yayasan Kalyanamitra	Indonesia: Jakarta and Bandung	Raising awareness of women's rights based on CEDAW for communities
20. Commission for "the Disappeared" and Victims of Violence of North Sumatra (KontraS SUMUT)	Indonesia: North Sumatra	Advocacy reinforcement to defenders of farmers' rights
21. Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy (ELSAM)	Indonesia	Indonesia Protection of human rights defenders
22. Rural Women Rights Structure (RWRS)	Liberia: Bong County	Women rights advocacy and empowerment in Kpahi District
23. Self Help Initiative for Sustainable Development – Liberia (SHIFSD)	Liberia: River Gee County	Fighting sexual and gender-based violence in rural communities and schools
24. The Forum for Women Rights Defense (FORWORD)	Liberia: Margibi County	Campaign against gender-based violence and abuse in rural Margibi County
25. West Point Women for Health and Development Organization (WPWHDO)	Liberia: Monrovia	Fighting SGBV and domestic violence in West Point through advocacy and awareness
26. Women & Children Rights Organization (WOCRIFO)	Liberia: Nimba County	Protecting girls against corruption and sexual abuse in schools

27. Women Actions Network (WAN)	Liberia: River Cess County	Combating domestic violence and traditional practices in River Cess County
28. Women Rights Watch (WORIIWA)	Liberia: Grand Bassa County	Campaign against domestic violence and impunity in Rural Grand Bassa County
29. Women Solidarity Inc. (WOSI)	Liberia: Lofa County	Promoting girls' rights to education in traditional communities
30. Women's Rights and Democracy Centre (WORD Centre)	Liberia: Margibi County	Enabling participation of adolescent girls and women in human rights work rural Liberia
31. Centro de Derechos Humanos Digna Ochoa AC (Digna Ochoa)	Mexico: Chiapas	Strengthening the participation of the network of human rights promoters on the coast of Chiapas
32. Comisión Independiente de Derechos Humanos de Morelos A.C (CIDHM)	Mexico: Morelos	Work against violence against women human rights defenders
33. Indignación. Promoción y Defensa de los Derechos humanos A.C.	Mexico: Yucatán	Defence of land and territory of the Maya indigenous population on the Yucatán Peninsula
34. Un Mundo Una Nación A.C (UMUN)	Mexico: Tlaxcala	Access to justice for migrants victims of violations and abuse of human rights
35. Centro de Derechos Humanos de los Pueblos del Sur de Veracruz	Mexico: Veracruz	Defence of territory in indigenous communities in the Santa Marta Mountains, Veracruz
36. Colectivo Contra la Tortura y la Impunidad	Mexico: national	Stop torture, cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment of Migrants in Mexico's Migrant Detention Centres
37. Colectivo Contra la Tortura y la Impunidad	Mexico: national	Capacity building and certification of independent forensic experts on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (the Istanbul Protocol)
38. Conservación Investigación y Aprovechamiento de los Recursos Naturales (CIARENA)	Mexico: Oaxaca	Indigenous women constructing a life free of violence
39. Association of Women for Awareness and Motivation (AWAM)	Pakistan: Punjab	Advocacy for disability legislation and implementation of CRPD
40. Encourage the Human Development (EHD)	Pakistan: Multan	Ensuring entitled rights of bonded labour in Multan
41. Sindh Rural Partners Organization (SRPO) in Hyderabad Sindh	Pakistan: Sindh	Stopping forced conversion and marriages of Hindu Girls
42. Democratic Commission for Human Development	Pakistan: National	Protection of human rights defenders
43. Sujag Sansar Organization (SSO)	Pakistan: Sindh	Preventing child marriages
44. The Awakening	Pakistan: SWAT	Stop early and forced marriages
45. Good Thinkers organization	Pakistan: Punjab	Access for transgender to justice and basic human rights
46. Human Rights Lawyers Association (HRLA)	Thailand: National	Support to human rights lawyers network and their communities
47. Community Resource Centre (CRC)	Thailand: National	Legal support to local communities and their environmental rights
48. Inform Documentation Centre	Sri Lanka: National and regional	Support to human rights defenders at risk

Other support:

49. Human Rights Defenders Fund (HRDF)	Israel	Defending human rights defenders
50. Minority Rights Organization (MIRO)	Cambodia	Protection and empowerment of Khmer Krom human rights defenders
51. Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition	Global	Support to women human rights defenders

In addition, the NHRF had several active projects in its portfolio in 2015 where information is not published. A majority of these projects focuses on work against impunity and on the protection of and better working conditions for human rights defenders at risk.

The NHRF continuously updates its webpage (www.nhrf.no) about new grants and sizes of grants categorised by year.

External evaluation of the NHRF

In August–November 2015, Henrik Alffram and Pontus Modéer from the Sweden-based consultancy firm, Rightshouse, conducted an external evaluation of the NHRF. The evaluation included both virtual and face-to-face interviews in various countries and contexts. The following is an interview with the evaluation team, highlighting the main findings of the evaluation.

What were the key findings of this evaluation?

The evaluation concludes that the NHRF has succeeded in meeting its objectives, with a high level of accuracy in selecting relevant and effective grantees. It has also managed to increase its financial resources, even though it has become increasingly dependent on government funding. It has effectively communicated its profile and results and has done well in preventing mismanagement of funds. Most importantly, it has supported the grantees, with a high degree of cost effectiveness and in a flexible manner, to carry out their work and contribute to important results from a human rights perspective.

In looking forward, longer-term support, annual grantee meetings, capacity building initiatives for grantees and perhaps the semi-permanent presence in all priority countries contribute to create expectations that



Henrik Alffram and Pontus Modéer from the Sweden-based consultancy firm, Rightshouse.

the NHRF needs to determine how to handle. Ultimately, there appears to be a need to decide whether the NHRF should be a project-oriented, flexible and «short term» donor, able to quickly respond to emerging needs, support new ideas and take risks, or if its focus should be on building partnerships that contribute to long term development of both small organisations and larger initiatives.

In your observations during the evaluation, what makes the NHRF unique?

Compared to most other organisations providing support to human rights groups around the world, the NHRF possesses a number of features that together make it a fairly unusual donor and give it much of its added value. These features include: the NHRF's provision of relatively small grants to small organisations, despite their administrative and management limitations; being a flexible, listening donor taking into account the changing needs and socio-political context of its grantees; supporting local initiatives and actors, with priority given to vulnerable and marginalised groups who themselves organise and mobilise in pursuit of their rights; and striving to give support to countries, contexts and issues where there are few other funding sources available.

What are some areas in which the NHRF, through its support to grantees, has contributed to change?

The evaluation team identified a number of areas, including:

- Giving voice to marginalised people who in publications and meetings can express their views and share their knowledge and experiences;
- Addressing the problem of impunity for grave human rights abuses in dozens of cases through legal actions and advocacy campaigns;

- Supporting the establishment of new civil society organisations representing individuals affected by human rights violations;
- Ensuring that respect for human rights for vulnerable and marginalised groups have been put on the agenda;
- Providing legal aid to thousands of people facing violations of human rights;
- Contribution to increased awareness about security and risk mitigation and to the elaboration of security plans among the grantees;
- Reinforcing women's rights, leading to for instance reduced number of cases of sexual and gender based violence;
- Monitoring and documentation of human rights violations

What were your findings and recommendations on the NHRF's work regarding human rights defenders?

