

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

CENTRE FOR CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS – CCPR

Building partnerships, inclusiveness and scaling digital access for the universal promotion of civil and political rights



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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND THE DIRECTOR

It is our privilege to share the Centre for Civil and Political Rights ('the Centre') Annual Report 2022, which outlines our actions and achievements from January to December 2022.

Following two years of pandemic-related restrictions impacting the UN Human Rights Committee ('the Committee') and limited online participation by Civil Society Organizations ('CSOs'), 2022 will be remembered by many as the year that in-person engagement returned to a 'new normal'. The Centre was pleased that from February 2022 we were able to attend Committee sessions in-person in Geneva, significantly improving our ability to interface with Committee members. Civil society representatives were also able to attend in-person from June 2022 onwards.

The lifting of travel restrictions also meant that the Centre was able to resume its in-country missions in 2022. We began with follow-up missions in Kenya and in El Salvador in February, before reaching full capacity and conducting a total of ten field missions

throughout the year. We also continued to leverage the tools and modalities developed during COVID-19, including the use of hybrid CSOs in-country consultations and briefings with Committee's members, to allow for more inclusive CSOs participation.

COVID-19 also highlighted that clear, simplified and harmonised access to the findings of the UN human rights mechanisms is crucial, especially when CSOs are prevented from being physically present in Geneva. To facilitate this access, the Centre continued the development of online interactive tools in coordination with other partners (including TB-Net) to promote the dissemination and integration of the Committee and other Treaty Bodies' main findings. This included a data visualisation tool on Myanmar, complete with a map and other graphics outlining UN Member States' engagement with Myanmar since the military coup, as well as an interactive map, developed in partnership with a national NGO, reflecting documented human rights violations in Burundi.

During the reporting period, the Centre also began to pilot some of the key interventions planned for inclusion in our next Strategic Plan (2024-2027). These included:

- Increasing the strategic use of follow-up missions, to ensure progress can be tracked and monitored over time;
- Increasing engagement with Parliamentarians to raise awareness of the key role they can play in the implementation of UN Treaty Bodies' recommendations; and
- Conducting multistakeholder initiatives with other international organisations to assist national stakeholders in their understanding of issues raised in priority recommendations, and to streamline the process of implementation when similar concerns are raised by different UN bodies.

This year, the Centre was once again able to demonstrate the significant value of our interventions. In alignment with our mandate of facilitating inclusive and meaningful CSOs

participation in the work of the Committee, the Centre also responded to evolving national and regional contexts. We adopted a 'think outside of the box' approach and developed innovative ways of promoting civil and political rights and promote CSOs participation, especially in environments where there is minimal cooperation with UN mechanisms. This included work conducted by the Centre in countries that show poor or no collaboration with the Committee (i.e. Russian Federation and Nicaragua); countries that have not ratified the ICCPR (i.e. Myanmar or Cuba) or those where participation in civil society introduces significant security risk (i.e. Burundi, Uzbekistan and Venezuela).

The Centre's pursuit for universal respect for civil and political rights would not have been possible without the continued and close collaboration of the Centre's partners, donors and supporters. We remain indebted to their steadfast engagement and trust as we work to build a more just and sustainable world, in which civil and political rights are well known and respected by and for everyone.



Victor Rodriguez Rescia
President



Patrick Mutzenberg
Director

WHO WE ARE



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 support to civil society and through connecting key actors engaged to implement the UN Human Rights Committee's recommendations at a national level.

“One of the Centre's main strengths, is that it really brings the ICCPR provisions down to the reality in the field, linking them to the real struggle of people around the world.

For this, the mission of the Centre is essential, unique and irreplaceable”

.....
- Nimalka Fernando,
Director of Women's Political Academy, Sri Lanka -

WHERE WE WORK

Headquarters:



Geneva (Switzerland)

Regional Offices:



Africa
(Togo)



Asia-Pacific
(Thailand)



Latin America
(Costa Rica)

National Coordinators (2022):



El Salvador



Guatemala



Kenya



Honduras



ASIA

- Myanmar
- Sri Lanka
- Viet Nam
- Uzbekistan
- Nepal



AFRICA

- Burundi
- Congo Brazzaville
- DR Congo
- Ethiopia
- Eswatini
- Gabon
- Kenya
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mauritania
- Niger
- Senegal
- Togo
- Uganda
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe



LATIN AMERICA

- Cuba
- El Salvador
- Honduras
- Guatemala
- Nicaragua
- Uruguay
- Venezuela
- Bolivia

A YEAR IN FIGURES

Training and Capacity Building for Civil Society Organisations ('CSOs')

11



Trainings and Consultations on the ICCPR were conducted in 11 countries

- Burundi
- Congo-Brazzaville (online)
- DR Congo (online)
- El Salvador
- Gabon (online)
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Madagascar
- Nicaragua (in Costa Rica)
- Sri Lanka
- Uganda (online)

150



Journalists and journalism students trained

on how to identify and report on Human Rights issues in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

Support to CSOs Advocacy

Submission of CSOs reports to UN Human Rights Mechanisms

12

CSOs reports to Human Rights Committee

- Prior to the review (LOI and LOIPR): Burundi, Congo Brazzaville, Gabon, Uganda
- Reports for the review: Bolivia, Ethiopia, Uruguay, Nicaragua, Sri Lanka
- Follow-up reports: El Salvador, Guatemala, Senegal

4

CSOs reports to other UN Treaty Bodies

- Review: Committee Against Torture: Bolivia, Cuba, El Salvador, Malawi

2

CSOs trainings on UPR

- Haiti, Sri Lanka

5

CSOs reports to UPR

- Eswatini, Mauritania, Togo, Venezuela, Zimbabwe

9

Oral statement/advocacy papers on the Human Rights situation

- Burundi, Eswatini, Guatemala, Haiti, Liberia, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Venezuela and Zimbabwe

4

CSOs series of webinars / roundtables on Follow-up to the HR Committee's Recommendations

