

# ANNUAL REPORT

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Centre for Civil and Political Rights  
(CCPR Centre)  
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# Table of Contents

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<b>Our vision</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Our mission</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Key Figures</b>	
State Parties to ICCPR and its Optional Protocols	<b>6</b>
<b>Our work</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>A word from the President and the Director</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>A new strategy</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Where we work</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Strategic Objective 1:</b> Strengthen and assist efforts of civil society for the protection of civil and political rights	<b>16</b>
1) Increase capacity of civil society to effectively report to the HR Committee	<b>17</b>
The impact of our advocacy efforts on the fight against impunity in Liberia	<b>18</b>
2) Facilitate direct interaction between civil society and the HR Committee	<b>19</b>
NGOs working in coalitions to reinforce their report	<b>20</b>
3) Develop a more holistic approach to utilisation of UN Human Rights mechanisms by civil society	<b>21</b>
<b>Strategic Objective 2:</b> Increase ratification and enhance implementa- tion of ICCPR	<b>22</b>
1) Contribute to the ratification of ICCPR and its two Optional Protocols	<b>23</b>

2) Increase the visibility of HR Committee's recommendations at the national and international levels	24
The Committee's recommendations as a key tool for leverage at the national level	25
3) Create a space for national dialogue	26
The importance and effectiveness of a space for dialogue between civil society and authorities	27
<b>Strategic Objective 3:</b> Contribute to the strengthening of the HR Committee's work	28
1) Increase scrutiny and transparency of the elections of HR Committee members	29
The role of NGOs in the 2020 review to strengthen the UN Treaty Bodies	30
2) Reinforce meaningful civil society participation and increase the outreach of the work of the HR Committee	32
Protecting HRDs from reprisals	33
3) Contribute to the enrichment of the HR Committee's findings on thematic issues	34
The vital role of Civil society in the work of the HR Committee	35
<b>Our Supporters and partners</b>	36
<b>2018 income &amp; expenditure</b>	37
<b>Our Staff</b>	38
<b>Our Board</b> <b>Our Advisory Board</b>	39

## Our vision

A world where civil and political rights are protected, respected and fulfilled for everyone without discrimination.

## Our mission

To contribute to the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) through supporting civil society, as well as connecting and engaging key actors in implementing the UN Human Rights Committee's (HR Committee) recommendations at the national level.



## Key Figures

### State Parties to ICCPR and its Optional Protocols

#### ICCPR

**172** State parties to the ICCPR

**6** Signatories

China, Comoros, Cuba, Nauru, Palau, Saint Lucia

**States not party**

**19** Antigua and Barbuda, Bhutan, Brunei, Cook Islands, Holy See, Kiribati, Malaysia, Micronesia, Myanmar, Niue, Oman, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Tonga, Tuvalu, United Arab Emirates

**3** New ratifications in 2018

Fiji, Marshall Islands, Qatar

### Monitoring ICCPR - The review process of the HR Committee in 2018

**16** States reviewed in 2018

Belarus, Belize, Bulgaria, Guinea, Sudan, Algeria, Bahrain, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, Lithuania, El Salvador, Guatemala, Hungary, Lebanon, Norway

**1** Review of non-reporting State

Gambia

**318** Recommendations made by the HR Committee on 16 States

### Main themes addressed by the HR Committee in 2018

**48** Recommendations on equality and non discrimination

excluding issues related to women's rights

**28** Recommendations on women's rights and violence against women

**27** Recommendations on freedom of expression, assembly and association

**27** Recommendations on liberty, persons deprived of their liberty and detention conditions

**24** Recommendations on extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances and torture  
excluding cases referring to detention conditions

**22** Recommendations on the right to a fair trial

including independence of the judiciary

## OP1: Individual communications

**116** State parties

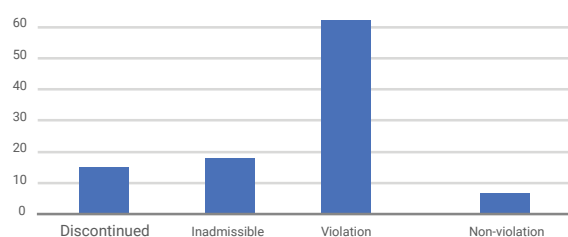
**3** Signatories

**78** States not party

**0** New ratifications

**74** Cases adopted under the OP1 in 2018

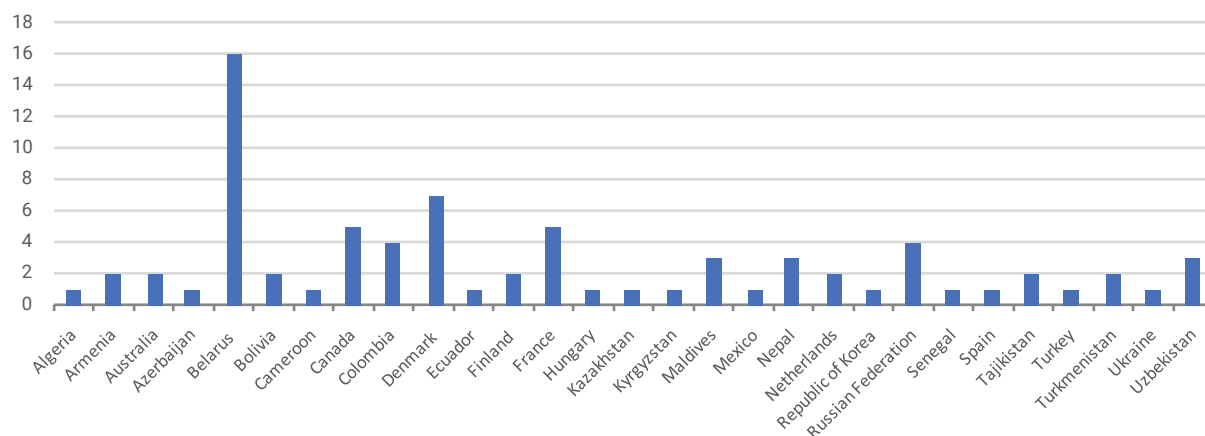
Outcome of the individual communications adopted in 2018



