

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020



# Content

<b>MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND THE DIRECTOR.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>TIMELINE .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>GOAL 1 STRENGTHEN AND ASSIST EFFORTS OF CIVIL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Our goal.....	8
<b>Tactic 1: Using the ICCPR review as a tactic to promote the protection of human rights .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Our approach .....	9
Our achievements.....	10
<b>Story: Facilitate contacts among CSOs to streamline their advocacy message: the examples of Nicaragua, Senegal and Togo .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Tactic 2: Effective participation at the session of the Human Rights Committee .....</b>	<b>15</b>
Our approach .....	15
Our achievements.....	16
<b>Tactic 3: Strategic tools for dissemination and monitoring the recommendations at national level.....</b>	<b>17</b>
Our approach .....	17
Our achievements.....	18
<b>Story: In Kazakhstan the Centre's partner NGO KBHRL developed an ambitious monitoring tool to track the implementation of the recommendations .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Tactic 4: Toward an holistic approach .....</b>	<b>23</b>
Our approach .....	23
Our achievements.....	24
<b>Story: DR Congo: Using the various UN mechanisms to advocate for change.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>GOAL 2 INCREASE RATIFICATION AND ENHANCE IMPLEMENTATION OF ICCPR .....</b>	<b>28</b>
Our Goal .....	28
<b>Tactic 1: Engagement for a worldwide ratification .....</b>	<b>29</b>
Our approach .....	29
Our achievements.....	30
<b>Story: Myanmar: amplifying efforts of national actors for better protection of civil and political rights.....</b>	<b>32</b>

<b>Tactic 2: Disseminate the Human Rights Committee recommendations at the national level and generate a public debate .....</b>	<b>34</b>
Our approach .....	34
Our achievements .....	35
<b>Story: El Salvador: Opening spaces for dialogue on human rights .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Tactic 3: Generating national debates on civil and political rights .....</b>	<b>39</b>
Our approach .....	39
Our achievements .....	40
<b>Story: Belarus: First ever dialogue between State authorities and civil society organizations .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Tactic 4: Working with the Committee to address the lack of cooperation of States .....</b>	<b>43</b>
Our approach .....	43
Our achievements .....	44
<b>Story: Nicaragua: A country under scrutiny after a period of lack of cooperation with the UNTBs .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>OBJECTIVE 3 SUPPORTING THE WORK OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE .....</b>	<b>47</b>
Our Goal .....	47
<b>Tactic 1: Reinforcing the work of the Human Rights Committee and other UN Treaty Bodies .....</b>	<b>48</b>
Our approach .....	48
Our achievements .....	49
<b>Tactic 2: Our thematic work on corruption and human rights .....</b>	<b>51</b>
Our approach .....	51
Our achievements .....	52
<b>Story: One regional consultation - three alternative reports - several specific recommendations .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>FINANCIAL SITUATION .....</b>	<b>56</b>
Our Supporters and partners .....	57
Income and costs statement for the year 2019 .....	58
2019 Income & Expenditure .....	58
<b>OUR STAFF .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>OUR BOARD .....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>OUR ADVISORY BOARD .....</b>	<b>60</b>

# Message from the President and the Director

The period of 2019 and the beginning of 2020 was very special for the Centre, as we began implementation of our **strategic plan 2019-2023**. This plan allowed us to focus our activities on the priorities articulated to our three key stakeholders: namely human rights defenders, State authorities and members of the Human Rights Committee.



**Victor Rodriguez Rescia**  
President



**Patrick Mutzenberg**  
Director

We are pleased to present the **Centre Annual Report 2020, covering our activities from January 2019 until March 2020**. The period of 2019 and the beginning of 2020 was very special for the Centre, as we began implementation of our strategic plan 2019-2023. This plan allowed us to focus our activities on the priorities articulated to our three key stakeholders: namely human rights defenders, State authorities and members of the Human Rights Committee.

During the reporting period, we organized dozens of training sessions with **human rights defenders** and worked with them **to ensure their voices are heard both the universal and national level**, while advocating for full implementation of the Human Rights Committee's recommendations. Our work to facilitate and reinforce the dialogue between human rights defenders and the national authorities also continued, with initiatives to foster such dialogue conducted in **Liberia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and in Myanmar**.

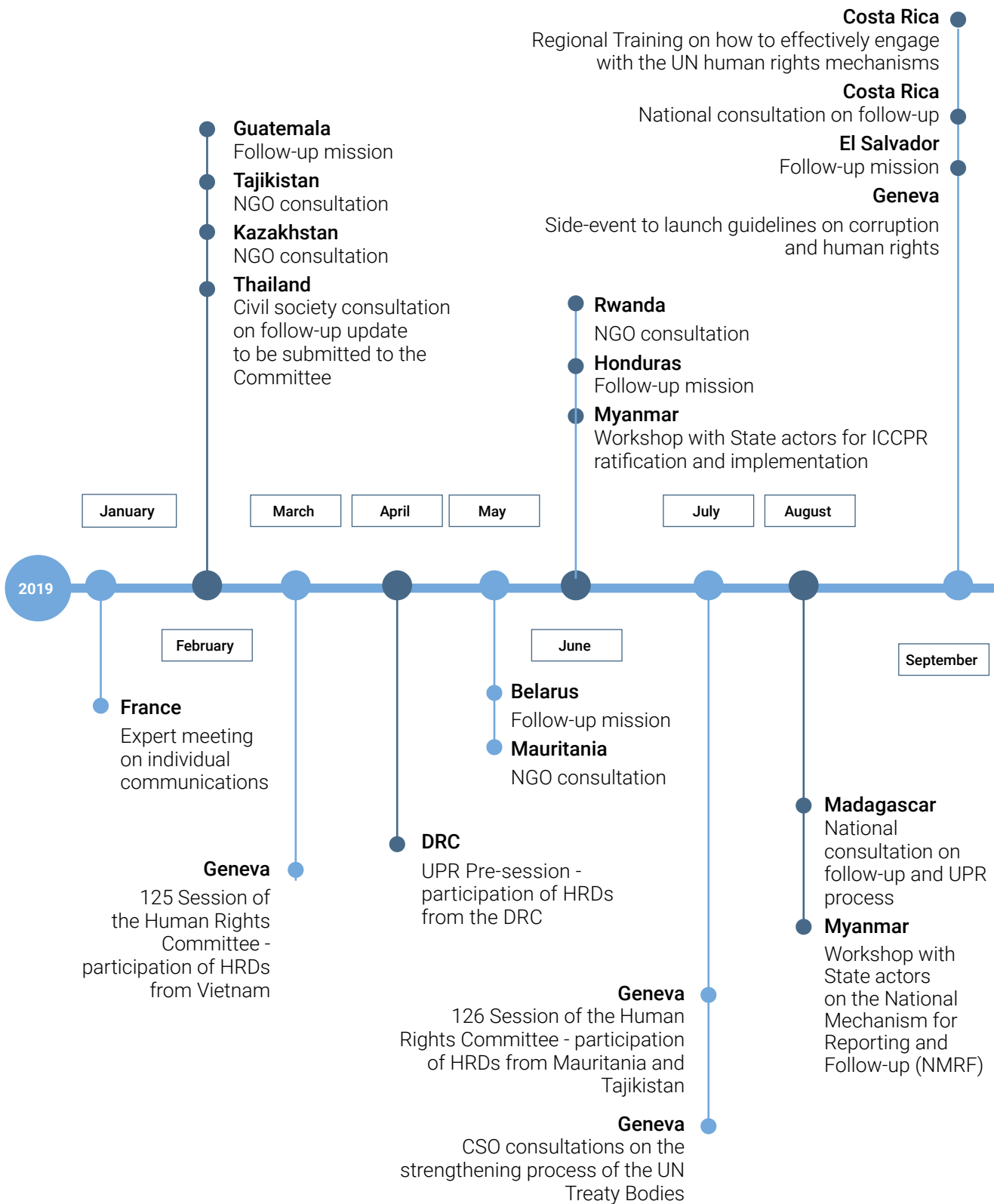
The **thematic approach** of the Centre is now well established. Our longstanding effort to ensure that the issue of **corruption** is more systematically addressed by the Human Rights Committee has proven successful, with a recent study finding that recommendations have improved since we began our work on this - both in terms of countries addressed, and also on specificity of the recommendations. Similar work is in progress on the right to participate in the public affairs and elections standards, which we expect will further develop our thematic activities in 2020 and 2021.