- DR Congo, El Salvador, Madagascar and Guatemala

NGO briefings

22

CSOs briefings

380

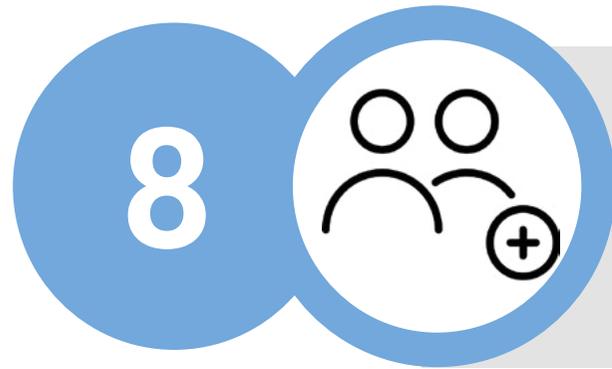
HRDs participating in persons or online

14

HRDs sponsored to participate in UN advocacy meetings

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Bolivia (review) | • Ethiopia (review) | • Philippines (review) |
| • Brazil (LOI/LOIPR) | • Georgia (review) | • Qatar (review) |
| • Cambodia (review) | • Iraq (review) | • Russian Federation (review) |
| • China - Macau (review) | • Ireland (review) | • Turkmenistan (LOI/LOIPR) |
| • China - Hong Kong (review) | • Israel (review) | • Uruguay (review) |
| • Colombia (LOI/LOIPR) | • Kyrgyzstan (review) | • Venezuela (LOI/LOIPR) |
| • Egypt (LOI/LOIPR) | • Japan (review) | |
| | • Luxembourg (review) | |
| | • Nicaragua (review) | |

Engagement with National Authorities



Follow-up missions

- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Kenya
- Madagascar
- Mauritania
- Uruguay



Raising awareness on ICCPR provisions

Thematic Studies, Guidelines and online tools

- Practical guide on Freedom of Religion and Belief (FORB) translated into Vietnamese
- Yearbook on UNTBs' 2021 jurisprudence
- Booklets on Compared Jurisprudence Inter American System/Human Rights Committee
- Collection of thematic factsheets for UPR Advocacy Haiti
- Posters on Recommendations of the Human Rights Committee in Kenya and Mauritania



Social Media



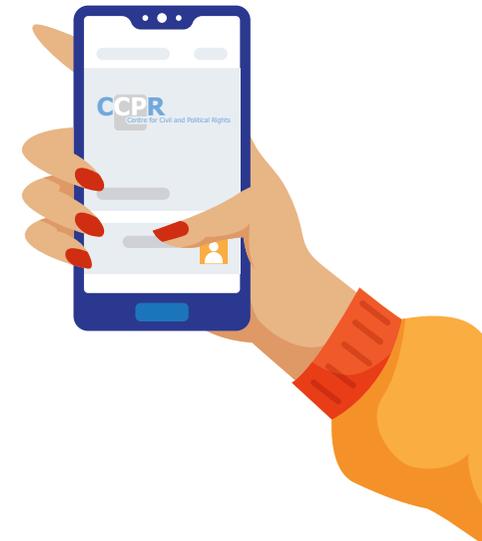
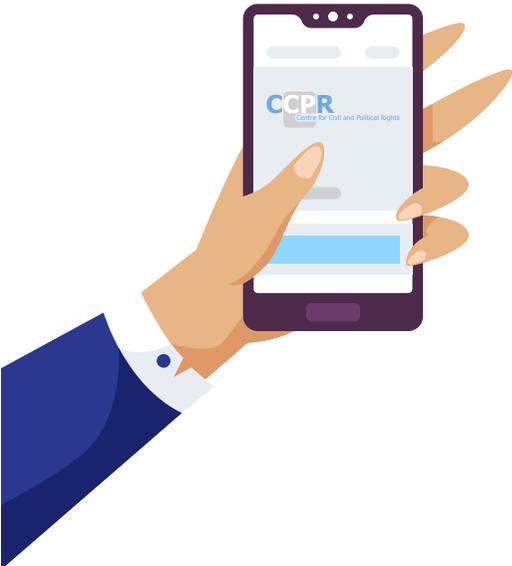
TWITTER IN ENGLISH



FACEBOOK



NEWSLETTERS



A YEAR IN REVIEW



- Mauritania: **Online webinar** on freedom of expression and HRDs
 - Kenya: **Follow-up Mission** with HR Committee member Helène Tigroudja
 - El Salvador: **Follow-up Mission**
-
- **134th session of the HR Committee.** Briefings for CSOs from Qatar, Israel, Iraq, Bolivia, and Cambodia
 - Guatemala: **Follow Up Mission**
 - Kenya: **CSOs participation in the validation of the Government's Implementation Matrix**
 - Sri Lanka: 3 online consultations for HRDs to prepare for ICCPR review + submission of a CSOs report
 - Madagascar: **Four in-region NGOs consultations** with Action des Chrétiens pour l'Abolition de la Torture ('ACAT')
 - Honduras: **Follow-up Mission**
 - Cuba: Submission of a joint **CSOs report to the CAT**
-
- Madagascar: Joint **Follow-up Mission** with partners UPR-Info and ACAT
 - Burundi: In-country **Training for CSOs**
 - **135th session of the HR Committee.** Briefings for CSOs from Luxembourg, Uruguay, Ireland, Georgia, Hong Kong and Macao
 - Southern Africa - Out and Proud: The Centre supported five HRDs to do LGBTIQ+ advocacy at the Human Rights Council



- Myanmar: **Advocacy work at HRC 50**
- DR Congo: Two meetings with HRDs on indicators to assess implementation of the Concluding Observations (COBs)
- Mauritania: **Follow-up Mission** with HR Committee member Mahjoub El Haiba
- Ethiopia: **CSO National consultations** and submission of CSOs joint report
- DR Congo: Three regional online meetings with CSOs representatives from provinces on civil and political rights
- Uruguay: **Follow-up Mission** with HR Committee member Hernán Quezada
- Sri Lanka: Advocacy visit with two HRDs at HRC 51
- Myanmar: **Advocacy work** at HRC 51
- Myanmar: HRD Advocacy visit to Geneva
- Viet Nam: Launch of the Freedom of Religion or Belief ('FoRB') Guide (**EN** and **Vietnamese**)
- **136th session of the HR Committee.** Briefings for CSOs from the Philippines, Kyrgyzstan, Japan, Ethiopia, Nicaragua and Russia
- Uzbekistan: Asset Returns – Swiss / Uzbek CSOs in-country consultations
- El Salvador: Submission of a joint CSOs report to the CAT
- Southern Africa: Final consultation on the EU Project Out and Proud (LGBTIQ+)
- Nicaragua: Follow-up mission in Costa Rica with HRDs in exile from Nicaragua and HR Committee member Vasilka Sancin
- Sri Lanka: **Advocacy travel** and participation to the UPR Pre-sessions + submission of a **CSOs report**
- Publication of **Booklets** on Compared Jurisprudence Inter American System/Human Rights Committee

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2022, the Centre continued to progress the implementation of our 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. Our general objectives are to:

1

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

2

Increase the ratification and enhance the implementation of the ICCPR, and

3

Contribute to strengthening the work of the Human Rights Committee.