Outcome of the individual communications

Discontinued	15
Inadmissible	18
Violation	61
Non-violation	7

Number of individual communications adopted





## OP2: abolition of death penalty

87 State parties

1 Signatories  
Angola

109 States not party

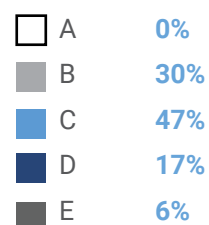
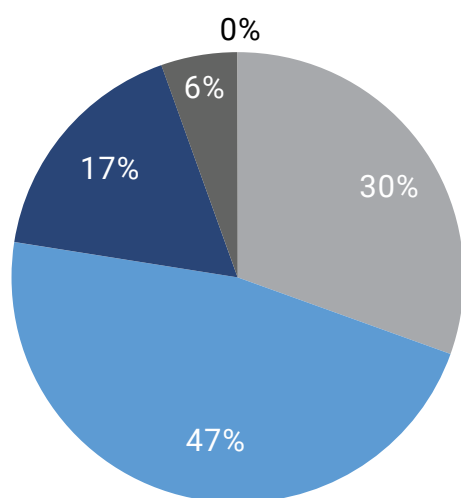
1 New ratifications  
Gambia

## Assessment of replies according to the grading system of the Human Rights Committee (2018)

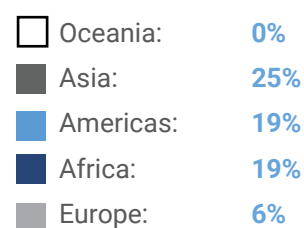
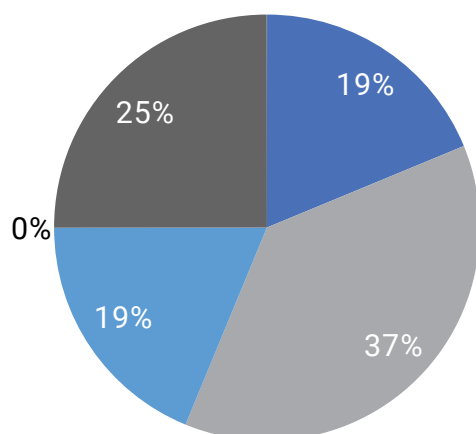
	Reply / Action satisfactory
<b>A</b>	Reply / action largely satisfactory
	Reply / Action partially satisfactory
<b>B</b>	Additional information or action remains necessary
	Reply / Action not satisfactory
<b>C</b>	Response received but actions or information not relevant or do not result in implementation of recommendations
	No cooperation with the Committee
<b>D</b>	No follow-up report received after reminder(s)
	The measures taken are contrary to the recommendations of the Committee
<b>E</b>	The reply indicates that the measures taken go against the recommendations of the Committee



**Grades adopted  
by the HR Committee in 2018**



**Countries followed-up  
by the HR Committee  
in 2018 per region**



Burundi and Venezuela did not reply to the HR Committee regarding the implementation of the priority recommendations (D-grade).

## Our work

### Providing key information on civil and political rights:

#### 19 CSO reports submitted to UN mechanisms

- 8 Reports** submitted to the HR Committee in partnership with national NGOs.
 

Algeria	The Centre also provided legal and technical support to:
Lebanon	Bahrain, Belarus, Belize and El Salvador
Liberia	
Vietnam	
- 5 Follow-up reports** on implementation of the recommendations.
 

Ecuador	Jamaica
Thailand	Eswatini
Ghana	
- 6 UPR reports** on ICCPR findings.
 

Azerbaijan	DR Congo
Burundi	Nicaragua
Cameroon	Uzbekistan

### Provide capacity building on ICCPR to local Human Rights Defenders

- 10 Trainings and consultations on ICCPR**

Algeria	Tajikistan
Eswatini (focus on follow-up and implementation)	Thailand (focus on follow-up and implementation)
Ecuador (2)	Togo (focus on journalists and media)
Jamaica (focus for LGBTI HRDs)	Vietnam
Liberia	
- 85 Human Rights Defenders** participating in the ICCPR trainings

### Facilitate access of Human Rights Defenders to the HR Committee and other UN HR Mechanisms

- 15** CSO briefings organised for the HR Committee
- 106** HRDs attended the sessions of the HR Committee
- 11** HRDs financially supported by the Centre to attend the sessions
- 9** HRDs participated at their countries' UPR to streamline the recommendations of the HR Committee

## Working with national stakeholders for the implementation of the HR Committee's recommendations

### 11 Follow-up missions with members or former members of the HR Committee:

Ghana  
Burkina Faso  
Ecuador (2)  
Madagascar  
Liberia

Thailand  
DR Congo  
Eswatini  
Jamaica  
Togo

## Thematic work

### Corruption and human rights

#### 2 International conferences

International conference on corruption and human rights with 65 participants;  
Expert consultation on the draft of a practitioners' guide on corruption and human rights violations with 26 participants

#### 2 Litigation workshops on individual communications

Workshop on individual communications to the UN Treaty Bodies with 15 lawyers;  
Consultation on UN Treaty Body Litigation' with 35 lawyers

## Communication in 2018

4342 Followers on Twitter (increase from 3432) and more than 260 tweets

965 Retweets (on average 3 retweets per day)

873 Likes on Twitter

3833 Likes on Facebook (increase from 2612)

99 Posts on facebook (increase from 85), reaching up to 2900 people (increase from 1900)

14 Posts on Instagram, with 78 followers (started in October 2018)

2200 Visits to website per month (increase from 1600)

7 Newsletters to a database of more than 2800 contacts

## A word from the President and the Director



In 2018 more than 100 Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) raised their voices and alerted the HR Committee to grave violations of civil and political rights around the world. Often they participated in the session of the Committee at their own risk, facing reprisals upon their return. It is mainly to support their work that the Centre for Civil and Political Rights was created ten years ago and it is still the *raison d'être* of our organisation.

The Centre is strongly committed to supporting HRDs working in difficult situations and has developed specific actions to facilitate their work and their engagement with the Treaty Bodies. This is the case, for example, with our long-term engagement with CSOs in Algeria, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nicaragua or Vietnam, where space for civil society is limited or even non-existent.

