

# APPEAL

# 2024



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



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## FOREWORD BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

Justice and rights are the foundation of enduring peace. They are the basis of development that is inclusive and sustainable. They build greater well-being – and greater trust.



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As I write this foreword, it is easy to feel apprehensive about the future. Conflict is raging in many regions, with unbearable human rights impacts on millions of people. Human rights violations are being met with impunity. And with every new act of violence, there is a risk that our tolerance level increases, fuelling the prospect of even more human suffering. Trust vis-à-vis national and international governance structures is diminishing, as is the space to dissent and dialogue in an increasingly polarized world. We are burning up our planet and humanitarian crises have grown to brutal and unprecedented dimensions, with displacement on an epic scale. Inequalities within and among nations are mounting. This is not a landscape that any of us wants to live in, or to hand over to future generations. And we don't have to.

Fear divides and paralyzes. It is easily manipulated to instigate polarization, dehumanization and hate. Hope opens a future. We need to nourish hope and create opportunities for collective engagement in the construction of the future. We also need a shared common vision of that future to guide us. 75 years ago, in the aftermath of appalling suffering, destruction and misery, countries from every region came together to define that common promise. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has promoted immense benefits across the world, inspiring and sustaining movements against discrimination; liberation struggles against colonial subjugation and exploitation; vast advances in labour rights and social protections; and many important steps towards accountability and participation. The anniversary of the Universal Declaration reminds us of its transformative power – and the many solutions that it has enabled, to challenges as complex and existential as those we face today.

Through the human rights dialogues that have taken place last year across the world in the context of the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, my colleagues and I have engaged with many different communities. The many thoughtful and passionate voices that we found are a testament to the power of human rights engagement. We need to harness this potential to revitalize a **global movement for human rights** that enables the space for critical

conversations to bring human rights-based solutions to the current world challenges.

Those of us holding responsibilities at the national and international levels must work together with all actors to build inclusive and representative governance structures that promote trust and confidence between people and institutions, but also between different people and groups within societies. We need to deploy more effective efforts to promote a renewed social contract anchored in human rights, as called for by the Secretary-General in his Common Agenda.

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In the face of emerging risks, we have the collective responsibility to step up prevention and **early warning systems** and enhance our efforts to respond effectively to ensure **better protection for people and the fulfilment of their rights**. Action to implement human rights recommendations contributes to preventing and resolving conflict. Internationally and domestically, human rights need to be at the centre of all peacebuilding and prevention work. They also need to be front and centre in climate negotiations as part of **environmental action**. This requires a collective effort that must be supported by all stakeholders, from the private to the public sector.

To ensure greater well-being, sustainable and inclusive development, economic policies, investment decisions and business models need to be informed by civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, the right to development and the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. The fight against corruption and associated illicit financial flows are also essential for rebuilding trust and increasing fiscal space for human rights at the national level. An **economy** founded on **human rights** can address the growing inequalities both within countries and among countries.

Inequality is a multi-dimensional reality. With far-reaching demographic changes underway – decreasing and aging populations in high income countries and growing and increasingly young populations in low- and middle-income countries – it is crucial to address human rights throughout the life cycle. The intersectionality of all forms of discrimination, exclusion and marginalization must inform policies and programmes to realize the 2030 Agenda’s promise of leaving

no one behind. Inequality also limits opportunities to profit from the rapid development of new technologies, and those same technologies may exacerbate discrimination and marginalisation. We need to work to ensure that digitalization benefits all people everywhere, including by enhancing protection in the digital space and leveraging the opportunities that **digital technologies and data** present for the realization of human rights.

In the next four years, my Office will continue to implement its mandate around the six pillars of its work: enhancing accountability; fostering participation; addressing discrimination; seeking to embed human rights in peace and security; and development efforts; and strengthening the support to the human rights ecosystem at the core of all our work. In response to the emerging challenges and opportunities for human rights impact, through these pillars, we will seek to:

- Rebuild trust and reinvigorate a **global movement for human rights** that proposes solutions to the current global challenges;
- Enhance **early warning** and advance the **global protection** agenda in the face of emerging risks;
- Promote a **human rights economy** to realize rights and address inequalities;
- Foster **inclusion** and **equality** through a **diversity** approach;
- Promote rights-based **environmental actions**; and
- Ensure **digital technologies and data** advance human rights.

To deliver on this programme and respond to the complex burgeoning challenges, I am accelerating our drive to increase our organizational effectiveness. Our objective is to have an Office that is **fit for the future**, which delivers as both a trusted partner and a leading authority, advancing all human rights for everyone – everywhere. This drive aligns with the Secretary-General’s Common Agenda and flows from what we learned through the Human Rights 75 initiative.

We need to position the Office to deliver **on its universal mandate for human rights**. This requires adapting our organizational design, shifting

existing resources to where they are most needed and adding new capabilities, at the global, regional and country levels.

We need to **embrace forward-thinking approaches**. This requires investing in innovation. We will intensify our adoption of digital technologies and our use of data-driven analysis, behavioural science and strategic foresight, especially so that we can continuously strengthen support to the human rights ecosystem.

We need to **work through partnerships** to broaden and deepen our impact. This requires an Office that is better equipped to place catalytic human rights expertise and technical assistance at the service of the Member States, UN system, civil society, private sector, academia and other potential partners.

Making the Office’s larger potential a reality will depend on our ability to translate this vision into results. This entails continuously expanding and improving the work of our regional and country presences worldwide, to achieve greater impact on people’s lives. The drive to increase organizational effectiveness will be supported internally by a renewed commitment to staff welfare and a refreshed working culture. It will feature ongoing organizational development efforts to strengthen leadership, cultivate talent and streamline operations and administration – all aiming to ensure that the Office is able to deliver more effectively for partners worldwide.