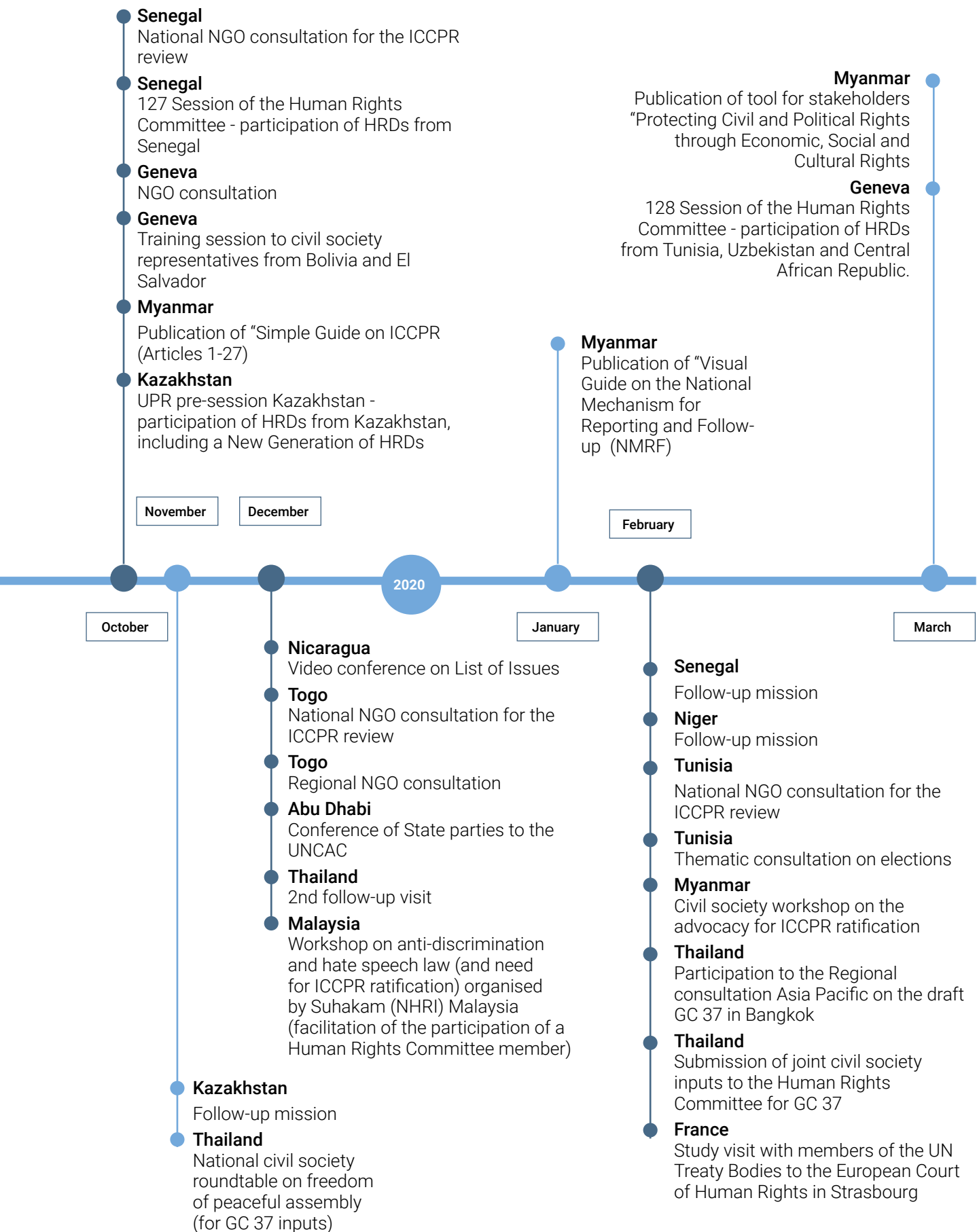
We remain convinced that the work of the UN Treaty Bodies can be further aligned and made more accessible to human rights defenders on the ground. The **strengthening processes currently underway provide a unique opportunity to improve the participation of civil society, while at the same time ensuring that all States are equally scrutinized** in order to better assess treaty compliance. Recently, in a unique effort with our colleagues at TB-Net, we gathered more than 30 NGOs from all over the world to collaborate on a potential new reporting procedure to be adopted by all treaty bodies. This meeting resulted in a combined proposal endorsed by 86 NGOs, which was widely disseminated and discussed among stakeholders including members of the UN Treaty Bodies and States.

All of these activities would not have been possible without the commitment of our generous supporters, some engaged with us since the establishment of the Centre, back in 2010. In 2019 and in 2020 we were particularly pleased to see that both the **Swiss MFA and the Canton de Genève renewed their support for multiple years**, allowing us more flexibility to respond effectively to the needs of our partners in the field.

However, our funding remains fragile, and this is particularly true in the face of COVID-19. At the Centre, we believe that our work is more important than ever, as we witness many attempts to limit or derogate from ICCPR protected rights under the guise of the COVID-19 pandemic. The general pushback to civil and political rights is linked to a tendency to question the principle of the democracy, and this is a threat to all of us. More than ever, human rights defenders that stand firm in their fight to protect civil and political rights need to be supported and protected. It is our sole reason of existing and our sole reason to continuing our work.

# Timeline







# Goal 1

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

## OUR GOAL

*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 Human Rights Committee, is at the core of the Centre's mandate.*



## Tactic 1: Using the ICCPR review as a tactic to promote the protection of human rights

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### Our approach

The objective of the Centre is to ensure that human rights defenders are in position to participate and contribute to the country reviews effectively



Consultation with Human Rights Defenders in Mauritania ahead of the ICCPR review, Nouakchott, Mauritania, May 2019.

When States are scheduled to be reviewed by the Human Rights Committee, the Centre is committed to providing all relevant information on the process to ensure that human rights defenders are fully informed, and in a position to genuinely engage at all the steps of the process. This includes early alerts, newsletters and dissemination of the Human Rights Committee's information.

The objective of the Centre is to ensure that human rights defenders (HRDs) are in position to participate and contribute to the reviews effectively. To facilitate this, the Centre promotes the creation of informal platforms and coalitions in order to raise the voices of civil society. When such coordination is not possible, the Centre plays a vital role in ensuring that civil society organisations can at least share their information and their priorities.


## Our achievements



NGO workshop prior to the ICCPR review of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, Tajikistan, Jan. 2019.

- We organised four consultations for civil society organisations (CSOs) ahead of the ICCPR review to inform civil society **with dozens of human rights defenders from Tajikistan, Nicaragua, Senegal, Mauritania and Togo**.
- We developed new **innovative tools to allow human rights defenders** to draft qualitative and comprehensive updated reports. These include fact-sheets with key information from the previous Human Rights Committee recommendations and the State reports, as well as summaries from reviews of other UN Treaty Bodies.
- We provided **legal and technical analysis to several CSOs** reports submitted to the Human Rights Committee, with long-term support to coalitions of human rights defenders from **Tajikistan, Nicaragua, Senegal and Togo**.
- Engaging with CSOs at the early stages of the review process is key to ensure that the agenda of the Committee takes into account the concerns of the civil society. To that end, we organized a series of webinars with human rights defenders from **Nicaragua** to ensure their concerns are well reflected in the List of Issues.

## Story

A photograph of Fatou Diouf, a woman with dark skin and hair, wearing a dark headwrap and large hoop earrings. She is seated at a long wooden conference table, gesturing with her right hand while speaking. In the background, other participants are seated at similar tables in a large room with tall windows. A glass of water and some papers are on the table in front of her.

Fatou Diouf, from the Centre Africain pour l'Éducation aux droits humains - Senegal - is briefing the HR Committee, Geneva, Oct. 2019.

### Facilitate contacts among CSOs to streamline their advocacy message: the examples of Nicaragua, Senegal and Togo

It is crucial that HRDs can convey a coordinated message to the Human Rights Committee and are in a position to speak to a consistent narrative. Ideally, it is also very important to identify the common key priorities, which can only be done when CSOs have a space to exchange in a dialogue. **The Centre is committed to facilitating such discussions, and promoting exchanges through national consultations for common advocacy strategies. We also promote CSO reports prepared in coalitions.**

In **Nicaragua**, 10 CSO reports were submitted to the Human Rights Committee by Nicaraguan NGOs, including *Centro Nicaraguans de Derechos Humanos* (CENIDH), *Colectivo de Derechos Humanos "Nicaragua Nunca +"*, *Centro por la Justicia y Derechos Humanos de la Costa Atlántica de Nicaragua* (CEJUDHCAN), *Articulación de Movimientos Sociales* (AMS), *Iniciativa Nicaragüense de Defensoras* (IND),



In Senegal, thanks to the creation of space for dialogue, human rights defenders drafted a joint CSO report and developed a common advocacy strategy. This activity was conducted online through a webinar held on October 10, 2019 with the participation of 13 human rights defenders.

*Movimiento Autónomo de Mujeres (MAM)* and others. The Committee published the List of Issues regarding the implementation of the ICCPR in Nicaragua in November 2019. This will be the basis for the upcoming review scheduled in 2020.

In view of the upcoming review of Nicaragua by the Human Rights Committee in 2020, the Centre together with the International Institute on Race, Equality and Human Rights (Race & Equality) and the Inter-American Institute of Social Responsibility and Human Rights (IIRESODH), prepared a [document](#)

based on the [List of Issues \(LOI\) in relation to the fourth periodic report of Nicaragua](#), adopted by the Human Rights Committee in November 2019. The document was shared with the Nicaraguan CSOs asking them to indicate which topics in the LOI they wished to contribute to. The purpose is to coordinate the inputs of civil society in order to ensure that all the issues of the LOI will be covered by the CSO reports.

Finally, a first webinar jointly with Race & Equality and IIRESODH took place in February 2020 to discuss and launch the process to prepare for the upcoming review of Nicaragua by the Human Rights Committee.

In **Senegal**, the Centre supported a coalition of NGOs, in partnership with the *Rencontre Africaine pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (RADDHO)*. Since ratifying the ICCPR in 1978, Senegal has been through four consecutive rounds of review during the 1980s and 1990s. However, since then, the State did not submit the fifth report (due in 2000). Following this very long gap, the Senegalese State sent its latest report in 2018. This was welcomed by the CSOs as it provided an avenue to scrutinize the human rights situation at the domestic level. **At the same time, human rights defenders were not adequately trained to participate effectively in these processes and requested the support of the Centre. Thanks to the creation of space for dialogue, human rights defenders drafted a joint CSO report and developed a common advocacy strategy.** This activity was conducted online through a webinar held on October 10, 2019 with the participation of 13 human rights defenders.