We are committed to facilitating national consultations and the creation of ad-hoc platforms of CSOs willing to engage with

the HR Committee. Our inclusive approach of working with all interested CSOs and long term engagement at the national level allowed creative engagement of HRDs that had never previously worked together. We further developed our commitment to working closely with our sister organisations in the TB-Net to ensure that advocacy efforts are not limited to one specific Committee, but reach all UN Treaty Bodies.

This engagement to support HRDs was praised on numerous occasions, and the current Chair of the Committee - Ahmed Fathalla - underlines in this annual report how HRDs help the Committee to fulfil its mandate. He also stresses the importance of the Centre's role in supporting HRDs' engagement with the Committee.

We would like to warmly thank our partners and supporters, who have enabled us to support CSOs in their efforts to change the situation on the ground and promote the full implementation of the ICCPR. In these tumultuous times, our commitment to making civil and political rights a reality for everyone is more important than ever.

**Victor Rodriguez-Rescia**  
President of the Centre

**Patrick Mutzenberg**  
Director of the Centre

## A new strategy

In 2018, the Centre adopted a new strategic plan for the period 2019-2023. The new plan is structured around strategic objectives targeting three key players needed for a real change at the national level.

### Civil society

Engagement with human rights defenders will continue to be at the heart of the Centre's work in coming years. Our long-term support will lead to a comprehensive advocacy approach aimed at improving the protection of civil and political rights. This advocacy takes place at both the international level (HR Committee and other UN Human Rights mechanisms) and at the national level.

### National authorities

National authorities have primary responsibility for ensuring full respect for civil and political rights. As such, the Centre will continue to work closely with States to ensure they take the necessary

measures in order to be in full compliance with their ICCPR obligations. Our target is to develop our expertise in supporting States that have not yet ratified the ICCPR and to strengthen our cooperation with States in their efforts to implement the HR Committee's recommendations. The inclusive approach which makes the Centre successful must be strengthened further in order to create spaces for constructive dialogue between authorities and civil society actors. Such initiatives have become crucial as safeguards and fundamental freedoms continue to shrink.

### UN Treaty Bodies, in particular the HR Committee

Our strategic plan provides for even greater collaboration with the UN Treaty Bodies, in particular the HR Committee. This collaboration aims to enable the Committee to fully exercise its mandate and address the many challenges it currently faces. The Centre will continue to provide its expertise to the HR Committee on the thematic issues that it has focused on for many years, including corruption and its negative impact on human rights. In addition, the Centre intends to engage further in the elections process of the Committee's members in order to strengthen its expertise, geographic diversity and gender parity.



## Where we work

### CSO reports submitted to UN mechanisms for:

Algeria  
Lebanon  
Liberia  
Vietnam  
Ecuador  
Thailand  
Ghana  
Jamaica  
Eswatini  
Azerbaijan  
Burundi  
Cameroon  
DR Congo  
Nicaragua  
Uzbekistan

### Legal and technical support provided to:

Bahrain  
Belarus  
Belize  
El Salvador



Capacity building on the ICCPR  
provided to local HRDs in:

Follow-up missions  
organized in:

Algeria  
Eswatini  
Ecuador  
Jamaica  
Myanmar  
Liberia  
Tajikistan  
Thailand  
Togo  
Vietnam

Ghana  
Burkina Faso  
Ecuador  
Madagascar  
Liberia  
Thailand  
DR Congo  
Eswatini  
Jamaica  
Togo





# Strategic Objective 1:

Strengthen and assist efforts of civil society for the protection of civil and political rights

## Our goal:

At the core of the Centre's mandate is ensuring that HRDs advocating for full respect of civil and political rights at the national level are able to genuinely engage with the UN Human Rights bodies, especially the HR Committee.



# 1 Increase capacity of civil society to effectively report to the HR Committee

## Our commitment:

To provide the best training available on the ICCPR and share best practices with HRDs to maximise their advocacy efforts.

## Our success in 2018:

- We worked in close partnership with national NGOs to provide training sessions to HRDs from Algeria, Liberia, Tajikistan and Vietnam on the ICCPR and NGO engagement with the HR Committee.
- We supported ICCPR coalitions in Liberia, Lebanon, Tajikistan and Viet Nam to prepare and submit their reports to the HR Committee on violations of the ICCPR.
- We elaborated key pedagogic tools to develop advocacy strategies on key issues featured in the ICCPR.
- We provided legal advice to NGOs from Algeria, Bahrain, Belarus, Belize, El

Salvador and Vietnam on how to draft and submit reports for HR Committee reviews.

- We trained HRDs from Armenia, Brazil, El Salvador, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Tajikistan, Turkey, South Africa and Uganda on how to submit individual complaints to the UN Treaty Bodies.

*Why it is important:* Increasing the capacity of civil society and supporting their advocacy efforts is crucial to ensuring that HRDs are in a position to raise their concerns before the HR Committee. The Centre encourages civil society to work in coalitions and produce joint civil society reports. It also begins to mobilise civil society actors at the earliest stage possible by providing key information on strategic engagement with the HR Committee.



## What's next? In 2019, we plan to:

- Organise workshops for HRDs in **Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Tajikistan** and **Togo** in order to support them in preparing and submitting **CSO coalition reports** to the HR Committee.
- Support the participation of **HRDs from Niger, Mauritania, Vietnam and Tajikistan at the HR Committee's sessions** and facilitate direct interaction between civil society and Committee members.

## The impact of our advocacy efforts on the fight against impunity in Liberia

**Adama Dempster, Secretary General of Civil Society Human Rights Advocacy Platform of Liberia**

— **In which ways did the national consultation contribute to the development of a coordinated advocacy strategy for civil society?**

Liberia to this day remains a country that has not addressed crimes perpetrated in the past. Despite persistent calls for justice, atrocious crimes continue to go unpunished. This situation was at the heart of the NGO consultation ahead of the July 2018 review. With the support of the Centre, the Civil Society Human Rights Advocacy Platform was able to produce its first report on the implementation of the ICCPR in Liberia with a specific focus on war crimes and other grave human rights violations.

Thanks to the recommendations of the Committee, pressure from civil society and international organisations and the government's new position, a renewed movement on accountability for past crimes has taken shape. For instance, in November 2018, a national justice conference was held in Monrovia as a follow up to the HR Committee's recommendations on Liberia.