Peace and security, development and human rights are the pillars of the United Nations system. They also form the foundation for humanity’s security and well-being. They are of equal value and importance, and they are mutually reinforcing. But they are not equally resourced. In today’s context of growing turmoil and threats, it is vital that the human rights pillar is given greater resources – so that it can deliver greater impact. The world needs this investment to deliver on peace and development. Justice and rights are the foundation of enduring peace. They are the basis of development that is inclusive and sustainable. They build greater well-being – and greater trust.

In the past 75 years, the world has faced many crises. We are living through many now. Every

time the lessons are the same: we need more human rights – not less. We need a powerful, principled, and impartial human rights system that is focused on delivering solutions. And that takes not just effort, but financing and strong and committed partners. I am appealing for **US\$500 million**, to enable us to respond to existing needs, while scaling up our capacity to respond to the intensifying human rights crises of our time. I am also asking you to join me in this journey as your trusted partner to deliver real benefit to the people of the world.



**Volker Türk**

United Nations High Commissioner  
for Human Rights

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# MANDATE



# 2023 SNAPSHOT

## 2023 Results in Numbers

### MEMBER STATES COOPERATION

**22** treaty actions  
**1** signature  
**14** ratifications  
**7** accessions

**54** governments hosted  
**72** visits by special procedures mandates

**157** flagship pledges towards the realization of human rights for all made by Member States in the context of HR75.

**125** State party reports reviewed by the treaty bodies with **8** State parties visited by the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and **1** visit each by CEDAW and CED

### PEOPLE-CENTRED



**97** fellows (54 women, 43 men) from indigenous, Afro-descendant and minority communities from **55** countries participated in the UN Human Rights Fellowship Programme

**12,130** survivors of contemporary forms of slavery and their families in **36** countries received direct support

**59,389** survivors of torture and their families in **92** countries received direct support

### HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS SUPPORT

Support to the work of **172** treaty body experts during **26** sessions for a total of **93** weeks

**110** resolutions adopted by the Human Rights Council

**60** Special Rapporteurs in place, **16** new appointments

**350** new communications related to individual complaints meeting prima facie admissibility requirements were registered

### HUMAN RIGHTS INTEGRATION IN THE UN

**11** Human rights components in UN Peace Missions, including **564** staff, supported by UN Human Rights

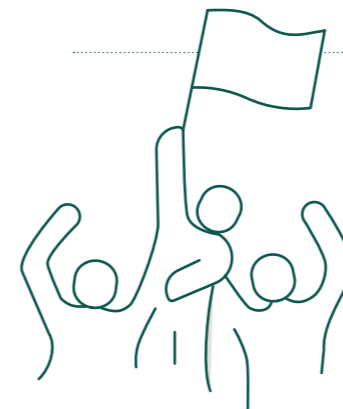
**43** Human Rights Advisers in Resident Coordinator Offices, **5** new requests received

### CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT

**2,442** oral statements delivered by NGOs during Human Rights Council sessions

Nearly **4,000** participants in the 12th Forum on Business and Human Rights

**54** grants were awarded by the UN Human Rights Grants Committee for a total amount of **\$3,538,765** for projects to be implemented in **28** countries