There is broad agreement that the space for human rights defenders has decreased in recent years. In parts of the world, the funding available for human rights work has clearly diminished. Observers interviewed by the evaluation team have talked about forgotten countries in which there is almost no funding available for human rights work and the fact that the financial situation is often more problematic for organisations operating in middle income countries than in low income countries.

Almost all those interviewed in connection with this evaluation have expressed an appreciation of the NHRF's focus on human rights defenders and some have argued that there is a moral obligation for anyone who financially supports human rights groups to operate to also support them to protect themselves and to be prepared to assist when they face problems due to the work they are doing.

At the same time, it must be recognised that the effectiveness of many protection measures put in place can be questioned and, as acknowledged in the NHRF reporting, human rights defenders often tend to ignore protection measures that are cumbersome to use and whose effectiveness they doubt. Physical protection measures tend to be very



The evaluation team visited NHRF grantee Minority Rights Organization (MIRO) in Cambodia. Pictured here: MIRO's legal training for Khmer Krom human rights defenders in August 2015.

expensive and often beyond the means of a donor like the NHRF. At the same time, grantees and observers believe that the very fact that the NHRF supports the organisations, gives them international recognition and occasionally visits them is in some countries itself of significance from a protection perspective. In other contexts, such as Pakistan, exposure to international donors may impede both on an organisation's legitimacy and security.

We recommend the NHRF focus the support to protection of human rights defenders on existing grantees and contexts where there are few or no other actors providing such support.

What are your recommendations on the NHRF's finances?

The NHRF has managed to almost double its annual income over the past five years and the goal of improving the NHRF's annual financial base must, thus, be considered attained. Its dependence on Norwegian government funding is, however, very high. While it is highly likely that the NHRF could attract alternative sources of funding, the potential effects of raising funds from

individual as well as new institutional donors need to be carefully considered. Private fundraising has proven to be difficult to increase for similar organisations and may create unwanted competition over limited resources with the NHRF's owners, and new institutional donors may bring demands that affect the NHRF's nature as a flexible donor.

Can you elaborate on the key recommendations you made into a very interesting list of potential action points?

We made a list of potential actions points we believe will be beneficial for the NHRF to consider as they might contribute to further increase the relevance and effectiveness of the organisation and its operations. Of primary importance is, however, that there is an organisation-wide discussion on whether the NHRF should remain prepared to take calculated risks and provide flexible short term support, or take on more of a partnership approach contributing to long term organisational development. As argued in the final report of the evaluation, the evaluation team believes that the NHRF should be

very restrictive in moving towards a partnership approach.

Was there anything that surprised you when doing the evaluation?

In most evaluations, you will find mixed views regarding the performance of the organisation or programme you are looking at. Among those interviewed in the evaluation of the NHRF there was unanimous praise for the commitment and competence of the secretariat. Rarely or never have we come across something similar.

What was the most challenging issue while conducting the evaluation?

It is always challenging to assess the global operations of an organisation when you can only visit a few of the countries in which it has operations. In this case, we are nevertheless quite confident that we have obtained an accurate picture of the NHRF's operations. In addition to the interviews we conducted in Colombia, Pakistan, Thailand, Cambodia, Norway, Sweden and Finland (during a conference for human rights defenders), we were also able to reach quite a few key informants over Skype and telephone. ■



Secretary General of Amnesty International Norway, John Peder Egenæs, by the railway tracks in Apizaco, Tlaxcala State, Mexico.

With the NHRF in Mexico

Amnesty International recently stated that Mexico is suffering a human rights crisis of epidemic proportions with disappearances, torture, mass graves and brutal murders so common, they have become a part of day-to-day life.

In November 2015, Secretary General of Amnesty International Norway, John Peder Egenæs, accompanied the NHRF on a project visit to Mexico, visiting a shelter for irregular migrants and meeting with local organisations working to protect migrant's rights. In Apizaco, Tlaxcala State, he witnessed migrants boarding the infamous train «The Beast» (La Bestia). Each year, hundreds of thousands of migrants travel atop on these freight trains, hoping to reach «el norte», the United States of America.

Standing by the railway tracks, watching the train disappear, Egenæs thought

about the immense risks these people were willing to take, hoping to improve their lives. A marginal number succeeds. Many die.

– «La Bestia» is also known as «The Death Train». It was deeply disturbing knowing that the men and women I met near the shelters, preparing to continue their perilous journey towards the American Dream, were likely to face a brutal destiny, Egenæs said.

– It is, therefore, impressive to see how the Mexican human rights movement keeps raising its voice, loud and clear, in this extremely inhospitable environment, Egenæs said.

Egenæs told the NHRF that he was truly impressed by their knowledge and how they support vulnerable partners in the region.

– The contribution of the NHRF in Mexico is vital to uphold the work of



John Peder Egenæs

brave human rights defenders on the ground, especially considering that many are risking their lives, fighting for fundamental freedoms for themselves and others. Working closely with grassroots organisations, NHRF has, throughout the years, gained deep knowledge and thorough understanding of the human rights situation in Mexico. This expertise is also valuable to Amnesty's work in the region, and we are proud to support their efforts, Egenæs said. ■

NHRF network participation in Norway

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 2015 through our network participation.

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
- Norwegian Dalit Solidarity Network

In addition, the NHRF has regular meetings and joint events with owner organisations.

The peace process

The NHRF continued its involvement in the Colombia Forum in 2015. The forum brings together various Norwegian organisations with activities in Colombia for experience sharing and coordination. The Colombia Forum has regularly met with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for discussions about the human rights situation and the ongoing peace negotiations since 2012. The need for

the peace negotiations to translate into tangible results, in order to strengthen support for the process, has been among the Colombia Forum's key advocacy points.

Voices of survivors

On 24th June, the NHRF organised a seminar, together with the owner organisation Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (NCHR), on accountability and human rights in the Asia Pacific region, with representatives from Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR).

AJAR screened the film, «Empowering victims to advocate and access local government services in the City of Palu», which showed the work of a survivors' group in Palu in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia. The group is funded by the NHRF through AJAR (see page 22). Director of AJAR, Galuh Wandita, stressed that essential aspects of transition, such as anti-corruption, democracy and elections, freedom of information and civic engagement, cannot stand alone without accountability of massive human rights violations.

The meeting fostered a rich conversation on lessons from different countries of political transitions, the meaning of and challenges to achieving transitional justice, creative methods to engage the public on human rights issues, the meaning and impact of small grants and projects, and the space and security to do such work in the field. While the road to accountability may be long, it starts with small initiatives, such as healing of victims to self-identify as survivors, and the supporting funds of donors, big and small. ■



The film screened by AJAR in Oslo in June, showed survivors and human rights workers using a participatory tool called «Stone and flower».

Results of NHRF activities in 2015

The goal of the NHRF is increased respect for the human rights of vulnerable and marginalised individuals and groups. Through direct financial support, the purpose of the NHRF funding scheme is to enable local human rights organisations to carry out their important work in the first line of defence for human rights.

The NHRF regularly witnesses impressive results achieved by the supported human rights defenders, despite difficult circumstances and working conditions. We are therefore very pleased that the external team that evaluated the NHRF in 2015 concluded that: «The NHRF has effectively and in a flexible manner, with a high degree of cost effectiveness, supported the grantees to carry out their work and contribute to important results from a human rights perspective.»