There is ongoing advocacy led by civil society groups, as well as international support for

the quest for justice for past crimes in Liberia. In addition, there is ongoing engagement with members of the national legislature urging them to consider adopting legislation on war crimes in Liberia. As a result of these efforts, it is expected that a resolution on war crimes will soon be introduced by the Joint Committee of the House of Representatives.

— **How did you develop your advocacy strategy on fighting impunity and transitional justice prior to the HR Committee review?**

To ensure that Liberian civil society participated in the 2018 Committee review process, the Centre held a two day workshop on treaty reporting in Monrovia. The Centre also provided technical and funding support, allowing us to draft our first report on the ICCPR. In addition, it provided logistical support to civil society participants in order to ensure that they could attend and partake in the HR Committee review sessions in March and July 2018.

Following the review, the CCPR Centre and the European Union's office in Liberia sponsored the participation of a HR Committee member in a stakeholders consultation as a follow-up to the Concluding Observations.

— **How helpful did you find CCPR Centre's support?**

As compared to other international organisations, the Centre's support was very timely and helpful to civil society organisations in Liberia. Before the Centre delivered its workshop, the participation of local NGOs in Treaty Body reporting procedures and follow up was very low. We look forward to more engaging follow-ups on the Committee's recommendations, with the support of the Centre in the period leading up to Liberia's next review.



## 2 Facilitate direct interaction between civil society and the HR Committee

### Our commitment:

To be the main gateway between civil society and the Committee by coordinating civil society participation in formal and informal briefings.

### Our success in 2018:

- We facilitated the access of HRDs from 17 countries to the HR Committee.
- We organised 10 NGOs briefings for HRDs from Algeria, Bahrain, Belarus, El Salvador, Guatemala, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Norway and Sudan.
- We facilitated the participation of HRDs from Lebanon and Liberia at the HR Committee's sessions in Geneva.
- In partnership with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), we created an online platform for NGO registration to briefings.

*Why it is important:* NGO briefings are essential for providing information on the implementation of the ICCPR to the members of the HR Committee as well as for sharing the concerns of civil society. Dialogue with civil society provides in-depth knowledge of the countries' situations and leads to a more focused and specific scrutiny of national authorities' claims. As such, HRDs' access to Geneva is fundamental. The Centre is committed to financially supporting HRDs from the Global South and alleviating the burden of online registration.

### What's next?

#### In 2019, we plan to:

- Continue the facilitation of the access of HRDs to the HR Committee, by organising NGO briefings and financially supporting civil society in their participation in Committee sessions



## NGOs in Algeria working in coalitions to reinforce their report

Nassera Dutour, Director of Collectif Disparus-Algérie

- **How were the NGOs organized to write the report? Which difficulties were encountered when working in coalitions?**

One NGO took the initiative to organise a training with the participation of the EuroMed Rights Network and the Centre, and brought together several NGOs around this training. During this training, we first talked about the various UN Human Rights mechanisms and especially the HR Committee. The Centre explained the provisions and implications of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and afterwards we discussed the human rights



violations committed in the country. We divided the issues among the participants of the training, so that each person could write about the themes they are most comfortable with. These persons provided us with a draft, and one person was in charge of coordinating the work of all the participants. In the end, this process was very fruitful: we succeeded in bringing together several NGOs and people to draft this report. We want to thank the EuroMed Rights Network and the Centre for facilitating this training.

- **What was the result of your submission to the HR Committee?**

The report has been submitted to the HR Committee and our cooperation with the Centre has been a great success. The Committee has taken up all the topics we wrote about in this report. Point by point, all the violations have been discussed with the Algerian delegation. All the experts of the Committee have, one after the other, addressed the human rights violations committed in Algeria during the period between the two last reviews. It was a pleasant surprise and a great success for us after all the efforts we undertook to submit this report.



### 3 Develop more holistic utilisation of UN Human Rights mechanisms by civil society

#### Our commitment:

To increase capacity and assist efforts of civil society to effectively monitor and assess implementation of all recommendations issued by the HR Committee.

#### Our success in 2018:

- We supported the submission of NGO follow-up reports on the implementation of the Committee's priority recommendations in **Ecuador, Thailand, Ghana, Jamaica and Eswatini** (formerly Swaziland).
- In Thailand, we developed a tool to support civil society in providing effective follow-ups to reviews and utilising the UN Human Rights Bodies in a holistic manner. The guide was published in English and in Thai.
- We supported HRDs from Azerbaijan, Burundi, Cameroon and Uzbekistan in participating at the UPR of their countries in order to streamline the recommendations of the HR Committee.
- We worked closely with TB-Net and OSJI to organise a workshop on individual communications to the Treaty Bodies, bringing together more than 30 lawyers.

**Why it is important:** It is crucial to engage with local NGOs on long-term follow-up activities at the national level in order to bring tangible and sustainable changes on the ground. At the international level, the Centre is convinced that other UN Human Rights mechanisms, such as UN Treaty Bodies or the UPR, should be more systematically and holistically utilised in order to enhance implementation of HR Committee recommendations.

#### What's next?

#### In 2019, we plan to:

- Support CSOs from the **DRC** and **Kazakhstan** to engage with the **UPR in order** to enhance implementation of HR Committee recommendations.
- To work closely with CSOs in their national advocacy efforts in relation to the promotion of the implementation of the HR Committee recommendations in **Cameroon, DRC, Eswatini, Guatemala, Honduras, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Thailand** and **Viet Nam**, wherever possible, in combination with the review mechanisms of other UN Human Rights Bodies.



## Strategic Objective 2:

### Increase ratification and enhance implementation of ICCPR

#### Our goal:

Contribute to the universal ratification of the ICCPR and to the implementation of the recommendations of the HR Committee through genuine cooperation with the national authorities.





# 1 Contribute to the ratification of ICCPR and its two Optional Protocols

## Our commitment:

To provide legal expertise and technical advice to State actors including national Parliamentarians on the ICCPR and the ratification process. This approach is combined with raising the awareness of other stakeholders and the production of pedagogic tools.