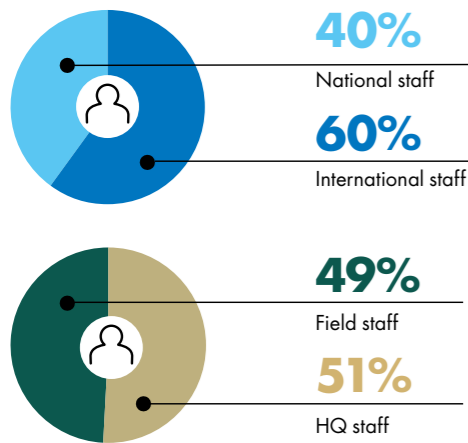


\*Data available at the time of preparing this appeal



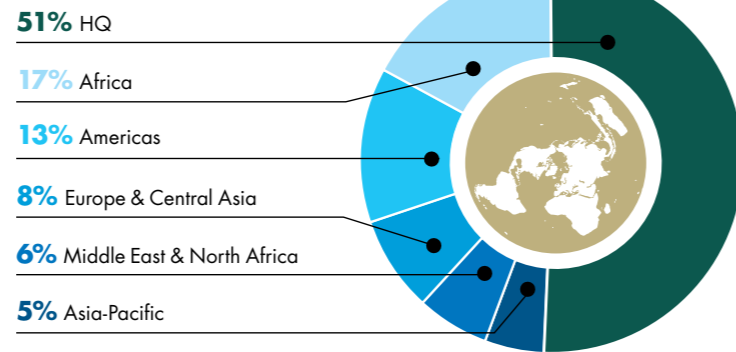
# Global Workforce in 2023

## 10 STAFF DISTRIBUTION BY CATEGORY

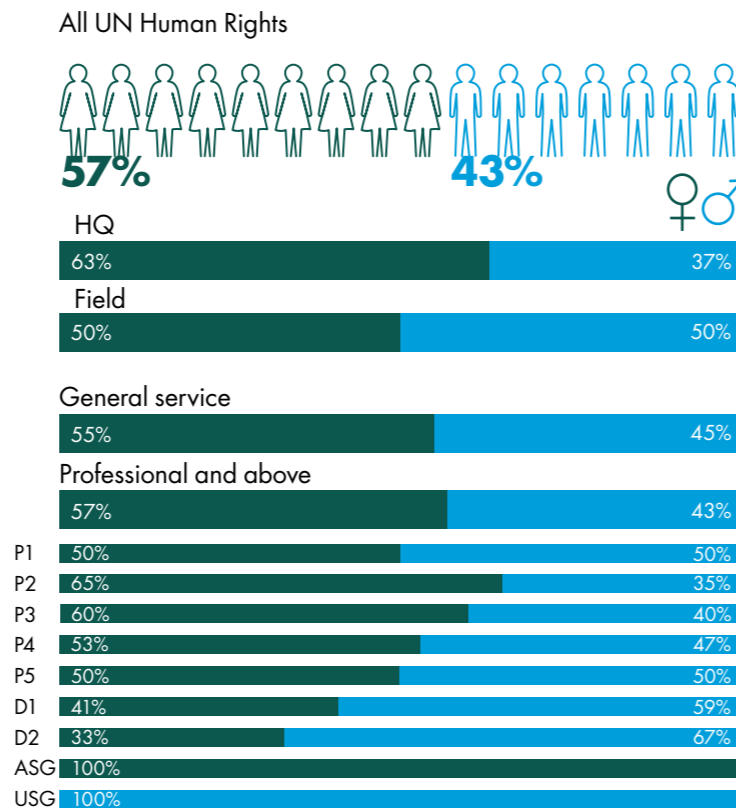


- 1,962** staff
- 148** nationalities
- 564** staff in peace missions
- 44** JPOs sponsored by **17** Member States

## STAFF DISTRIBUTION BY LOCATION AT HQ AND IN THE FIELD



## STAFF DISTRIBUTION BY GENDER



Notes: Data available as of 31 October 2023. Data include all UN Human Rights and UNDP-administered staff in the General Service, National Officer, Professional and higher categories on temporary, permanent, continuing and fixed-term appointments. Locally recruited staff in the General Service category are considered as national staff. HQ includes staff at the Geneva and New York locations.

# Overview of 2023 budget and funding

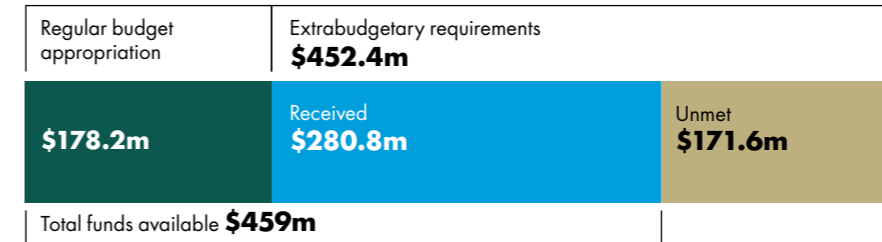
In 2023, UN Human Rights' aspirational budget amounted to US\$630.6 million, including US\$178.2 million from the UN regular budget and US\$452.4 million to be funded by voluntary contributions from Member States and other funding partners.

As in previous years, the 2023 regular budget reflected "zero growth", as well as several across-the-board reductions from previous years decided by the General Assembly and represented around 40 per cent of our overall income.

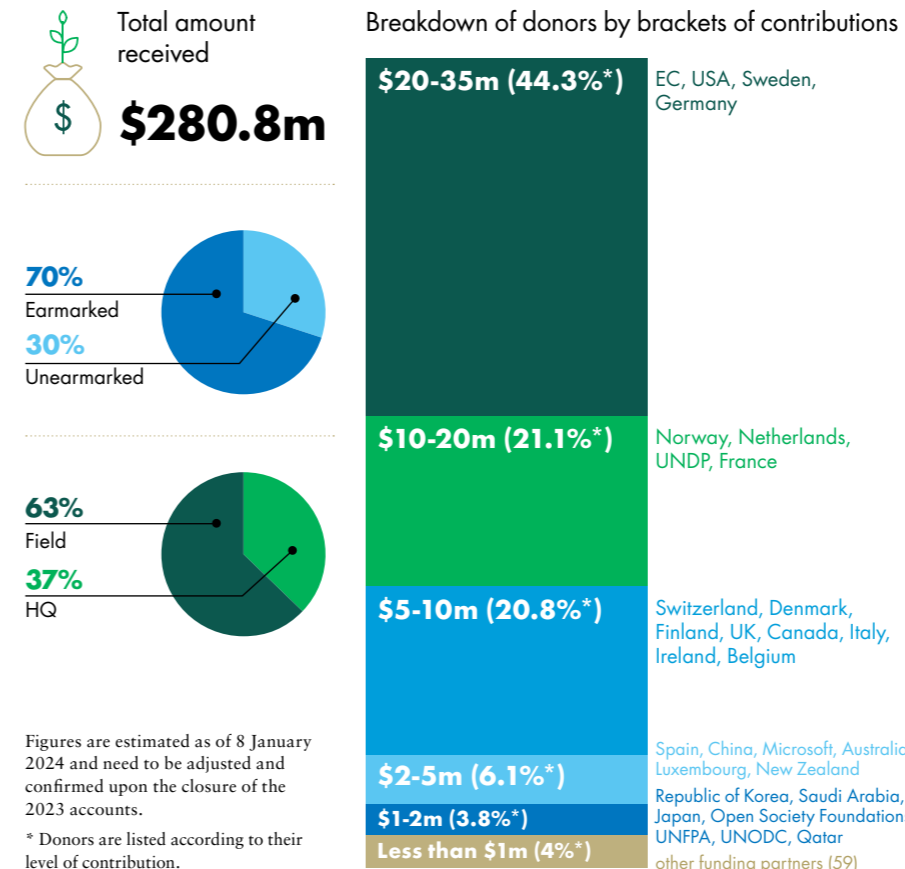
The Office received US\$280.8 million in voluntary contributions in 2023, compared to US\$240.8 million in 2022 (an increase of some 17 per cent), which represented around 60 per cent of our overall income. Of these contributions, only 30% per cent were unearmarked, impacting our capacity to allocate resources where they were most urgently required and demanding constant budgetary adjustments in the course of the year.