AFRICA



DR Congo: Developing common indicators to monitor the implementation of the Committee's recommendations effectively



Ensuring a prompt and effective dissemination of the Human Rights Committee's recommendations in countries and monitoring the progress of their implementation by national stakeholders has been one of the Centre's core activities since its inception. In 2022, the Centre has identified the **need to expand its**

focus from the key recommendations selected for the follow-up procedure **to monitoring of all recommendations**.

The **first pilot project** featuring a focus on all recommendations was carried out in the **DR Congo**, where the Centre developed a

monitoring tool that allows for the tracking of progress made toward implementing recommendations made by the Committee. The tool was developed in close cooperation with the Carter Center and our coalition of CSOs, and includes **clear indicators** designed to assist national stakeholders in identifying and critiquing measures taken by national authorities, from both a qualitative and quantitative perspective.

The development and adoption of indicators was conducted through a **series of webinars** held between July and December 2022. These webinars brought together **CSOs** involved in the follow-up of the Committee's recommendations and covered a **wide spectrum of civil and political rights issues** (i.e. the rights of children, women, conditions of detention, fight against impunity, protection civic space, among others). To improve the inclusiveness of the process, the Centre and its partner organisation worked to ensure that **representatives from different provinces** could participate in the consultations. The national authorities, and in particular, the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Human Rights (NMRF), were also actively involved in the creation and promotion of the tool.

The indicators are to be formally adopted and shared with the general public in May 2023, however the **tool** is already available online.

“The first pilot project featuring a focus on all recommendations was carried out in the DR Congo.

In 2022, the Centre has identified the need to expand its focus from the key recommendations selected for the follow-up procedure to monitoring of all recommendations”

.....
- Patrick Mutzenberg,
CCPR Centre's Director -

OUR IMPACT IN BRIEF

- Development of SMART indicators to measure the implementation of Human Rights Committee's recommendations over time.
- Process of the identification of indicators was inclusive – bringing together various stakeholders, working on different human rights issues and representing different country provinces as well as the national authorities.
- Indicators were well received by all stakeholders as a useful way to keep track of progress over time.
- This pilot project will be repeated in other contexts in 2023.

Madagascar: Inclusiveness is the key



The activities carried out by the Centre in Madagascar in 2022 are a great example of our strategic approach to deploying multiple, coordinated interventions designed to promote the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee:

- **Inclusiveness:** Formally invite CSOs from all provinces of the country in consultations and/or invite selected representatives to the capital for decisional meetings;

- **Increase engagement with Parliamentarians:** Highlight their key role in the implementation process and work with them to understand the issues related to their role;
- **Partnership:** Work closely with other relevant international stakeholders with the ultimate aim of facilitating and streamlining the implementation process.

Our engagement in Madagascar began in May 2022 when the Centre, in collaboration

with ACAT-Madagascar, organised **four regional meetings to discuss current human rights challenges**. Each session brought together between 15 and 20 HRDs from a particular Province to discuss existing challenges in the country, as well as the implementation of UN Treaty Body recommendations and the UPR. Our discussions focused on the implementation status of each recommendation, the remaining challenges and possible actions that could be taken.

The month of HRDs' engagement ended with a series of **consultations jointly organized in Antananarivo** by the Centre, UPR-Info and CRAAD-OI in collaboration with the in-country Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights ('OHCHR Madagascar'). During this last round of consultations, participants developed a **methodology for drafting the UPR mid-term report and a report for the upcoming country review by the Committee**.

The Centre also organized **three half-day consultations for Parliamentarians** in Antananarivo to help them identify the recommendations where they can play an active role. This was especially important in promoting draft laws, such as those on the prohibition of child labour, statelessness and the law on torture.

The activities organised by the Centre and its partners revealed that **limited progress** had been made on the implementation of key recommendations from UN Bodies. While on the positive side, the Centre observed that the death penalty had been abolished, a law



“ Inclusiveness, an increased engagement with Parliamentarians and more partnerships as complementary tools to promote the implementation of the Committee’s recommendations ”

.....
- Patrick Mutzenberg,
CCPR Centre’s Director -

OUR IMPACT IN BRIEF

- CSOs consultations are more inclusive, with representatives from different regions.
- Launch of a CSOs platform ready to engage on the UN Treaty Bodies and UPR upcoming reviews.
- Long-term engagement with Parliamentarians to raise awareness on UN Treaty Bodies and their role in the implementation of the recommendations.

criminalising violence against women had been adopted and laws relating to the nationality of children now allows Malagasy nationality to be conferred appropriately.

However, there were **several areas where no progress has been made**, such as respect for the rights of refugees or on the issue of statelessness. The recent review by the Committee on the Rights of the Child showed that the issue of **child labour** (and its lack of prohibition in domestic law) remains unresolved. Finally, the **absolute prohibition**

of abortion, despite numerous clandestine cases, provoked passionate debate and it is difficult to envisage a pathway to remove this prohibition despite the commitment of certain Parliamentarians.

As next steps, the Centre, in partnership with UPR-info, will continue to **deliver** its **CSOs platform** to support HRDs based in Antananarivo as well as those in the provinces. This platform will play a key role in the next review cycles of the UN Treaty Bodies and the UPR.

Burundi: The importance of not leaving CSOs behind, especially when the State is reluctant to collaborate with the UN human rights mechanisms



Ongoing **cooperation and engagement with the UN Human Rights Bodies remains significantly limited** in Burundi, where authorities are also reluctant to collaborate with the UN Human Rights Council ('HRC').

The situation also presents significant **challenges for CSOs** in the country. In this respect, the Centre has observed that many HRDs and journalists have relocated from Burundi due to safety concerns and

those still working in the country face significant security risks.

As 2023 **will be a critical year for Burundi** with its upcoming UPR and also scheduled State party review by the Committee, the Centre initiated **strategic engagement** with our long-term partner SOS-Torture to prepare an early report on the implementation of the ICCPR. The Centre also began **work with a number of CSOs still operating in the country**, with the aim of coordinating a view on crucial human rights issues ahead of the scheduled reviews. In May 2022, the first consultation was held in Bujumbura with 38 HRDs, organised in close collaboration with the UN Resident Coordinator Office in Bujumbura and the Lutheran World Federation.

This first consultation was crucial for HRDs still operating in Burundi in order to prepare to engage with the UN human rights mechanisms. Success of this engagement can be demonstrated by the five thematic CSOs reports already submitted for the UPR. The Centre expects to continue its support in 2023 in preparation for the upcoming review of the Committee.