## Our success in 2018:

- The Centre carried out an assessment of Myanmar's progress towards ratifying the ICCPR and identified areas for further effective intervention, in the framework of a project funded by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). It also secured new funding from the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), allowing it to continue this project.
- New funding from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) allowed the Centre, Amnesty International and other partner NGOs to undertake advocacy on **Nicaragua**, urging the State to comply with its reporting obligations to the UN

Treaty Bodies. Some of the actions we took included submitting a briefing note ahead of the State's UPR and organising a meeting with HR Committee members to call for Nicaragua to be reviewed in light of the deteriorating human rights situation in the country, despite the absence of a report.

***Why it is important:*** As of December 2018, there are still 25 UN Member States which have yet to become a party to the ICCPR. Recognising that it is a largely State-driven process, the Centre continues to assist national efforts and to enhance domestic processes to ratify the ICCPR. To this end, the Centre has provided in-depth training in order to increase local NGOs' knowledge about the ICCPR, the steps needed to ratify the Covenant and the subsequent reporting obligations.



## What's next? In 2019, we plan to:

- Assist Myanmar in signing the ICCPR and continue activities aimed at ratification and effective implementation of the ICCPR by the State;
- Seek concrete opportunities and resources in order to promote ratification of the ICCPR by Malaysia and Pacific Island countries.

## 2 Increase the visibility of HR Committee's recommendations at the national and international level

### Our commitment:

To carry out various creative activities to disseminate the HR Committee's recommendations and raise awareness among national stakeholders, including organising high-level country visits with Committee members and expert meetings focusing on relevant HR Committee recommendations.

### Our success in 2018:

- We carried out follow-up missions in **Ecuador, Madagascar, Liberia, Thailand, DRC** and **Eswatini**, where we facilitated meetings with Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Ministries of Justice and Ministries of Interior.
- We provided briefings on the ICCPR review for diplomatic communities in **Madagascar, Thailand, DRC** and **Eswatini**.
- As part of the long-term engagement with our national partners, we organised thematic missions in **Liberia** and **Jamaica** and evaluation missions in **Ecuador, Burkina Faso, Ghana** and **Togo** for the first time.
- We provided a **series of three training sessions for journalists** on follow-up to the HR Committee's recommendations in **Togo**.

**Why it is important:** The Centre plays a leading role in ensuring that the HR Committee's recommendations are implemented and have an impact on the ground. This is achieved through raising awareness and deepening understanding of the HR Committee's concerns, as well as through genuine dialogue and constructive engagement with State authorities to find concrete measures for improved implementation. To this end, the Centre produces awareness raising materials (booklets, posters, video clips), organises public events and meetings with national authorities, as well as partnerships with National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up (NMRF) and cooperates with UN Agencies.

### What's next?

#### In 2019, we plan to:

- Work together with national partners to produce **awareness raising materials in countries recently reviewed by the HR Committee (videos, posters, booklets)**.
- **Translate, when necessary, the recommendations of the HR Committee into national languages.**
- Carry out country visits with members of the HR Committee in **Belarus, Cameroon, Guatemala, Honduras, Lebanon** and **Niger**.
- Carry out country visit with members of the HR Committee in **Thailand** for more comprehensive follow-up and preparation for the next review, including systematic assessment of implementation of Committee's recommendations.
- **Organise thematic conferences to support States in the implementation of their recommendations in Kazakhstan, Eswatini and in DRC.**



## The Committee's recommendations as a key tool for leverage at the national level in Eswatini

Federica Masi, Eswatini Country Director at COSPE

- **What are the main challenges in the implementation of the Committee's recommendations at the national level and how did the follow-up mission address them?**

Challenges include shrinking spaces for civil society, especially when operating in the area of civil and political rights, lack of political will, lack of spaces of dialogue between government officers, officials and civil society, lack of pressure from public opinion for policy reforms or implementation. The follow-up mission provided an opportunity to engage the State and raise the voice of civil society. It provided a framework for constructive dialogue.

- **What is the importance of the links between international NGOs based in Geneva like us and NGOs in the field?**

The connections between national advocacy actions and international advocacy opportunities give strength to civil society in the field, protecting HRDs from abuses and threats, helping them to overcome restrictions on freedom of expression at the country level and to put pressure on policy reforms or implementation. The Centre plays a key role, providing guidance on how best to link the HR Committee's work with civil society advocacy strategies, connecting HRDs and activists with HR Committee

members and international NGOs, and facilitating Committee members' in country missions.

- **What are the next key steps in your fight to denounce human rights violations in Eswatini?**

The next steps include reinforcing collective advocacy actions for the implementation of ICCPR/CEDAW/UPR recommendations among different national civil society organisations (four campaigns on different priority areas), using international human rights instruments to submit shadow reports (CEDAW 2019, UPR 2020), promoting in country visits of Treaty Body members and/or the African Commission on Human and People's Rights Commissioner for Eswatini.



### 3 Create a space for national dialogue

#### Our commitment:

To initiate and reinforce national dialogue between national authorities and other stakeholders, in particular National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and civil society on the implementation of the recommendations of the HR Committee.

#### Our success in 2018:

- We organised a first round table in **Madagascar** with representatives of the National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up (NMRF) and civil society on the recommendations of the HR Committee.
- We developed a tool and assisted efforts of civil society to monitor and assess implementation of HR Committee's recommendations in **Thailand** on enforced disappearances, torture and conditions of detention.
- In **Ecuador** we convened a roundtable with CSOs from all over the country, State representatives, members of the diplomatic community and international organisations. Each stakeholder presented their role and challenges they faced in complying with the HR Committee's recommendations. This was an important step toward enabling social dialogue, something which was difficult to achieve at the time of the country review.
- We worked with Liberia's Civil Society Human Rights Advocacy Platform and other national and international NGOs to organise a conference on transitional justice in the State. This issue was earmarked as a key priority by the HR Committee;
- In **Eswatini**, we worked with the NGO COSPE to organise a roundtable on the implementation of the ICCPR. The event

was facilitated by the NHRI and included the participation of representatives from various Government ministries, civil society organisations, the EU and US Ambassadors, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and other relevant stakeholders.