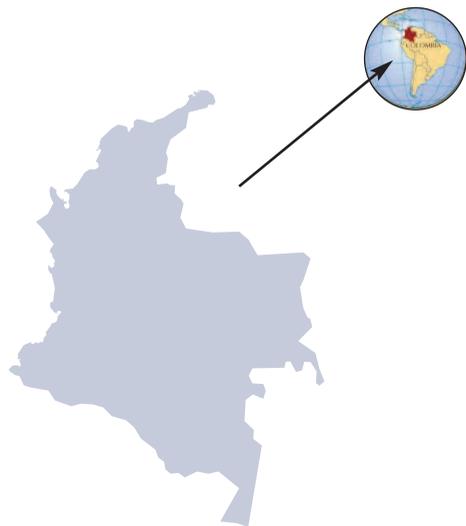
The target group for the NHRF is local organisations operating on a grassroots level, often addressing contentious human rights issues. Given the time consuming and complex nature of human rights work, reporting results on various levels is often a challenge. The NHRF is a small donor operating in countries with vast challenges, and the support from the NHRF must be regarded as a contribution to wide and long-term struggles.

In the following pages, we try to highlight some of the results achieved by the NHRF grantee organisations during 2015. The grants have different time frames, and the NHRF has not yet received final reports for all projects supported in 2015. 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 2015.



NHRF support in

Colombia



The human rights situation in Colombia

The armed conflict in Colombia is the longest ongoing civil war in the world, and all parties are responsible for gross human rights violations. The ongoing peace negotiations in Havana, facilitated partly by Norway, are hoped to bring an end to the conflict.

The struggle for justice continues for victims of falsos positivos – extrajudicial killings committed by the Colombian military. In 2015, Colombian Attorney General, Eduardo Montealegre, announced the investigation of 22 military generals for their role in the falsos positivos scandal, acknowledging that the practice had been «systematic».

The armed conflict since 1964:

- **250 000+** people killed
- **5 million+** people displaced
- Vulnerable groups particularly affected by the consequences of the conflict include indigenous peoples, Afro-Colombians, peasants, women and girls, human rights defenders, unionists and community leaders

The peace negotiations continued in 2015:

- Launched in 2012, widely expected to conclude in 2016
- Agreement reached on four out of six topics on agenda for negotiations
- Agreement reached on transitional justice framework in September 2015
- Still no official peace process with guerrilla group ELN, raising concerns about the anticipated post-conflict period
- Need to address the issue of organised crime and paramilitary groups responsible for much of the ongoing violence

The security situation for human rights defenders remains critical with no signs of improvement. By November, Front Line Defenders had recorded the killings of 54 human rights defenders during 2015, representing more than half of the cases in Latin America and almost the one third of cases worldwide.



Members of Familiares de los Desaparecidos del Palacio Justicia (Familiares).

The NHRF in Colombia

- Colombia has been a priority country for the NHRF since 2002
- Priority is given to projects working to end impunity and for justice for the victims of the armed conflict, and to projects applying advocacy work at the local and national levels
- In 2015, the NHRF provided support to five organisations
- All supported organisations defended the rights of victims of the armed conflict

Selected results in Colombia

Victory for justice

The NHRF supports several groups of victims working against impunity for human rights violations committed during the Colombian armed conflict. Since 2013, the NHRF has supported the group Familiares de los Desaparecidos del Palacio Justicia (Familiares), which consists of relatives of victims of forced disappearance and torture committed by the Colombian military during an operation against the M19 guerrilla group occupying the Justice Palace in Bogotá in 1985.

During a commemoration event marking 30 years since the incident, President Juan Manuel Santos publicly recognised the responsibility of the Colombian state for human rights violations and apologised to the victims. The admission of responsibility is a major victory for the victims' persistent struggle for justice for 30 years, facing harassment and physical attacks, including the murder of their lawyer Eduardo Umaña in 1988. As an emblematic case of human rights violations attracting large national and international media coverage, the event is seen as a significant breakthrough in the wider struggle against impunity for human rights violations in Colombia. The public apology was among the measures included in a 2014 ruling by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, which convicted Colombia of 11 cases of



NHRF consultant Elena Rey and Diego Martínez, director of Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (CPDH).

forced disappearance and other violations during the 1985 incident. With NHRF support, several members of Familiares had travelled to Brasilia to deliver their testimonies to the court.

Contributions to the peace process

In 2015, two human rights defenders supported by the NHRF made key contributions to the ongoing peace negotiations between the Colombian government and the FARC guerrilla in Havana:

Diego Martínez is the director of Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (CPDH), one of Colombia's oldest human rights organisations. The NHRF has supported CPDH on various occasions, and currently funds a two-year project focusing on the right to peaceful protest through human rights schools targeting social organisations in the departments of Huila and Boyacá. Martínez was among the six lawyers who wrote the agreement on transitional justice that was signed by the parties in Havana in

September 2015, and the only representative from civil society among the architects of this key document to achieve peace in Colombia.

Luz Marina Bernal is the coordinator of the group Madres y familiares de los casos de ejecuciones extrajudiciales en Soacha, Bogotá y otras ciudades de Colombia, that consists of mothers and relatives of victims of extrajudicial killings committed by the Colombian military. The NHRF has supported this work since 2012, and lately, there are efforts to expand the struggle from a group of mothers from Soacha to a nationwide network of victims. In a peace process that has set a new standard for the acknowledgment and contribution of victims, Bernal was one of five representatives of different groups of victims of the conflict to deliver their testimonies to the parties in Havana. In recognition of this role, Bernal has been nominated to the Nobel Peace Prize 2016, together with the negotiating parties and the four other representatives of victims. ■

NHRF support in

Mexico



The human rights situation in Mexico

Since 2004, Mexico has suffered extreme levels of violence due to conflicts between the powerful drug cartels and the Mexican government's «war on the drug cartels» launched in 2006.

The conflict since 2006:

- **100 000+** deaths
- **25 000+** disappeared persons
- Only **1–2 %** of murders lead to convictions

In January 2016, Amnesty International stated that Mexico is suffering a human rights crisis of epidemic proportions.

The crisis is characterised by:

- Widespread incidents of disappearances, torture, mass graves and brutal murders
- The truth about the 43 students from Ayotzinapa Teachers' College who disappeared in September 2014 is still not revealed
- Mexico has the largest number of missing journalists in the world

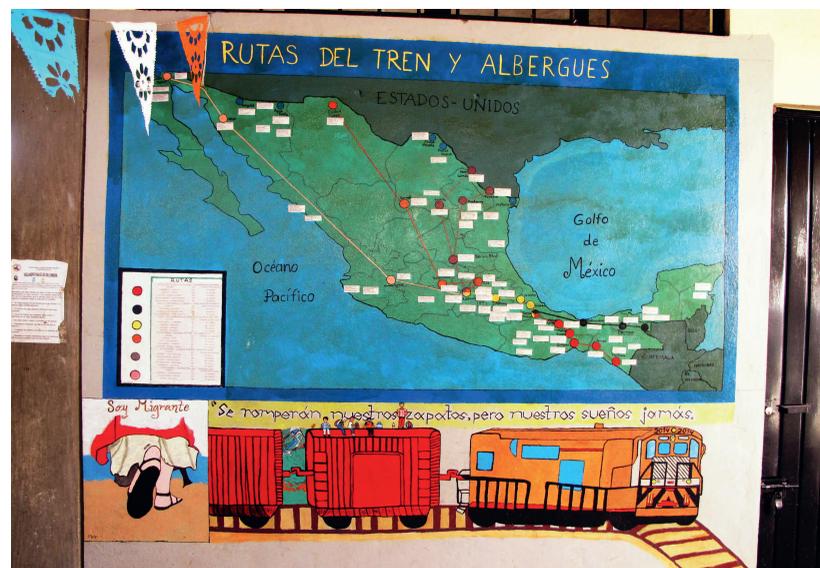
- Undocumented migrants are subjected to grave human rights abuses, including kidnappings, assaults, sexual abuse, murders and disappearances
- Hundreds of thousands of undocumented migrants pass through Mexico every year, many are subjected to grave human rights abuses

