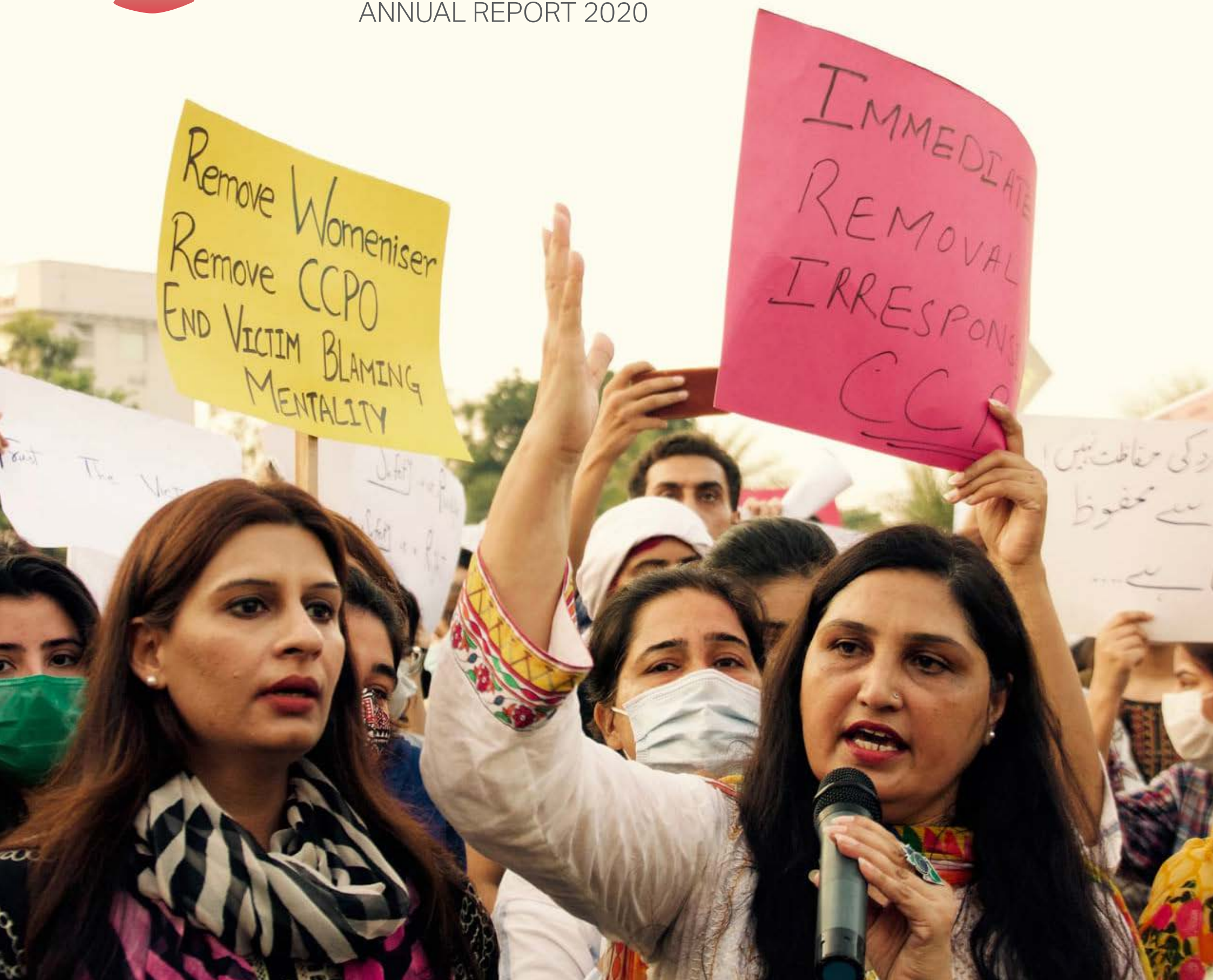




# NORWEGIAN HUMAN RIGHTS FUND

ANNUAL REPORT 2020







**The Norwegian Human Rights Fund (NHRF)** works to protect and promote human rights internationally through direct support to organisations working in the first line of defense for human rights. As part of its core identity, the NHRF strives to be a flexible donor, and in doing so has been able to take risks and support nascent initiatives that are targeted and smart - eliminating the use of intermediary links and time-consuming procedures for our grantee partners.

The NHRF is anchored in Norwegian civil society organisations and institutions that contribute strategically, professionally and financially to the NHRF's work, as well as serve on the NHRF Board. In 2020 the following organizations were members supporting the NHRF and serving on the Board: **Amnesty International Norway, the Atlas Alliance, Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions, and Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations.**

**Front page picture:** Executive Director of NHRF's grantee Women in Struggle for Empowerment, Bushra Khaliq, together with advocate and human rights activist Rabbiya Bajwa during a protest in Pakistan. Photo: Women in Struggle for Empowerment.

All photos in the report are by the NHRF or grantees, unless otherwise accredited.

**Graphic Design:** Willhemina Wahlin | Braenchild Media

**nhrf.no**

## ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS 2020

*The pandemic has posed numerous challenges to the way our organisation functions, however as far as activities are concerned, I think we're now able to think out of the box.* – NHRF grantee from Pakistan



NHRF's Executive Director Sandra Petersen, together with Colombian grantees in Putumayo, Colombia, February 2020.

### 🕒 **The NHRF's Colombia Office opened in April 2020.**

The establishment of the office has enabled us to ensure targeted, fit-for-purpose capacity building and enable us to follow-up more closely with grantees, and to continue the support to Colombian civil society organisations in the year to come!

### 🕒 **Human rights work during COVID-19**

The NHRF has been regularly monitoring COVID-19's impact on the work of our grantees. Our latest survey demonstrates that many of our grantees have been severely impacted by the pandemic, but also show that they have adapted and transitioned well despite the significant impact the crisis has had on their activities and communities.

### 🕒 **In spite of travel restrictions,** the NHRF held 17 seminars for our grantees on topics such as financial management, gender and safeguarding, and roundtables with Norwegian Embassies in Indonesia, Thailand, India and Mexico.



## A YEAR OF CONTRAST AND HOPE

*Word from the Chair and the Executive Director*



ABOVE: From one of the many protests in Thailand during 2020. (Photo: Kan Seangthong)

*This annual report provides a snapshot of some of the victories of the critical human rights work that our grantees commit to amid this global decline and pandemic.*

**2020 has been a year marked by disruption, change, and, for the Norwegian Human Rights Fund, new opportunities and growth.** The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the vulnerability of millions of people that are invisible in social protection programs and suffer from inadequate access to healthcare, and repressive state responses have exacerbated existing issues of inequality, discrimination and marginalisation. It has been a year that has highlighted the crucial role that strong and diverse rights-based movements and organisations play: not only in holding authorities accountable for their service provision, but also in stepping in and providing communities with vital information, supplies and protection of their rights.

The struggle for human rights fulfillment and democracy across the world and in the countries where the NHRF works in continues. In 2020, we saw that violence and assassinations in Colombia rose significantly. Demonstrations erupted across the world, including in countries we provide support. In Thailand, protests calling for democratic reform were met with violence and harassment, and human rights defenders have been criminalised by authorities. Similar patterns of violence have taken place in India against farmers objecting to the deregulation of the Indian agricultural economy, or the attempts to strip away citizenship for religious minority communities. Last year we saw women taking to the streets in Mexico to highlight the country's menacing and increasing levels of violence against women, and activists opposing the Indonesian "Omnibus law" dismantling environmental, labour and human rights protection to benefit businesses in a time of economic crisis. **Evidence of a backlash against human rights globally can be seen in many countries where we provide support, and it threatens many hard-won victories in its attempt to further curtail legitimate human rights work and suppress those who defend them.**

This turbulent and repressive context is the one in which many of NHRF's grantees work, but they continue to defend human rights and to build on the progress made. Grassroots initiatives and projects at the local level are directly connected to the issues people face, and our grantee partners have in many cases been the first responders to crises and challenges the human rights movement face. **This annual report attempts to provide a snapshot of some of the victories of**

**the critical human rights work that our grantees commit to amid this global decline and pandemic.**

Flexibility has always been one of our core values, and this year it has been crucial to demonstrate this to our grantees. As the outbreak hit, we committed to responding in a flexible way and to ensure that we could complement the evolving needs of our partners amid the uncertainty that they faced. We are proud to have worked alongside organisations that have continued to work and fight despite challenges and adapted in a remarkable way to continue serving their communities and seeking structural change.

The pandemic has also forced us to adapt and to embrace the new circumstances, our new working format, and the growth in financial resources that 2020 has yielded the NHRF. The establishment of our country office in Colombia has been a major step towards a new grant-making model. In addition to having hired new staff in Norway, Thailand and Indonesia, an entire new team has been recruited in Colombia to make a substantial contribution to support Colombian civil society in a very volatile situation. In 2020 we have also undertaken a significant expansion in our communications work on our various communications and social media platforms, held meetings, panels and seminars involving decision-makers from the various local, national and international levels of human rights work and politics. We are glad to see new partnerships and collaboration arising including, with UC Berkeley International Human Rights Law Clinic and the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, and further strengthened cooperation with the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders. In addition, the secretariat developed a series of new guidelines and policy documents relating to gender and equality, ethical guidelines and a new theory of change. Finally, the Secretariat has throughout 2020 been engaged in a consultative process of developing and drafting NHRF's new five-year strategy. The strategy will guide us to meet the stated objectives, so that marginalised and vulnerable individuals and groups can claim their human rights and that their rights are fulfilled.