*Why it is important: Ongoing dialogue with the national authorities, NHRIs and representatives of civil society is essential to ensuring cooperation with the HR Committee and to monitoring the progress made by States in implementing the recommendations of the HR Committee. To this end, the Centre developed several strategies for engaging in a dialogue with States' representatives on the Committee's key recommendations. The primary targets of this dialogue were the NMRF and other governmental bodies responsible for the implementation of the HR Committee's recommendations. Activities included briefings of reviews held in Geneva, presentation of progress reports and thematic meetings with international experts.*

#### What's next? In 2019, we plan to:

- Organise multi-stakeholders roundtables with members of the HR Committee in **Belarus, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guatemala, Honduras, Kazakhstan** and in **Madagascar**.

## The importance and effectiveness of a space for dialogue between civil society and authorities in Madagascar

**Maria Raharinarivonirina, Director of ACAT-Madagascar**

### — What are the possibilities for dialogues between authorities and NGOs?

There were several possibilities for civil society to engage in dialogue with the authorities: a round table was organised with the inter-ministerial committee, which consists of 54 ministries, parliamentary institutions and civil society working on different issues: women's rights, rights of the child, people with disabilities, corruption, public life participation, environmental rights, land rights etc. HCDHED, an independent institution observing the rule of law and the protection of human rights in the country, the CNIDH, the national commission of human rights, the HCJ, an organ of the judiciary or the CFM, a national council in charge of national reconciliation.

### — Who benefited from ongoing Human Rights trainings and the reform of the Security Sector in Madagascar?

Several important actors participated in the trainings that were organised in Madagascar: the Police and the Gendarmerie Reform of the Security Sector in Madagascar, the National School of the Judiciary and the Clerks and the National School of the Penitentiary Administration, University of Ankatso. The Independent Anti-Corruption Bureau (BIANCO) also participated.

### — What is your assessment of the meeting we organized with the authorities during the follow-up mission with Fabian Salvioli, former member of the HR Committee?

The follow-up mission was extremely useful to raise the recommendations of the HR Committee with all the stakeholders, including representatives from the Government, the NHRI and the human rights defenders. After several months, we can say that some of the recommendations are taken seriously by the authorities. For example, the NHRI is now better equipped and has an increased budget. But we need to continue to push for more progress in several other areas, such as the amendment of the torture law or the establishment of the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture.





## Strategic Objective 3:

Contribute to the  
strengthening of the HR  
Committee's work

### Our goal:

Strengthen the legitimacy of the HR Committee,  
promote its work and provide expertise on emerging  
challenges on the implementation of the ICCPR.



# 1 Improve the scrutiny and transparency of the elections of HR Committee members

## Our commitment:

Work in close partnership with TB-Net to strengthen the legitimacy of the UN Treaty Bodies and the HR Committee in particular, through the improvement and alignment of working methods and a more transparent election process.

## Our success in 2018

- Working in collaboration with TB-Net and Amnesty International, we submitted interviews to all candidates running for the 2018 UN Treaty Body elections, with the aim of enhancing visibility of the election process.
- **We monitored the 2018 UN Treaty Body elections on a dedicated website ([untbelections.org](http://untbelections.org)), promoting respect for expertise, independence and diversity of membership.**
- We organised three events with State Parties in Geneva and New York to share best practices on open and transparent nomination elections processes at the national level.
- We participated in several Expert Meetings organised by the Geneva Academy on the “2020 Treaty Body Review Process”.
- We participated in the Chairpersons

Meeting in New York to further advocate harmonisation of the follow-up procedure of the UN Treaty Bodies, as envisaged in the 2017 Expert Meeting organised jointly with the Geneva Academy.

## What's next? In 2019, we plan to:

- Organise, jointly with the Geneva Academy and the Paris Human Rights Center, an Expert Meeting on the UN Treaty Bodies' individual complaints procedures.
- Work in partnership with TB-Net to provide in-depth research and analysis of the “2020 Treaty Body Review Process”.
- Organise with TB-Net and its partners, a civil society consultation on the “2020 Treaty Body Review Process” and ensure that the voice of civil society is strongly taken into consideration in any reform adopted by State Parties.

**Why it is important:** The composition of the UN Treaty Bodies and specifically the HR Committee is a major factor that influences the quality of its work and ultimately its legitimacy. The Centre has been engaged for several years in increasing awareness among stakeholders and reinforcing public scrutiny of the election process to ensure that the principles of independence, competence, equitable geographical distribution and gender balance, as set out in the UN Human Rights Treaties, are fully respected. Since 2016, the

Centre has carried out campaigns and election monitoring in close cooperation with TB-Net, ensuring a common approach for all the Treaty Bodies. We are convinced that the UN Treaty Bodies should harmonise their working methods in order to become more efficient and accessible, particularly for civil society. To this end, the Centre is part of a longstanding effort coordinated by the Geneva Academy, aimed at generating solutions for streamlining the work of the UN Treaty Bodies, with particular focus on the reporting procedure.



## The role of NGOs in the 2020 review to strengthen the UN Treaty Bodies

**Felix Kirchmeier, Executive Director, Geneva Human Rights Platform; Geneva Academy**

- **Which activities did you carry out in the run up to the 2020 review to strengthen the UN Treaty Bodies?**

The Geneva Academy created an academic platform in 2015 on the 2020 TB Review. In the following years we held numerous expert meetings in Geneva and abroad, including 7 regional consultations hosted by academic partners on all continents. Through an open call we also received some 80 written contributions and then condensed all the input in our 2018 report “Optimizing the Human Rights Treaty Bodies”.

To link this academic process to political debates, we held regular meetings with OHCHR, Treaty Bodies and NGOs, and organised monthly briefings for the diplomatic community in Geneva – our Geneva Academy Fridays – and two briefings for diplomats in New York. Today we continue the process, providing research input to areas not addressed by the academic platform, such as the technical details around the Individual Communications procedures of the TBs, or fleshing out details, such

as a systematic coordinated calendar for TB reviews.

- **Which aspects of the current UN Treaty Bodies are most problematic, according to the different stakeholders you have interacted with during these activities?**

There are four main areas that have come up over and over again:

1. The lack of universality: in the current system, a state decides when and if to report. Not legally, but practically. This



results in grotesque under-reporting, and thus spares exactly those who do not collaborate from any form of scrutiny by the Treaty Bodies. States that take their reporting obligation seriously are as a result exposed to much higher scrutiny than those who do not.