During 2015, several UN bodies expressed serious concerns about the situation in Mexico:

- UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Juan Méndez: «Torture and ill treatment during detention are generalised in Mexico, and occur in a context of impunity»
- UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein: «No one in Mexico can feel safe. They are not enjoying the protection of the law»
- The UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED) reported widespread disappearances, virtually no convictions and countless obstacles in the search for disappeared loved ones

In the context of the ongoing human rights crisis, marginalised groups that are particularly exposed to human rights violations include:

- Irregular migrants
- Indigenous peoples
- Journalists
- Human rights defenders, especially community activists protesting against large scale development projects



Hundreds of thousands of undocumented migrants pass through Mexico every year, hoping to reach the USA. Shelters set up by local communities provide migrants with humanitarian assistance along the way.

The NHRF in Mexico:

- The NHRF has supported organisations in Mexico since 2012
- Mexico was given status as prioritised country in 2015
- In 2015, the NHRF provided support to four projects in the country
- The projects focused on the rights of migrants, women, indigenous peoples and human rights defenders at risk
- In 2015, the NHRF organised the first annual seminar for all grantees in Mexico City

Selected results in Mexico

Historic ruling for indigenous peoples' rights

The NHRF has provided three grants to the work of the organisation Indignación. Promoción y Defensa de los Derechos Humanos A.C. (Indignación) for indigenous peoples' rights on the Yucatan peninsula in southern Mexico. In November 2015, Indignación, jointly working with other organisations, succeeded in their efforts to secure a historic ruling by the Mexican Supreme Court guaranteeing indigenous communities' rights to consultation over use of their territories. The Court thereby cancelled a permission previously granted to multinational company Monsanto to cultivate genetically modified soybean on their land.

Beyond avoiding the anticipated contamination of groundwater and deforestation in the Maya areas, Indignación hopes that the decision signals a shift for Mexican legislation and public policy towards increased respect for indigenous peoples' right to consultation.

Protecting migrants

Hundreds of thousands of undocumented migrants, mostly from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala, pass through Mexico each year. On their journey towards the USA, the migrants are subjected to frequent and gross violations of human rights, including kidnappings, disappearances, assaults, rape and



Indignación mobilises Maya communities on the Yucatán peninsula to defend their human rights, providing training and legal accompaniment.

torture. In 2015, the NHRF provided support to two organisations working for the protection of migrants' rights.

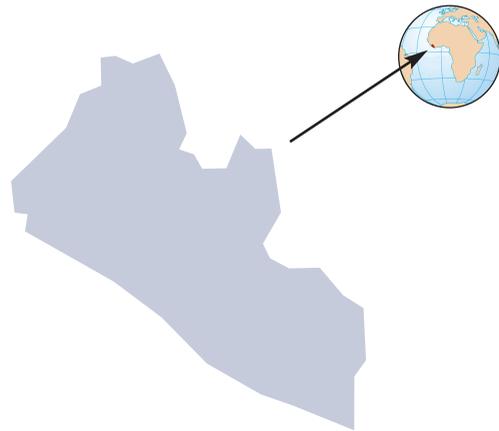
In Apizaco, Tlaxcala State, the organisation Un Mundo Una Nación A.C. (UMUN) provides assistance to migrants through the shelter La Sagrada Familia. With NHRF support, the organisation accompanies migrants who decide to file complaints on human rights violations in the Mexican legal system. In 2015, UMUN reported that they had successfully obtained a humanitarian visa for a Honduran migrant, and achieved the right to health services for two other migrants. In their efforts to demand the removal of concrete poles erected along the railroad tracks – which has so far cost the lives of two migrants and mutilated nine others – they have gained significant media coverage. However, their campaign has so far not succeeded in having the poles removed. In 2015, the NHRF provided renewed support to the work of UMUN for the

defence of migrants' rights.

In late 2015, the organisation Colectivo Contra la Tortura y la Impunidad A.C. (CCTI) finalised their first NHRF-supported project on documenting torture and maltreatment of migrants. During the project period, CCTI staff interviewed 62 migrants in 8 shelters in the states of Veracruz, Oaxaca, Chiapas, Tabasco, Coahuila and Chihuahua to document violations. According to their findings, 92% of the respondents had experienced some form of torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment, as described in the 1984 UN Convention. In December 2015, CCTI launched their final report in a press conference with 17 attending news agencies. The report received wide coverage in the Mexican media and will provide the basis for CCTI's further advocacy work for the rights of undocumented migrants. ■

NHRF support in

Liberia



The human rights situation in Liberia

Civil war 1989 – 2003:

- **200 000+**

lives claimed

- **1 million**

people displaced

- **72 %** of Liberian women

raped during the war

- Liberia's infrastructure and economy destroyed

Liberia has since stabilised politically, but the peace remains fragile. The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) was established in 2003, and is now in the process of a draw-down. Its current mandate lasts until 30th September 2016. Several root causes of the conflict remain unresolved, including ethnic divisions, systemic corruption, economic grievances and impunity for perpetrators of violence.

Ebola virus disease outbreak 2014–2015:

- **4 800+** probable, confirmed and suspected deaths reported in Liberia

- Caused near collapse of the healthcare system and affected virtually all sectors of society

- Liberia declared Ebola free for the third time in January 2016

- Survivors, including orphans, living with complications and social stigma

Continued concerns include:

- Widespread police corruption, denying citizens' equal protection under law and violating human rights

- Persistent weaknesses in the judiciary undermining access to justice and due process

- Sexual violence continuously a significant threat to the physical security of women and children across Liberia, with low numbers of successful sexual violence prosecutions

- Deep and widespread poverty, with Liberia ranking **177** out of 188 countries in the 2015 UN Human Development Index



Students in Saclepea district in Nimba County participate in a training organised by NHRF grantee WOCRIFO.

The NHRF in Liberia

- The NHRF has supported organisations in Liberia since 1996
- Liberia has been a priority country for the NHRF since 2002
- The NHRF's target group is primarily organisations based in rural areas with sustained links to the target area
- NHRF activities are supported by an earmarked grant from Norad in the period 2013–2015
- In 2015, the NHRF provided support to six organisations all working with women's and children's rights

Selected results in Liberia

Combating sexual exploitation and abuse in schools

In the Saclepea district of Nimba County, Women and Children's Rights Organisation (WOCRIFO) has established fora and structures for discussing and reporting sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in 15 schools. Supporting these anti-SEA structures to independently monitor, document and report corruption and SEA in schools was thus a major task for WOCRIFO during 2015.

At the end of the year, WOCRIFO reported that from February to November 2015, they had conducted sessions in all fifteen schools with a target group of more than 2 000 students. They also conducted training of trainers workshops for officers and members from the structures established in the schools, and provided kits that comprised information on SEA advocacy and the rights of students and young people as contained in national and international laws. In addition, WOCRIFO participated in radio programmes addressing the issue and devoted ample time to advocacy activities, particularly among key stakeholders. Local school authorities, principals, parents and officers of the Parents Teachers Association were constantly visited and confronted with reports gathered from schools on SEA and corruption.