Overall, a little less than two thirds of the 2023 budget needs were met, with a shortfall of US\$171.6 million.

## INCOME



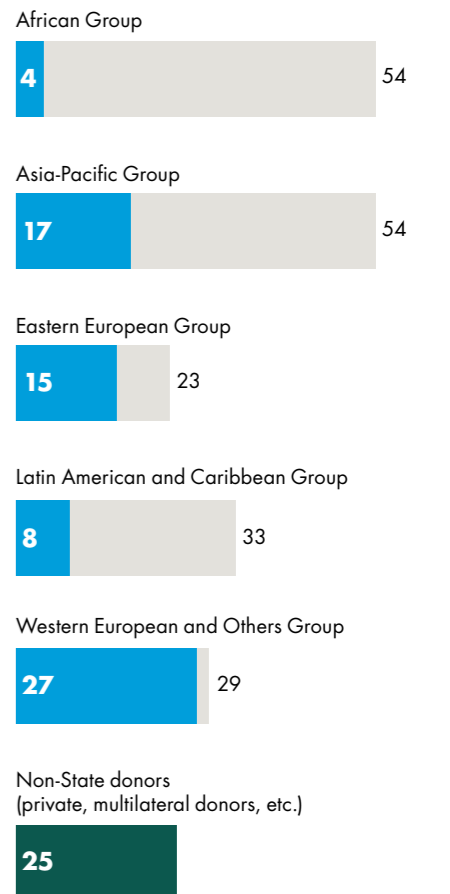
## VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS



## DONORS



## Breakdown of donors by geographic group



# In Paraguay, social security creates safety nets and builds rights for all



Indigenous people march in Paraguay. ©EPA/Nathalia Aguilar

*“We want our fundamental human rights and our right to development to be respected,” said Hipólito Acevei.*

*“We want our fundamental human rights and our right to development to be respected,”* said Hipólito Acevei.

Acevei, who is the president of the Federation for Indigenous Peoples’ Self-Determination of Paraguay, has spent a lifetime fighting to improve the living conditions of indigenous peoples in this South American country.

*“Indigenous peoples in Paraguay face many obstacles to the enjoyment of their human rights, including poverty, discrimination, deforestation, disputes over land ownership, and a lack of social security protection.”*

Despite social security being recognized in several human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it remains illusory for billions across the world, particularly for marginalized communities.

In Paraguay, indigenous peoples lack access to basic needs such as adequate food, education, housing, justice and health, which puts at risk the achievement of most national and international commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals.

Under its mandate to address inequalities and promote economic, social and cultural rights, UN Human Rights is supporting Paraguay’s efforts to adopt a social protection system that integrates human rights, alleviates structural inequalities and generates sustainable growth.

With funding from the Surge Initiative, the Office is working with the government, civil society, human rights institutions and academia, providing technical assistance and analytical data, and enhancing capacity with the goal of building institutional and financial capacity to ensure social security for all.

*“Social security systems contribute to eradicating poverty and inequality, promoting human dignity and social inclusion, and are key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals,”* said Pradeep Wagle, Chief of the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Section at UN Human Rights.

Wagle said the COVID-19 pandemic, and the global health and economic crises it triggered, exposed deep inequalities within and between countries, as well as decades of under-investment in services essential to upholding economic, social and cultural rights.

## HUMAN RIGHTS ECONOMY

José Galeano, a UN human rights adviser in Paraguay, said that while Paraguay has experienced strong economic growth in the last two decades, such prosperity has not been matched by adequate public spending on economic, social and cultural rights for the wellbeing of all.

*“Social protection requires greater resources to provide assistance and access to human rights,”* said Galeano.

Paraguay’s relatively low tax revenue is a key contributor to the limited fiscal space for social spending, including investments in social protection. Increasing tax revenues through reforms, as well as intentional allocations to social protection, can lead to reduced poverty and resilient development.

About 66 percent of Paraguay’s indigenous peoples live in poverty, and 34.4 percent live in abject poverty, three times the national level. The illiteracy rate among indigenous people is 33.5 percent, while less than 1 percent have access to internet. Less than 4 percent of the indigenous people benefit from the state IPS social protection system.

## ROOT CAUSES OF INEQUALITY

Galeano said these dramatic conditions have structural causes, such as the low participation of indigenous peoples in political decision-making bodies, persistent discrimination by the State and the expulsion of indigenous peoples from their lands and resources.

Acevei said governments should make sure indigenous peoples have a say in building more inclusive and prosperous societies.

*“The traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples is very important. We can provide alternatives for the recovery of nature and achieve the SDGs. Without the participation of indigenous peoples, it will be difficult to move forward,”* he said.

Speaking during the 54th Session of the Human Rights Council, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, said human rights economies measure success not by the size of GDP, but by the well-being of all people.