2. The lack of financial and human resources, as well as the structure of human resources, and their prioritisation. As the treaties themselves do not provide the necessary guidance, efficiency problems arise in the tensions between General Assembly, OHCHR and Treaty Bodies themselves. The management of resources also has implications for the accessibility of the Treaty Bodies themselves and to their jurisprudence.

3. The way that Treaty Body members are selected. This has a great bearing on other points, such as trust among Treaty Body members and delegation of power on procedural decisions to the Treaty Body Chairpersons, and generally on governance of the system.

4. And overall, the shortcomings in implementation on the ground. This is of course a multi-faceted problem and difficult to address in direct causality.

One issue that is surely detrimental to the implementation is the low visibility of the Treaty Bodies and knowledge about them, which leads to low political pressure in regard to the implementation of recommendations coming from this system. Therefore one of the main suggestions of the Academic Platform is to cluster Treaty Body dialogues of any given country to focus attention on one specific date.

#### — What will happen between now and 2020?

Hopefully the growing awareness of the importance of this process, which we see among diplomats in Geneva, will be matched by diplomats in New York, engaging in discussions on the resolution and its financial implications. In January 2020 the Secretary General will publish his third report on the state of the system and the implementation of the measures taken under resolution 68/268 and potentially in April or at the latest in October/November, delegations will negotiate a follow-up resolution to 68/268.

## 2 Reinforce meaningful civil society participation and increase the outreach of the work of HR Committee

### Our commitment:

To improve the outreach of the work of the HR Committee and create new and safe spaces for HRDs attending Committee sessions, including through the use of new technologies.

### Our success in 2018:

- We published **three newsletters** highlighting the main developments of each session of the HR Committee and **three newsletters on the assessment of the implementation** of the recommendations according to the follow-up procedure.
- In cooperation with the IHEID and its Law Clinic, we produced our fifth edition of the **Yearbook** on the HR Committee's findings in 2017. The research analysed the main developments in the Committee's jurisprudence and Concluding Observations.
- We continued to update our **database on cases decided** by the HR Committee, which now features more than 1400 cases, fully indexed and searchable by keywords, dates, countries and sessions.

- We facilitated the remote participation of CSOs during the HR Committee briefings on **Sudan** and **Hungary**.

### What's next? In 2019, we plan to:

- Work in close collaboration with the IHEID and its Law Clinic to produce our sixth edition of the **Yearbook** on the HR Committee's 2018 findings.
- We will develop our online presence, in particular on social media in order to further increase the reach of the work of the HR Committee.
- We will increase the use of new technologies, particularly video conferencing, to facilitate interaction between the members of the HR Committee and CSOs.
- We will continue to work closely with the Focal Point on Reprisals of the HR Committee to mitigate any risks of reprisals against HRDs.

**Why it is important:** It is fundamental for the HR Committee to have genuine dialogue with civil society in order to be able to review the level of implementation of the ICCPR. To this end, the Centre facilitates the organisation of formal and informal CSOs briefings. Such meetings are a unique opportunity for the members of the Committee to receive the latest information regarding the implementation of the ICCPR at the national

level. Measures are taken to ensure the safety and protection of HRDs against reprisals, including through close cooperation with the Committee's Focal Point on Reprisals to prevent any risks of reprisals against HRDs upon their return to their home countries. In addition, the Centre is engaged in promoting the work of the Committee to the HRDs and practitioners, via social media, online tools and in-depth analysis of the Committee's findings.

## Protecting Human Rights Defenders from reprisals

### Bamariam Koita, member of the Human Rights Committee and Rapporteur on reprisals

- **As Rapporteur on reprisals against those who cooperate with the Human Rights Committee, what is your main role?**

It is the rapporteur's responsibility to monitor and ensure the implementation of the right for all to freely access and communicate with the Human Rights Committee without hindrance on the issues of civil and political rights protected by the Covenant. This includes preventive measures as well as increasing the visibility of cases of reprisals, as a deterrent to reduce their occurrence. The rapporteur's role also includes receiving and assessing allegations of intimidation or reprisals and transmitting this information to the Committee in coordination with other United Nations actors active in the fight against reprisals, in order to adopt the most appropriate strategy.

- **How can HRDs submit information about intimidation or reprisals to the Committee, after having cooperated with this mechanism ?**

All information relating to acts of intimidation, threats, harassment and reprisals against HRDs is received and recorded by a focal point in the Secretariat, who in conjunction with the Rapporteur carries out preliminary checks on all the parties concerned and collects all data relevant to the processing of the cases submitted to it. The Rapporteur communicates through the secretariat with affected persons and relevant States parties to prevent risks and to ensure that individuals or groups alleged to be victims of intimidation or reprisals are afforded protection from the State party concerned. It may request the State party to provide information on the protection

measures granted and to monitor their implementation.

- **Which measures can the Human Rights Committee take to prevent and respond to reports of intimidation and reprisals ?**

The Committee condemns all acts of intimidation and retaliation directed against individuals or groups contributing to the work of the human rights Treaty Bodies, and urges States to take all appropriate measures to prevent and eliminate such human rights violations.

The Committee complies with the San José Guiding Principles on the Fight Against Bullying or Reprisals adopted in July 2015 by the Chairs of the UN Treaty Bodies. These principles emphasise the responsibility of States "to avoid such acts and to ensure the prevention, protection, investigation and establishment of responsibility, as well as the access of victims to remedies". They further stipulate that Treaty Bodies must take measures when they receive allegations of intimidation or reprisals, as well as preventive measures to protect vulnerable individuals or groups.



## 3 Contribute to the enrichment of the HR Committee's findings on thematic issues

### Our commitment:

Provide strategic advocacy materials to the HR Committee to ensure it is in a better position to meaningfully address key emerging issues and challenges related to the implementation of the ICCPR.