**John Peder Egenæs**

*Chair of the Board*

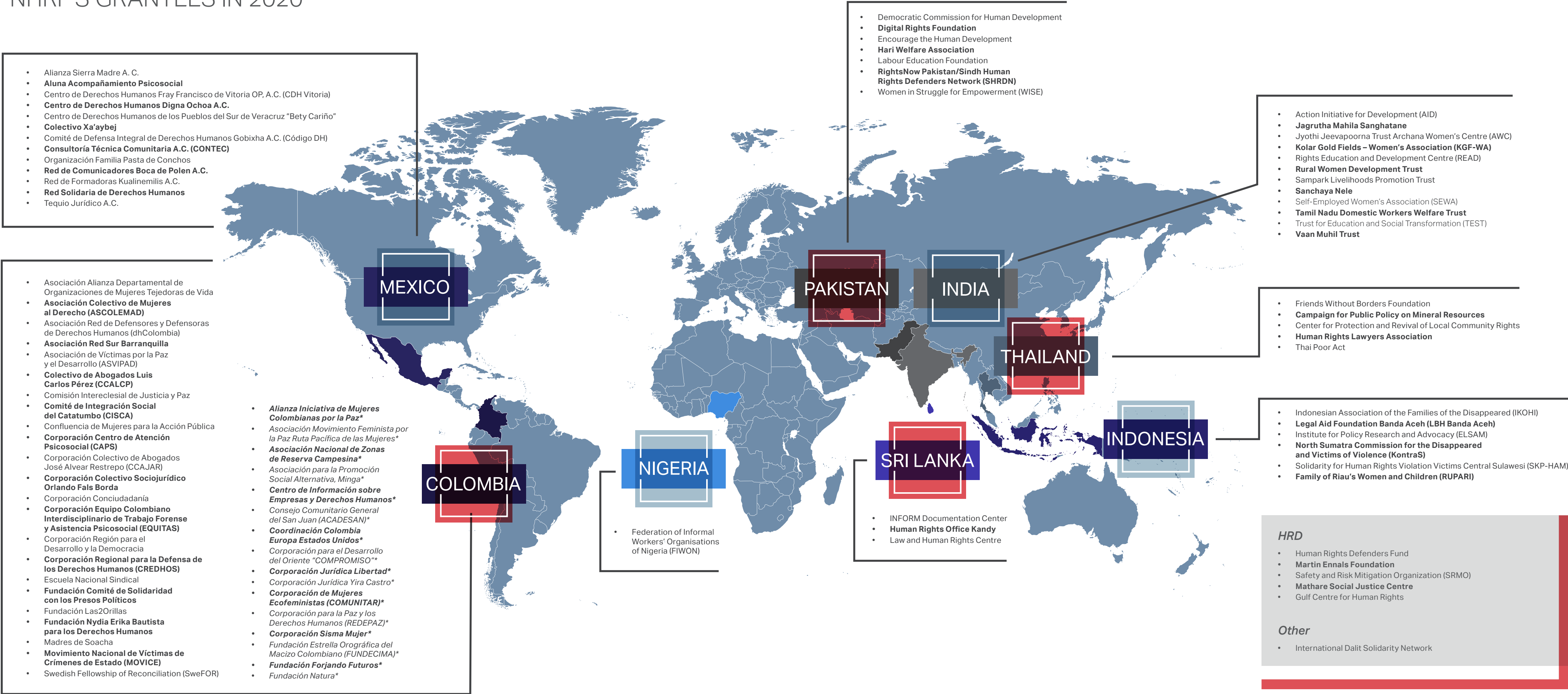
*Amnesty International Norway*

**Sandra Petersen**

*Executive Director*

*Norwegian Human Rights Fund (NHRF)*

NHRF'S GRANTEES IN 2020

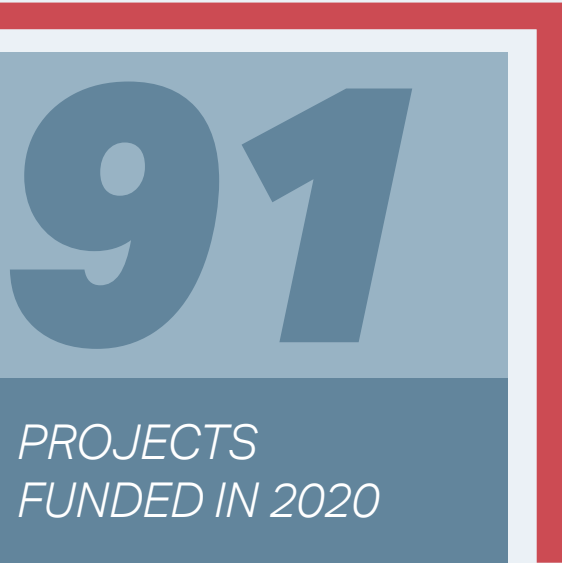


- HRD**
- Human Rights Defenders Fund
  - Martin Ennals Foundation**
  - Safety and Risk Mitigation Organization (SRMO)
  - Mathare Social Justice Centre**
  - Gulf Centre for Human Rights
- Other**
- International Dalit Solidarity Network

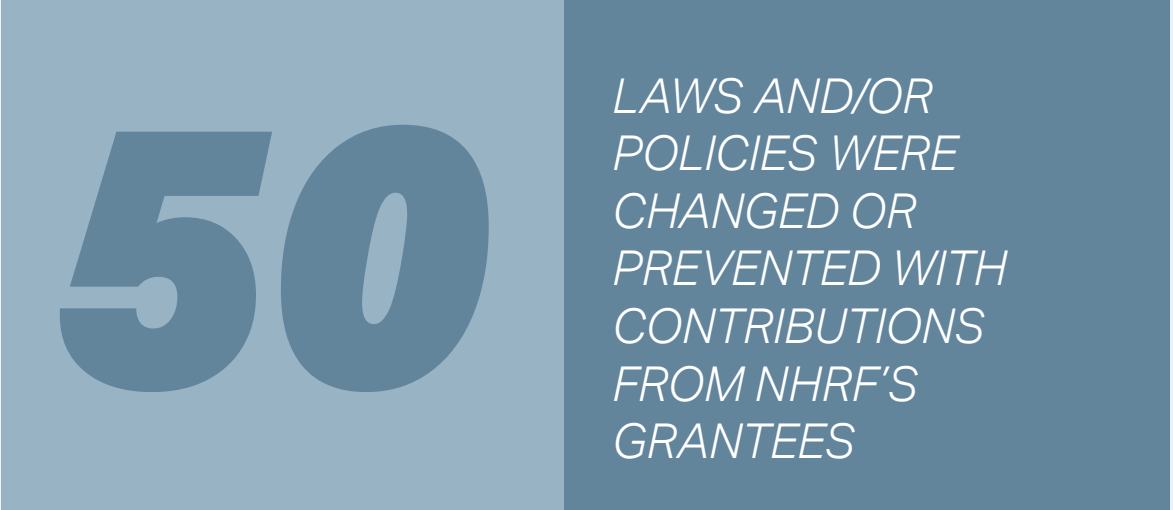
\*Implementation in 2021.



2020 AT A GLANCE



AT LEAST



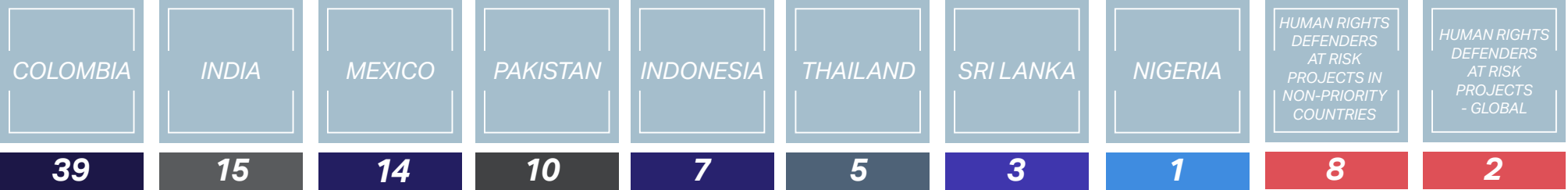
APPROXIMATELY



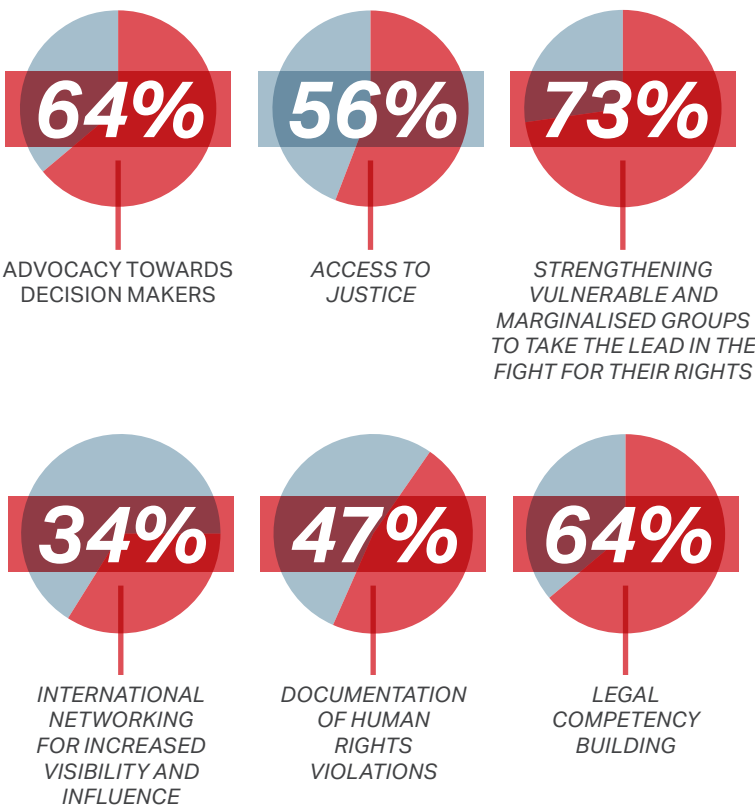
All statistics include numbers from the NHRF's reporting forms, such as the annual survey and project reporting.



NUMBER OF PROJECTS PER COUNTRY



METHODS USED IN SUPPORTING PROJECTS (% OF PROJECTS PER METHOD\*)



\* Organisations use many methods for one project.



# TAKING THE LEAD

## Colombian grassroots organisations continue to lead in the pursuit of peace and human rights – insights from NHRF Colombia's first year

2020 was a year of growth for the NHRF. A country office was established in Colombia in April, and by the end of the year the Colombia office consisted of a country director, a finance and administrative manager, four program officers and a communications officer. By the end of 2020, our total grant size for Colombian organisations had increased significantly from 11 to 39 grantees present in 31 out of 32 departments of Colombia, considerably increasing our human rights impact in the country.

The situation for human rights defenders and social leaders in Colombia is critical, and in spite of important efforts and initiatives from both national and international actors, the situation is not improving when it comes to protection and security. **53%** of the killings of human rights defenders worldwide took place in Colombia in 2020, with **177** defenders and social leaders killed, according to Front Line Defenders, and **381** killed according to the Colombian human rights organisation INDEPAZ. Front Line Defenders also reported that the number of killings has increased every year since the signing of the Peace Agreement in 2016. **This reality in numbers helps illustrate just how devastating the year 2020 was for those who defend human rights in Colombia.**

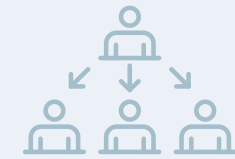
The COVID-19 pandemic further complicated human rights work in the country, but fortunately our grantees were able to adapt quickly and to continue supporting their communities. All the organisations supported by the NHRF continued their projects through adjustments such as partial digitalisation of their work, diverting their focus to remote work, and by empowering local communities to assist in implementation. The flexibility of the NHRF together with the adaptability of the grantees have been key in tackling some of the difficulties arising from the pandemic.