*“The basic necessities of life – education, health, decent work, social security, an adequate standard of living, freedom from hunger, and enjoyment of science and culture – are not services or commodities, but human rights to be enjoyed by all,”* Türk said.

In Paraguay, the UN Human Rights’ Surge Initiative carried out a human rights analysis of the social protection system, including a series of recommendations on economic and fiscal policies to secure universal social security.

The study is being used to engage with the Ministry of Social Development to promote the extension of the government programme *Vamos!* to segments of society that have been excluded, including indigenous peoples, women, older persons, children and persons with disabilities.

Working with academia, UN Human Rights in Paraguay also organized a series of workshops on social protection and human rights.

*“I believe that the State should definitely invest more in social security systems in a more inclusive way,”* said Oscar Díaz Aguilar, a teacher who participated in one of the workshops. *“There are segments of the population that are invisible.”*

UN Human Rights created the Surge Initiative in 2019 in response to rising inequalities, the slow implementation of the SDGs and increasing social unrest. Its mission is to step up engagement at the country and regional levels on economic, social, and cultural rights and strengthen the link between human rights and economics.



## 14 Management Plan

75 years ago, States committed to upholding the inherent dignity of every human being, without distinction of any kind, and to advancing the rights that we all share. They drafted and adopted a pivotal document, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which remains a critical blueprint for action in a turbulent world based on its promise of freedom, equality, non-discrimination, and justice for all. UN Human Rights plays a central role in delivering on this promise helping to remove obstacles for the full realization of all human rights for all.

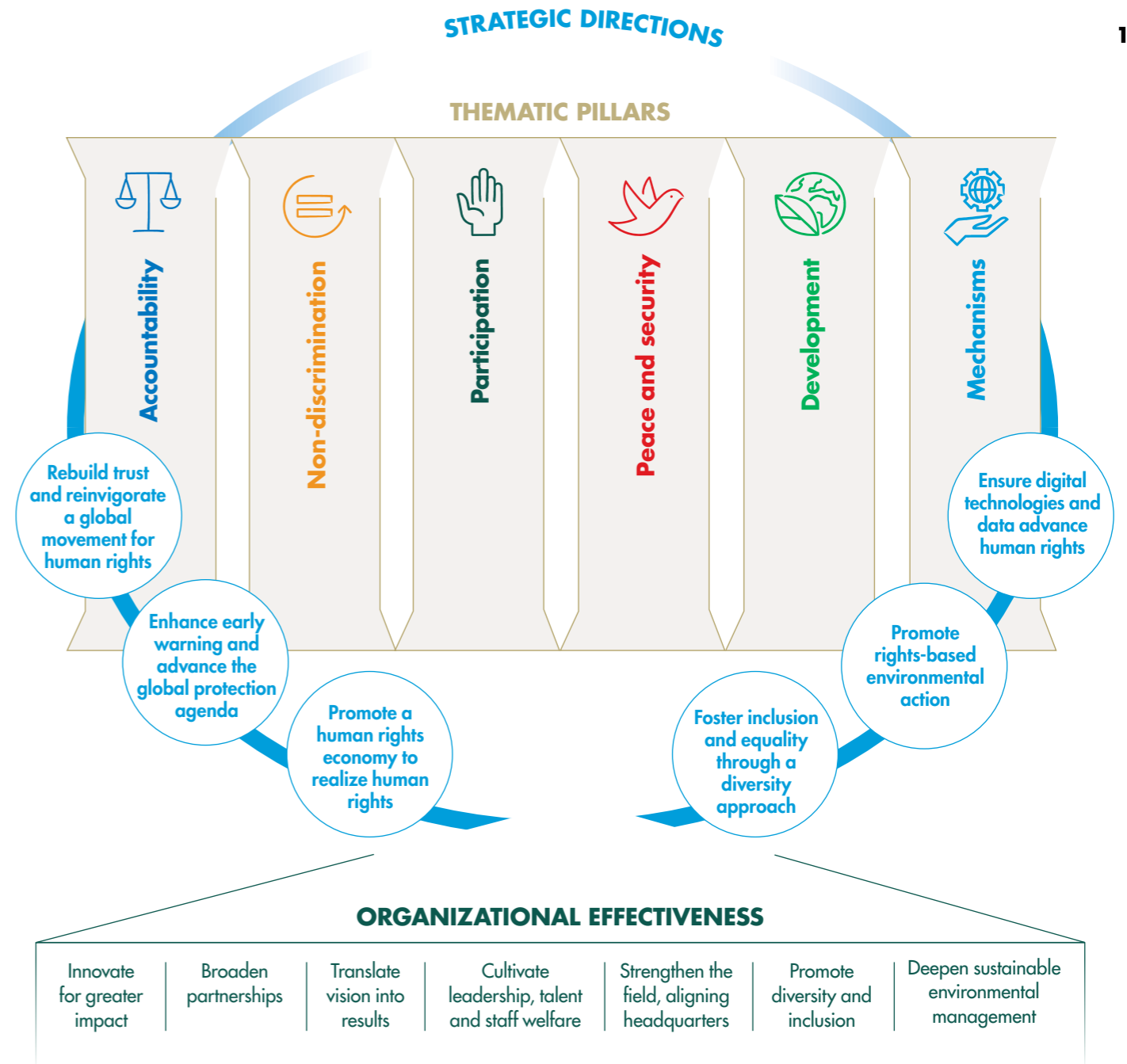
In carrying out its mandate, UN Human Rights will ensure that priority is given to addressing the most pressing human rights violations both acute and chronic, particularly those that put lives in imminent peril; focus attention on those who are at risk and vulnerable on multiple fronts; pay attention to the full realization of all civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, including the right to development and the right to a healthy environment; and measure the impact of its work through the substantive benefit that is accrued, as a result, to individuals around the world.