### Our success in 2018:

- The Centre continued its long term engagement on the issue of corruption and how this is addressed by the UN Treaty Bodies:
- We published our first research report on UN Treaty Bodies and their findings on corruption, covering all the work of the UN Treaty Bodies from 2007 to 2018 and suggesting concrete steps to better streamline and systematise their approach towards corruption.
- We organised an international conference on **human rights and corruption in cooperation with the Geneva Academy and the OHCHR in February 2018**. The Centre also organised a first expert consultation to discuss and review the draft of a **Practitioners' Guide on corruption and human rights violations**. This guide will support efforts of anti-corruption groups to better engage with the UN Treaty Bodies and in particular the HR Committee.
- We drafted UPR advocacy reports on **human rights and corruption** on three key countries - Azerbaijan, Cameroon and Uzbekistan.
- We participated in a meeting organised by the Geneva Academy, that gathered members of the UN Treaty Bodies, namely the HR Committee, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Committee Against Torture (CAT) and the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), CSOs and OHCHR to **develop strategies to better**

### streamline the way the issue of corruption is addressed by the UN Treaty Bodies.

*Why it is important:* Corruption has a negative impact on the enjoyment of civil and political rights. It undermines justice and accountability reforms and remains both a driver for human rights abuse and a barrier to States' implementation of treaty-based human rights obligations. The Centre identified this issue as a priority among its thematic expertise, because corruption was rarely addressed by the UN Treaty Bodies until 2017.

### What's next? In 2019, we plan to:

- Continue our work on **corruption and human rights**, including by identifying possible **individual cases** of human rights violations related to corruption that could be submitted to the UN Treaty Bodies. The Centre will also support a **platform for anti-corruption groups** aiming at developing new ways to engage with the UN Human Rights Mechanisms. The Centre will send out **thematic newsletters** on the issue of corruption and human rights.
- The **Practitioners' Guide on corruption and human rights** will be launched in 2019. The Centre will organise a training session for anti-corruption groups to coincide with the launch at the Conference of State parties to the UN Convention Against Corruption in Abu Dhabi in December 2019. A side-event will be organised during the Human Rights Council in Geneva to introduce the guide.



## The vital role of civil society in the work of the HR Committee

### Marcia Kran, Member of the HR Committee

#### — Why is it so important for the Human Rights Committee to receive information from civil society?

Non-governmental submissions to the HR Committee are tremendously useful supplements during the reporting process. They provide up-to-date information on the actual implementation of human rights based on the lived experience of rights holders in the country concerned, identifying who is affected and the extent of the problems. While international human rights groups can cover many issues, local human rights groups are closest to the issues on the ground and can have a more comprehensive understanding of the human rights challenges and the reasons they exist. Civil society organisations also benefit by making submissions to the Committee, as it helps build domestic coalitions, inform and focus local groups on the universal human rights protections their governments have agreed to apply to its citizens, and provides another legal tool to assist them in advocacy both at home and abroad.

#### — What do you see as the role of the Centre for Civil and Political Rights? What is the importance of the links between international NGO based in Geneva and NGOs in the field?

The NGO input coordinated by the Centre is critical if the Committee is to have a clear grasp of the *de facto* situation in the countries it reviews. I greatly appreciate the Centre's coordination of NGO input to the Committee in advance of the constructive dialogues. The information provided by, and the presence of, civil society organisations from inside the country under review and elsewhere, are of practical value to us. Your organisation makes

in depth information including data available to the Committee. It would often not be possible for us to obtain it otherwise. This information ultimately contributes to higher quality dialogues, and in turn, more specific Concluding Observations issued by the Committee for action by State parties.

#### — How can the Centre best achieve its mandate?

The safe space and concern for confidentiality that the Centre provides, built on the relationships of trust with human rights defenders and organisations in various countries, is crucial given the risks that civil society organisations and human rights defenders face in some countries today. The Centre enables many civil society and national NGOs to participate in the reporting process. This, in turn, paves the way for them to leverage the recommendations to prompt implementation and follow up by the State party. I am hopeful that your efforts to increase civil society engagement with the Committee will continue and expand.



## Our Supporters and partners

The Centre for Civil and Political Rights is grateful for the generous support of the following donors, including Governmental entities and Foundations.

### CHF 100'000.- +

Open Society Foundations (OSF) & (OSJI)  
MFA Switzerland  
Etat et Canton de Genève

### CHF 50'000 - CHF 100'000

Ville de Genève  
Loterie Romande

### CHF 15'000 - CHF 50'000

MFA UK (FCO)  
National Endowment for Democracy (NED)

### CHF 2'000 - CHF 15'000

OI Francophonie  
MFA Australia (Embassy in Thailand)  
MFA Canada



## 2018 income & expenditure

In 2018, the Centre for Civil and Political Rights reported a total income of CHF 694'349.- which is an increase of 13% compared to 2017 (CHF 603'633.-). In 2017, the Centre continued to save 1% of the total of funding received to improve its reserves which now stand at CHF 45'631.

The number of donors was similar in 2018 compared to the previous years with several donors providing support for multi-year projects. The main challenge for the Centre is to secure and increase core funding in order to carry out activities in countries where no related projects exist.

Income and costs statement for the year 2018 1st January - 31st December, in CHF  
(This is an extract of the audited financial statements for 2018. A full version is available upon request at [info@ccprcentre.org](mailto:info@ccprcentre.org)).

Income		
Governments	356'508.-	CHF
Fundations	307'685.-	CHF
Other revenue	30'156.-	CHF
<b>Total income</b>	<b>694'349.-</b>	<b>CHF</b>
Costs		
Obj.1: HRDs support for ICCPR implementation	173'618.-	CHF
Obj 2: ICCPR ratification and implementation	135'665.-	CHF
Obj 3: Support to the HR Committee and thematics	172'614.-	CHF
Administration, Communication Fundraising	82'685.-	CHF
Governance and strategy	9'193.-	CHF
Net movement in funds	74'943.-	CHF
<b>Total costs</b>	<b>648'718.-</b>	<b>CHF</b>
<b>Income (deficit) for the year (inc. reserve fund)</b>	<b>45'631.-</b>	<b>CHF</b>
Assets		
Cash and equivalents	302'010.-	CHF
Debtors	189.-	CHF
Transitory assets	13'126.-	CHF
<b>Total</b>	<b>315'325.-</b>	<b>CHF</b>
Liabilities and reserves		
Short term liabilities	16'282.-	CHF
Deferred grants	214'417.-	CHF
Free capital and reserve funds	84'626.-	CHF
<b>Total</b>	<b>315'235.-</b>	<b>CHF</b>

## Our Staff



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**Nitza Schall**  
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**André Afanou**  
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