



***Human rights  
are not  
optional.***

CASE FOR SUPPORT

**MAKE HUMAN RIGHTS** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ **A REALITY FOR ALL**



UNITED NATIONS  
**HUMAN RIGHTS**  
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

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# INTRODUCTION

Making human rights a reality for everyone, everywhere.

“To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity.”

**NELSON MANDELA**

2018 marked the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Created as a roadmap for peaceful and decent societies, born out of the chaos, despair and bloodshed of two world wars and the desire that such atrocities never happen again.

Since its adoption, and thanks to the dedication of human rights defenders and visionary leaders, the dignity of millions has been uplifted, untold human suffering prevented and the foundations for a more just world laid.

But the promise of the Declaration is yet to be kept for all. Inequality has grown. Fundamental freedoms are under strain the world over with populism and intolerance on the rise.

Working with countries the world over, every day UN Human Rights strives to turn this around: to help make human rights a reality for everyone, everywhere. By building up capacity of countries to protect rights, by bringing people together across sectors and continents to address barriers, by speaking out publicly against abuses, by forging partnerships for global and local change, we make a tangible difference in people’s lives.

Now more than ever, we must stand up together for human rights – stand up for equality, justice and freedom. In a divided world, human rights unite us. By standing up for your rights, my rights and their rights too, we can face down selfishness, hatred, and despair; we can find a brighter future for us all.

Thank you for considering becoming our ally for rights.



# OUR SHARED HUMANITY

Human rights are inherent to every human being, no matter who we are, where we live or where we come from.



“Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighbourhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works.

Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.”

**ELEANOR ROOSEVELT**

Our rights do not depend or discriminate on the basis of our race, colour, sex, gender, language, religion or political opinion. Like the oxygen we breathe: when our rights are respected, we may take them for granted, but deprived of them, we feel the pain and the indignity.

Human rights are relevant to every aspect of our lives: when voting in free and fair elections or accessing clean water or adequate health care. Rights are relevant to our workplaces, to the environments in which we live, and they affect responsibilities of both authorities and

businesses alike. With concerns about privacy online and artificial intelligence rising, human rights are also key to the future of how technology is shaping our world.

Human rights speak to every person on the planet: your life is equally valued, recognised and must be defended. Without rights, there would be no lasting peace, justice for the oppressed, or hope for a better, fairer and more prosperous world. Human rights are the basis of our shared humanity. This is why we need to stand up for rights.

# OUR RIGHTS ARE CHALLENGED

Many of us are anxious about where the world is heading. Cruel conflicts and material deprivation are forcing families from their homes. Extremist violence subjects people to grave tragedy. Climate change threatens our horizons. Messages of intolerance and hatred prey on our fears.

Little by little, this toxic tide rises around us, and those vital deep principles that safeguard peaceful societies risk being washed away. We feel overwhelmed – unsure what to do or where to turn.

The work of UN Human Rights is a vital counterbalance to rising despair; a vital counterpoint to deepening fear.



*“Strengthening UN Human Rights is an important investment, not only in human rights, but also in development and peace and security. We are supporting the independent status of the UN Human Rights’ mandate and the world needs its leadership in defending human rights. That is why the Norwegian government is committed to supporting the work of the UN Human Rights Office.”* **HERBORG ALVSAKER, MINISTER COUNSELLOR, GOVERNMENT OF NORWAY**

AROUND

**1 in 10**

CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD ARE SUBJECTED TO CHILD LABOUR



**880 million**

URBAN RESIDENTS AROUND THE WORLD LIVE IN SLUMS



250 MILLION WOMEN ALIVE TODAY WERE MARRIED BEFORE THE AGE OF

**15**



**65 million**

MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN HAVE BEEN FORCED FROM THEIR HOMES BY WAR AND PERSECUTION. THIS REPRESENTS ONE IN EVERY 113 PEOPLE

**29%**

OF CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF FIVE HAVE NOT HAD THEIR BIRTHS REGISTERED, AND DO NOT HAVE THE PROTECTION OF A NATIONALITY