The organisations supported in Colombia work against impunity and for access to justice, as well as for strengthening victims' participation and their rights in compliance with the Peace Agreement. In line with the NHRF's strategy to promote gender equality and strengthen women's leadership, **76%** of the organisations we support in Colombia are led by women and **100%** have women in leadership roles. In 2020, NHRF Colombia held two calls for proposals for Colombian civil society organisations. During the second call for proposals in October 2020, the office received 670 concept notes, and will grant approximately 30 new organisations. Through them, the NHRF Colombia Office will continue to support human rights work in Colombia in 2021.

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*The flexibility of the NHRF together with the adaptability of the grantees have been key in tackling some of the difficulties arising from the pandemic.*

# COLOMBIA HIGHLIGHTS



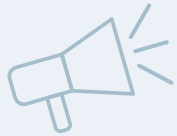
## Expansion of our work in Colombia

- From 11 to 39 grantees by the end of the year
- Increased direct support to human rights defenders



## The establishment of the NHRF Colombia team

consisting of a country director, a finance and administration manager, four program officers and one communication officer.



## Open call for proposals

- Received 670 applications from Colombian civil society organizations
- Granting of approximately 30 new organizations, commencing their projects in 2021



## NHRF Colombia Country Office opening on 1 April



## Context analysis sessions with Colombian grantees

Important input preparing for the new call for proposals and for the construction of NHRF Colombia's theory of change.



## The office has increased its communications work

by producing podcast series, opening an exhibition in Medellin, establishing new social media channels for a Spanish-speaking audience and developing our first communication strategy for NHRF Colombia.



NHRF COLOMBIA AT A GLANCE

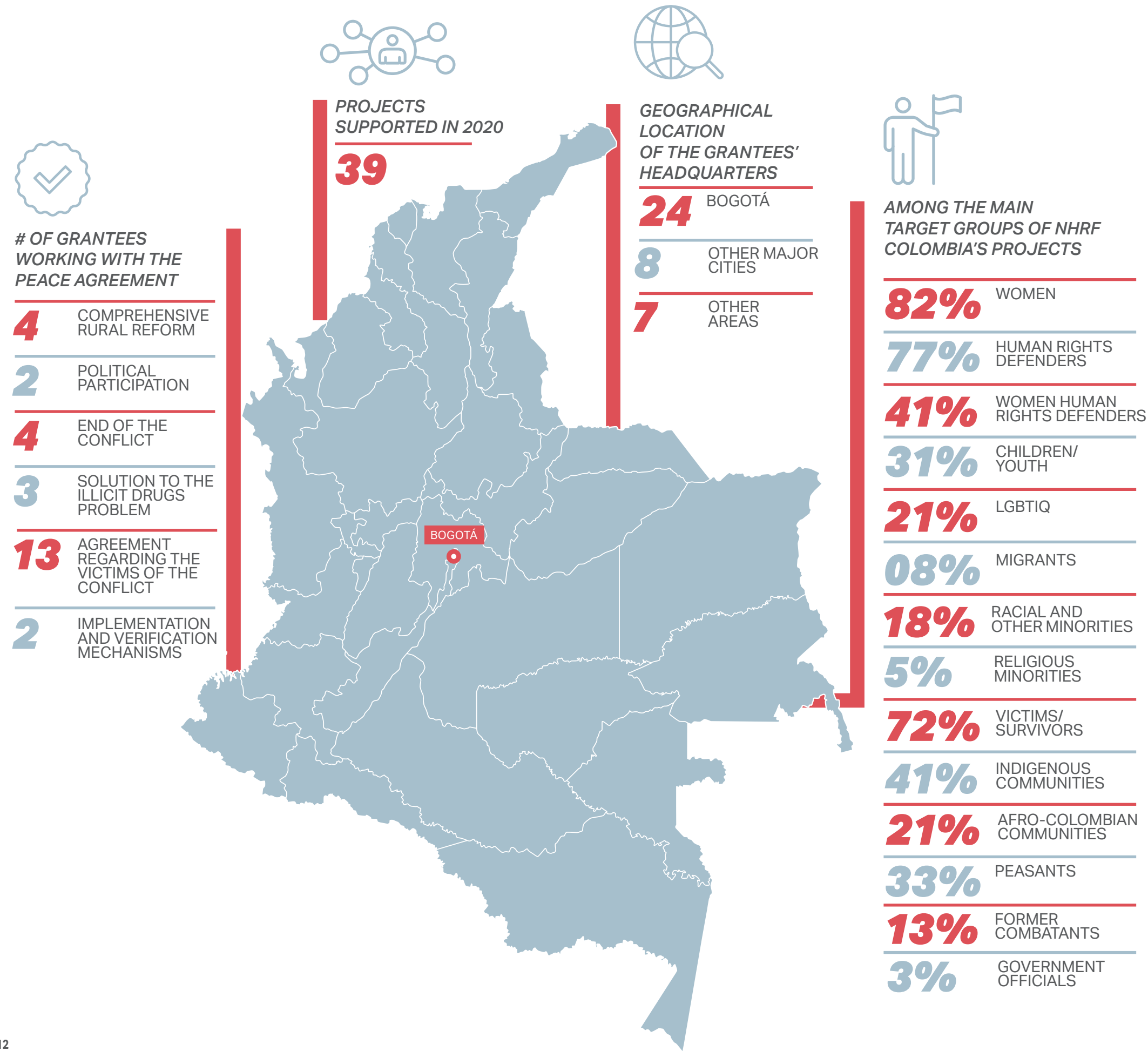


Photo: Alianza de Mujeres Tejedoras de Vida



# "ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES PUTS A HOLD ON LIFE"

Interview with Leonor Marina Restrepo from Corporación Región

In Colombia, the scale of the issue of enforced disappearances is of a magnitude so great that it is difficult to grasp.

But let's try. Imagine the number of people you come across on a normal day. You wake up, eat breakfast with your family, you drop off your children at school, and go to your office. Let's say that you had met around 110 persons by the end of the day. Imagine that all the people you ran into that day disappeared. Now, imagine that the people that you met that day and every day for the last three years disappeared: **this number would be the equivalent to the number of disappeared persons during the Colombian armed conflict –124,000 persons.**

The Medellín-based organization **Corporación Región** has been working to strengthen democracy, making historical remembrance of the armed conflict and peacebuilding for three decades in various regions of Colombia. Today, they are accompanying families who suddenly found themselves absent of a son, daughter, father, brother or uncle, with no knowledge of where they went or if they are safe. Families forced into an indefinite hold with an uncertainty that demands the right to the truth and to move forward. We spoke with Leonor Marina Restrepo from Corporación Región to find out more about their work.

**How did the method for this project come up?**

The project, *Memories of Absence*, was born out of the research of the anthropologist Andrea Romero Vargas from the University of Antioquia. She accompanied families of victims of enforced disappearances for eleven years, and along the way she created a method called "Forensic action without harm", an approach that intends to make historical remembrance from a more peaceful perspective, not from pain. Then, our organization started to use this method to collect testimonies and share them with the Search Unit for Missing Persons (*Unidad de Búsqueda de Personas dadas por Desaparecidas*) in the context of the armed conflict, information that is indispensable for the identification of the bodies.

**What do you hope to achieve with this method?**

That the testimonies remain in the memory of the people and of the whole world, because enforced disappearances puts a

hold on people's lives; they are not there, neither dead nor alive... this uncertainty makes it difficult for the families to move on.

**According to official figures, there are more than 124,000 forcibly disappeared persons in Colombia, what does it mean for a family to not know if their son, brother, father or mother is still alive?**

There are peasants and young people who disappeared and were never heard from again, but with the signing of the Peace Agreement there is hope for their families. This project makes them feel recognized, it is an opportunity for them to regain confidence in the government, because mistrust is a very serious fracture in our country. Making disappearances visible and not remaining silent until they are found, is key for all of us.

**They say that there is no greater pain for a mother than to lose a child, but not knowing if he or she is alive or dead somewhere may surpass this?**

Exactly. Because there is uncertainty, but also the hope of finding them alive, or as the mothers say: "I want at least to get a sign...something that tells me that his body reappeared, so that I can bury him with dignity".

**How has the support from NHRF Colombia been in helping your work?**

The accompaniment has been very important. They [NHRF Colombia] respect the methods that propose more humane approaches to the families, and they support us from a technical point of view. In addition, they are open and flexible to adjustments.

**Tell us about the importance of continuing the search for the forcibly disappeared in Colombia?**

The dignity of the human being is at stake. Losing a loved one, a mother, a father, a sister, or a son, is an irreparable event. Every life is unique and every time someone disappears, we also miss what that person could have been in the lives of others.



Pictured from left: María Camila Agudelo, Leonor Marina Restrepo and Sandra Gonzalez from the Corporación Región team.  
Photo: Corporación Región.



# SUPPORT TO HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AT RISK

### Protecting human rights defenders during the pandemic

In 2020, human rights defenders (HRDs) across the world were suddenly exposed to increased vulnerability and risk as the pandemic triggered a wave of government responses that ranged from genuine to opportunistic manipulation of safety measures to target civil society. Lockdowns forced defenders to shift their activism online and many were immobile and isolated – sitting targets. Many were arrested for “violating” pandemic measures, others were detained while other prisoners were released as part of COVID-19 safety measures. In this context, the NHRF’s grantees have worked to achieve incredible feats of resistance while others are fighting for their very survival amid killing campaigns against HRDs. **The following examples show the courageous work our grantees carried out in 2020:**

### Protecting the rights of defenders in Pakistan

In Pakistan, the situation for human rights and particularly for human rights defenders has declined the last years, creating a restrictive environment for Pakistani civil society organisations. Despite this, the NHRF’s grantees continue to support and create better working conditions for human rights defenders at risk in Pakistan. During 2020, our grantees have strengthened their national and regional human rights defenders networks and built resilience and capacity of Pakistani defenders. The Sindh Human Rights Defenders Network (SHRDN), the Democratic Commission for Human Development (DCHD), and Digital Rights Foundation have collectively provided trainings, workshops and legal aid for hundreds of defenders in highly diverse communities - ranging from women, religious and ethnic minorities, transgenders and other victims of violations. Whilst Digital Rights Foundation has focused primarily on strengthening the digital security capacity of defenders and bolstering their protection on the digital realm, SHRDN and DCHD have focused more on increasing capacity and teaching tools to improve security and protection for defenders as well as building a stronger network for advocacy and legal protection purposes.