UN Human Rights carries out its mandate under the direction and authority of the Secretary-General, within the framework of the overall competence, authority and decisions of the General Assembly. UN Human Rights contributes to the Secretary-General's Programme Plan. In addition, UN Human Rights details its directions, expected results and strategies in its Management Plan (OMP).

The 2024-2027 OMP was shaped by broad consultations that have taken place in the context of the Human Rights 75 initiative throughout 2023, including the High-Level Event in December, with Member States, the United Nations System, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders. It will be released in June 2024, with the main elements detailed below.

## Key elements of the OMP

"All human rights, for everyone, everywhere."



## THEMATIC PILLARS

The OMP is structured around six thematic pillars, rooted in the Office’s institutional mandate, that enable universal coverage for all human rights everywhere. They are indivisible, interdependent and mutually reinforcing:

- Advancing the core human rights principles of **accountability, non-discrimination and participation**.
- Integrating human rights in the other two United Nations pillars of **development and peace and security**.
- Supporting the international human rights mechanisms.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

While developing the thematic pillars, six strategic directions will ensure that UN Human Rights’ work is geared towards addressing the most pressing human rights challenges and maximizing opportunities for greater human rights impact. In addition, these directions align with and actively advance key UN priorities and agendas such as the 2030 Agenda and our Common Agenda.

- In many countries and globally, we face setbacks in the enjoyment of human rights and a loss of trust in the ability of human rights to provide solutions to our biggest challenges. There is a need for concerted efforts aimed at **rebuilding this trust and reinvigorating a global movement for human rights**. At the national level, this means working with governments and a broad range of stakeholders to renew the social contract, anchored in a comprehensive approach to human rights, ensuring that people can participate in the decisions that affect them and that institutions are responsive to their needs. At the global level, it means strengthening partnerships and forging new ones to ensure that the human rights ecosystem is effective, well resourced, forward-looking, and responsive. UN Human Rights will engage both nationally and globally with broader constituencies, to build stronger societies anchored in human rights and increasing trust in and cooperation on human rights among States.

- UN Human Rights will **foster inclusion and equality through an approach that recognises and respects individuals and peoples in all their diversity**, grounded in their lived experiences, unique needs and contributions of persons from all walks of life. Intersectionality may result in differential treatment, access, and opportunity, impacting the enjoyment of rights - including as it affects women and girls, youth and older persons, individuals from racial, religious, national, or ethnic groups; minorities and Indigenous Peoples; individuals with different sexual orientation and gender identity; and persons with disabilities. We will actively work to address and dismantle historical and new barriers, including stereotypes, and power dynamics, to pave the way for a more just and inclusive society where everyone can participate, contribute, and thrive.
- We will also work towards **enhancing early warning mechanisms and the global protection agenda** as a critical element to prevent and mitigate human rights violations, conflict, and humanitarian disasters before they escalate. Strengthening early warning systems involves investing in advanced technology, intelligence gathering, and collaborative information-sharing mechanisms for timely and coordinated responses to potential crises. Through this strategic direction, UN Human Rights will further support the identification of emerging risks, the implementation of protection measures and accountability plans to ensure effective responses to protect vulnerable populations, with civil society, including human rights defenders, and the private sector, among the actors. With early warning and prevention at its core, the global protection agenda contributes to upholding the rule of law and human rights principles for enduring peace in the world.
- Our work over the past few years reinforces the concept of a **human rights economy** that emerges as a powerful approach **to realize rights and address inequalities**. Rooted in human rights obligations and principles, a human rights economy puts people and the planet at the centre of economic policymaking. It provides a fundamental contribution to realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its pledge to leave no one behind. It prioritizes investments in the fundamental rights of

every individual, such as access to education, healthcare, housing, and fair employment opportunities, including through the empowerment of marginalized communities. In the context of dire socio-economic crises, marked by widespread debt distress, UN Human Rights will continue to support countries in adopting economic and social policies that tackle inequalities; promote social cohesion; allow for a just green transition; and advocate for reform of the international financial architecture.

- **Promoting rights-based environmental action** recognizes the profound interconnection between a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and human rights. A rights-based environmental perspective requires inclusiveness and participation, ensuring for example that marginalized communities, often disproportionately affected by environmental degradation, are actively engaged in decision-making processes and that environmental human rights defenders are being protected. Our engagement in this area also underscores the responsibility of governments and the business sector to protect the environmental rights of individuals, holding them accountable for unsustainable decisions and practices. In advancing a rights-based environmental agenda, we not only protect ecosystems but also empower people to engage actively in the preservation of our planet, including for the benefit of future generations.
- Digital technology presents “make or break” challenges and opportunities for human rights globally. In a world of rapid digital change impacting all aspects of our lives, the human rights framework can be a cornerstone for managing risks and maximizing benefits for all. Rapid expansion of our work to **anchor digital technologies in human rights** and to **use digital technologies and data to advance human rights** is needed. We intend to leap forward in deploying digital technologies and data to enhance all aspects of our work, as we lead crucial efforts to integrate human rights in the design, development, and use of digital technologies, with support and advocacy directed towards both governments and companies.

## ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS ACTION PLANS

To increase the impact of our operations, we will scale up investment in efforts to improve ongoing programme delivery. Our **organizational effectiveness action plans** (OEAPs) represent and orient UN Human Rights’ commitment to continuous results-based internal improvement. Action plans are Office-wide initiatives that lead to a more efficient and effective Office, where colleagues are empowered individually and collectively to contribute to the realization of our full potential.