ALMOST

**1 in 3**

PEOPLE IN DETENTION ARE HELD THERE WITHOUT TRIAL OR SENTENCE



**2030**

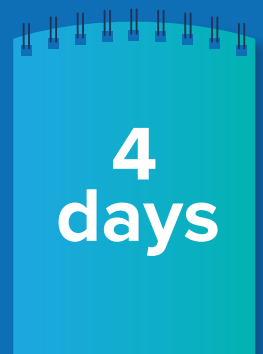
BY 2030, CLIMATE CHANGE IS EXPECTED TO CONTRIBUTE TO 250,000 ADDITIONAL DEATHS PER YEAR FROM MALNUTRITION, MALARIA, DIARRHOEA AND HEAT STRESS



AN ESTIMATED

**15%**

OF THE WORLD POPULATION, OR AROUND 1 BILLION PEOPLE LIVE WITH DISABILITIES



**4 days**

ON AVERAGE, A JOURNALIST IS KILLED EVERY 4 DAYS SOMEWHERE IN THE WORLD

## OUR MISSION

**At UN Human Rights, we work tirelessly for equality, justice and inclusion. We stand up for freedom, respect and compassion, and advocate practical solutions for overcoming fear and discrimination.**

The access we have to those who have the power to make a real difference at scale means we're uniquely placed to impact the lives of millions. We work directly with governments, with the judiciary, parliaments, the police, prison authorities and the military, and we engage too with the private sector so that in their operations, they uphold rights.

We work at the grassroots level too, supporting local organisations and the courageous women and men who put their lives and freedom on the line to defend rights. We are proud to help make their voices heard.

But our work is unfinished so long as anyone's rights are denied. And vigilance is essential to defend against roll back. So we will continue to support those whose voices are too easily ignored. We will continue to demand justice for victims and accountability for perpetrators. And, we will work with governments around the world to strengthen the infrastructure for rights.

But we need you. With your support, our work can magnify – expand and extend.

Please do support us. Together, we can help make human rights a reality for people and communities everywhere.



*"For years, the UN Human Rights Office has been an invaluable partner and ally in the struggle for human rights, social justice and equality in Cambodia. We appreciate that it has always taken an impartial, apolitical and principled approach and advocated against injustices, and it always produces work of the highest standard."* **CHAK SOPHEAP, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,**

**CAMBODIAN CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**



# OUR WORK

UN Human Rights is on the frontlines of the global struggle for human rights. We manifest the world's commitment to the promotion, protection and realization of the full range of human rights and fundamental freedoms set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Under the leadership of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, with a staff of 1,300 working in more than 70 countries, we pursue all avenues in our quest to make human rights a lived reality for all people, everywhere.

## WE UPHOLD THE STANDARDS

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As the UN's lead entity on human rights, we engage governments to support and implement human rights standards: to ratify treaties, to embed protection of human rights in national legislation and to implement experts' recommendations.

We support the operations of the UN Human Rights Council and enable the work of a wide range of their human rights experts on topics from indigenous people's rights, to violence against women and the rights of people with disabilities.

Through cooperation and advice, we work with Governments so they assume their responsibilities for upholding the human rights of their people.



### **Indigenous legal aid in Australia**

Supported by our intervention, the Australian government reversed budget cuts for indigenous legal aid.

### **Criminalising rape and land grabbing in Afghanistan**

We helped the Afghanistan government pass a new penal code, which legally defines rape and corrupt land grabbing as criminal offenses.

### **Parity for male and female political candidates in Cameroon**

Our work helped the Cameroon government secure a change to their Electoral Code, to ensure equality between male and female political candidates.

### **Land rights in Timor-Leste**

We helped the government of Timor-Leste, pass a new law that gives all Timorese the right to land ownership.

### **Domestic violence laws in Tunisia and Serbia**

Our work with the authorities in Tunisia saw the adoption of a new law to eliminate violence against women. We had another breakthrough in Serbia, when a new law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence was passed.