The ICCPR CSO consultation in Togo jointly organized by the Centre, OMCT and FIACAT, Lomé, Togo, Dec. 2019.

The joint report identifies various themes of the ICCPR, such as violence against women and harmful practices, judicial independence and the extremely limited number of lawyers, conditions of detention as well as death in prison, rights of refugees and asylum seekers and rights of children.

The participants agreed that the priority issues to be raised during the session of the Human Rights Committee would be, inter alia, the fight against torture and conditions of detention, the freedoms of assembly and demonstration, children's rights and gender-based violence, rights of foreigners including refugees and asylum seekers.

A similar process was undertaken in **Togo** ahead of the review of the Human Rights Committee scheduled for 2020. The consultation took place in December 2019, organized by the Centre in partnership with the Collective of Associations against Impunity in Togo (CACIT), ACAT Togo and the Centre de Documentation et Formation des Droits de l'Homme (CDFDH) and **included the participation of 31 actors from different regions of the country**. During the two day workshop, the participants shared their common concerns on the challenges faced by the State in the implementation of the Covenant. As for Senegal, they also developed a common strategy on key priorities that the Human Rights Committee should take on board during the review of Togo.



Key issues related to the draft law on polygamy, the protection of the elderly, the definition of torture in the criminal code which does not meet international standards, the lack of resources of the National Human Rights Institution, conditions of detention, especially in Lomé prison, the reform of the Code of Criminal Procedure, and the freedom of expression of human rights defenders. A strong connection with the recent review of the Committee against Torture in August 2019 was also made. Thanks to a close partnership with the Organisation Mondiale Contre la Torture (OMCT), several workshop sessions were devoted to analysing the recommendations made by the Committee Against Torture and the progress (if any) made by the State to implement them.

It is important to note that the National Human Rights Institution participated in the CSOs consultation, also sharing similar concerns with respect to the fulfilment of their mandate with limited resources.

Outputs from the workshops were communicated with the Human Rights Committee before the dialogue with the Togolese State initially scheduled for March 2020, however postponed to 2021 due the COVID-19 crisis. Two human rights defenders nominated by the coalition are scheduled to participate in the session, with the further support of the Center. They will share their main concerns during formal and informal briefings of the Committee.

**Andrea Meraz**

 @andrea\_ccpr

**André Afanou**

 @AndreAfanou

## Tactic 2: Effective participation at the session of the Human Rights Committee

### Our approach

We proactively engage with civil society from all countries under review to ensure their effective participation, including increasingly through video-conferences.



Fatou Diouf, from the Centre Africain pour L'éducation aux droits humains - Senegal - is briefing the HR Committee, Geneva, Oct. 2019.

We consider NGO briefings with Human Rights Committee members crucial for providing information on the implementation of the ICCPR to the Committee, as well as for communicating the concerns of civil society. We proactively engage with civil society from all countries under review to ensure their effective participation, including increasingly through video-conferences. We are also committed to financially supporting HRDs from the Global South to attend the Committee's sessions and be able to participate in person during the briefings.

### Our effort for a better outreach of the Committee's work



#### Twitter

<b>469k</b>	Twitter Impressions
<b>558</b>	New Followers
<b>1595</b>	Likes
<b>1256</b>	Retweets
<b>561</b>	Link Clicks



#### Website


<b>32'000</b>	Visitors (+21%)
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#### Facebook

<b>239</b>	new Facebook Likes
<b>5431</b>	unique page views
<b>41677</b>	people reached
<b>2337</b>	reactions, comments, and shares
<b>6%</b>	average engagement rate per post (in comparison to the NGO sector average of 0.13%)

## Our achievements



Nadejda Atayeva, Human Rights Defender from Uzbekistan is briefing the HR Committee, Geneva, March 2020.

- In 2019-20 we supported the **participation of 13 human rights defenders from 7 countries**, namely Niger (2), Vietnam (2), Mauritania (3), Tajikistan (2), Senegal (2), Central African Republic (1) and Uzbekistan (1).
- We coordinated the **participation of more than 150 human rights defenders in briefings with the Human Rights Committee**.
- We organised online CSO briefings with HRDs from **Dominica and Paraguay**.
- Various activities carried out and provide alerts, news and analysis through social media (Twitter, Instagram and Facebook)
- **Newsletters issued at the end of each session** are shared with 3'000 subscribers highlighting the main developments of the work of the Human Rights Committee
- Finally, **the Centre issued - as every year - the 2018 yearbook of the Human Rights Committee** providing in-depth analysis of the activities carried out by the Human Rights Committee in 2018. This latest issue pays special attention to the countries' recommendations of the Committee adopted in the follow-up procedure.

## Tactic 3: Strategic tools for dissemination and monitoring the recommendations at national level

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### Our approach

We work closely with human rights defenders to monitor progress made by the authorities regarding the implementation of the recommendations on a regular basis.



CSO consultation in San José, Costa Rica, Sept. 2019.

The role of the Centre is not limited to supporting human rights defenders in order to drive effective participation in the Human Rights Committee sessions. The Centre is also committed to working with national CSOs to ensure that advocacy strategies are developed at the national level, and that human rights defenders are equipped to monitor progress made by the authorities regarding the implementation of the recommendations on a regular basis.



## Our achievements



NGO consultation in Bangkok, Thailand, Nov. 2019.

- We organized the first CSOs consultation in [Kazakhstan](#) with CSOs on their assessment of the Committee recommendations that were adopted in 2016, with 37 participants.
- In [Senegal](#), the Centre jointly developed an ambitious follow-up plan with the RADDHO to monitor the recommendations adopted by the Human Rights Committee in October 2019. We had our first consultation in December 2019 to build a CSO coalition with thematic sub-groups, and prepared a roadmap with the NGOs which will coordinate the advocacy efforts among the members of the coalition. This was the first time that NGOs from Senegal worked together on the ICCPR advocacy work.
- In [Costa Rica](#), we held a consultation in September 2019 with 14 Costa Rican CSOs to follow-up on the recommendations adopted by the Human Rights Committee. It was facilitated by the Centre and IIRESODH. The participants developed a road-map to prepare and submit a joint report to the Human Rights Committee addressing the three issues selected for the follow-up procedure, namely on: sexual and reproductive rights, indigenous peoples' rights, and non-discrimination. The joint report was submitted in December 2019 to the Human Rights Committee, with a follow-up evaluation by the Committee scheduled to take place in March 2020, but it was postponed due to COVID-19.
- In [Thailand](#), we organised a civil society consultation to prepare updated follow-up reports to be submitted to the Committee, ahead of the evaluation of Thailand by the Committee in July 2020. In total, 5 civil society follow-up update reports were submitted by Thai CSOs in April and May 2020.
- The Centre also supported the submission of CSO follow-up reports of [Jamaica and Honduras](#).



## Story



Roundtable with the MFA of Kazakhstan with V. Sancin, Member of the HR Committee, Astana, Kazakhstan, Nov. 2019.

### In Kazakhstan, the Centre's partner NGO KBHRL developed an ambitious monitoring tool to track the implementation of the recommendations

An economic leader in Central Asia, Kazakhstan, has seen large economic and social improvements in recent decades. However, its performance in terms of civil and political rights has been the object of criticism, resulting in numerous recommendations from international human rights bodies.

To tackle challenges relating to the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other human rights instruments, Kazakhstan's leading human rights NGO - the Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law (KBHRL) **developed an ambitious set of tools to track the implementation of the recommendations issued to Kazakhstan by UN treaty bodies**. The initiative was implemented within the framework of the Consultative and Advisory body - Dialogue Platform on Human Dimension established under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which serves as an effective mechanism to facilitate institutionalized dialogue between the government and human rights organizations on the human dimension issues.

This long-term initiative allowed for better tracking and assessment of Kazakhstan's performance on human rights commitments.

The Platform has been operating as part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan since 2013. It provides a space for discussion on the most salient human rights issues and the development of joint decisions by a wide range of Kazakh NGOs, international organizations and government bodies of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Since its inception, the dialogue between authorities and the human rights community has significantly intensified, and begun to

take shape as a proper institutional process. **The Platform includes over 60 members representing leading human rights and civil society organisations** as well as the representatives from relevant government agencies and departments with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Office of the United Nations in Kazakhstan, the Representation of the European Commission in the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Programme Office of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and others participating as an observers. The Platform also established a Working Group to facilitate its operations, co-chaired by a Member of Parliament and the Bureau for Human Rights' Chairperson. The Bureau also serves as the Secretariat of the Working Group. The work of the Platform that includes both state authorities and civil society organisations provides opportunities for civil society to influence the development of human rights related issues through constructive dialogue with the authorities. In addition, it allows for stimulating the dialogue within various advisory bodies (such as the Expert Council under the Human Rights Commission under the President of Kazakhstan, the Public Council under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the recently created Working Group on cooperation with non-governmental organisations under the Ministry of Culture and Sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and a number of others), as well as within the National Preventive Mechanism for the prevention of torture

**The initiative included the drafting of "road maps" - civil society-developed guidance for state authorities on specific actions the state and its relevant authorities should take to implement UN recommendations in the area of human rights.** Road maps take a unified structure and provide clear recommendations of which human rights bodies are relevant to the matter, which state body is expected to take a particular action in order to implement the recommendation, and also suggest which experts may assess its implementation.