Among their main achievements in 2015, WOCRIFO reported that: they obtained the necessary cooperation



Word Centre staff member in Kakata City, Margibi County, during the NHRF's field visit to the organisation in October 2015.

from critical stakeholders; the overall reports of overt advances and sexual harassment in the 15 target schools decreased; 3 500 local residents now have access to relevant information material on SEA; and the District Education Officer of Education Law distributed memos prohibiting fees for primary students. WOCRIFO received their third grant from the NHRF in 2015, which is currently its only donor.

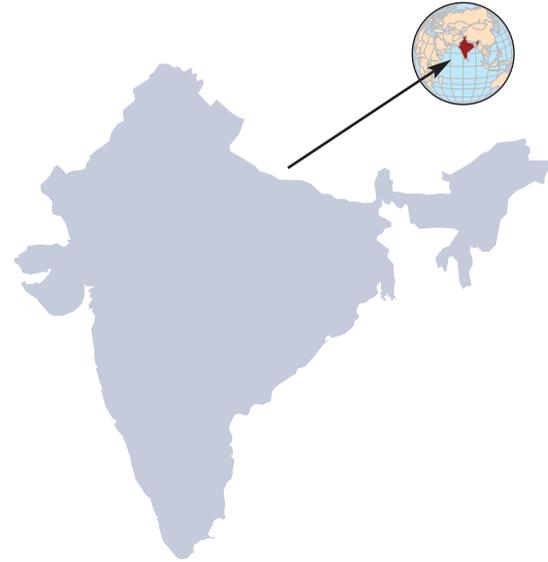
Enabling adolescent girls' participation in human rights work

Women Rights Democracy Centre (WORD Centre) in Kakata, Margibi County, received their second NHRF grant late 2015 for their work to enable the participation of women and adolescent girls in human rights work in five communities in rural Liberia. At the end of their first grant in autumn 2015,

WORD Centre reported that the women and adolescent girls in the target communities have taken ownership of the project and are increasingly monitoring, documenting and reporting cases of abuse. They no longer shy away from seeking justice through court procedures and are involved in monitoring relevant court cases. As a result of WORD Centre's work, rural community radio stations in the target areas are also constantly airing jingles promoting respect for rural women's rights. Furthermore, WORD Centre reported that they were one of the organisations recognised by communities and placed on the county technical committee, which was set up by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to fight the spread of the Ebola virus in Margibi County during the deadly outbreak. ■

NHRF support in

India



The human rights situation in India

India is both vast and diverse in terms of its people, language and cultural traditions. It is predicted to become the world's most populous nation by 2022, overtaking China. The country is militarily strong and has major cultural influence and an expanding economy. At the same time, India is tackling huge environmental, social and economic problems.

- Population **1,3 billion** (est.)

- **201 million+** estimated Scheduled Castes (SCs)

- Ranked **130** out of 188 countries in the 2015 UN Human Development Index

India has a legal framework ensuring the rights of marginalised and vulnerable groups:

- India's Constitution (1949) ensures equality before the law and equal protection of the laws within the territory of India, explicitly prohibits discrimination based on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and stresses equal opportunity in matters of public employment

- The Protection of Civil Rights Act (No. 22 of 1955) prescribes punishment for the preaching and practice of «untouchability»
- Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SCs/STs) Prevention of Atrocities Act (1989) was enacted by the Indian Parliament to prevent atrocities against SCs and STs

Despite the above-mentioned legal provisions, India has severe human rights concerns. Marginalised communities, such as SCs and STs, continue to face neglect, discrimination, violence and severe difficulties in obtaining justice.

Continued concerns include:

- The gap between progressive laws and their implementation
- The serious challenge of sexual abuse and other violence against women and children
- Abuses against marginalised communities
- Indian authorities' increased crack-down in recent years on civil society by using the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), a law regulating grants from foreign donors



Volunteers from several districts across Karnataka, Sanchaya Nele staff and NHRF consultant at Sanchaya Nele's state committee meeting held in Bangalore, April 2015.

The NHRF in India

- The NHRF has supported organisations in India since the early 1990s
- India has been a priority country for the NHRF since 2002
- The NHRF has three priority states in South India: Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu
- The NHRF supports projects focusing on the protection and promotion of the rights of marginalised and vulnerable groups, such as the SCs/STs
- In 2015, the NHRF provided support to four organisations and one human rights defenders network

Selected results in India

Empowering manual scavengers

In the state of Karnataka, a campaign for the rights of manual scavengers has developed, organised through the organisation Prarambha. Manual scavenging refers to the practice of manually cleaning, carrying, disposing or handling human excreta from dry latrines and sewers. The practice is linked to India's caste system where so-called lower castes are expected to perform the work. Manual scavengers are amongst the poorest and most disadvantaged communities in India.

The employment of people as manual scavengers was officially prohibited in India in 1993. In 2013, a landmark Manual Scavengers Act was passed which seeks to reinforce the ban by prohibiting the practice in all forms and ensures the rehabilitation of manual scavengers to be identified through a mandatory survey. It is within this legal framework that Prarambha's work through a Safaikarmachari watchdog committee, with representatives of the manual scavengers' community, is conducted.

Prarambha received its second grant in 2015, with the NHRF as the organisation's only donor. The campaign's main achievements after its first year of support included the formation of the Safaikarmachari watchdog committee operating in 12 districts on manual scavenging issues, six complaints with



A manual scavenger cleaning a pit latrine in Kolar Gold Fields, Karnataka.

fact-finding reports filed with relevant human rights commissions, and partial compensation achieved for one family of a diseased manual scavenger in Mysore. Prarambha also reported that the watchdog committee had succeeded in getting the Chair of the Safaikarmachari Commission in Karnataka to visit 13 cities, and that the issue had received substantial coverage in print and electronic media. Despite the social stigma attached, manual scavengers are now beginning to disclose their identity, forming watchdog committee units in their respective localities, and participating in public meetings in the campaign's target districts.

Defending the rights of Dalit women and girls

The organisation, Sanchaya Nele documents atrocities against Dalit women in the state of Karnataka within the legal framework of the SCs/STs Prevention of Atrocities Act (POA Act). With the support of the NHRF from 2014, the organisation expanded its ongoing work to the northern part of the state. The organisation provides legal assistance in selected cases, is involved in alliance building, and publishes an annual status report on the implementation of the POA Act in Karnataka.

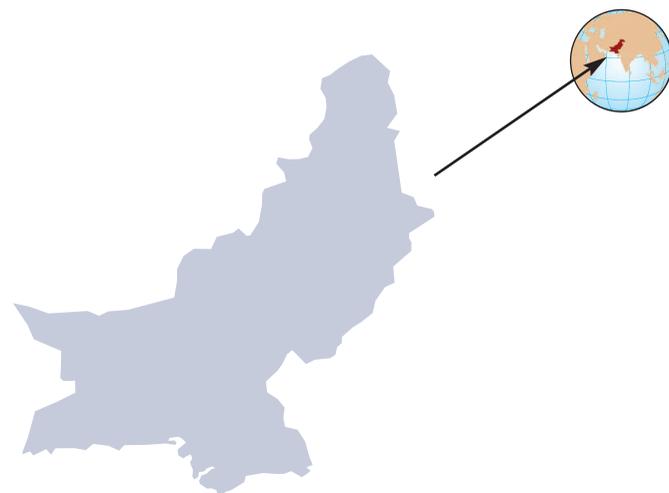
After their first year of support, Sanchaya Nele reported that they had conducted five human rights trainings for a total of 300 selected human rights

defenders (men and women) from North Karnataka. The trainings focused on how to monitor the implementation of the POA Act and claim social entitlements, using the Right to Information Act (RTI Act). From 2014 to 2015, 100 RTI claims were filed. 15 structured advocacy meetings have been held with appropriate authorities, and a new group of women Dalit leaders has emerged.