## WE HELP KEEP HUMAN RIGHTS PROMISES

Committing to the principles of human rights is only a first step. Implementation is key.

This is why UN Human Rights works with authorities and institutions at all levels to help keep the promises of the Declaration, building their capacity and skills to ensure human rights standards convert into everyday practice.

We also work with non-governmental/civil society organizations to help identify innovative solutions to the human rights needs of their communities and we partner with companies ready to embed human rights into their daily operations.

### Educating the army in Uganda

Working with Uganda's Ministry of Defence, we helped establish a Human Rights Office to educate the army about their responsibilities.

### Training the judiciary in Jamaica

In Jamaica, working with the University of the West Indies and the Caribbean Court of Justice, we trained members of the judiciary, to raise awareness of human rights issues.

### Bringing business together for human rights

Working with members of the UN Human Rights Council, we convene an annual global forum, bringing together hundreds of business leaders, civil society, academia and government, to discuss recent trends and developments in human rights.



*"We strongly support the UN Human Rights Office in its critical mission to protect and promote all human rights for everyone. Human rights must be at the heart of our work at the United Nations as without them there can be no peace, security or prosperity. The international community has set ambitious goals for sustainable development. This can only be achieved if underpinned by a sustained support for human rights."* **MICHAEL GAFFEY, AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRELAND**

## WE STAND WITH THOSE DEFENDING RIGHTS

UN Human Rights also works to inform people of their rights and to help them stand up when these are denied or neglected. We play an important role in protection of and solidarity with those who locally are driving human rights change. We show that the world is watching and we demonstrate how those responsible for breaches can be held to account.

Human rights defenders across the world are subjected to harassment, intimidation, arbitrary arrest, detention even assassination. Our role is to work for systems for their protection; to stand with them; safeguard their dignity; to empower those willing to speak out for rights and to ensure that their voices are amplified.

### Supporting defenders of Roma rights in Moldova

The Roma community in Moldova has suffered decades of discrimination and prejudice. But human rights defender Silvia Feraru is working to put an end to inequality.

In partnership with the local UN Human Rights Office Silvia undertook advocacy training to help her fight for Roma rights. Already, she's made a dramatic impact.

Working closely with the mayor and local council, she's managed to have all the Roma in the Carpineni region registered with a doctor. Now, children are vaccinated and pregnant women have access to medical attention.

Another project close to her heart is keeping Roma children in school. Silvia monitors their attendance and graduation records, visiting children at home when there are problems. Thanks to her efforts, 100 percent of Roma children currently attend school. Anecdotally, many have expressed their wish to go to university.

**Silvia's advocacy training has empowered her success:**

“Participation in human rights trainings offered me the necessary knowledge of how to correctly defend my rights as a Roma woman. Now, serving as a Roma community mediator, I can more efficiently help and encourage them to fight for a prosperous future.”





#### **Reparations in Kenya**

After a case of lead poisoning in Kenya, we worked with a local community in their struggle to secure the compensation they deserved.

#### **Women in Mali**

In Mali, we worked locally with women displaced by widespread violence to build the means to earn an income and thereby better safeguard their future.

#### **Community leaders in Colombia**

In the wake of decades of fighting in Colombia, we helped local human rights defenders develop the skills and confidence to become community leaders.

#### **Young people in Cambodia**

We support local organisations in Cambodia in their work to promote the rights of young people.

“What human rights defenders teach us is that all of us – no matter where we are, or the circumstances of our lives – can stand up for our rights and the rights of others. We can stand up to the bullies on our streets, and to the oppressors in our neighbourhoods, in our countries – and around the world.”

**MICHELLE BACHELET, UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

*“As the primary body upholding the United Nations human rights pillar, the UN Human Rights Office is an essential ally for Human Rights Watch’s mission to defend the rights of people worldwide. We value our relationship with the Office on a wide range of areas of our work, country and thematic.”* **BRUNO STAGNO, DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (ADVOCACY), HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH**

“They helped me be fully recognized as a refugee and that will allow me to be resettled to another country,” she said. “My life is changing. Before I couldn’t even sleep at night I was so terrified. Now I have received counselling – I can air my problems and I am not alone.”