Under the initiative, the Bureau was able to collect all recommendations issued to Kazakhstan authorities by UN treaty bodies, the Human Rights Council under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and Special Procedures and publish them on their website: [www.mindet.kz](http://www.mindet.kz).

**This comprehensive exercise allowed for better tracking and assessment of Kazakhstan's performance on human rights commitments.** Thus, civil society's assessment included the following numbers: in 2010, Kazakhstan accepted 102



Roundtable with the CSO and the national authorities on the implementation of the recommendations on individual complaints in Kazakhstan, Astana, Kazakhstan, Nov. 2019

recommendations out of the 128 recommendations that were adopted. Of the remaining 26, 16 were accepted later, 3 were already implemented according to the State, 4 were rejected and 3 were “suspended”. According to civil society, Kazakhstan only implemented 10 recommendations out of 128. 58 were partially implemented, and 54 not at all. After the second UPR cycle in 2014, Kazakhstan received 198 recommendations, of which 147 were accepted, and 51 rejected. Out of the 147 accepted recommendations, 10 were implemented fully, 103 partially and 33 not at all.

The initiative assisted civil society in formulating better and more relevant recommendations for the UPR conducted in 2019. For example, civil society noted that Kazakhstan rejected the ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, as well as ratification of the 2nd Optional Protocol to the ICCPR to abolish the death penalty, did not ratify the optional protocols to nine human rights treaties that would allow citizens to file individual complaints, and refused to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. However, by end of 2019, the president of Kazakhstan declared his intention that the state ratify the 2nd Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, an achievement that can be attributed to long-standing efforts by the civil society with support of international stakeholders.


In that context, [the Centre organised two workshops in 2019 on the implementation of recommendations issued by the UN treaty bodies](#). The first workshop was aimed at 1) assessing the implementation of the recommendations, 2) formulating

recommendations for the upcoming UPR, and 3) ensuring that these assessments are included in the NGO report to be submitted for the UPR. Three recommendations selected for the follow-up procedure were discussed, but the implementation of other important recommendations was also analyzed: violence against women, the independence of the Ombudsman office, freedom of religion, the independence of the judiciary, extremism and terrorism, and other issues.

The second workshop was designed for the New Generation of Human Rights Defenders Coalition, focusing on strategic advocacy. This was added to the programme at the Coalition's request, and focused on strategic advocacy for the upcoming UPR. 15 human rights defenders took part in this workshop, of which eight identified as women. They focused on non-discrimination, freedom of expression and access to information, environment and electoral laws. The agenda focused on possible activities before, during and after the review, and on an analysis of the previous recommendations to Kazakhstan.

The activities supported by the Centre in Kazakhstan follow our long-term goal of supporting civil society and government in establishing and improving tools for comprehensive monitoring of the implementation of the Human Rights Committee and other treaty bodies' recommendations at national level.

**Rustam Kypshakbayev**

 @RKypshakbayev

**Katya Kavlis**

 @EKavlis



## Tactic 4: Towards a holistic approach

### Our approach

Other UN Human Rights mechanisms, such as UN Treaty Bodies or the UPR, could be more systematically and holistically utilised in order to enhance implementation of Human Rights Committee recommendations



Engaging with the ACAT-Madagascar and the OHCHR to ensure a large dissemination of the UNTBs and UPR recommendations, Antananarivo, Madagascar, Aug. 2019.

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, could be more systematically and holistically utilised in order to enhance implementation of Human Rights Committee recommendations.



## Our achievements



Roxane Cabrera and Railen Hernandez from IIRESODH at the Regional training on how to effectively engage with UN human rights mechanisms, San José Costa Rica, Sept. 2019

- Invited by the NGO UPR-Info, we facilitated a training session to civil society representatives from [Bolivia and El Salvador](#) to deepen their understanding of the UN human rights mechanisms, with a focus on how to prepare an advocacy strategy for the UPR considering the holistic use of the mechanisms. The training took place in October 2019 and was attended by 23 human rights defenders.
- Ahead of the UPR review of [El Salvador](#), we worked closely with Fundación de Estudios para la Aplicación del Derecho (FESPAD) and Comcavis Trans to highlight key recommendations from the Human Rights Committee related to the rights of indigenous peoples, the protection of human rights defenders and the rights of LGBTI persons. All three issues were successfully raised by the States during the UPR.
- The Centre also held a meeting with eight civil society representatives to discuss the possible activities that CSOs can implement in [El Salvador](#) to follow-up on the recommendations of the UPR. Possibilities to follow-up to recommendations of other UN human rights mechanisms, such as the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), were also discussed during the meeting.

- We co-sponsored four oral statements delivered during the [Interactive Dialogues with the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi](#) at the Human Rights Council sessions addressing human rights violations in the country and the situation of human rights defenders.
- In [Liberia](#), we continued to reinforce the CSOs coalition initially created for the Human Rights Committee review in 2017. This coalition is now a key actor in Liberia and works closely with the Government, the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in particular on transitional justice.
- A regional training on how to effectively engage with the UN human rights mechanisms took place in September 2019 in San José. It was attended by 14 [Costa Rican](#) and 10 [Nicaraguan](#) human rights defenders. It addressed all the available UN human rights mechanisms and how civil society organisations can engage with each one, including the UPR, the Human Rights Council's Special Procedures and the UN Treaty Bodies. A special session on how to submit individual cases to the UN mechanisms took place, followed by a discussion on possible individual complaints that Costa Rican and Nicaraguan civil society could submit.
- Further on 19 September 2019, the Centre and IRESODH facilitated a consultation with 10 [Nicaraguan](#) human rights defenders to develop a strategy on litigating cases of human rights violations and submitting reports to the UN treaty bodies, in particular to the Human Rights Committee.
- Together with the Coalición contra la Impunidad, the Plataforma Internacional contra la Impunidad and Lawyers without Borders, we provided technical ongoing consultation in [Honduras](#) on how to better streamline civil and political rights in the context of the 2019 UPR process.
- As part of our efforts to better advocate for the implementation of the urgent recommendations of the Human Rights Committee in [DR Congo](#) and in [Madagascar](#), we supported CSOs to participate in the CEDAW and UPR reviews. The issues identified by the Human Rights Committee were systematically taken into account in the advocacy strategy. This resulted in specific and aligned recommendations adopted at the UPR and CEDAW reviews.
- In the framework of the project in [Myanmar](#), we developed a tool for stakeholders for "[Protecting Civil and Political rights through Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#)", which identifies intersections between the ICCPR and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and issues related to civil and political rights that stakeholders can also raise with the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR).

## Story

Workshop on the follow-up to the HR Committee's recommendations with the ICCPR coalition, Kinshasa, DRC, Nov 2018.

### DR Congo: Using the various UN mechanisms to advocate for change

The DR Congo is one of the most complicated countries to carry out human rights related activities, with the vastness of the territory coupled with extreme poverty presenting difficult challenges. However, after several years of violence, unrest and gross human rights violations, there are some signs for hope. [The recent elections of December 2018 led to some positive developments](#). One may observe the strengthening of the Human rights institutions (such as the NHRI) [and the State willingness to initiate reforms in the field of human rights](#).

In this context, both the UPR and CEDAW review took place in 2019 and provided an important opportunity for scrutiny, as well as to reinforce NGO coalitions developed in the country. It was also an occasion to reinforce our ties with the [National Human Rights Commission](#) as well as with the National Mechanism for Reports and Follow-up (NMRF), which is part of the Government.

Our UPR advocacy was carried out throughout 2019 with the Carter Center and the group of NGOs involved in the 2017 Human Rights Committee's review. This group was divided into three sub-groups that jointly prepared thematic reports on [Rights of the child and vulnerable groups](#), [civil and political rights and public freedom](#), and [women's rights](#). [We ensured that our advocacy work carried out for the Human](#)



Our work for 2020 is developed in the same approach, with ongoing advocacy efforts on two key issues considered as urgent issues for the Human Rights Committee in 2017, namely the gender representation in the election process and the establishment of an independent national mechanism for the prevention of torture (NPM).

Rights Committee's review was adequately reflected in these reports as well as at public and private hearings held at the pre-session in April 2019. References were made to the recommendations of the Human Rights Committee, as well as regarding the progress of their implementation.

We also developed factsheets on key civil and political rights issues ([fair trial](#), [conditions of detention](#), [pre-trial detention](#), [human rights defenders](#), [torture and impunity](#)). These

thematic factsheets underlined the recommendations made during the previous UPR cycle, the recommendations made by the Human Rights Committee, the progress and challenges in their implementation and suggested new recommendations for the current UPR cycle.

In our efforts for global advocacy work, we also supported the same NGO coalition to actively participate in the CEDAW review of the DRC in July 2019. On this occasion, we emphasized the issues addressed by the Human Rights Committee regarding women's rights and in particular the gender-based violence and the related impunity. CEDAW also selected this issue as an urgent one for the follow-up procedure, requesting a progress report from the Government by July 2021.

**This long-term engagement is at the heart of our strategy, ensuring that key concerns successfully advocated by our national partners at the Human Rights Committee reviews also remain the focus of other UN Treaty Bodies' reviews or in the UPR context. This ensures that ongoing UN scrutiny is made on these issues and fuels our efforts of advocacy at the national level.**

Our work for 2020 is developed in the same approach, with ongoing advocacy efforts on two key issues considered as urgent issues for the Human Rights Committee in 2017, namely the gender representation in the election process and the establishment of an independent national mechanism for the prevention of torture (NPM). We plan to work closely with the Government and the Members of the Parliament of the DRC to implement these two recommendations.