On 18th December 2015, Indian media reported that the Karnataka state police department had instructed all the police stations across the state to observe «Dalit Day» on the second Sunday of every month. This includes looking into pending atrocities cases and conducting meetings with Dalits to prepare reports on problems they are facing. On 21st December 2015, the SCs/STs Prevention of Atrocities Amendment Bill 2015 was passed in the Indian parliament, strengthening protections for Dalit and tribal communities, and making it easier for them to pursue justice. Furthermore, on 13th January 2016, the Chief Minister of Karnataka announced the establishment of a new portfolio – Additional Advocate General at the state level to curb the atrocities committed against SCs/STs. These developments show that long term advocacy from organisations in India, such as Sanchaya Nele, can lead to positive results. ■

NHRF support in

Pakistan



The human rights situation in Pakistan

In spite of the peaceful transition between two elected governments in 2014, the country is in a deeply fragile political situation with deadly fighting between Islamic militants and the army. Natural disasters, recurring floods, an energy crisis, terrorist attacks, gender inequality, weak economy and imbedded corruption are major obstacles for the country's development.

In 2015, human rights organisations and others reported:

- **350** people executed since the government lifted the moratorium against death penalty in December 2014
- Ranked **147** out of 188 in UNDP's 2015 Human Development Index

- **21%** live under the poverty line
- **21%** of girls married before the age of 18

Continued concerns include:

- Deeply flawed criminal justice system that pose threats of wrongful convictions
- Lack of accountability and protection for attacks against journalists and human rights defenders
- Pakistan has been named as the fourth most dangerous country in the world for journalists
- Weak statutory protection for the country's millions of citizens belonging to religious minorities, including the blasphemy laws
- Violence against women and girls, including honour killings, acid attacks, and forced marriages remains a major concern despite criminalising all these offences through legislation
- Reports of enforced disappearances, extra-judicial killings and torture
- Government efforts to regulate foreign funding under the Foreign Contribution Bill can hamper work of human rights defenders



In Pakistan, transgender persons are often subject to illegal detentions and vulnerable to human rights violations. Pictured here: GTO's lawyer providing legal aid to an arrested transgender individual.

The NHRF in Pakistan

- Pakistan has been a priority country for the NHRF since 2002
- The NHRF supports organisations and projects working to enhance the human rights situation for vulnerable groups, such as workers, children, women, minorities and persons with disabilities
- In 2015, the NHRF provided support to four organisations
- The NHRF supports organisations in three provinces: Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and Sindh
- The NHRF supports a national project on protection of human rights defenders

Selected results in Pakistan

Civil rights for the transgender community

In 2015, the NHRF supported Good Thinkers Organization (GTO) for streamlining access to justice and protecting basic human rights of the transgender community in Kasur, a district in Punjab Province. GTO's project report highlighted the positive role the support has played in improving the lives of transgender persons. During the project, a baseline study was conducted on the situation of transgender people in Kasur. A legal support structure, «Transgender Network», was established to uphold and advocate for the rights of transgender persons. Nine monthly meetings were held to coordinate concrete steps in responding to the discrimination and injustice against the transgender community in Kasur. Key actors from civil society, media, law, government departments and institutions were sensitised towards the rights of transgender persons. GTO reported that government departments showed positive responses towards the issue in 85 cases. Many transgender individuals were able to attain their national identity cards, register to vote, and provided with police security for birthday celebrations and marriage festivals. At the end of the project, GTO reported on improved access to justice, with legal aid undertaken in four cases and further legal assistance in 64 cases. In total, seven articles

were published in the local newspaper to highlight the situation of transgender people in Kasur and the organisation used radio programmes to fight the stigma against the transgender community. The NHRF gave the organisation a second grant to continue its efforts in January 2016.

Mobilisation of bonded labourers

The Multan-based organisation Encourage the Human Development (EHD) works against bonded labour. At the end of 2015, EHD reported that a total of 2 724 workers positively benefited from their last project, along with 626 workers, including women, attending a rights education session to increase their awareness of their rights in the workplace. In total, EHD provided follow-up legal support in eight cases, benefiting 152 workers. Over 1 000 bonded workers had joined and participated in rallies in the 1st May workers' day celebration, giving a strong voice to the needs and demands of the bonded labourers. EHD also finalised a baseline survey on the situation of workers in Multan that they have actively used in their advocacy work and in their interaction with the government departments. The NHRF gave the organisation a fourth grant at the end of the year.

Protection of human rights defenders

In 2015, a second phase of the joint project on protection of human rights defenders between the NHRF and the Democratic Commission for Human Development (DCHD) was undertaken. The project built upon the baseline on the situation of human rights defenders in

Pakistan undertaken in 2013-2014 with a sample of 800 organisations. Using the results of the research and through consulting relevant organisations, government agencies, international NGOs and donor agencies, the DCHD and the NHRF continued to work towards the greater protection of human rights defenders in 2015. Thus, early in the year, the consultation process started at both provincial and national levels to mobilise all key stakeholders in forming a human rights defender's protection mechanism on both levels, as well as a three-tier joint strategy focusing on the state, the international community, and local civil society organisations.

Four regional consultations were conducted in Sindh, Baluchistan, KPK and Punjab, with a total of 152 organisation representatives. Four regional working groups were established. On 15th-16th October, a national consultation was held in Islamabad with a focus on establishing a national protection mechanism. 51 participants attended, representing: the four provincial working groups, international organisations such as Amnesty International, the newly established National Commission on Human Rights, the National Commission on the Status of Women, the Directorate of Human Rights, the Ministry of Human Rights, key human rights defenders, two diplomatic missions, and the Dutch and the EU missions. Key recommendations and action points were taken forward to the regional working groups. The project will continue until April 2016, with the aim of establishing a response mechanism for human rights defenders' protection in Pakistan. ■



Although bonded labour is outlawed, debt bondage is a vast human rights issue in Pakistan affecting millions of workers. In 2015, EHD provided labour rights education sessions for 626 workers in the Brick Kiln, including women, about their rights in the workplace.

NHRF support in

other countries

In addition to the five prioritised countries listed earlier in this report, the NHRF has an open call for organisations in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia and Nigeria to apply for grants. In 2015, 20% of the grants were allocated to projects in these countries. Additionally, the NHRF supports projects on the protection of human rights defenders and proposals forwarded by owner organisations and its donors.

Selected results in Indonesia

Fulfilling the rights of victims of the 1965/66 violence

In Indonesia, from late 1965 to early 1966, an estimated 500 000 – 1 million people were killed in an anticommunist purge, and no one has so far been held accountable. Survivors and relatives of victims still live with stigma and discrimination today. The organisation Solidarity for Victims of Human Rights Violations (SKP-HAM) in Palu in Central Sulawesi, received their second NHRF grant at the end of 2015 to continue their research on, and verification of, the victims of the 1965/66 atrocities. SKP-HAM's work is conducted within the context of a unique and ground breaking decree of Mayoral Regulation 25/2013 on the implementation of the National Human Rights Plan, ordering the provision of government services to fulfil these victims' right. SKP-HAM's work is thus done in close dialogue with the City Government of Palu.