In Ethiopia, a diminutive woman no bigger than a young teenager sits quietly, looking down at the floor, only her eyes visible in her veiled face.

Samira (not her real name) was punished for her beliefs. Accused of supporting the opposition, she was dragged into prison for six months, physically and psychologically tortured. Eventually she escaped. Via a terrifying overnight truck ride to the distant border with Kenya she then made a final sprint to freedom.

Once there, she met an organisation that changed her life forever. The Refugee Consortium of Kenya (RCK), is the only organization that provides legal aid to asylum seekers in Kenya and helps refugee torture victims with psychosocial counselling.

RCK is one of many organisations supported by the UN Fund for Victims of Torture. The Fund which is managed by UN Human Rights, is one of several Funds that we aim directly at helping people subjected to serious human rights violations. The Victims of Torture fund invests in non-governmental organizations around the world that offer support to torture survivors in overcoming their suffering, giving them back hope and the dignity destroyed by the torturers.

## WE MONITOR AND REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

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Hatred, poverty, discrimination and violence are breeding grounds for human rights abuse. Human rights abuses build community grievances which in turn can escalate into conflict. We work to prevent conflict and to promote justice as a solution. Monitoring, reporting and calling out violations across the world, we capture the evidence of preventable causes of human suffering and call out these root causes of conflict.

### Reporting atrocities against Rohingya

The evidence we collected drew the world's attention to the plight of Rohingya Muslims, fleeing bloodshed in Rakhine State, Myanmar. We called on the international community to help end the violence, protect the victims and successfully paved the way for formal accountability measures to be taken.

### Collecting evidence of human rights abuses in Syria

Over the period of the Syria conflict, we have meticulously documented and preserved evidence of violations of international law perpetrated against thousands of civilians and in devastation of civilian infrastructure. Our evidence will play a major role in efforts to formally recognise people's suffering and to hold those responsible accountable.

### Freeing innocent detainees in Ukraine

Working under benefit of cooperation from the Government, we applied pressure on authorities, spotlighting the situation of detainees in Ukraine. Our work helped secure the release of innocent people held in isolated detention.

### Legal advice in Burundi

After monitoring the condition of women's prisons in Burundi, we mounted a persuasive case that led to the introduction of legal assistance now available to 65% of prisoners.



### Human rights monitoring in Yemen

In March 2015, war broke out in Yemen. Since then, fierce fighting has killed more than 8,000 people, with over 49,000 injured – many in deadly airstrikes led by a Saudi coalition.

In one such attack, an airstrike on a residential block killed 30 people, and injured scores more. Mohammed Ali Mosleh was a survivor, yet he's been left struggling for answers:

“There was no military here. We are just people. Why were we targeted? To this day, no one has told us why.”



For victims like Mohammed, UN Human Rights is a trusted partner in their search for justice.

We monitor civilian casualties in conflict zones around the world. We visit hospitals to speak to injured survivors. We interview eyewitnesses like Mohammed – and, if we have to, count bodies at the scene. Armed with evidence, we piece together the events and, in some cases, identify who has been responsible.

### AL MONIFY IS A UN HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER IN SANA'A, YEMEN'S CAPITAL:

“I believe that when I defend human rights, I defend for my family, I defend for myself and I defend for my community. I believe that if we shut our mouths and we don't speak, who will speak about the rights of victims? If we allow our weaknesses to control us, those rights and the suffering of those victims will disappear.”