“ It’s a very difficult time for CSOs and HRDs in Burundi. The law restricts our ability to engage, the government is watching us, and we are scared: scared of talking, scared of being arrested. But we do want to fight for human rights and for a just society for us and for the next generations. Without the support of the Centre, we would have never dared coming together, we would have not submitted any information to those bodies that we did not even know existed. Also, the fact that an internationally well-known organisation is supporting us, makes us feel safer. I have no words to thank the Centre for all they have done for us and for our country. It means a lot to us ”

.....
- Participant of one HRDs consultation in Bujumbura -

OUR IMPACT IN BRIEF

- A CSOs platform was established in Bujumbura, engaging HRDs and CSOs still operating in the country and providing a safe space to express themselves.
- 38 HRDs have been trained on how to reach out to UN human rights mechanisms and draft meaningful and timely reports on key human rights issues in the country.
- Five thematic reports submitted to the Human Rights Council were drafted by the group based in Bujumbura.





Interview with **Lázarië Eeckeloo**,
Human Rights Officer in charge of the “Out & Proud” project

Our “Out & Proud” project sought to advocate for the rights of LGBTIQ+ persons and to fight discrimination in Southern Africa. This included strengthening the capacity of, and opportunities for, LGBTIQ+ people and human rights defenders in the region. It also sought to improve the legislative frameworks relating to non-discrimination in the region. Its implementation covered Malawi, Eswatini and Zimbabwe.

As the 3-year “Out and Proud” project is now ending (January 2023) what were the main achievements in terms of HRDs capacity-building activities?

Lázarië Eeckeloo: While this project started in 2020, travel restrictions introduced to combat COVID-19 meant that many of the planned activities were not able to be completed in-person. Once restrictions were lifted, a joint advocacy trip to Geneva was planned in 2022 for the partners from the three countries involved in the project. The visit to Geneva took place at the end of June, during HRC50. During their visit, the partners were able to connect in-person and engage

with the UN processes they had learnt about online.

The project included several southern African countries. Was there an exchange of experience between the different countries? Did the experience of civil society in one country inspire action elsewhere in the region?

Lázarië Eeckeloo: There were regular exchanges. There was a monthly coordination meeting that all partners attended, which increased awareness about what was happening in each country. It was also a way for partners to learn from each other, especially when there were activities or interventions planned in one

country on issues another partner had already worked through. Further, for the joint trip to Geneva and the advocacy on the renewal of the mandate of the Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity (“SOGI”), the partners were able to collaborate as this went beyond their national contexts.

The project ended in 2022. Is a follow-up planned? How can we ensure that the outputs and relationships built are able to continue?

Lázarië Eeckeloo: The project has now ended, but sustainable relationships have been built. Partners have gained experience in interacting with the UN system, and the Centre has learned about advocacy on the rights of



LGBTIQ+ people in Southern Africa. As a result, many networks have been broadened, both internally within the partner organisations but also across the continent. These relationships can be leveraged into the future – for example, the Independent Expert on SOGI opened a call for inputs regarding a report that partners have provided information on. The Centre was able to inform them about the opportunity and encouraged them to submit information.

“ The project has now ended, but sustainable relationships have been built and can be leveraged in the future ”



“ The Out and Proud Project was well-received by the LGBTI community in Zimbabwe and its profound effect will have a long-lasting impact. This project contributed immensely to building momentum, strengthening capacity and establishing data for the LGBTI community to use in its advocacy. Most importantly, with the expertise of the Centre for Civil and Political Rights, the project helped simplify engagement with the international system and UN human rights mechanisms, which is an otherwise intimidating and convoluted process of the average CSO in Zimbabwe.

With the technical assistance of the CCPR Centre and other Out and Proud partners (Cospo and SALC), we submitted a number of shadow reports. We also participated in the Universal Periodic Review (‘UPR’) process which led to the government of Zimbabwe accepting two SOGIE-related recommendations for the first time ever in the history of the state’s participation in the UPR - a massive win for the LGBTI community in Zimbabwe! ”

-Trevor Ncube,
CSO representative, member of TREAT Zimbabwe -



LATIN AMERICA



Review of Uruguay and Bolivia: promoting consistent and coordinated CSOs participation



CSOs participation in the State party review process is still at the core mandate of the Centre, with a strong commitment to ensuring that civil society is able to engage effectively with the Committee. In 2022, the Centre's Latin America and the Caribbean ('LAC') Programme identified **two countries where meaningful CSOs participation in the review process were under threat**. These included **Uruguay**, where CSOs appeared to be isolated in their advocacy work, and **Bolivia**, where the significant number of CSOs made alignment on key issues difficult.

In **Uruguay**, we identified that the engagement of HRDs during the pre-sessions phase of the State party review process was comparatively low, with the submission of only one report during the adoption of the List of Issues. For this reason, the Centre decided to elevate the country within its LAC Programme in order to **increase the participation of national CSOs** in the State party review scheduled for July 2022. This approach resulted in a **coalition of CSOs being formed and trained**. A **joint CSOs report** – signed by six CSOs – was also ultimately

“ The Centre identified two countries where meaningful CSOs participation in the review process was under threat: Uruguay, where CSOs appeared to be isolated in their advocacy work; and Bolivia, where the significant number of CSOs made alignment on key difficult issues ”

.....
- Mariel Merayo,
CCPR Centre's Regional Coordinator
for Latin America -

submitted in close partnership with our local partner, the Servicio Paz y Justicia ('SERPAJ'). This group of CSOs were also the only ones able to update the Committee during the Briefing organised by the Centre with the Committee's members.



We observed the converse situation in **Bolivia**. The State party has a **vibrant civil society community that is already well organised**, through a civil and political rights advocacy platform of 45 CSOs that convene under the umbrella of “Comunidad de Derechos Humanos”. In this instance, the Centre focussed on **facilitating coordination** among this important group and ensuring that the key messages and priorities were

agreed upon and shared by all the stakeholders. This exercise proved particularly challenging as a significantly wide range of topics were included in the List of Issues (LoI). As a result of the early preparatory work supported by the Centre, **all topics mentioned in the original LoI were addressed by the CSOs** Coalition and a **strategic advocacy plan** was successfully adopted.



OUR IMPACT IN BRIEF

Uruguay

- High number of CSOs engaged and trained prior to the Committee reviews, with the aim to ensure a meaningful CSOs participation in the process.
- CSOs report - co-signed by six CSOs - submitted prior to the review.
- Hybrid briefing between CSOs and the Committee on key human rights issues in the country.

Bolivia

- Facilitation of the coordination amongst the 45 members of an already existing CSOs coalition, ensuring key messages and priorities sent to the Committee were agreed upon and shared by all the stakeholders.
- CSO reports addressing all topics mentioned in the LoI.
- Development of a common “Strategic Advocacy Plan”.

Work in a hostile environment: Review of Nicaragua and Early engagement in Venezuela



Nicaragua is one of the State parties that has recently breached their international obligation to cooperate with the UN Treaty Bodies. This situation is concerning as the human rights situation in the country is extremely serious. In response, the Centre **activated a network of key stakeholders**,

both in country and in Geneva, to address the lack of participation of the State before three other Treaty Bodies (CESCR, CAT, CERD).