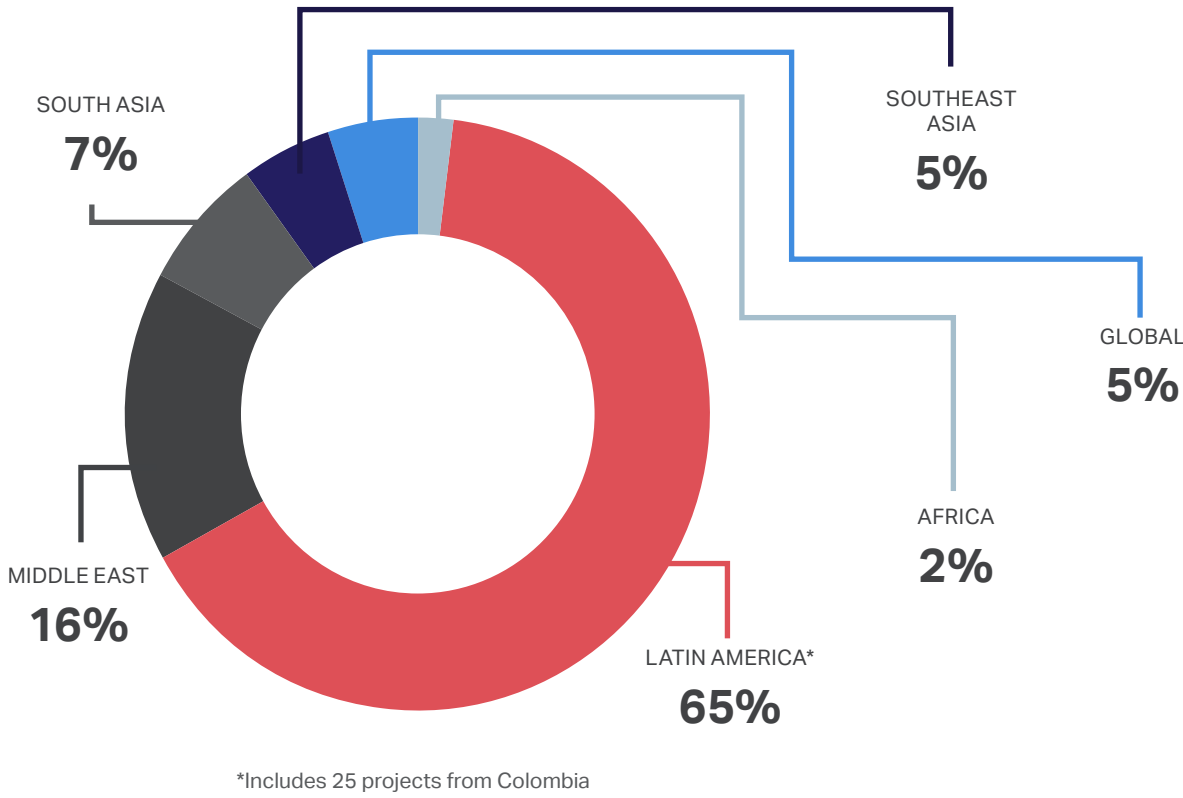
### The situation for defenders in Afghanistan

In the past years, the situation in Afghanistan has seen an intensification of violence perpetrated by the Taliban and other armed groups. The NHRF’s grantee, Safety and Risk Mitigation Organization (SRMO), was founded to provide training and protection for human rights defenders in Afghanistan, a responsibility that has taken on a new level of urgency in 2020 with an increase in threats, harassment, and assassinations. This deterioration has created a climate of fear and insecurity in the community of defenders, journalists, and human rights actors.

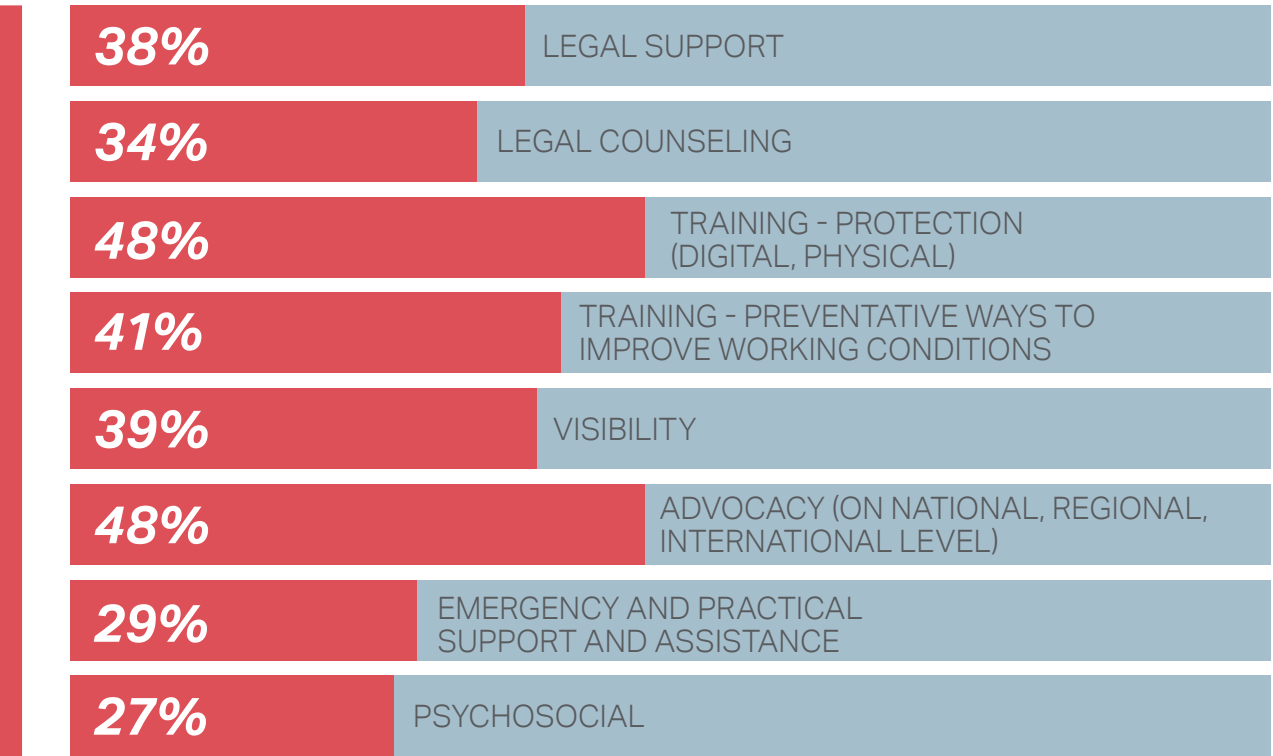
SRMO has been at the forefront of responding to this dire situation, acting to assist, relocate, protect, and advocate on behalf of all defenders. SRMO has been calling on the international community to stand in solidarity and action with defenders, established a shelter for human rights defenders at risk, and consulted on the newly established protection mechanism – the Joint Commission for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders.

*NHRF supported 25 projects in Colombia focusing on and including work on human rights defenders at risk.*

# HRDS AT RISK: REGIONAL SUPPORT



# SUPPORTED PROJECTS FOCUSED ON:



\*Numbers presented here and in the number of human rights defenders at risk supported do not include Colombia grantees.



// In 2020, more than 5900 human rights defenders were supported by the NHRF's grantees - over half were women.



Photo from SRMO's two-year report for the years 2018 and 2019. Photo: SRMO.



The NHRF continues to support the Martin Ennals Foundation (MEF). In 2020, MEF had the first ever all-women cohort of finalists. Pictured here are the finalists and laureate for 2020 with their awards: Laureate - Huda Al - Sarari (Yemen), finalists - the late Sizani Ngubane (South Africa) and Norma Ledezma (Mexico) (Photo: MEF/Patrick Lopreno).