Among the results achieved in 2015, SKP-HAM reported the verification and acknowledgement of 352 victims of the 1965/66 violence in eight sub-districts in Palu. Furthermore, several victims have obtained redress, access to social services and the fulfilment of basic rights from the government, including: scholarships (25 children and grandchildren of victims), access to government health services (171 victims) and intensive work training (201 victims). Furthermore, SKP-HAM is facilitating the City Government of Palu, the National Commission of Human Rights, the Human Rights



Nurlaela Lamasitudju is the spokeswoman for the survivors' group SKP-HAM in Central Sulawesi. Here, holding the motto of Indonesia's Coalition for Justice and Truth (KKPK): «Speak the truth».

Commission for Women, and the Witness and Protection Agency to implement the decree and develop a common programme on education and fulfilment of human rights in the coming three years. The NHRF supports SKP-HAM through their partner organisation, Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR).

Selected results in Thailand

Supporting human rights lawyers and local communities

The Human Rights Lawyers Association (HRLA) in Bangkok works with HRLA members, local lawyers, students, law lecturers at universities and community leaders in order to empower local communities facing human rights violations. HRLA works in the north, northeast and south of Thailand with issues such as forest and land rights, natural resource management and local communities' right to consultation. Achievements from HRLA's first year of NHRF support include five legal trainings for approximately seven local communities and villages in the provinces of Mae Hong Son and Tak in the north, and rendering legal advice to a total of five communities with 2 345 beneficiaries in Mae Hong Son, Tak and Chang Mai. Furthermore, legal assistance through pro bono lawyers was provided to individuals and communities in eight cases in the north. In the south, HRLA succeeded in developing a network of human rights lawyers for future joint activities, and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between HRLA and the law faculties at three universities, with the aim of promoting and protecting human rights. In Khonkaen Province in the northeast, a working group of students was established to develop a report on the human rights situation in the target areas. In Loei Province, also in the northeast, a working group of students, villagers and local authority members was set up to develop a draft sub-district code of law for the purpose of protecting mineral resources. HRLA works in close cooperation with other networks and local organisations and received renewed support from the NHRF in 2015.

NHRF support to protection of human rights defenders

In response to increasing requests from organisations working under difficult circumstances, the NHRF has opened for 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 the NHRF strategy for support to the protection of defenders at risk (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.

In 2015, 27% of the NHRF's grants were allocated to ten projects focusing on the protection of human rights defenders in the Middle East, Latin America, South and Southeast Asia. Five of these projects were in priority countries Mexico, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. The activities ranged from legal and practical assistance and support to imprisoned or vulnerable human rights defenders, to



Butmao Sourn, Executive Director of MIRO in Cambodia, during a field visit.

advocacy projects, strengthening network, capacity building and empowerment of local human rights defenders at risk.

The Minority Rights Organization (MIRO) in Cambodia, is an example of one of these ten projects. MIRO focuses its work on minorities and Khmer Krom human rights defenders in particular. The Khmer Krom is a marginalised community receiving little international attention. MIRO monitors legal cases against defenders from this community, provides legal trainings to Khmer Krom defenders and engages in advocacy work at the national and international levels. At the end of their first year of NHRF support, MIRO's report included follow-up of two cases at

the Takeo provincial court, and monitoring of 12 cases involving imprisonment of Khmer Krom activists and monks in relation to their struggle for land rights, against evictions, and protests against the new NGO-law. In addition, the organisation conducted interviews with eight monks who had been summoned by the court, and submitted four complaints to the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) regarding Khmer Krom Buddhist monks who have been charged with harassment, intimidation or incitement. At the end of 2015, MIRO received their second grant for their continued support to human rights defenders from marginalised communities in Cambodia in 2016. ■

Linking local human rights work to the international level



Human rights defenders at the consultation with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, Michel Forst, in Florence, 2015.

PHOTO: UN SR-HRD

In 2015, the NHRF supported two organisations to participate in consultations with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders (SR HRD), Michel Forst. On 22nd–23rd June 2015, Executive Director Alma Biblash from the NHRF-funded Human Rights Defenders Fund participated in a consultation organised by the SR HRD in Florence, where she highlighted the situation for local human rights defenders in Israel

and Palestine and the work undertaken on the ground.

The Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition (WHRDIC) organised a dialogue meeting with the SR HRD on 9th June in Geneva. The meeting focused on how the Special Procedures (SP) mandates can better document violations against women human rights defenders (WHRDs) and strengthen the SP's outreach during country visits to solicit information on WHRDs. ■



Representatives from grantee organisations engaged in discussions on financial management during the annual seminar in India, 2015.

Capacity building

As part of the NHRF's multi-annual strategic plan (2011–2015), the NHRF aimed to increase its capacity building for grantee organisations and create spaces for mutual learning and experience sharing. In addition to feedback and local consultants, the annual seminars organised in priority countries are particularly important in this work. In its capacity building efforts and annual seminars, the NHRF also benefits from the assistance of national and community resource persons and networks. In 2015, the NHRF organised the following seminars:

■ **Pakistan:** Islamabad, 13th–14th April, Human rights violations monitoring and documentation and use of international protection mechanisms for human rights defenders

■ **Colombia:** Bogotá, 21st–22nd April, Workshop on protection and security for human rights defenders

■ **India:** Bangalore, 22nd–23rd April, NHRF security guidelines for grantees in the field and financial management of foreign contributions under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA)

■ **Liberia:** Monrovia, 26th–27th October, NHRF security guidelines for grantees in the field and financial management for local organisations

■ **Mexico:** Mexico City, 10th–11th November, Experience sharing and mutual learning for human rights defenders (first NHRF seminar in Mexico)

Goals for the NHRF's capacity building efforts

- Grantee organisations have improved their ability to carry out human rights work
- 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
- Continuous follow-up of grantees in application process and reporting
- In selected countries: internal audits with feedback to the organisations

NHRF consultants

In order to ensure a high level of accuracy in the selection of projects, the NHRF 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 likeminded 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.



PAKISTAN:
Tanveer Jahan,
consultant for the
NHRF since 2003



LIBERIA:
Aloysius Toe,
consultant for the
NHRF since 2004



COLOMBIA:
Elena Rey
Maquieira Palmer,
consultant for the
NHRF since 2011



INDIA:
Mathews Philip,
consultant for the
NHRF since 2013



MEXICO:
Agnieszka
Raczynska,
consultant for the
NHRF since 2015

The board of the NHRF

Representatives from each of the NHRF's five owner organisations constitute the NHRF's board.

What do you think has been the most stimulating aspect of your work on the board in 2015?

Gina Lende

Chair

Representative from the Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations



«Through learning about the work of our grantees, I get constant evidence that human rights are far from being fancy, empty words but rather crucial tools in bringing about actual changes in people's lives and communities.»

Gerald Folkvord

Vice Chair

Representative from Amnesty International Norway



«One of the many things that made me proud to be a board member of the NHRF in 2015 was the NHRF's focus on the security of the human rights defenders we support. The excellent «Guidelines on security for grantees in the field», together with a number of other activities, make the NHRF a forerunner in this often neglected area.»

Cecilie Figenschou Bakke

Board member

Representative from Norwegian Centre for Human Rights



«To realise the vision of the United Nations General Assembly resolution on human rights defenders, you need actors such as the Norwegian Human Rights Fund. The NHRF is doing important work to support human rights defenders on the ground and I am happy to serve as member of the board.»