The Centre **successfully advocated** in coordination with other groups **for the establishment** of a special mechanism of investiga-

tion and accountability mandated by the Human Rights Council. The Centre also advocated for the **scheduling of the State party review** of Nicaragua by the Committee in October 2022, however the **State refused to send a delegation**. This did not discourage the CSOs from attending the review in Geneva and provide the Committee with their in-depth analysis of the dire human rights situation in the country.

The Centre's work with CSOs in Nicaragua is distinct from its work in many other countries, as most of the **HRDs are operating in exile** and in most cases are located outside the country. For this reason, preparatory consultations ahead of the review took place in Costa Rica. Activities planned to **disseminate and follow up** on the Committee's Concluding Observations were also organised

“The Centre advocated for the scheduling of the State party review of Nicaragua by the Committee in October 2022, however the State refused to send a delegation. This did not discourage the CSOs from attending the review in Geneva”

in Costa Rica, in November 2022. The Centre invited a **member of the Committee, Vasilka Sancin** and facilitated consultations with CSOs and other key stakeholders to provide insight into the content of the Committee's final recommendations, and to brief the CSOs on the Committee's follow-up procedures. In order to raise awareness of the Committee's findings, the Centre also worked closely with Nicaraguan journalists in exile.

In 2022, the Centre also continued to work in **Venezuela**, where the human rights situation is also particularly concerning. To promote active and meaningful CSOs participation in the country's 2023 State party review, the Centre **initiated engagement with HRDs well in advance**. It hosted several preparatory workshops ahead of the adoption

of the List of Issues by the Committee (October 2022) in order to facilitate the coordination of the advocacy work amongst all the involved stakeholders. The Centre also organised a **series of webinars** (May-June 2022) in collaboration with its in-country partner Centro de Justicia y Paz ('CEPAZ'), which was attended by more than 40 CSOs. This process culminated in the **submission of two alternative reports to the Committee**, including a comprehensive submission signed by 26 CSOs and a thematic submission focused on "Corruption and Human Rights". An **online briefing between CSOs and Committee's members** was also organised, facilitating an important discussion between 40 CSOs and the Committee's members on key human rights issues affecting the country.

“ To promote active and meaningful CSOs participation in the Venezuela's 2023 State party review, the Centre initiated engagement with HRDs well in advance ”

OUR IMPACT IN BRIEF

Nicaragua

- Successful advocacy work to ensure that Nicaragua is scheduled for State party review.
- Follow-up activities designed to promote the dissemination of the Committee's recommendations.
- Committee Member able to directly interact with Nicaraguan HRDs and journalists in exile, to detail the content of recommendations and explain the Committee's follow-up procedure.

Venezuela

- Provide support to the CSOs coalition to discuss and prioritize human rights issues to be raised to the Committee prior to the review and submission of a coalition CSO report.
- 40 HRDs able to directly interact with the Committee's members through an online briefing organised by the Centre.

Mixed results in the implementation of the Committee's recommendations: El Salvador and Guatemala



In 2022, the Committee also **assessed the implementation** of key recommendations made to two States from Central America: **El Salvador** and **Guatemala**.

The June 2022 evaluation of El Salvador by the Committee was consistent with the findings of the follow-up report sent by CSOs,

with both showing **no progress was achieved** on any key issues selected for follow-up, namely, i) reproductive rights; ii) the right to life; and iii) extrajudicial killings. The situation is particularly concerning as the **independence of the judiciary** remains in question. In its review, the Committee awarded a **grade E (worst grade)** for the dismissal of the Attor-

ney General and judges of the Constitutional Chamber, as well as the possible removal of other judges.

In **Guatemala**, the Committee selected three key recommendations for follow up in February 2022, including i) the persecution of anti-corruption justice operators, ii) the repression and criminalization of Indigenous communities in defence of territory, and iii) a series of legislative, political and judicial actions that have been closing civic space and consolidating an authoritarian regime. The Committee reported **no progress (Grade C) for all key recommendations**. This echoed the very concerning details that were shared by Guatemalan CSOs in their follow-up report to the Committee, which was also highlighted in a public statement made by the Centre after the mission.





“The Committee’s evaluation of key recommendations made to el Salvador and Guatemala echoed the concerning details shared by CSOs in their follow-up reports, showing no progress were made”

.....
- Andrea Meraz,
CCPR Centre’s Programme Manager

OUR IMPACT IN BRIEF

- Support and provide guidance for CSOs in the development of a submission on follow-up reporting that was adopted for consideration by the Follow-up Rapporteur, which unfortunately showed no progress on key selected follow-up recommendations.
- Raise awareness of the assessment made by the Human Rights Committee to key national stakeholders, including the lack of implementation of key recommendations.



Interview with Human Rights Committee member **Hernan Quezada** on his follow-up mission with the Centre



What do you consider to be the main impact of follow-up visits for both civil society and state agents?

In my opinion, the main impact of follow-up visits is to show *in situ* the Human Rights Committee’s interest and concern for the implementation of its recommendations, thus sending a strong signal to State officials and civil society. Such visits are not merely a symbolic gesture, but constitute an unavoidable task of following up on the recommendations in order to actively collaborate in their fulfilment.

How does the presence of Committee members impact those on the ground, and do you consider that this can enhance the work of the Committee?

The presence of Committee’s members in the field can have a positive impact on the attitude of State authorities towards international human rights monitoring

bodies, leading to a better understanding of their work. Likewise, this presence can be a stimulus to the work of civil society organisations, especially in countries where they face difficult conditions in conducting their activities. Finally, the presence of Committee members in the field can certainly strengthen the work of the Committee, to the extent that its members obtain a more direct view of the human rights situation in the States party.

How is the impact of the CCPR-Centre’s work relevant before, during and after a Committee review?

The work of the CCPR Centre has become fundamental in the examination of the periodic reports of the States parties. The Centre acts as an important enabler, bringing civil society organisations – whose information constitutes a primary source of information for the dialogues with the delegations of the States under review – into close contact with the Committee. In

addition, the professional capacity of the CCPR Centre staff is an essential contribution to the Committee’s work, whose knowledge of the reality of the States parties is extremely useful for the performance of our work as experts.