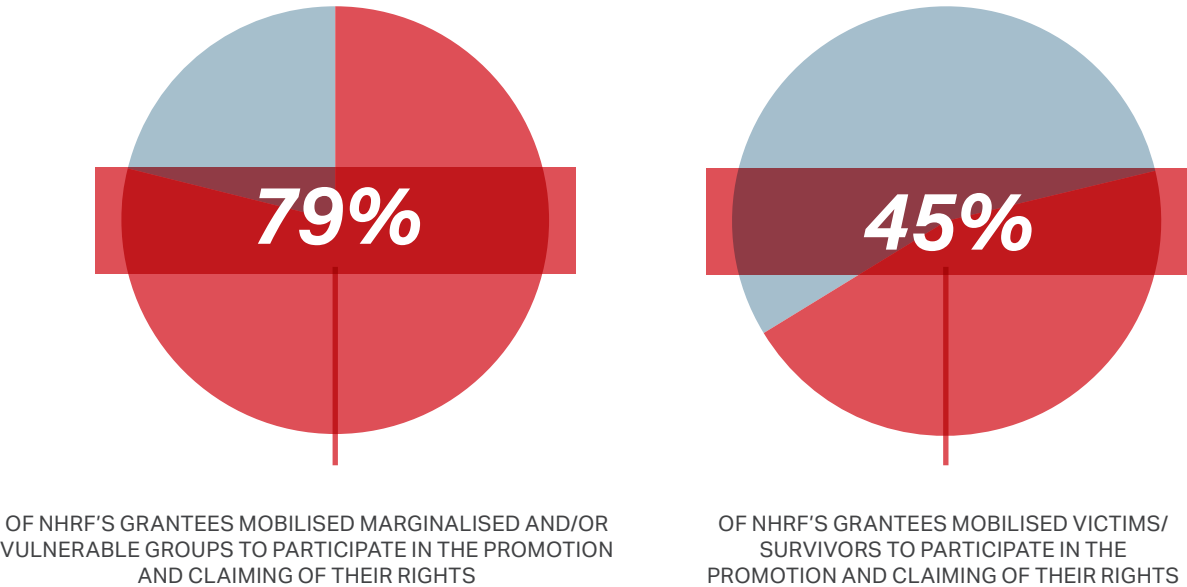


SUPPORT TO WORK AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

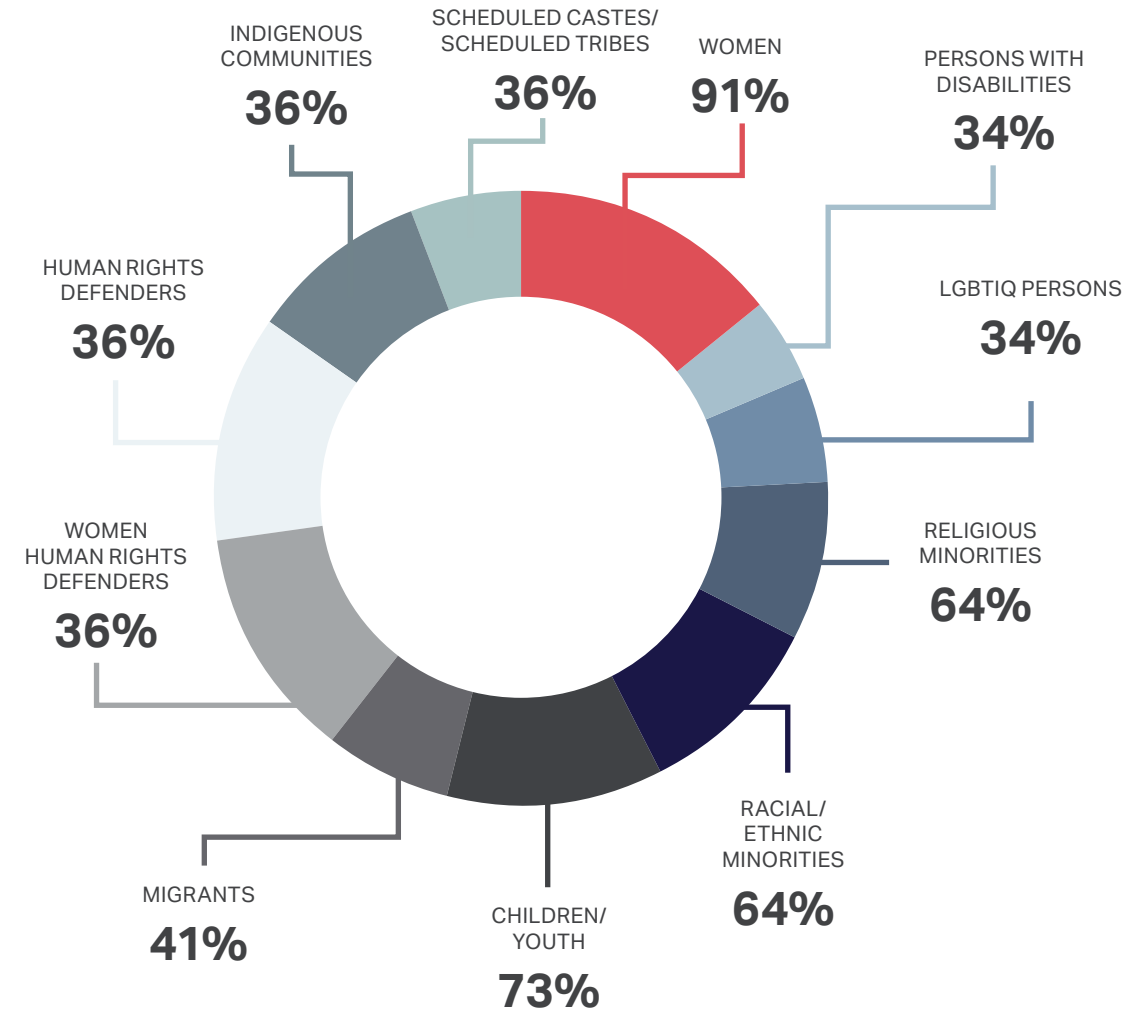
Many of the NHRF’s grantees work with groups facing multiple forms of discrimination based on their gender, caste, sexual orientation, ethnicity and other diverse identities. Supporting marginalised groups to take the lead in their fight against discrimination is a core component of the NHRF’s work.

\* Numbers presented here do not include Colombia projects, please refer to the Colombia pages for more info related to the Colombia grantees.

Photo over page: Ruma



AMONG THE MAIN TARGET GROUPS OF NHRF'S PROJECTS:



Women at Work

In 2020, the NHRF initiated the Women at Work pilot program in India to support organisations addressing the gendered experiences of women and LGBTIQ persons with a focus on responding to the impacts of the pandemic. Supported projects are designed to empower women, and to promote and protect their rights. This project is the first of its kind for the NHRF, and we hope to continue to develop the program into meaningful support for women workers, and to help shape the narrative on viewing women worker leaders as human rights defenders leading the struggle for decent work and the rights enshrined in ILO 190.

27,715

WORKERS AND/OR MIGRANTS EXPERIENCED A POSITIVE CHANGE IN THEIR CLAIMS FOR RIGHTS



# SUPPORT TO WORK AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

Examples from our grantees' work:

## Land and environmental rights in Indonesia

In 2020, the NHRF started expanding our work in Indonesia to support communities that are victim of land grabbing and those who fight to reverse or prevent exploitative business practices. **Legal Aid Foundation – Banda Aceh (LBH Banda Aceh)** is training legal representatives (“paralegals”) in an indigenous community in Northern Sumatra to strengthen their capacity to defend their community land that is subject to land encroachment by palm oil plantation companies. **Family of Riau’s Women and Children (RUPARI)**, a rural feminist organisation working on women’s issues and gender justice in the rural areas of the Riau province on Sumatra, works with women of the Sakai tribe that are living or working on the land exposed to exploitative palm oil plantation companies. The project aims to build a grassroot movement that will help women come together to defend themselves from the discrimination and marginalisation that they face.



Exploitative business practices have a detrimental impact on the land and environment in Aceh, Indonesia. Photo: LBH Banda Aceh.

APPROXIMATELY

500

COMMUNITIES  
EXPERIENCED A  
POSITIVE RESULT  
ON THEIR CLAIM  
FOR LAND AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
RIGHTS

## The NHRF continued its support to the International Dalit Solidarity Network

The International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN) is a global network that works to bring international attention, solidarity, and action on caste discrimination as a critical human rights issue through engagement with the UN and other multilateral institutions. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, IDSN continued working with its members and their communities that are severely impacted by discrimination based on work and decent, namely Dalits and Dalit’s rights activists. Fear surrounding the COVID-19 virus has exacerbated existing ‘untouchability’ practices, leading to a rise in caste-based hate crimes. IDSN has worked with members on the ground to report this rise, elevating Dalit voices to the UN and EU, and also dedicated a COVID-19 section on their [website](#).



Cover of IDSN's Annual Report 2020

## COVID-19 response to indigenous communities in Mexico

Several Mexican grantees have played an important role in providing information and support to indigenous communities about COVID-19 in local indigenous languages. Some have distributed face masks and antibacterial gel as well as emergency relief for those hardest hits by the pandemic. **Red Solidaria de Derechos Humanos**, Michoacán, works to strengthen the participation of women in their local communities. As a response to COVID-19, the women involved in the project decided to create a “Community Care Brigade” that contributed with food and information on COVID-19 to 120 families in the community reaching an estimated 2 400 people.

**Red de Comunicadores Boca de Polen** uses communication as a tool among indigenous communities in Chiapas, Mexico, to protect land and indigenous rights. In 2020 they established the network “Mayan voices network” consisting of young communicators from five indigenous communities, using radio to strengthen cultural identity and the recognition of their rights as indigenous peoples.

Using creative tools such as gardening, planting and beekeeping, Mexican grantee **Red De Formadoras Kualinemilis A.C.**, Puebla, gathered 30 indigenous women and youth to raise awareness of land, environmental and territorial rights, including their own body as “the first territory”.



Photo: Red De Formadoras Kualinemilis A.C., Mexico.



Photo: Red de Comunicadores Boca de Polen, Mexico.



Teachers visiting migrant communities in Mae Sot district, Thailand. Photo: Friends Without Borders Foundation.