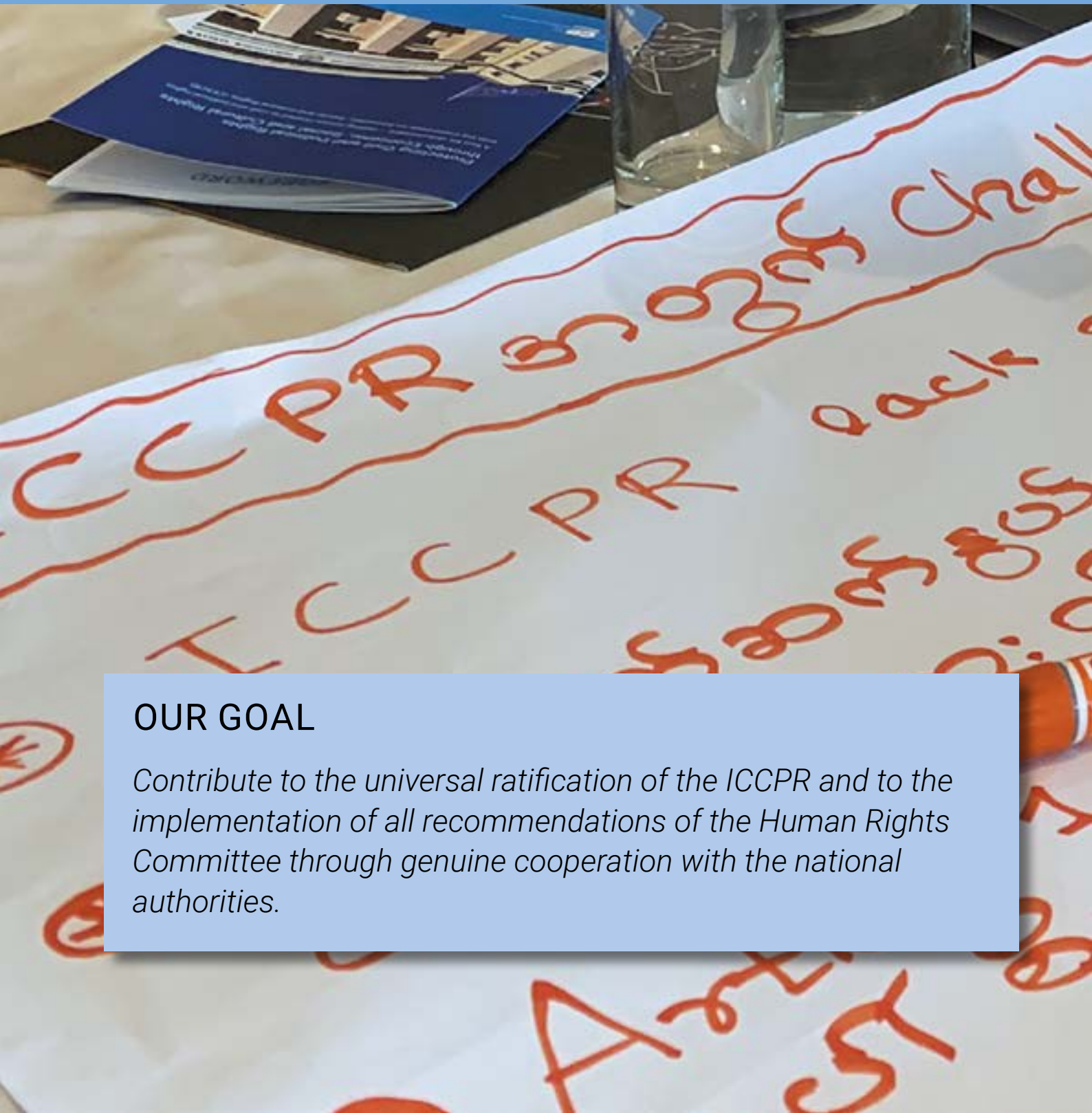
**Patrick Mutzenberg**



@mutzenberg

# Goal 2

Increase ratification and enhance implementation of ICCPR



## OUR GOAL

*Contribute to the universal ratification of the ICCPR and to the implementation of all recommendations of the Human Rights Committee through genuine cooperation with the national authorities.*



## Tactic 1: Engagement for a worldwide ratification

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### Our approach

We seek to provide legal expertise and technical advice to State actors including national Parliamentarians on the ICCPR and the ratification process.



The Centre developed a tool for stakeholders for "Protecting Civil and Political rights through Economic, Social and Cultural Rights."

We seek to provide legal expertise and technical advice to State actors including national Parliamentarians on the ICCPR and the ratification process. We combine this approach with raising awareness of other stakeholders and the producing of pedagogic tools.

## Our achievements



CSO strategic meeting on ICCPR ratification process in Myanmar, Yangon, Myanmar, Feb. 2020.

- Most of our work and achievements for the universal ratification of the ICCPR focused on **Myanmar**, where we have been carrying out multi-year projects. Our first [2-year project](#) was implemented in 2016-2018, which was followed up by our current 3-year project for 2018-2020. Several tools were produced in the current project, which can be utilised not only in Myanmar, but also for other countries that are not yet Party to ICCPR.
- We organised a [1.5-day workshop with State actors on ICCPR ratification](#) in **Myanmar**, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar (MoFA Myanmar), inviting former Human Rights Committee member, Mauro Politi, as a key resource. It was attended by more than 50 participants representing various State bodies and agencies.
- We developed a [“Simple Guide on ICCPR \(Articles 1-27\)”](#), which provides all stakeholders working on ratification as well as implementation of the ICCPR with an overview and basic understanding of the main articles of the ICCPR. The guide provides examples of issues and can also be used as an introductory tool for everyone wanting to learn about the ICCPR. It is available in English and in Myanmar, and can easily be translated into other languages as it uses simple language.
- In **Myanmar**, we also organised a [1.5-day workshop with State actors on the National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up \(NMRF\)](#), in cooperation with MoFA Myanmar and inviting Virginia Bras Gomes (former Chair of the CESCR and NMRF expert in Portugal) and Naleeruc Pairchaiyapoom (Ministry of Justice Thailand) as key

resources persons. The workshop used the initial reporting of Myanmar to CESCR as a practical example, thereby also initiating the preparation process of the report among participants. It was well received by more than 70 participants from different State bodies, as everyone recognised the importance of coordination and cooperation among State agencies to effectively and efficiently engage with international and regional HR bodies, for the benefit of NMRF for Myanmar.

- Based on the learnings and results of the abovementioned workshop in [Myanmar](#), we have developed a [“Visual Guide on NMRF”](#), available in English and Myanmar. Timely reporting and continuous engagement between State authorities and international and regional mechanisms are essential to effectively monitor and ensure the implementation of international human rights law. However, such reporting and engagement including follow-up to reviews has also been a challenge to many States, as their obligations increase with the number of international human rights Treaties they ratify. Such concern has been to some extent also a factor hindering smooth ratification of the ICCPR by remaining States. The visual guide was developed to help all States to more effectively engage with relevant human rights mechanisms at different levels, and further, to ratify any remaining UN human rights treaties and to implement them more comprehensively.
- We developed a tool for stakeholders for [“Protecting Civil and Political rights through Economic, Social and Cultural Rights”](#), which identifies intersections between the ICCPR and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and issues related to civil and political rights that stakeholders can also address with the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR).
- In [Myanmar](#), we also organised a [civil society workshop on effective advocacy for ICCPR ratification](#) by Myanmar, in cooperation with our national partners. It aimed to strengthen the capacity of national civil society actors to carry out joint advocacy for the earliest ratification of the ICCPR by Myanmar. The workshop was attended by more than 50 participants from 30 national CSOs including members of the ICCPR Action Group, a coalition of national CSOs working together for ratification and implementation of the ICCPR. Through the workshop, participants elaborated on a joint action plan for 2020-2021.
- In [Malaysia](#), we coordinated participation of a Human Rights Committee member, Ahmed Fathalla, from Egypt in the workshop organised by the National Human Rights Institute (SUHAKAM) Malaysia in December 2019 as the main resource. The workshop was on the anti-discrimination and hate speech law reforms, and has also contributed to the increased awareness and highlighted need for Malaysia to ratify the ICCPR.

## Story

# The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Human Rights Committee



CSO workshop Myanmar on ICCPR ratification, Yangon, Myanmar, Feb. 2020.

## Myanmar: amplifying efforts of national actors for better protection of civil and political rights

We have been working in Myanmar on the realisation of civil and political rights in the country, in full accordance with the ICCPR. It is easy to say in one sentence, but in no way something that can be achieved over a night in any of the countries in this world. In Myanmar, the challenge might be bigger and more complicated than some other countries, but there is no doubt, we believe, that the ratification of the ICCPR is the one decisive step Myanmar can take towards it.

Therefore, our previous engagement in Myanmar was rather focused on enhancing the process of ICCPR ratification. *In that context, it was a great pleasure to see the ratification of the ICESCR by Myanmar in 2017*, as it showed the commitment and actual ability of certain national actors in Myanmar to protect human rights in accordance with international human rights law. At the same time, ratification of the ICCPR is *“not an end in itself, but rather a starting point for a full implementation”* as Judge Krister Thelin, former member of the Human Rights Committee, has said at a workshop in Myanmar with us.