“ The work of the CCPR Centre has become fundamental in the examination of the periodic reports of the States parties. The Centre acts as an important enabler, bringing civil society organisations into close contact with the Committee ”

.....
 - *Hernan QUEZADA, member of the UN Human Rights Committee*

ASIA

State reporting procedure

State Party
(Countries)

Recommendations

State report

HR Committee
– review



Myanmar: assisting and complementing the efforts of all stakeholders for decisive actions



As highlighted by the Special Rapporteur ('SR') on Myanmar Thomas Andrews, the human rights **situation in Myanmar has deteriorated day-by-day** since the February 2021 coup. To reinforce the work of the Human Rights Council ('HRC'), as well as other mechanisms established such as Special Rapporteur on Myanmar and the Independent Investigative Mechanism on Myanmar, the Centre has carried out various **advocacy activities** to address the crisis. These included targeting different stakeholders such as the **HRC** and its **Special Procedures, diplomats** in Geneva, **UN Treaty Bodies**, and the **National Unity Government** ('NUG') and exploring different targeted interventions.

The Centre also carried out an extensive analysis of the discussions on Myanmar at the HRC and produced an **interactive online database**, to strengthen its own advocacy and assist the work of all

relevant stakeholders. Since the 29th Special Session to 51st Regular Session, the Centre analysed in total 381 statements made by UN Member States. We presented our findings on maps and infographics as well as papers, which are regularly updated after each HRC session. This online tool was officially launched at an event co-hosted by the U.S. Permanent Mission in Geneva and by the Centre before HRC52. Its **main findings** have been also published and shared with stakeholders, with the Centre **making clear** that **silence is not neutral but indifference**.



“ The work done by the Centre and its partners is critical to our understanding of the complex and evolving situation on the ground. It allows us to adapt our statements and advocacy in accordance with the critical needs of the people of Myanmar, whose rights are challenged every day ”

.....
- U.S. Ambassador
Michèle Taylor -

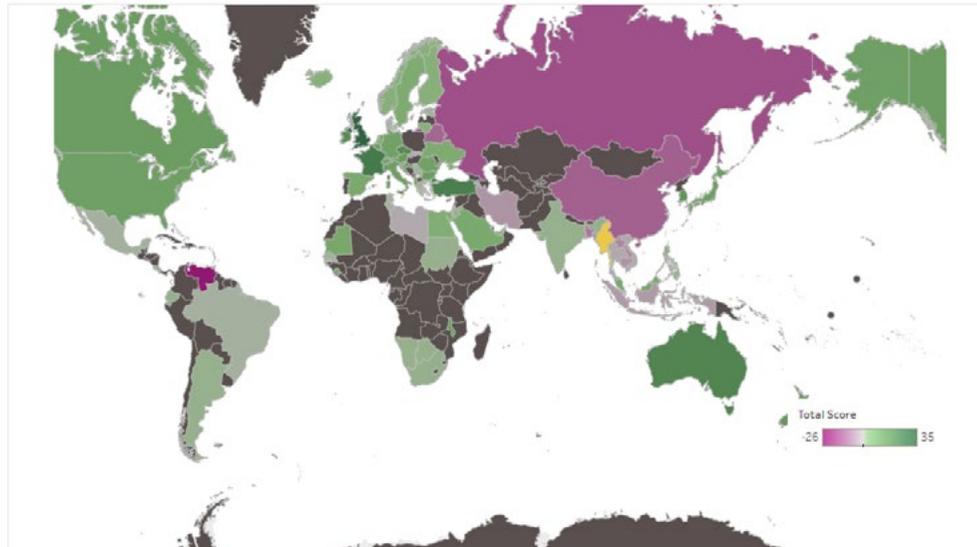


OUR IMPACT IN BRIEF

- Launched an online database providing analysis of the UN Member states relevant positions on Myanmar.
- Key interlocutors in Geneva, including diplomatic community, Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures received up to date information from the ground.
- An informal partnership was developed between the Centre and key stakeholders such as diplomats in Geneva, UN Treaty Bodies and national CSOs.

Condemnation and Concern

This map shows the degree of condemnation and concern expressed by countries at the HRC towards the action of the Myanmar military and the situation in Myanmar. Countries that expressed condemnation and concern are in green and countries that did not express condemnation or concern, or appeared to defend, support or legitimise the acts of the Myanmar military are in purple. Countries that have not made any statement are in dark grey. More information can be seen by hovering over countries.





Interview with **Aung Myo Min** Human Rights Defender and National Unity Government (NUG)'s Minister of Human Rights

Aung Myo Min, as the National Unity Government (NUG)'s Minister of Human Rights, what does your mandate include?

Aung Myo Min: The main task of the **NUG's** Ministry of Human Rights is to protect the rights of

people in Myanmar, without discrimination. Given the crisis my country finds itself in, our first priority is to prevent human rights violations by the military. When they occur, our team documents them in order to ensure the actions of the military are presented to the international community, with the hope for

action wherever possible – such as at the individual State, regional and UN levels. In our work, we also ensure the policies, practices and programmes of the NUG are in line with the existing international Human Rights standards.

What is the NUG current approach to civil and political Rights? Is ICCPR ratification one of your priorities?

Aung Myo Min: Unfortunately, the previous government of Myanmar did not sign the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), nor some other important internationally recognized Human Rights Treaties. The NUG is now deeply committed to ratifying the ICCPR as well as the Convention against Torture as soon as possible. This is shown in our statement published on the anniversary of the ICCPR on the 16th





of December 2022. This ratification would represent a significant step towards strengthening the protection of human rights in Myanmar and building a more equal society.

What can Treaty Bodies (TBs) do to contribute to the cessation of this crisis?

Aung Myo Min: Treaty Bodies whose treaties have been ratified by Myanmar – ICESCR, CEDAW,

CRC and CRPD – should “think out of the box” and find innovative ways to act now, individually or jointly, without waiting for the representation issue to be solved in New York. Possible action could include a) the possibility of a review of Myanmar without any State representative; b) joint statements by different Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures on issues of common concern; c) possible cooperation with the Special Rapporteur on Myanmar. It could be worth exploring alternative ways in which the enormous amount of information collected and verified by the IIMM could be used – without revealing sources or putting witnesses at risk – while waiting for ICC and ICJ to act in due course.

What made you accept this position, after years working as a Human Rights Defender and what keeps you motivated to continue this struggle, which is also your life-long struggle?

Aung Myo Min: In a “normal” situation, becoming part of the Government would

“ The National Unity Government is committed to ratifying the ICCPR as well as the Convention against Torture as soon as possible ”

.....
- Aung Myo Min,
NUG Minister of Human Rights -

have never been my choice. But in a comparable situation, when your people are suffering so much, if you really care and love the country you should be ready to serve, especially in desperate situations. If I had said no, my life would be easier, for sure, but I would be guilty not to take this kind of responsibility for my people.