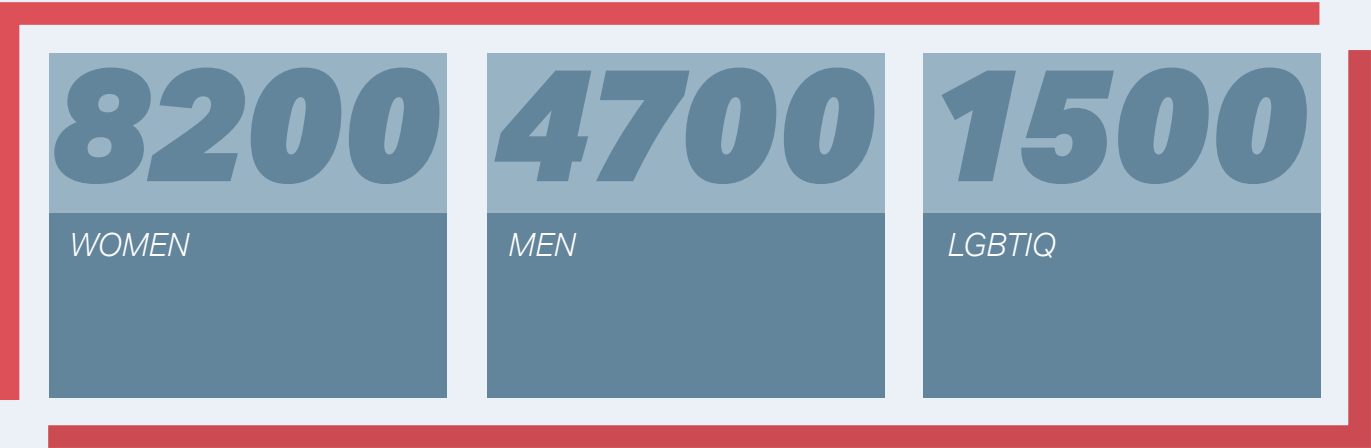


# SUPPORT TO WORK AGAINST IMPUNITY AND FOR ACCESS TO JUSTICE

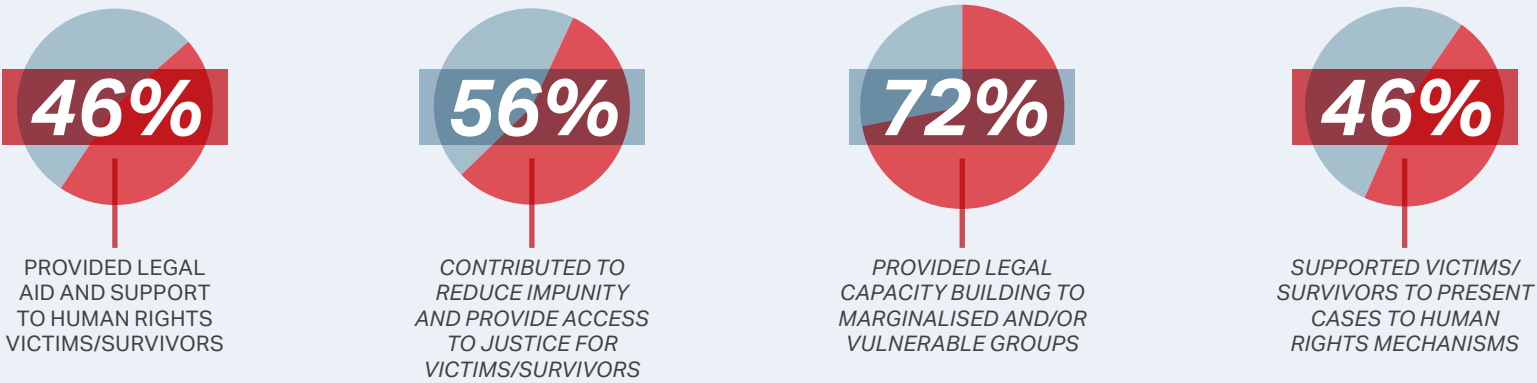
The NHRF prioritizes work aimed at ensuring full and equal access to justice, recognising justice as the key component to combating impunity.



## Breakdown of legal capacity building support:



## Out of the NHRF's grantees:



\* Numbers presented here do not include Colombia grantees, see Colombia pages for statistics.

## Examples from our grantees' work:

**Supporting victim groups in Indonesia:** Impunity and a lack of accountability remains a huge problem in Indonesia. A culture of silence prevails around the 1965-66 atrocities, where between 500,000 and one million people were killed unlawfully, and hundreds of thousands were imprisoned without trials. The NHRF has partnered with victims organisations of these past atrocities and related crimes. **Solidarity for Human Rights Violation Victims Central Sulawesi (SKP-HAM)** works with victim communities of the 1965 violence, advocating for their rights, and facilitating their access to basic services. Supporting this group has been vital in the aftermath of the 2018 Palu earthquake and the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak. The **North Sumatra Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KontraS)** works with countering torture and enforced disappearances in Sumatra. In 2020, they conducted trainings for more than 100 law enforcement officials on torture prevention, provided legal aid for 50 victims of torture and violence, and established an anti-torture network for journalists in Sumatra. The NHRF has for the last three years supported the **Indonesian Association of the Families of the Disappeared (IKOHI)** and their work on locating missing children from the conflict in East-Timor. IKOHI does not only work to identify and reunite children that were forcibly taken by Indonesian occupying forces during the conflict, but they are also a crucial actor in pushing for a national commission for the disappeared to provide redress and justice for these stolen children.

**Trust, truth, and reconciliation in Sri Lanka:** Law and Human Rights Center provided vital legal assistance to the families of the disappeared to bridge critical gaps that will help secure the support and reparations they need to move forward in post-conflict reality. This is highly sensitive work that comes with risks, especially to lawyers and other activists that are supporting and defending the rights of these families.

The NHRF continues its work in Colombia to support victims of the armed conflict in their struggle for truth and justice. **Corporación Conciudadanía**, Antioquia, works closely with the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence, and Non-Repetition, which is a part of the Colombian transitional justice system, to document the atrocities committed during the armed conflict and acknowledgement of the victims. So far, they have established agreements with nine mayors' offices and accompanied the preparation of three reports that will help to better understand what happened during the conflict. **Colectivo de Abogados Luis Carlos Perez (CCALCP)** aims to strengthen the enforceability of human, political, environmental, justice and peacebuilding rights. Together with victim groups, farmers associations, and grassroot human rights organisations, they work to guarantee that the human rights abuses of the past will not be repeated. They conduct strategic litigation, advocacy, organisational strengthening, awareness raising supporting grassroot organisations and collectives, including victims.



**Photos:** Top: Reunited disappeared children with their families in Timor-Leste. Photo: Indonesian Association of the Families of the Disappeared - IKOHI; Centre: From one of Law and Human Rights Center's legal awareness programs with a local community and government officers. Photo: Law and Human Rights Center; Bottom: MOVICE works to strengthen the rights of victims of enforced disappearances in Colombia. Photo: Movimiento de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado.



# NETWORKS AND ACTIVITIES

Snapshots

**In February, Mexican human rights defender and 2020 Martin Ennals Award finalist, Norma Ledezma, visited the NHRF in Oslo.** Norma Ledezma was one out of three women finalists for the award, and the visit was organised in collaboration with the Martin Ennals Foundation. During her visit, Ledezma raised awareness about femicides, enforced disappearances and human trafficking in northern Mexico in a guest lecture arranged by the NHRF and the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, and in a meeting with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in a radio interview with Radio Latinamerika.



Photo: Mónica Orjuela/NHRF.

**In February 2020, the NHRF's Executive Director and Project coordinator visited our grantees in Colombia.** Here is Executive Director Sandra Petersen and local consultant Mildrey Corrales in a meeting with human rights defenders in Puerto Asís, Putumayo, together with the Norwegian Embassy in Bogota in the offices of OEA MAPP.



Photo: NHRF.

**HUMAN International Documentary Film Festival:** During the festival in late February, the NHRF arranged a joint film screening and panel discussion together with Mental Health and Human Rights Info. The talk tackled the issue of impunity in conflict and post-conflict areas with panelists Nora Sveaass (Mental Health and Human Rights Info) and Jemima García-Godos (University of Oslo), who are both NHRF Advisory Board members. The discussion was followed by the screening of the film "Zero Impunity".



Photo: Mónica Orjuela/NHRF.

**In February, the NHRF Executive Director and Project Coordinator visited our grantees in Pakistan accompanied by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights Defenders, Michel Forst.** Together with representatives from Pakistani civil society, the NHRF team and Mr. Forst met with the Sindh Human Rights Commission, the Chief Minister and Governor of Sindh Province, the President of Pakistan, members of the diplomatic community, and hundreds of human rights defenders and activists through the Sindh Convention of Human Rights Defenders. These meetings were important opportunities for the Pakistani civil society to advocate for human rights in a restrictive context for civil society organisations, and to discuss their work with a high-level UN mandate holder.



The NHRF, the Special Rapporteur and three NHRF grantees during the meeting with the President of Pakistan.

**Support to human rights defenders during COVID-19:** In December 2020, the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights and the NHRF organised a joint webinar on the role of Norwegian and international support to human rights defenders during and after COVID-19. The webinar consisted of two panel discussions with human rights defenders, and members of international civil society, academia, the Mayor of Oslo Municipality, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders Mary Lawlor, and State Secretary of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Marte Ziolkowski.



**Throughout much of 2020, the NHRF Secretariat developed the new five-year strategy for 2021-2025, which was launched in early 2021.** The NHRF had several meetings and consultations with Board members, Advisory Board members, consultants and staff to gather input to the strategy. The NHRF also worked extensively on our new theory of change, which was approved and launched in the spring of 2020.

**The NHRF and the Berkeley Law Human Rights Clinic (BLHRC) began a new partnership,** through a project bringing selected NHRF grantees together with the students and faculty of the clinic for 1-2 semesters. The NHRF's role is to facilitate this partnership by bringing the two parties together, and the BLHRC students and faculty will take on selected cases of our grantees and will work with them as clients.



Photo: Mónica Orjuela/NHRF.

In October and November, the NHRF hosted meetings with the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, **Mr. Tomoya Obokata**, and our grantees in Pakistan and India. Representatives from the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions also participated in these meetings aimed at introducing our grantees to the mandate and providing the Special Rapporteur with grassroots contacts in these countries.

**The NHRF took on a coordinating role for the Working Group for Norway's Forum 1325** to engage with Norway's new role as a member of the UN Security council, and arranged a webinar as a part of FORUM 1325's Norwegian Women, Peace and Security anniversary week. The **webinar** included several women human rights defenders that works in NHRF-supported organisations, discussing the peace process and the current human rights situation in Colombia. The NHRF also promoted the Women, Peace and Security agenda by publishing several stories highlighting the anniversaries of the Resolution 1325 and the Beijing Declaration.

Free Webinar\*

#WPSin2020

## Not one step back: Women take the lead for peace and security in Colombia

Friday Nov 13, 2020 3PM - 5PM

Featuring:

- ♦ **Sandra Solano.** Confluencia de Mujeres.
- ♦ **María Ortiz.** Asvipad.
- ♦ **Nancy Sánchez.** Tejedoras de Vida.
- ♦ **Julia Figueroa.** Cealep.
- ♦ **María Ciro.** Cisca.
- ♦ **Luz Romero.** Asocolemad.

Moderator: **Claudia Mejía.**

\*This activity is held in the framework of the Norwegian civil society week "Building on 20 Years of Women, Peace and Security"





COMMUNICATIONS

In 2020, the NHRF continued to strengthen its communication work through digital communication, production of guidelines and documents, collection of new **I Defend Rights** stories, development of a new logo, as well as preparing for the launch for our new strategy for 2021-2025.

COMMUNICATIONS HIGHLIGHTS:

10000

HUMAN IN 2020, THE NHRF GOT MORE THAN 10 000 NEW FOLLOWERS ON FACEBOOK

X3

WE TRIPLED OUR NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS

100000

OUR VIDEOS WERE VIEWED MORE THAN 100 000 TIMES ON FACEBOOK

11/50

WE PRODUCED 11 BLOGS AND MORE THAN 50 WEBSITE ARTICLES

In 2020, the NHRF developed a new logo, created in collaboration with designer Willhemina Wahlin/ Braenchild Media. The logo, which also exists in Spanish and Norwegian, opens a new chapter of the NHRF's history, as we are also beginning the year with our new strategy for 2021-2025.

For the first time ever, the NHRF now has a full-time communications officer, who is working at the NHRF Colombia Office. We are very glad to be able to expand our communication work in the years to come!



The stories of human rights defenders often contain struggle and sometimes victory, yet the most important thing they show is the persistence and resistance of the human spirit. Through art and design, their stories can be shaped and presented in a way that engages the public in the often unseen narratives of society.