We strongly believe that initiatives led by national actors and their capacity building should be the centre of our engagement towards protection of civil and political rights in Myanmar.

Our current engagement has been designed and implemented, building upon the achievements and lessons learnt as well as the needs expressed by the national actors. In 2019-2020 we sought not only to assist the efforts of national actors towards ICCPR ratification but also to build their capacity to utilise all available opportunities for protection of civil and political rights, by:


- deepening the understanding of the ICCPR among larger stakeholders including the benefit of its ratification to Myanmar;
- providing practical assistance for the establishment of the National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up establishment of the NMRF in Myanmar in combination with actual practice of the initial reporting to CESCR; and
- facilitating the utilisation of UPR and CESCR reviews by national stakeholders to address issues related civil and political rights.

Workshops were organised with State and civil society actors in the country and tools were produced, which can be useful for those working to protect civil and political rights in other countries. Particular attention was paid to the tremendous efforts made by national actors and their needs in order for us to complement and amplify them, whereby also utilising limited resources and opportunities.

We strongly believe that initiatives led by national actors and their capacity building should be the centre of our engagement towards protection of civil and political rights in Myanmar, as they are the ones whose rights are at stake and they are the ones who can make real and sustainable change on the ground. **Their human rights and their democracy cannot be imported, but it is to be created and protected by them.**

Many challenges still lie ahead. The situation is further complicated by the COVID-19 outbreak, and a lot might change following the national election later in 2020. **Protection of civil and political rights, in accordance with the ICCPR, is a long-term process to which every stakeholder can contribute.** These thoughts are also reflected in our planned activities in 2020 and further in the [Strategic Plan Myanmar 2021-2023](#). We are convinced that we can play a unique role in that process and are committed to continuing our engagement to assist the efforts of national actors.

Daisuke Shirane

 @D\_Shirane

## Tactic 2: Disseminate the Human Rights Committee recommendations at the national level and generate a public debate

### Our approach

We continue to develop new creative activities to disseminate the Human Rights Committee's recommendations and to raise awareness among national stakeholders.



The Centre launched several websites allowing to have a global overview of all the recommendations of the UN Human Rights mechanisms.

We continue to develop new creative activities to disseminate the Human Rights Committee's recommendations and to raise awareness among national stakeholders. We are also engaged to organize high-level country visits with Committee members and expert meetings focusing on relevant Human Rights Committee recommendations.

## Our achievements



Follow-up mission in Lebanon with Ilze Brand Kehris, Beirut, Lebanon, Jan. 2019.

- We developed brand [new websites](#) to track and search all the UN Treaty Bodies and UPR recommendations. Specific graphs and figures allow to immediately see what the main concerns and challenges are, faced by the States at the national level. So far four country websites were developed, namely Vietnam, Belarus, Tajikistan and DR Congo.
- In cooperation with national partners, the Centre issued [posters](#) illustrating the Human Rights Committee recommendations working closely with local artists. This is a useful means to disseminate and vulgarize the recommendations among the general public and the various stakeholders. We also launched [leaflets and factsheets](#) in order to disseminate and explain the content of the recommendations.
- [Follow-up missions](#) with the participation of a member of the Human Rights Committee are a key element in the strategy of the Centre to disseminate the recommendations at the national level. In 2019-2020 we organised missions in [Lebanon, Belarus, Honduras, El Salvador, Kazakhstan, Senegal and Niger](#), meeting the highest national authorities.

- In **Thailand**, we organised the [2nd follow-up visit](#) with a new Committee member from the Asia region, Shuichi Furuya. While the previous review of Thailand took place in March 2017 and the State's as well as civil society follow-up reports were submitted in 2018, the Committee's follow-up evaluation of Thailand was only scheduled for July 2020. The 2nd follow-up visit helped all stakeholders, including the new Human Rights Committee member from the Asia region, who was not a member at the time of Thailand's review, to deepen understanding of the current situation, raise awareness of the follow-up process and share updates that should be taken into account when the Committee evaluates follow-up actions of Thailand in 2020.
- In **El Salvador**, we organised a conference with almost 60 State officials and members of the Ombudsman office on the topic "The role of United Nations human rights mechanisms and their relationship with the Inter American Human Rights System", raising awareness of the UN human rights machinery.
- The role of NHRIs to monitor the implementation of the Human Rights Committee recommendations is crucial and we cooperate with them on a regular basis. In **DR Congo**, we organised a workshop in June 2019 to identify how the CNDH-RDC could better monitor the UPR recommendations on civil and political rights. This consultation was attended by 44 people including six commissioners and 38 staff members, including from the provincial offices.
- The Centre works closely with the Office of the Swiss Cooperation in Burundi to maintain regular contact with the various Embassies represented in Bujumbura within the Early Warning Group on Human Rights (EWGHR). In particular, the Centre prepared a document on the [recommendations to Burundi adopted by the UN treaty bodies and the UPR](#), which was presented during a video conference call organized by the Swiss representation with the support of the European Union on April 10, 2019.



## Story



Follow-up mission in El Salvador with Helene Tigroudja, San Salvador, Sept. 2019.

## El Salvador: Opening spaces for dialogue on human rights

The Centre's follow-up visit to **El Salvador** took place in 2019 within the first four months of Nayib Bukele's newly assumed Presidency. This represented a challenge as at the time of the visit, the spaces for dialogue between the Salvadoran Executive Power and civil society organizations were completely closed. The former President had adopted a Decree establishing an Interinstitutional Mechanism for the Implementation and Follow-up of International Commitments regarding Human Rights, which included CSO participation. However, its functioning was on hold with Bukele's administration. Even the communication between the Executive and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in **El Salvador** had been suspended since the new administration. The new President was already known by using Twitter to communicate with the various stakeholders instead of promoting genuine dialogue.

In this context, the visit of Hélène Tigroudja, member of the Human Rights Committee, served to emphasize the importance of spaces for dialogue on human rights issues. Likewise, the visit was useful to re-establish channels of dialogue

In this context, the visit of H  l  ne Tigroudja, member of the Human Rights Committee, served to emphasize the importance of spaces for dialogue on human rights issues. Likewise, the visit was useful to re-establish channels of dialogue between OHCHR and the new administration.

between OHCHR and the new administration. We take this opportunity to thank the OHCHR office in El Salvador who assisted in coordinating our visit.

The delegation was able to meet with high-level authorities, including the Vice-President, the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General. We also had a long and fruitful meeting with the President and Judges of the Criminal and the Constitutional Chambers of the Supreme Court of Justice. We were also able to participate in a meeting of the Commission on Justice and Human Rights and in a meeting of the Commission on Foreign Affairs of the

Legislative Assembly. Furthermore, H  l  ne Tigroudja delivered a conference on the role of UN human rights mechanisms and their relationship with the Inter American Human Rights System, jointly organized with OHCHR and the Ombudsman of El Salvador, addressing almost 60 State officials and members of the Ombudsman. Therefore covering the main actors in charge of implementing the recommendations adopted by the Human Rights Committee in 2018.

Among the main issues of discussion were the extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances in El Salvador and the impunity of those violations, including those perpetrated by criminal gangs. The delegation also raised the issue of transitional justice mechanisms in El Salvador, particularly the impunity that prevailed with respect to the serious human rights violations perpetrated during the Salvadoran armed conflict, given that a key transitional justice legislative project was under discussion at the moment of the visit. Other topics addressed during this mission were the situation of human rights defenders and women's rights, including sexual and reproductive rights.

The visit ended with a one-day meeting with 27 human rights defenders to discuss their main concerns from the CSO perspective and to elaborate a road map to monitor the implementation of the Human Rights Committee's recommendations.

Challenges still remain and civil and political rights have been further restricted in light of the COVID-19 crisis in El Salvador, where President Bukele has taken extreme measures that have resulted in human rights abuses, and have impacted the work of human rights defenders in the country.

Andrea Meraz



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## Tactic 3: Generating national debates on civil and political rights

### Our approach

We promote an ongoing dialogue between national authorities and other stakeholders, in particular National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and civil society.



Roundtable with the authorities, the NRHI and the NGOs on the follow-up to the HR Committee's recommendations, Kigali, Rwanda, June 2019.

We remain convinced that national debates can contribute to the implementation of the recommendations of the Human Rights Committee. To that end, we promote an ongoing dialogue between national authorities and other stakeholders, in particular National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and civil society.



## Our achievements



Dialogue Platform on Human Dimension (DPHD) in Kazakhstan, Astana, Kazakhstan, Jan 2019

- A two-day conference was held in July 2019 with the Special Court for **Liberia** and the National CSO Platform to promote a better understanding of the members of the Parliaments on the principles and standards of international criminal justice.
- Participation in two meetings of **the Dialogue Platform on Human Dimension (DPHD) in Kazakhstan**, a body composed of Parliamentarians, representatives of state bodies and civil society, and mandated to exchange views on the implementation of the UN human rights bodies. Participants noted the uniqueness and the positive role of DPHD to monitor the progress and the challenges at the national level.
- After several attempts, in June 2019 we were able to organize the first joint consultation with the National Commission and civil society in **Rwanda**. The consultation focused on the role of civil society in the follow-up to recommendations as well as on the measures taken by the authorities to implement them. Both the authorities and civil society exchanged plans of action for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations, including on recommendations from the recent reviews of UPR and the Committee against Torture.
- In May 2019 and for the first time a roundtable was organised in **Belarus, where authorities and civil society met to review the recommendations of the Human Rights Committee**. Specific focus was placed on the recommendations related with equality, non-discrimination, and freedoms of religion, assembly, expression and association respectively.