*“Human rights is the foundation of our business. Our relationship with UN Human Rights is extremely important to us; their willingness and ability to engage with businesses, as well as governments and NGOs, helping all stakeholders to strengthen human rights, makes them a valued partner for Unilever.”* **MARCELA MANUBENS, GLOBAL VP INTEGRATED SUSTAINABILITY, UNILEVER**

# THE ROAD AHEAD

We look to the future with hope. With better access to education, information, and participation millions will claim, exercise, organize and defend their rights. New technology will help us diagnose and treat disease, conserve energy, and predict and prepare for natural disasters.

At the same time, dark clouds loom over our horizon. Climate change and environmental uncertainty leave us vulnerable. The freedoms we take for granted are increasingly threatened by populism and xenophobia. Inequality and impunity are eroding public trust in political and economic institutions.

UN Human Rights has developed ambitious plans to help combat these threats and safeguard the future for people's rights everywhere. Over the next four years, we'll expand our work, our partnerships and our reach while adapting to an ever-changing international context.

Our approach involves **four major shifts**, to focus in on key threats but also to leverage emerging opportunities. In an uncertain world, these shifts will help drive the unity and scale of human rights for measurable impact on people's lives.

1

## PREVENTING CONFLICT, VIOLENCE AND INSECURITY

- ✓ We will work to enhance the contribution of human rights to prevention of violence, insecurity and conflict. We will expose the significant roles that impunity, inequality and discrimination play in triggering conflict and we will signpost the paths to peace and human dignity at local levels.

2

## EXPANDING CIVIC SPACE

- ✓ We will highlight how protecting and expanding civic space helps to advance all human rights for all. We will work to increase public recognition of the value of civil society organisations and to enhance their visibility, protection and legitimacy. We will support human rights defenders to play their part without threat of intimidation or attack.

3

## CREATING A GLOBAL CONSTITUENCY FOR RIGHTS

- ✓ From workplaces to schools, homes to city halls, we will champion understanding of and support for the values of human rights. We will reach new audiences with strategic partnerships, opening dialogue to inspire and mobilize people to stand up for human rights.

4

## EXPLORING FRONTIER ISSUES

- ✓ With the input of affected communities, we will use human rights as the basis for people-centered implementation of the Paris Agreement on **climate change**.
- ✓ We will expand our influence in the **digital space**, partnering with companies and governments to strengthen respect for human rights in the virtual world – in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.
- ✓ We will position human rights principles in support of the **anti-corruption** movement.
- ✓ We will help demonstrate how policies that foster **inequalities**, drive discrimination, undermine human rights and erode sustainable peace.
- ✓ We will work with the Global Compact on Migration to ensure that the human rights of all **people on the move** are better understood, recognised, respected and protected.





Our work will be people-centred. We will shine a **spotlight** on the human rights of **women, young people** and **persons with disabilities**. We will leave no one behind. We will invest in areas that will enhance delivery of impact and where change is needed, to ensure our continued relevance and efficiency. This means stepping up and fostering innovation and dynamic knowledge, engaging in more effective and visible communications and creating mutually beneficial partnerships with a wider range of actors.

Support our work. Help us break the toxic patterns of a fearful world, and help us pave the path to a more peaceful, just and sustainable future. Together we can make a difference.

*"In the Guinean context, where human rights represent a major challenge, the role of the UN Human Rights Office is crucial. Thanks to its expertise, the United Nations is recognized by the Guinean authorities, development partners and civil society as a viable partner in the fight against impunity and peace-building."* **SÉRAPHINE WAKANA, UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR IN GUINEA**

# YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Human rights are relevant to every aspect of our lives. They are central for human dignity and our shared vision for a better world for all. They are key to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals.

The opportunities for advancing human rights impact are many but our resources are limited. Without investments to expand our reach, our interventions are too limited and our presence in many countries too small.

We can change this, but we need your support. We rely on voluntary donations from governments, as well as private donors and businesses. To carry on our mission, maintaining our independence is vital – and so is diversifying our funding mix.



With your help, we can grow our work where it's needed – directly supporting human rights defenders, educating people about their rights and amplifying the voices of those who would otherwise never be heard.

**Thank you for standing up for rights with us.**

## CONTACT

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