The High Commissioner’s call to heighten organizational effectiveness efforts aims toward an Office fit for the future. With this over-arching direction in mind, OEAPs have been strongly informed by the Secretary-General’s Common Agenda and enriched by global consultations conducted through the Human Rights 75 initiative and beyond. They have been developed through an intensive process of internal and external reflection, consultation, information gathering and analysis. Their full implementation will enable us to deliver on the thematic pillars and strategic directions fundamental to advancing human rights over the next four years and into the future. Over the next four years, we will:

- **Innovate for greater impact**, by integrating the Secretary-General’s Quintet of Change across all work areas, thereby ensuring that UN Human Rights embraces the potential of data, digital transformation, strategic foresight, and behavioural science to promote and protect human rights more effectively. This action plan will encompass introducing next-generation capabilities and promoting a forward-thinking culture to better serve our partners. It will also include upscaling our efforts to generate, manage and apply dynamic knowledge across our operations. Digital transformation and strengthened data processes must underpin these efforts, requiring the Office to take a quantum leap to establish systems, processes and know-how that will enable it to adapt to and adopt new ways of work and harness the benefits of technological evolution.
- **Broaden partnerships**, by bringing a wider spectrum of stakeholders into the global movement for human rights and ensuring that

UN Human Rights has the knowledge, skills and presence to engage more effectively with Member States, national human rights institutions (NHRIs), civil society, private sector, foundations, academia, the UN System entities at the global and national level and networks, other international organizations, including regional human rights mechanisms (HRMs), and international financial institutions (IFIs), communities and individuals worldwide. This action plan will move UN Human Rights into a more dynamic partnership model, beyond resource mobilization, investing in digital communications tools to support global outreach and service delivery.

- **Translate vision into results**, by steadfastly pursuing UN Human Rights' refreshed vision through expanding and improving our work in countries and regions, strengthening support for internal strategic decision-making and programme alignment, a focus on judicious risk management and learning and working towards continuous organizational development. This plan will include actions to ensure that the Office's leadership not only exemplifies the United Nations leadership framework, but also delivers on additional capabilities that empower, inspire, focus and deepen the substantive contributions of staff across the Office.
- **Cultivate leadership, talent and staff welfare**, by ensuring that staff benefit from career development, support and learning opportunities, including opening channels for mobility and rotation and identifying, assessing and capacitating potential future leaders. This action plan will place a higher priority on improving all aspects of staff welfare, to ensure that the Office's extraordinarily dedicated staff can fulfil their potential in a healthy work environment – across all duty stations.
- **Strengthen the field**, aligning headquarters, including administration, by reviewing workflows to simplify, automate and better integrate different processes with enhanced delegation of authority – within responsible control and governance frameworks – across UN Human Rights' global operations. The focus will extend from financial/budgetary and planning processes, to travel, human resources, programme management and internal and external reporting processes.

- **Promote diversity and inclusion**, by redoubling our commitment to recruiting a diverse workforce at all levels and ensuring that all staff are assured of an organizational culture and work environment characterized by equality, dignity and respect. This plan will include our ongoing efforts to use data collection to inform decision-making, monitor progress and ensure compliance with accountability measures in relation to human resource management.
- **Deepen sustainable environmental management**, by extending the reach of initiatives to support environmentally sustainable global operations. Whereas every planning entity across the Office already makes formal commitments to integrate environmental sustainability, UN Human Rights remains firmly committed to building on its experiences and lessons learned and drawing on good practices and experiences from elsewhere. The starting point for the Office's approach to sustainable environmental management is transparency, accountability and the adoption of a rights-based approach, consistent with fulfilment of the human right to a healthy environment.

UN Human Rights' reinvigorated approach to organizational effectiveness requires a refreshed *organizational culture*. A dedicated action plan to build an organizational culture that strengthens our collective focus, rewards change and innovation, places risk and governance at its core and nourishes courage, commitment and inclusion will be developed and integrated across all other OEAPs.

#### Rebuilding trust and reinvigorating a global movement for human rights

Throughout 2023, 88 local, national, regional and cross-regional dialogues and consultations were organized in the context of the HR75 initiative with the aim to “hear all voices” and collect recommendations and concrete takeaways about the future of human rights.

#### Fostering inclusion and equality through a diversity approach

UN Human Rights partners with a diverse range of stakeholders to combat discrimination.

“We must invest in anti-racism education, empowering people to know their rights but also seek support.” Vinicius Jr., Real Madrid player and UN Human Rights Champion.

#### Enhancing early warning and advancing the global protection agenda

Emergency Response Teams (ERTs) set up in seven UN Human Rights' Regional Offices have translated global prevention processes into practice in the field by providing the situational awareness required to inform the timely, evidence-based, strategic, and operational decisions made by the United Nations system. With their work, ERTs were shortlisted for the 2022 Secretary-General's award on innovation!

#### Ensuring digital technologies and data advance human rights

UN Human Rights has developed AI for automatically processing open source information in search of leads on attacks against human rights defenders, as well as on protests experiencing violent repression. Our traditional approach surfaced around 400 cases of attacks on defenders a year; the new approach is surfacing 450 leads per day, representing a step change in our capacity for gathering initial information. By developing our AI models in house, we have trained them to apply human rights definitions and thresholds, so that the leads flow seamlessly into further human rights monitoring, investigations, and analysis.