– Karen van Luttervelt, Designer, Foundation We Are

La terquedad por la paz

by Nancy Sánchez  
February 18, 2020 · 6 mins story

1. Por favor díganos su nombre (a menos que quiera ser anónimo o anónima), y por qué defiende derechos. Por ejemplo, ¿sucedió algo en su vida que lo o la motivará?



'Yo Defiendo Derechos' by Foundation We Are. Photo by David Sierra.

The NHRF has launched new social media pages for Twitter and Facebook for our Spanish-speaking audience. The channels produce Spanish content about our grantees' work in Colombia and about the human rights situation in Latin America, and is managed by NHRF Colombia. The channels are complementary to the NHRF's main social media channels, which will continue to highlight content in English about all the work that we support.

During 2020, the NHRF produced several videos in collaboration with Communications Consultant Mónica Orjuela, such as for the International Women's Day, and the Human Rights Day on December 10th. A video was also made as a part of a communication campaign in the fall of 2020, celebrating the Women, Peace and Security agenda and the anniversaries of the Resolution 1325 and Beijing Declaration.

I Defend Rights is a joint initiative with the organisation Memria that aims to collect and disseminate stories of human rights defenders all over the world. In December 2020, the exhibition "Yo Defiendo Derechos" opened at Casa de la Memoria in Medellín, Colombia, using the stories from human rights defenders submitted to the I Defend Rights initiative. The exhibition is designed by the Foundation We Are and was created in partnership with Memria and with the collaboration of the Museo Casa de la Memoria. It was originally scheduled to take place during the Bogota International Book Fair (FILBo) in April 2020, but the festival was cancelled due to COVID-19.

Podcast: The NHRF began the podcast collaboration "Los Incómodos" with Programa Somos Defensores, Memria and the Colombian media outlet La Silla Vacía which resulted in two podcast episodes in Spanish about human rights defenders in Colombia.



Photo: La Silla Vacía



# HUMAN RIGHTS PERCEPTION INDEX

The NHRF Human Rights Perception Index (HRPI) measures the perception of the human rights situation on the ground among NHRF's grantees. The first annual HRPI survey was conducted in 2017, and the fourth HRPI survey was sent to NHRF's grantees in a time heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We had already seen a deterioration in the human rights situation in previous years, with a 10% increase in the perception of deterioration between 2017 and 2019. In 2020, the results suggest that the perceived deterioration of the human rights situation in the grantees' countries remains similar to last year (71% in 2020, compared to 74% in 2019). However, the results highlight a worrying trend we have observed during the pandemic: 76% of the grantees reported that there have been changes in laws and/or policies that affects the civil society in their countries - a spike of 17% from 2019.

However, 92% of NHRF's grantees are optimistic about the ability to continue carrying out their work - the highest percentage ever measured in the HRPI's history!

Photo over page: Centro de Derechos Humanos Digna Ochoa A.C., Mexico.

	No, it remains the <b>same</b>	Yes, it has <b>improved</b>	Yes, it has <b>deteriorated</b>
Has the overall human rights situation in your country changed during the course of 2020?	<b>26%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>71%</b>
Has the human rights situation in your local area (city, state, province etc.) changed during the course of 2020?	<b>33%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>61%</b>

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Are there laws in your country that restrict civil society organizations' work and are not in line with your country's human rights obligations?	69%	22%	9%
Have there been any changes in laws and/or policies in your country during the course of 2020 that affect civil society organizations' possibilities to carry out their work?	76%	15%	9%
Are you optimistic about the possibilities for your organization to continue your human rights work in 2021?	92%	4%	4%





# ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANISATION

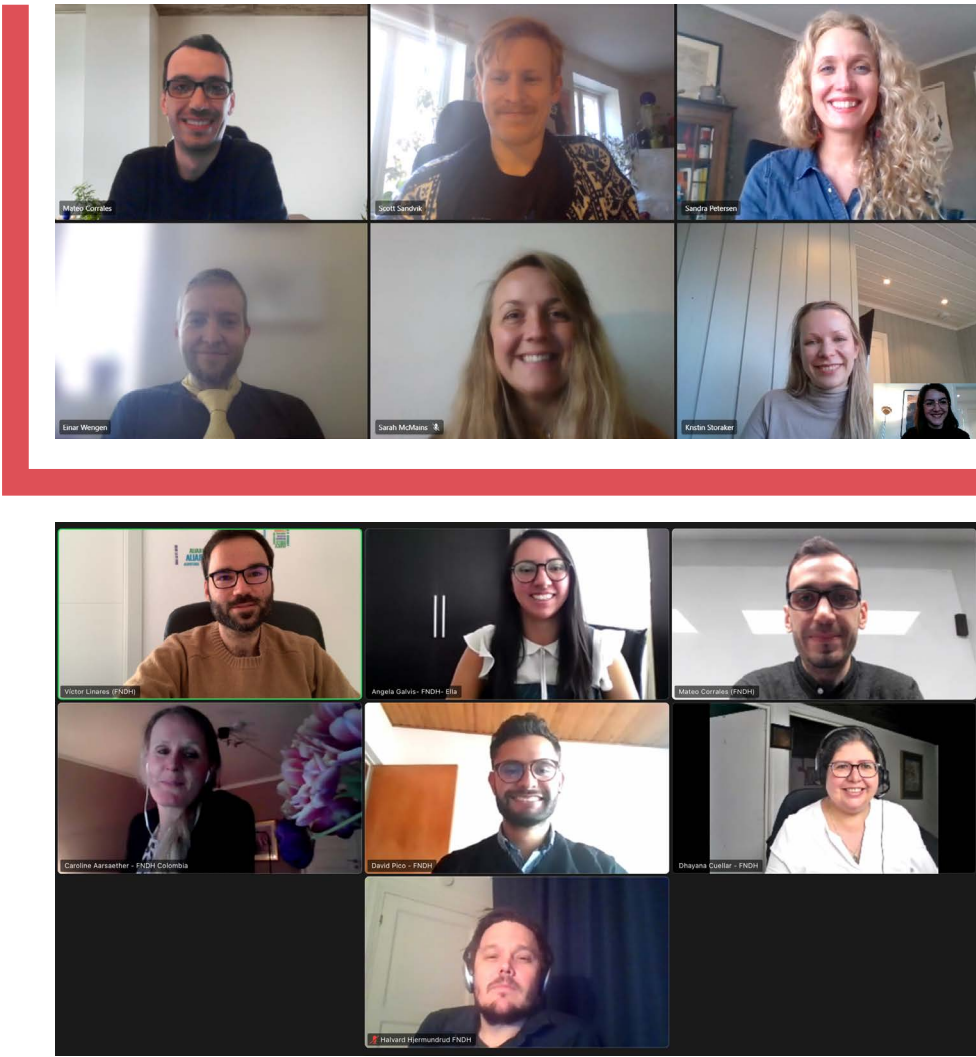
## The Secretariat

In 2020, the NHRF team in Oslo consisted of Executive Director Sandra Petersen, Head of Finance Einar Wengen, Project Coordinators Halvard Hjermundrud (transitioning to the Colombia team in the fall of 2020) and Kristin Storaker Skutlaberg – who both were on parental leave parts of the year – Projects Coordinators Scott M. Sandvik and Mateo Corrales Hoyos (transitioning to the Colombia team in the fall of 2020), and Communications and Organisation Officer Maya Sunde Singh in a new position, joining the team in January 2020.

From 2020 onwards, the NHRF's accounting has been conducted by Knif Regnskap. Additionally, we worked with several resource persons in consultancy positions to support other key areas of our work, among them Communications Consultant Mónica Orjuela. We also continued our internship agreement with the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, and we wish to thank Lorena Schwab De La O for her great contributions as an intern at our office during the spring of 2020.

## NHRF Colombia

The NHRF's country office in Colombia opened in April 2020. By the end of the year, NHRF Colombia consisted of Country Director Caroline Aarsæther, Finance and Administrative Manager Dhayana Cuellar Becarí, Project Coordinator Mateo Corrales Hoyos and Halvard Hjermundrud, Program Officers Angela Galvis and David Pico Garcia, and Senior Communication Officer Víctor M. Linares.



The NHRF Secretariat (top) and the NHRF Colombia team (bottom).

*Amid the challenges and distribution that 2020 has thrown on us, the NHRF has grown stronger and more resilient with new team members, new partnerships and funding that will enable us to support front line human rights defenders and civil society in a more robust way in the years to come.*

- Sandra Petersen, Executive Director

## The Board

The Board consists of one representative from each of the NHRF's member organisations. Members of the Board in 2020 and presently are as follows:

- **Amnesty International Norway:** John Peder Egenæs, Chair of the Board (deputy board member Sidsel Stanmore Andersen – mandate transferred to Ingvild Gjone Lyberg in Spring 2020)
- **The Atlas Alliance:** Morten Eriksen (deputy board member Andrew Kroglund)
- **Norwegian Centre for Human Rights:** Peris Sean Jones (deputy board member Knut D. Asplund)
- **Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions:** Aina Østreng (deputy board member Magnus Holtfodt)
- **Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations:** Guro Almås (deputy board member Einar Tjelle)

## The Advisory Board

NHRF's advisory board is a volunteer group that contributes to our work in many ways. Primarily in the provision of strategic advice and support to the Secretariat. We would like to thank the NHRF's Advisory Board members for their support and cooperation:

- **Mary Lawlor:** United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders
- **Jan Egeland:** Founder of the NHRF and Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council
- **Phil Robertson:** Deputy Director of Human Rights Watch's Asia Division
- **Jemima García-Godos:** Professor, Department of Sociology and Human Geography, University of Oslo
- **Gerald Staberock:** Secretary General of World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)
- **Nora Sveaass:** Chair of the Board of Mental Health and Human Rights Info, and Professor Emeritus, Department of Psychology, University of Oslo
- **Miloon Kothari:** President of UPR Info and former United Nations Special Rapporteur on adequate housing
- **Claudia Mejía Duque:** Colombian human rights defender, former director of the organization Sisma Mujer (COLOMBIA)
- **Mildrey Corrales:** Former local NHRF consultant, National Technical Secretary of the Coordination Colombia Europe United States – CCEU (COLOMBIA)



Chair of the Board, John Peder Egenæs, in conversation with Marianne Hagen, then State Secretary in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Photo: Mónica Orjuela/NHRF.



Advisory Board member and NHRF's founder Jan Egeland together with NHRF Colombia's Country Director Caroline Aarsæther, during NHRF's Board Strategy meeting in August 2020. Photo: Mónica Orjuela/NHRF.