Sri Lanka: An in-between – enabling holistic utilisation of the Human Rights System by the HRDs from the ground



In 2022, Sri Lanka was **hit by the worst economic and financial crisis** in its history, which **impacted the human rights situation** on the ground in various ways. The crisis led to the collective action of the wider population and the removal of then President and

Prime Minister, who have been accused of serious violations of human rights but were enjoying impunity, as well as to a change of government. However, it also created new human rights issues, with some affecting the entire population and others predomi-

nantly affecting vulnerable groups in Sri Lankan society. The crisis also affected the capacity of national civil society and grassroots HRDs to address deep-rooted and long-standing human rights issues such as accountability, national reconciliation, and protection of minority rights.

In this context, the **review of Sri Lanka by the Human Rights Committee**, originally planned in June 2022, and the 4th UPR scheduled for early 2023 presented a **unique opportunity for** national civil society and **HRDs** to address a range of new and existing human rights issues. However, the crisis also meant that necessary resources and capacity to effectively utilise these opportunities were missing.

To support, the Centre organised a series of online consultations in April 2022, inviting national civil society and HRDs from different parts of the country and dealing with different issues to facilitate effective coordination, efficient sharing of tasks, and joint action in order to maximise these opportunities. Following the consultations, **a joint report signed by 14 national CSOs** was submitted to the Committee for the scheduled review of Sri Lanka in June-July 2022.

Although the review of Sri Lanka was postponed twice, the Centre continued sharing up-to-date information with the national civil society and exploring every possibility of advocacy at the international level. This included assisting with the engagement of three national HRDs at HRC 51 in September 2022, as well as the UPR pre-session in December 2022.

The Centre also organised a **two-day consultation in December 2022 in Colombo** with representatives of national CSOs and HRDs in order to ensure the continuity of their engagement in the process in 2023. While also monitoring the UPR, a joint update was sent to the Com-



mittee in January 2023 by the national CSO coalition for the review of Sri Lanka. The Centre also facilitated online participation of the coalition representative in the **formal and informal briefings to the Committee** and assisted their interaction with Committee members. As a result, many concerns of the CSOs and HRDs from the ground were reflected in the recommendations issued at the UPR as well as by the Committee.

“Although the review of Sri Lanka was postponed twice, the Centre continued sharing up-to-date information with the national civil society and exploring every possibility of advocacy at the international level”

.....
- Daisuke Shirane,
CCPR Centre's
Coordinator for Asia Pacific

OUR IMPACT IN BRIEF

- Initiated joint efforts of national CSOs and HRDs to utilise the review of Sri Lanka by the Human Rights Committee and UPR through a series of online consultations.
- Assisted submission of joint civil society report to the Committee signed by 14 CSOs.
- Facilitated participation and advocacy of national HRD representatives at the 51st session of the Human Rights Council and UPR pre-session.
- Facilitated joint strategic planning of national CSOs and HRDs for 2023.



Interview with **Nimalka Fernando** - Director of the Women's Political Academy and Member of Mothers and Daughters and **Ameer Faaiz**, Alliance for Minorities



What does the situation of Human Rights, and especially civil and political rights, look like in Sri Lanka?

Nimalka Fernando: The situation in the country is quite risky. Civic space is shrinking, peaceful demonstrators are being imprisoned arbitrarily. "National Security" is often used as an excuse to stifle and oppress legitimate protests. Since the new President is in place, dissent is not tolerated at all. People are also very worried by the escalation in food prices, cost of living, inflation, shortage of fuel, gas etc. The economic crisis and the demonstrations that we are now seeing in the country are one example of unresolved Human Rights issues, including a great divide between rich and poor. Therefore, the agenda of the government and that of the international community must be

reviewed to find mechanisms to support the introduction of reforms that would comply with international standards.

Impunity also remains an issue, years after the end of the civil war that ravaged the country for over 4 decades. We do this work, despite all the related risks, because we want to fight for a just society, one that allows the same rights to all communities. We do have a responsibility

“ When national mechanisms clearly do not provide justice, peace and accountability, we have to turn ourselves to international mechanisms ”

.....

*- Ameer Faaiz,
Alliance for Minorities, Sri Lanka -*

towards our children to allow them to live in a peaceful society, where democracy is respected, and conflicts resolved.

What is your organisation's mission? Why are you engaging with the UN Human Rights bodies?

Ameer Faaiz: The main mission of Alliance for Minorities is to promote and apply human rights to all Sri Lanka citizens. The organisation also works for the promotion and protection of Human Rights of specific ethnic and religious minorities, which are often forgotten. When national mechanisms clearly do not provide justice, peace and accountability, we need to turn ourselves to international mechanisms such as the Human Rights Council or the UN Treaty Bodies.

How was the Centre involved in your visit to Geneva and what added value did it bring?

Nimalka Fernando: As a small national organisation, we are not familiar with the UN reporting and engagement processes. The Centre for Civil and Political Rights did an excellent job in supporting us with the accreditation process and ensuring we were on top of the list of speakers for the Interactive Dialogue of the Human Rights Council. Once in Geneva, the Centre also assigned us a focal point who helped us in the organisation of bilateral meetings. Finally, given the huge economic crisis our country is facing, the financial support of the Centre was also essential for us to come to Geneva and assist the session in person.

It's not the first time we worked with the Centre: their Asia-Pacific Coordinator, Daisuke Shirane, helped us in 2021 when we had to prepare submissions

for the country review by the Human Rights Committee. What makes the support of the Centre unique is the fact that it does not only have technical expertise, but it also has excellent access to Treaty Bodies and other UN Mechanisms. Also, the fact of being sponsored by such a well-known international organisation increases our protection, making us feel safer in doing our work, which is something incredibly important. Another strength of the Centre is that it really brings the ICCPR provisions down to the reality in the field, linking them to the real struggle of people around the world. You can have as many international Conventions as you want, but if you can't bring them to the victims, if you don't empower HRDs and CSOs to act accordingly, then they are ultimately useless. For this, the mission of the Centre is essential, unique, and irreplaceable. We hope that the Centre will be able to continue its support in the future, facilitating our participation in the next Human Rights Committee's and UPR reviews.

“What makes the support of the Centre unique is the fact that it does not only have technical expertise, but it also has excellent access to Treaty Bodies and other UN Mechanisms”

.....
*- Nimalka Fernando,
Director of Women's Political Academy, Sri Lanka*

Protecting Freedom of Religion and Belief (FoRB) in Viet Nam

Tự do Tôn giáo hoặc Tín ngưỡng Hướng dẫn Giám sát Luật Nhân quyền Quốc tế

FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF A Guide for Monitoring International Human Rights Law



Biên soạn bởi Abigail Koshimo Brown
Biên tập bởi Daisuke Shirane và Patrick Mutzenberg

Written by Abigail Koshimo Brown
Edited by Daisuke Shirane and Patrick Mutzenberg

The Centre continued its project in Viet Nam, with a focus on the **Freedom of Religion and Belief (FoRB)** in line with the recommendations issued by the Committee. The Centre developed a **Guide** on the topic with the aim of providing practical information and guidance to **monitor the implementation of Article 18 of the ICCPR**. It also serves as a useful tool for all actors working to protect FoRB on the ground, in particular CSOs and HRDs.