## Story



For the first time, national CSOs were able to join a roundtable with the authorities to discuss the implementation of the HR Committee's recommendations, Minsk, Belarus, May 2019.

## Belarus: First ever dialogue between State authorities and civil society organizations

After twenty years of interruption in their cooperation with the UN Human Rights Committee, Belarus was reviewed under the ICCPR in October 2018. The Committee adopted 25 recommendations to be implemented by the State party, including three urgent issues, where the State is required to take concrete measures within two years (by November 2020), namely:

- Implementation of the Views under the Optional Protocol and interim measures of protection
- Death penalty
- Freedom of peaceful assembly

Together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Belarus and Human Rights House Foundation, we organised a national dialogue to discuss the practical implications for the implementation of the Human Rights Committee's recommendations, with the participation of Human Rights Committee member Ilze Brands Kheris. The dialogue took place in May 2019.

Previous interactions with the government were largely conducted on the basis of government monologues, and that there was rarely, if any, meaningful dialogue between the two sides.

All of the key government departments were represented, with a notable exception being the Ministry of Interior, who is disinclined to discuss human rights issues. **The composition of participants was roughly an equal number of government representatives and CSO representatives, including non-registered NGOs. This was seen as a positive sign, as in the past the government had been reluctant to engage with non-registered NGOs – or with CSOs at all.**

Even though the most sensitive human rights issues in the country (such as the implementation of the Views under the Optional Protocol and the death penalty) were not included in the dialogue, participants were able to discuss topics such as non-discrimination, freedom of religion, freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly.

Several government representatives said the dialogue helped them to see that “both sides need to compromise if we want to make progress on these recommendations”. Both the government and CSOs expressed disagreements, particularly on recent legislation targeting online freedoms, and on a very recent human rights incident affecting the Roma community in Belarus. **However, on the whole, disagreements were positive in the sense that participants were able to manifest their views of the issues, and show that dialogue could help to address concerns of both sides.**

Civil society representatives appreciated the dialogue as an opportunity to discuss human rights issues with the government. Previous interactions with the government were largely conducted on the basis of government monologues, and that there was rarely, if any, meaningful dialogue between the two sides.

**Andrea Meraz**

 @andrea\_ccpr

## **Tactic 4:** Working with the Committee to address the lack of cooperation of States

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### Our approach

In case of overdue reports, we regularly send reminders to States and recall to the Human Rights Committee that non-reporting States should be on the agenda of the Committee sessions.



Equatorial Guinea ratified the ICCPR in 1987 but sent its first report in 2018 only. The review took place in July 2019 and was a very important opportunity for the CSOs to address the HR Committee.

We are convinced that the regular scrutiny by the Human Rights Committee is essential to monitor State compliance with their legal obligations. Therefore, we closely monitor the cooperation of States with the Human Rights Committee, and track any shortcomings. In case of overdue reports, we regularly send reminders to States and recall to the Human Rights Committee that non-reporting States should be on the agenda of the Committee sessions.

## Our achievements



Several States are late in their reporting obligations and the Centre is mobilized to ensure that the HR Committee is able to review them even in absence of report.

- After carrying out advocacy activities for the review of **Nicaragua** by the Human Rights Committee by briefing the Committee on the country's deteriorating human rights situation and submitting a report to the UPR, Nicaragua finally sent its periodic report to the Committee after a delay of more than 6 years.
- **Equatorial Guinea** was another **state to be reviewed in absence of report by the Human Rights Committee** in July 2019. **This review happened for the first time since the Covenant entered into force in September 1987.** We devoted special attention to the Human Rights Defenders from this country to ensure they could participate in this crucial event, organizing an informal briefing with the Human Rights Committee as well several private meetings with representatives from the Special Procedures. As thematic work, we produced an NGO report on the corruption and human rights together with EG Justice (Equatorial Guinea).



## Story



The Centre produced a toolkit for the CSO from Nicaragua with key information ahead of the UNTBs reviews.

## Nicaragua: A country under scrutiny after a period of lack of cooperation with the UN Treaty Bodies

Nicaragua is a State party to 8 out of the 9 core UN human rights treaties. The only treaty that Nicaragua has not yet ratified is the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances (CPED). **While it is commendable that Nicaragua has ratified almost all of the international human rights treaties, the State had a delay of a minimum of 5 years in submitting any of its reports to the UNTBs.**

With the deteriorating human rights situation since the 2018 crisis in the country, it was worrisome that Nicaragua was not scheduled for review by any of the UNTBs due to the lack of reporting. In this sense, we were very pleased to hear that, in May 2019, the State submitted its outstanding report (due since 29 October 2012) on the implementation of the ICCPR to the Human Rights Committee, along with other pending State reports to the UN treaty bodies. This happened after the Committee decided, for the first time ever, to send a letter to Nicaragua reminding its reporting obligations under ICCPR and making reference to the Committee's Rules of Procedure, which enables the Committee to review a State party in the absence of a report. The letter was the direct result of a briefing with Human Rights Committee members and OHCHR

Additionally, the UPR played an important role as Nicaragua submitted its delayed reports just days before its UPR review. In this sense, the briefing note for Nicaragua's UPR prepared by the Centre on the lack of cooperation with the UN human rights mechanisms is also expected to have had an impact on Nicaragua's decision to submit its outstanding reports to the UN treaty bodies.

staff, organized by [the Centre and Amnesty International, about the deteriorating human rights crisis in Nicaragua to advocate for the review of Nicaragua in absence of a State report.](#)

More broadly, the advocacy activities carried out by the Centre and Amnesty generated a larger discussion within the Human Rights Committee on prioritizing the review of States parties with seriously deteriorating human rights situations. [In this sense, the Committee adopted criteria to take into account when considering whether to invoke the procedure of review in absence of a State report. Here, our advocacy has had a significant impact on reporting.](#)

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mechanisms is also expected to have had an impact on Nicaragua's decision to submit its outstanding reports to the UN treaty bodies.

We naturally consider the submission of the State report on the implementation of the ICCPR in Nicaragua to the Human Rights Committee and the other UN Treaty Bodies a positive step. This submission shows the willingness of Nicaragua to cooperate with the UN human rights bodies, which is better than a review in absence of report. [The submission of the State report also represents an opportunity for CSOs to engage in the review of Nicaragua by the Human Rights Committee scheduled in March 2021.](#) Nicaragua will also be reviewed in 2020-2021 by other Treaty Bodies such as the Committee Against Torture, CESCR, CEDAW and CERD. This means that Nicaragua will be under constant scrutiny by the UN human rights mechanisms after a period of lack of cooperation. We hope that Nicaragua will continue to engage constructively in the upcoming reviews, as they represent a unique opportunity to improve the human rights situation in the country.

**Andrea Meraz**

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# Goal 3

Supporting the work of the Human Rights Committee



## OUR GOAL

*Contribute to the quality of the work of the Human Rights Committee through an improvement of its working methods and through the development of the thematic work that are not yet fully addressed or emerging from changing reality on the ground.*

## Tactic 1: Reinforcing the work of the Human Rights Committee and other UN Treaty Bodies

### Our approach

Toward a long-term cooperation with TB-Net to suggest concrete proposals in the context of the UNTBs' strengthening process.



Experts meeting on the role of the Petition Team of the OHCHR in the processing of the cases, Paris, Jan. 2019.

We have developed a long-term cooperation with TB-Net, an informal group of international NGOs and networks created in February 2017, who work closely with the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies (UNTBs) and have specialised expertise on their procedures and substantive work. We believe that through our advocacy work with TB-Net we will be in a position to advise on the harmonization of the methods of work of the UNTBs, as well as concrete proposal in the context of the UNTBs' strengthening process.



## Our achievements



Jointly with TB-Net, we organized a CSO meeting to discuss the strengthening process of UN Treaty Bodies, Geneva, Jul 2020.

- Together with TB-Net, we organized [a series of consultations with national, regional and international NGOs on the UNTBs' strengthening process](#), in order to suggest concrete proposals on the reform of the UNTBs.
- This culminated with an international consultation held in Geneva in July 2020 with more than 30 NGOs. Based on this consultation, [a Civil Society Proposal "Towards a strengthened UN treaty body system" was adopted and endorsed by 86 NGOs](#). Subsequent webinars were organized with national NGOs in order to raise awareness of the role of the civil society in the strengthening process.
- We organised together with the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights (Geneva Academy) and the Paris Human Rights Center (CRDH) a [debriefing meeting on the report: "Treaty Bodies in Action: Consideration of Complaints from Individuals and States"](#), to further discuss the role of the Petition Team of the

OHCHR in the processing of the cases. This meeting was followed by a study visit at the European Court of Human Rights.

- As the Human Rights Committee has been preparing its **new General Comment (GC37) on the freedom of peaceful assembly**, we organised [a civil society roundtable in Thailand](#) in cooperation with its national partners. It helped Thai CSO participants analyse the 2nd draft text of the GC37, compare it with the national situation, identify key issues and inputs to be shared with the Committee, and start the process of preparing joint CSO submission to the Committee. A joint input by 6 Thai national CSOs in cooperation with the Centre was submitted to the Committee in February 2020, which is now available on the [Committee's website](#).
- We **have also participated in regional consultations on the new GC37 organised by partners, namely in Geneva for Europe and in Bangkok for the Asia Pacific region**. These consultations were also attended by Committee members, and provided a useful opportunity for participants to engage in direct interaction and provide the members with first hand information on the situation on the ground.