## Local Consultants

Our local consultants' presence in the NHRF's priority countries has been more important than ever during COVID-19 as the Secretariat has been unable to travel and conduct grantee visits. We want to thank our local consultants for their important work and direct contributions to the NHRF's work.

- **PAKISTAN:** Zulfiqar Shah
- **INDIA:** Anita Cheria
- **INDONESIA:** Papang Hidayat
- **THAILAND:** Petcharat Saksirivetkul
- **MEXICO:** Alexandra Jiménez
- **COLOMBIA:** Mildrey Corrales (until June 2020)



ACCOUNTS

In 2020, the NHRF had two agreements the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs: one with the Section for Human Rights, Democracy and Gender Equality as well as one with the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Bogota. The NHRF would like to thank our members and donors, among them Open Society Foundations, Jamette og Sverre Markussens Hjelpfond and the Norwegian Union of Municipal and General Employees, for their generous support in 2020. We will continue to work with our member organisations and partners, and seek new partnerships to increase our support to local human rights defenders on the ground.



Accounts in 2020	NOK	USD
Government institutional funds	26 515 248	2 820 651
Member organisations	1 212 000	128 931
Other income	1 430 552	152 180
Total income	29 157 800	3 101 762

Transfers to partners	20 575 051	2 188 742
Project costs (excluding transfers)	905 324	96 307
Communication	781 578	83 143
Personnel cost (excluding admin personnel)	4 574 003	486 575
Administration	2 026 397	215 565
Fundraising	86 174	9 167
Total	28 948 527	3 079 499

(Exchange rate: 9,4004 USD average in 2020)

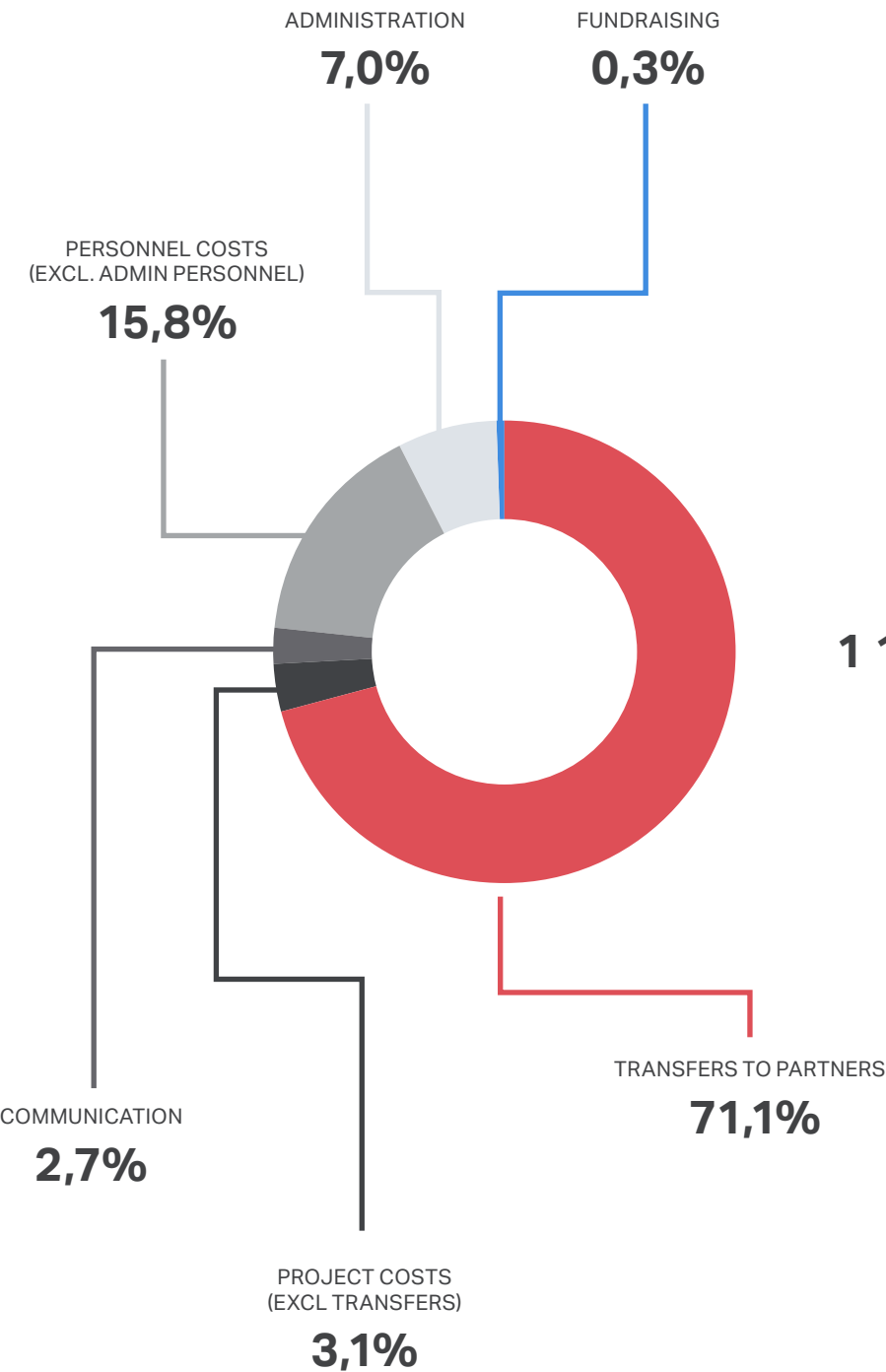
Annual budget size for supported organisations

	GRANTEES all countries (except Colombia)	COLOMBIA GRANTEES ONLY
<50,000*	44%	11%
50,000-100,000	32%	16%
100,000-150,000	12%	21%
>150,000	12%	52%

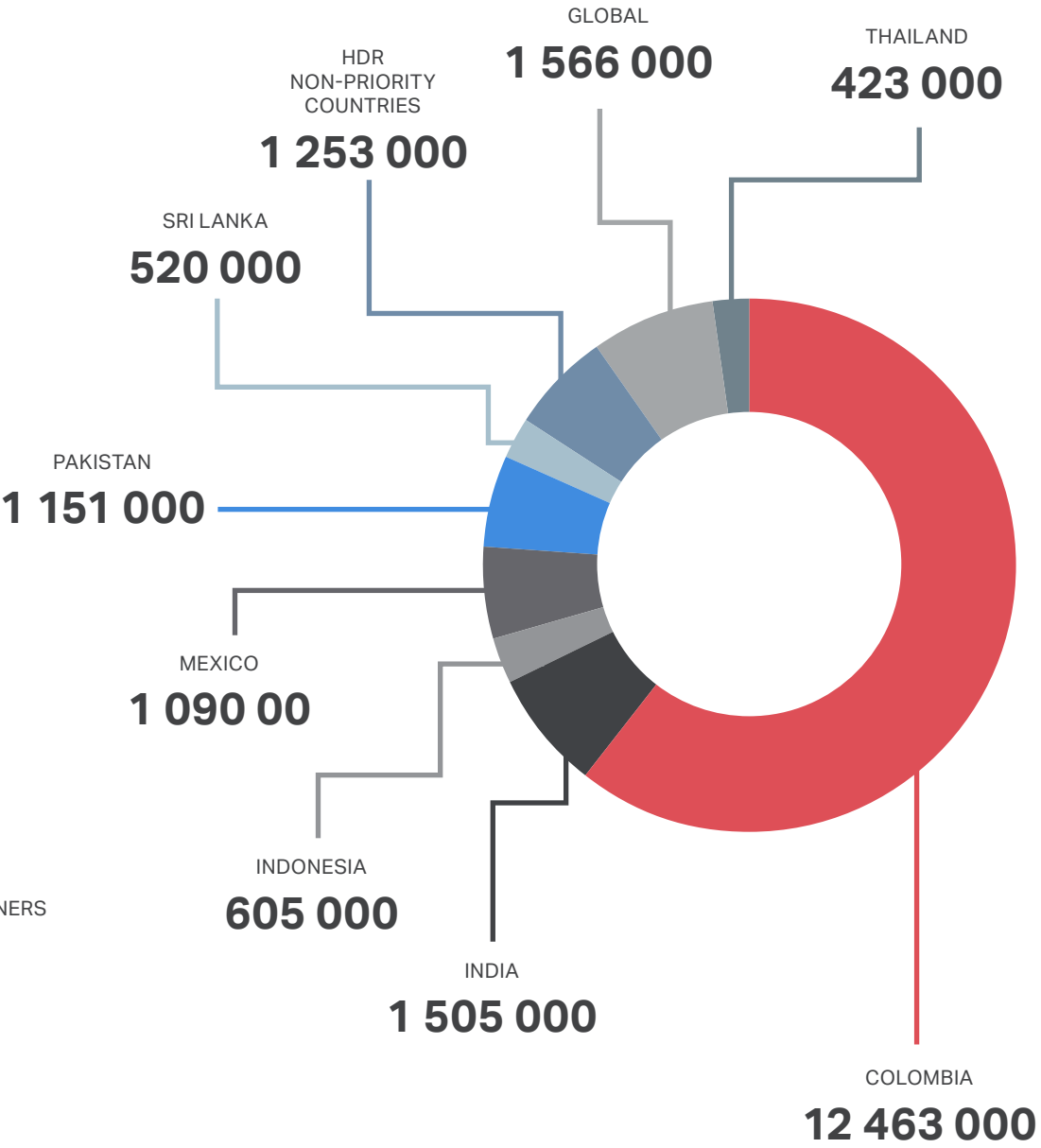
\* US dollars

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The NHRF would like to thank our members and donors for their generous support in 2020.



FUNDING PER COUNTRY IN 2020 (NOK – Norwegian Kroner)







NORWEGIAN  
HUMAN RIGHTS FUND

Direct support to  
human rights defenders



*I think the strength and the hope for the human rights movement is that it is being led by women of marginalized communities – in my context, of young Dalit women leaders. Perhaps that will actually take us to the next level of human rights organizing.*

– Asha Kowtal, Dalit and Woman Human Rights Defender from India

### **Support human rights defenders!**

Your support goes directly to front-line organizations fighting for human rights all over the world. With your support, the work against impunity and for access to justice, work against discrimination and protection of human rights defenders will continue.

Bank account: 1506.38.02317  
DNB Nor, Norway.

IBAN: NO3415063802317. Please mark the donation with: "Support to Human Rights work".

For Norwegians, give your donation via Vipps: 562372

**vipps**