The **Guide** provides an overview of Article 18 in plain language, and outlines how FoRB has a specific focus on “vulnerable groups” that are at a greater risk of violation of their freedom due to intersecting factors and identities. The **Guide** was prepared by analysing 147 Concluding Observations and 123 Lists of Issues of the UN Treaty Bodies from Asia since 2010. It is available in **English** and **Vietnamese**.

The Centre also developed three thematic Worksheets to better assist national stakeholders, in particular civil society, in monitoring and reporting violations of the FoRB. The Guiding Questions for Monitoring Interna-



“The Freedom of Religion or Belief remains as one of the most persistent and common human rights challenges in the world (...). This Guide in this regard is a quite helpful and practical tool for all stakeholders, including national and local authorities as well as human rights defenders”

.....
- Yadh BEN ACHOUR,
Member of the UN
Human Rights Committee -

tional Human Rights Law was designed to identify violations of Article 18 of the ICCPR and to collect information to be reported to the Human Rights Committee and other relevant bodies. Using the example of Viet Nam, an additional **two worksheets** were developed to **monitor and assess the implementation of recommendations on the FoRB made to Viet Nam**. These tools also serve as a model that can easily be modified and applied to other contexts.

OUR IMPACT IN BRIEF

- Developed an easy-to-read **Guide** for stakeholders on monitoring the Freedom of Religion or Belief in **English and Vietnamese**.
- Developed ready-to-use tools for stakeholders to assess the protection of the Freedom of Religion or Belief, as well as relevant recommendations issued by UN human rights mechanisms at the national level in English and Vietnamese.



THE WAY FORWARD

2023 will be the **last year of the Centre's existing Strategic Plan 2020-2023**. As we conclude this work, we reflect on the past four years of action and document lessons learned – from both successes and areas for improvement – but also take on the challenge of developing a new Strategic Plan to guide the Centre's activities going forward.

It is hard to overstate just how much has changed since the development of our Strategic Plan 2020-2023. Throughout the last four years, we have witnessed our **operating environment change dramatically**, with several compounding crises affecting our world. The geopolitical environment has become increasingly hostile to human rights advocacy, and the civic space is shrinking at

“ Throughout the last four years, we have witnessed our operating environment change dramatically ”

a pace rarely seen before. We can observe these trends not only through the turmoil of new and expanding armed conflicts, but also in observing autocrats and dictators deploy new and dangerous methods of restricting the enjoyment of civil and political rights. Further, we have also begun to observe that cooperation between certain State parties and the UN Human Rights Committee is at risk. In some cases, States have begun to openly challenge the role of the Committee, refuse to cooperate with its review process and also use various means to prevent the participation of HRDs.

This new paradigm will require the Centre to **engage** in an increasingly dynamic manner **across the UN mechanisms**, in order to bring grave civil and political rights' violations to the attention of the UN system. We have already trialled this approach in our engagement on State parties such as Myanmar, or non-cooperating States such as Burundi or Nicaragua. This approach will be further refined and reinforced in our next Strategic Plan.

“ In order to bring grave civil and political rights’ violations to the attention of the UN system, the Centre will engage in an increasingly dynamic manner across the UN mechanisms ”

.....
- Patrick Mutzenberg,
CCPR Centre’s Director

The Centre will also continue to **expand its partnerships** with relevant actors, with the aim of connecting CSOs with the right expertise on areas of highest need. We also intend to develop a long-term approach to monitoring follow-up activities with the Committee’s recommendations, including through the establishment of a tracking tool to monitor efforts made by States. Our progress in Kenya, such as the development of a joint implementation matrix between the government and the CSOs and in the DR

Congo, such development of specific indicators for monitoring, represent an excellent starting point.

We believe that **data-visualisation** and **digitisation is the future for human rights** work. As such, we will invest more in the development of technological solutions to disseminate human rights protections and tools as widely as possible. Finding new ways of ensuring prompt and regular updating of these digital tools, as well as their effective use and deployment on the ground, will be crucial to enabling the next generation of human rights defenders.



OUR SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS



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FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

(1st January – 31st December, in CHF)

This is an extract of the audited financial statements for 2022. A full version is available upon request at info@ccprcentre.org.

In 2022, the Centre reported a total income of 792'712.- CHF and expenses for 814'085.- CHF, ending the year with a deficit of 21'373.- CHF.

Compared to prior years, the Centre received funding from a similar number of donors in 2022. Several donors provided increased support for multi-year and regional projects.

The Centre incurred most of its expenses in connection with supporting the work of Human Rights Defenders (objective 1), followed by its engagement with national authorities (objective 2) and its thematic work (objective 3).

Administrative and financial expenses remained limited.

Income	2022	2021
Revenue		
Governments	606 273 CHF	347 293 CHF
Foundations	162 619 CHF	171 648 CHF
UN Agencies and related	14 793 CHF	26 402 CHF
Other revenues	9 026 CHF	27 369 CHF
Total	792 712 CHF	572 712 CHF

Income	2022	2021
Costs		
Obj.1: HRDs support for ICCPR implementation	470 770 CHF	373 253 CHF
Obj. 2: ICCPR ratification and implementation	103 508 CHF	74 533 CHF
Obj. 3: Support to the HR Cttee and thematic work	81 254 CHF	70 059 CHF
Administration, Finance, Communication and Fundraising	134 113 CHF	145 915 CHF
Governance and strategy	11 751 CHF	10 608 CHF
Net movement in funds	12 691 CHF	-90 016 CHF
Total costs	814 085 CHF	584 352 CHF
Income (deficit) for the year (inc. reserve fund)	-21 373 CHF	-11 640 CHF
Assets		
Cash and equivalents Debtors	252 337 CHF	260 898 CHF
Debtors	0 CHF	0 CHF
Transitory assets Total	0 CHF	0 CHF
Total	252 337 CHF	260 898 CHF
Liabilities and reserves		
Short term liabilities	32 469 CHF	34 649 CHF
Deferred grants	4 678 CHF	-8 013 CHF
Free capital and reserve funds Total	215 190 CHF	234 262 CHF
Total	252 337 CHF	260 898 CHF

OUR TEAM

Our Staff



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Director



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Programme Manager



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Rights Officer



André Kangni Afanou
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Abigail Koshimo Brown
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Asia Pacific
(September 2021 - April 2022)



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