Ellen-Kathrine Fauske

Board member

Representative from the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions



«The most inspiring aspect was the project visit to Colombia. It was encouraging to see the high quality of the work and the difference small-scale support can make.»

Trine Riis-Hansen

Board member

Representative from the Atlas Alliance



«The year 2015 was challenging but still very inspiring with the external evaluation and our work with the new strategy. I really enjoy working with such a great group of knowledgeable and committed people in the board and the secretariat. I am proud of being able to work on the NHRF board when I read about human rights achievements on the ground in the programme countries.»

Sidse Stanmore Andersen

Deputy member

Representative from Amnesty International Norway



«I think one of the most inspiring things about being part of the board in 2015 was to receive the external evaluation of the NHRF's work, which documented how the work of the NHRF has contributed to increasing respect for the human rights' situation of vulnerable and marginalised groups. It has also been an important inspiration to discuss the NHRF's strategy forward, and I look forward to the continuation!»

Nils A. Butenschøn

Deputy member

Representative from the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights



«The seminars organised for members of the board for in-depth discussions of both organisational matters, strategies, and individual projects have been very informative and stimulating – and in addition given me a chance to know the highly competent and committed staff at the NHRF.»

Einar Tjelle

Deputy member

Representative from the Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations



«The solid and positive result from the evaluation report on NHRF was stimulating. It is a strong recognition of what we are doing together through our strong partners in the field and excellent staff.»

In addition, Terje Kalheim has been the Deputy Board Member of Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions and Morten Eriksen a Deputy Board Member for the The Atlas Alliance

The main tasks of the board are to make strategic decisions and to supervise the NHRF's economy and administration. In 2015, the board held four meetings and two workshops in relation to the new strategy for 2016–2020. The board also commissioned a sub-group to work on the 2015 external evaluation.



NHRF consultant Elena Rey and board member Ellen-Kathrine Fauske from the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) with the grantee Asociación Red Juvenil del Suroccidente de Barranquilla in Colombia, April 2015.

Administration and organisation

The secretariat

The NHRF has three full-time positions, as well as a part-time accountant.

Work on Asia has been shared between Executive Director Sandra Petersen and Project Coordinator Liv Hernæs Kvanvig. Kvanvig is in charge of India, Thailand, Indonesia and the Liberia portfolio. Petersen is responsible for Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the grants on human rights defenders at risk, while Project Coordinator Torstein Taksdal Skjeseth is responsible for projects in

Latin America and, as from 2015, Nigeria. Bjørg Haugstulen is the NHRF's accountant.

The NHRF has an agreement on internships with the Master's Programme in the Theory and Practice of Human Rights at the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, University of Oslo, and the secretariat would like to express its gratitude for the invaluable assistance of Zoë Eunjae Lee from March to August. The secretariat is also extremely grateful for the help provided by Dario Iulianella,

who has also interned with the NHRF from October 2015 to March 2016. Dario is enrolled in the Master's Programme in Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Oslo.

Amnesty International Norway has hosted the secretariat since 2007. The sharing of offices with Amnesty continues to provide the secretariat with an inspiring work environment, both professionally and socially.

Travels and follow-up: During 2015, the secretariat conducted project visits

to India, Pakistan, Liberia, Colombia and Mexico. In April, Board member Ellen-Kathrine Fauske from the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) travelled to Colombia with the NHRF secretariat for project visits and follow-up. In November, Secretary General John Peder Egenæs of Amnesty International Norway travelled with the NHRF staff to Mexico to visit grantees and projects funded by the NHRF (see page 10).

The NHRF has had close contact with funders from the Nordic countries and global funders in 2015, including contact through participation in the following conferences and meetings:

■ **April (Stockholm, Sweden):** Defenders' Days, organised annually by the Swedish Organisation, Civil Rights Defenders

■ **June (Geneva, Switzerland):** Meetings with network and grantees; a meeting with Michel Forst, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders

■ **June (Berlin, Germany):** Funders' Workshop on the Disabling Environment for Civil Society, organised by the Ariadne- European Funders network and the International Human Rights Funders Groups

■ **June (Berlin, Germany):** Nordic meeting with a focus on Digital Security, together with the Amnesty Tech team

■ **September (Helsinki, Finland):** KIOS seminar, «Strengthening the co-operation and security of human rights defenders»

■ **November (Dublin, Ireland):** The Eighth Dublin Platform for Human Rights Defenders.

Petersen continued her participation in the International Dalit Solidarity Network's (IDSN) Executive Group (EG). She participated in EG meetings in Copenhagen in April, in Brussels in June, and in Geneva at the Minority Rights Forum in November. ■

Accounts

The total income in 2015 was NOK 9 278 961,- (US\$ 1 149 809,-). 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 portfolio. The remaining part of the budget was covered by the owner organisations of the NHRF and other donations.

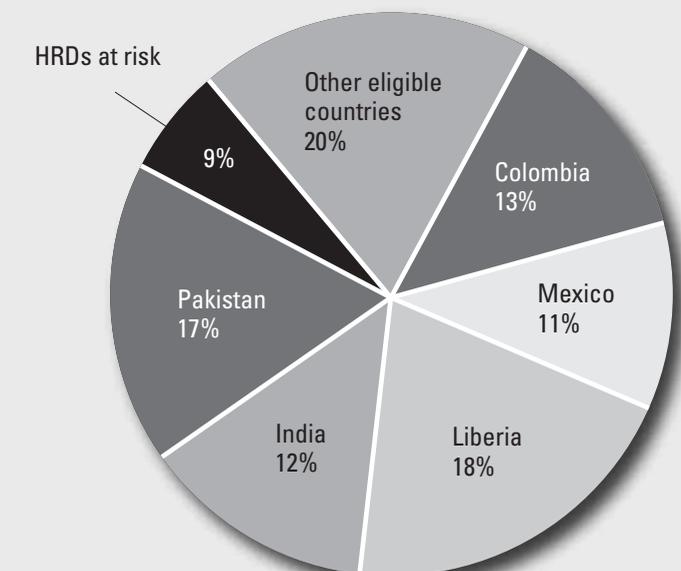
A total of NOK 6 023 760,- (US\$ 685 619,-) was granted to human rights projects during the year.

NOK 2 059 898,- (US\$ 255 253,-) was spent on salaries to staff in Norway. A total of x % of the total income was used for direct administrative costs such as office costs in Norway, audits, accountant, equipment, etc.

NOK 988 136,- (US\$ 122 445,-) was spent on follow-up and capacity building of grantee organisations through the NHRF's local consultants, training seminars in priority countries, and field trips by the secretariat in Oslo.

NOK 50 304,- (US\$ 6233,-) was spent on communication and reporting.

ACCOUNTS IN 2014	USD	NOK
Total income	1 149 809	9 278 961
From owners	96 034	775 000
From government	1 049 566	8 470 000
Other income	4 208	33 961
Total expenses	1 007 327	9 272 099
For grants	685 619	6 023 760
For administration and salaries Norway	255 253	2 059 890
For communication/ reporting	6 233	50 304
For follow-up and capacity building/Evaluation	122 445	988 136





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 2015:

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

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P.O. Box 6890 St. Olavs plass, N-0130 Oslo, Norway.

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The Norwegian Human Rights Fund,
c/o Amnesty International Norway, Grensen 3, Oslo, Norway.

HOMEPAGE:

www.nhrf.no