## Tactic 2: Our thematic work on corruption and human rights

### Our approach

Our activities focused on bringing anti-corruption groups to effectively integrate human rights their advocacy efforts.



The CCPR-Centre organized a consultation to identify cases on corruption that could be submitted to the Treaty Bodies, Geneva, Jul 2019.

As part of our thematic work, we initiated several projects on human rights and corruption. Indeed, corruption is a major obstacle to the observance and implementation of human rights. A wide range of mechanisms exist for monitoring compliance with human rights at the national, regional and international levels, and for fighting corruption. However, anti-corruption practitioners have not been fully equipped to make the link between corruption and the realisation of human rights in the UN human rights mechanisms. At the other end, human rights experts have not been fully equipped to use the anti-corruption mechanisms. Our activities focused on bringing the two communities together, to effectively integrate human rights into anti-corruption efforts. Moreover, none of the UN human rights mechanisms have approached the corruption issue in a systematic manner. As such, our activities were carried out in order to fill that gap.



## Our achievements



The Centre presented its most recent findings about the UNTB's approach on corruption at the Conference of State Parties to the UNCAC, Abu Dhabi, UAE, Dec. 2019.

- **Consultation on individual communications regarding corruption.** Lawyers from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Azerbaijan were invited to come to Geneva, together with corruption experts, to identify possible cases that could be submitted to the Treaty Bodies. 12 participants received an introduction to the system of individual complaints, and listened to guest speakers including Ivo Petrov of the Petition Team at OHCHR, and Ilze Brands-Kehris, member of the Human Rights Committee. The discussion focused on cases regarding forced eviction, the right to a fair trial, and admissibility requirements.
- A **French translation of the research** on the approach of the Treaty Bodies towards corruption. The research analysed how all Treaty Bodies approached corruption between 2007 and 2017. Both the English and the French version are now available, and were presented at the expert conference "Human Rights and Corruption", organised in June 2019 by the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF).
- **Several newsletters were sent out.** These newsletters focus on how the Human Rights Committee approaches corruption in its Concluding Observations, Lists of Issues and Lists of Issues Prior to Reporting.
- **Several thematic reports were submitted to the Human Rights Committee**, focusing on how corruption affects the enjoyment of human rights. This included reports for



the review of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Equatorial Guinea and Togo. Other reports were submitted for the List of Issues of Uzbekistan and Burkina Faso, and for the review of Benin by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These reports consider the issue of corruption from several angles and respond to the Committee's repeated request to receive more information on corruption from civil society. As a result, countries receive more questions as well as recommendations on the issue of corruption.

- **Development of advocacy tools:**
  - **Launch of the Practitioners' Guide on Corruption and Human Rights.** This guide describes how corruption and human rights violations can be interlinked, how the UN human rights mechanisms can be used by anti-corruption groups and that those involved in the fight against corruption must be protected. The guide was launched twice: once for the human rights community, in Geneva, during a side-event at the Human Rights Council, and once for the anti-corruption community, in Abu Dhabi, during the Conference of State Parties (COSP) to the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). These events allowed us to distribute the materials widely and disseminate our work on the topic. A translated version into French is also available.
  - We developed **information sheets with Frequently Asked Questions** and general information about the international human rights mechanisms, that usefully complement the Guide. They contain very practical information for anyone who would like to engage with these mechanisms, including referrals to useful websites.
  - **A new website is dedicated to corruption and human rights.** On this website, anti-corruption practitioners can find all the information about submitting information to the Human Rights Committee, and our previous activities related to corruption. All the advocacy tools discussed above, are available on that website.
- **Regional Training in Togo.** The Centre invited anti-corruption experts from Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger and Togo to a regional training in order to prepare them to submit a thematic report on corruption and its negative impact on human rights in their country, to one of the Treaty Bodies. As a result of this training, three alternative reports were submitted.
- **Several trainings at the COSP.** The COSP was an excellent opportunity to be able to address civil society working on corruption. The Centre held one general training that was open to anyone that was interested in the link between corruption and human rights. The second training was specifically meant for civil society from the MENA-region, which allowed us to focus on specific country situations. Our presence there allowed us to disseminate our work on the topic and the advocacy tools to its target audience: anti-corruption experts.

## Story



A first regional training was organized with CSOs specialised on the fight against corruption, gathering participants from five countries from West Africa

### One regional consultation - three alternative reports - several specific recommendations

It is not always easy to link corruption and human rights in practice. **In many countries, the anti-corruption and the human rights community are not aware of each other's work or the available mechanisms, leading to gaps in protection.** In order to address this gap, the Centre organised a regional training on the UN human rights mechanisms, specifically tailored to anti-corruption experts from Togo, Benin, Niger and Burkina Faso.

The anti-corruption experts had a lot of knowledge about the widespread nature of corruption in their country, the action plans the government is developing to fight against it, and shared many examples with the group. The human rights experts from the Centre joined the discussion to illustrate how these examples of corruption have a negative impact on the enjoyment of human rights, and clarified that a range of Treaty Bodies and other human rights mechanisms are available to them for reporting purposes.

These reports on corruption and human rights lead to concrete recommendations to the States in question, allowing civil society to use these reports in their work to advocate for improvement.

**An example included corruption linked to the management of natural resources and limiting access to education in Burkina Faso.**

These and other practices have a serious impact on the State's ability to guarantee non-discrimination, the right to life and other human rights. Detailed information was also added about the authority in charge of

fighting corruption in the country, information that is not usually included in general alternative reports. This thematic report was sent to the Human Rights Committee in preparation of the adoption of the List of Issues Prior to Reporting.

This regional training also allowed us to outline the legal framework on corruption. Again, this is information that is not always known by human rights experts, who focus on the legal framework regarding civil and political rights, for example.

**Bringing together several anti-corruption experts allowed us to maximize our impact.** One training has led to three alternative reports:

- One for Togo's review by the Human Rights Committee.
- One for Burkina Faso's List of Issues Prior to Reporting, also to the Human Rights Committee.
- One for Benin's review by the Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, resulting in very specific recommendations regarding the National Anti-Corruption Authority and the legal framework, including for whistleblower protection.

These reports lead to concrete recommendations to the States in question, allowing civil society to use these reports in their work to advocate for improvement.

**Lazarie Eeckeloo**

 @lazarieeeckeloo



# Financial Situation



Presentation of Centre's activities at the session of the Human Rights Committee, Geneva, March 2019



## 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.- +



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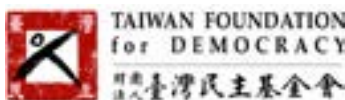


État et Canton de Genève

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



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Taiwan Foundation



Loterie Romande

## Income and costs statement for the year 2019

(1st January – 31st December, in CHF)

This is an extract of the audited financial statements for 2019. a full version is available upon request at [info@ccprcentre.org](mailto:info@ccprcentre.org)

### 2019 Income & Expenditure

In 2019, the Centre for Civil and Political Rights reported a total income of CHF 667'880.- which is a slight decrease compared to 2017 (CHF 694'349.-). In 2019, the Centre continued to save 1% of the total of funding received to improve its reserves which now stand at CHF 61'665. This reserve is particularly welcomed as we are now facing the future with a lot of uncertainty due to the COVID-19 crisis and its financial consequences.

The number of donors was similar in 2019 compared to the previous years with several donors providing support for multi-year projects. In the past 12 months we were particularly pleased to see both the Canton de Genève and the Swiss MFA renewing their supports for multi-year programs.

	2019	2018
<b>Income</b>		
Governments	339'456.- CHF	356'508.- CHF
Foundations	295'887.- CHF	307'685.- CHF
Other revenue	32'538.- CHF	30'156.- CHF
<b>Total</b>	<b>667'880.- CHF</b>	<b>694'349.- CHF</b>
<b>Costs</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
Obj.1: HRDs support for ICCPR implementation	297'293.- CHF	173'618.- CHF
Obj. 2: ICCPR ratification and implementation	171'121.- CHF	135'665.- CHF
Obj.3: Support to the HRCtee and thematic work	156'184.- CHF	172'614.- CHF
Administration, Communication Fundraising	109'000.- CHF	82'685.- CHF
Governance and strategy	7'731.- CHF	9'193.- CHF
Net movement in funds	-135'113.-CHF	74'943.- CHF
<b>Total costs</b>	<b>606'216.- CHF</b>	<b>648'718.- CHF</b>
<b>Income (deficit) for the year (inc. reserve fund)</b>	<b>61'665.- CHF</b>	<b>45'631.- CHF</b>
Assets		
Cash and equivalents	270'566.- CHF	302'010.- CHF
Debtors	0.- CHF	189.- CHF
Transitory assets	0.- CHF	13'126.- CHF
<b>Total</b>	<b>270'566.- CHF</b>	<b>315'325.- CHF</b>
<b>Liabilities and reserves</b>		
Short term liabilities	44'971.- CHF	16'282.- CHF
Deferred grants	79'304.- CHF	214'417.- CHF
Free capital and reserve funds	146'291.- CHF	84'626.- CHF
<b>Total</b>	<b>270'566.- CHF</b>	<b>315'325.- CHF</b>

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