#### Promoting a human rights economy to realize rights and address inequalities

Surge teams – composed of economists, sustainable development and economic, social and cultural rights specialists – have stepped up country tailored policy advice and engagement with government and UN country teams by conducting human rights based analyses of budgets, taxation and loans and conditionalities, with focus on countering inequalities and leaving no one behind. Under the vision of a human rights economy, more than 65 country seeding change projects have been implemented towards advancing social security, health, water, housing among other rights, while contributing to national development plans and strategies.

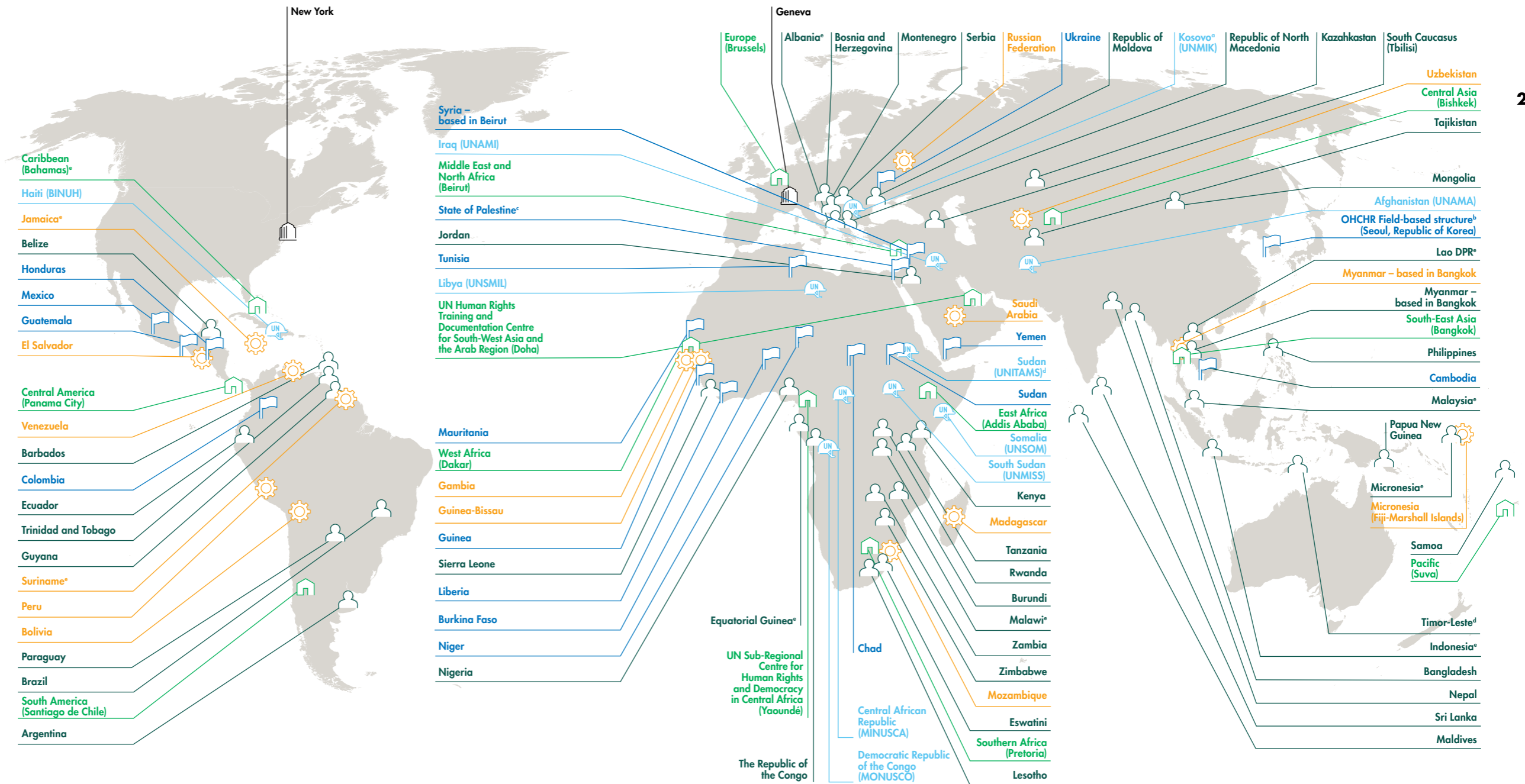
#### Promoting rights-based environmental action

UN Human Rights was a leading advocate of recognition by the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly of the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment for all people and integration of this right in key environmental outcomes such as UNFCCC, COP28, CBD, COP15 and ICCM5. More than 30 UN Human Rights field presences are currently working on issues related to the right to a healthy environment and the protection of environmental human rights defenders.



**2** + **91**  
HQ locations field presences

-  **2** Headquarters
-  **18** Country Offices
-  **12** Regional Offices/Centres
-  **10** Human rights components in UN Peace/Political Missions
-  **38** Human Rights Advisers in UNCTs
-  **13** Technical Missions



<sup>a</sup> Reference to Kosovo should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.  
<sup>b</sup> Mandated by Human Rights Council resolution 25/25.  
<sup>c</sup> Reference to the State of Palestine should be understood in compliance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 67/19.  
<sup>d</sup> Will close in the course of 2024.  
<sup>e</sup> On hold until funding is available.

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.



# 2024 FUNDING AND BUDGET

## Funding

**22** UN Human Rights' income has two components: the UN regular budget, representing around 40 per cent, and voluntary contributions from Member States and other donors, representing around 60 per cent.

The UN regular budget, approved by the General Assembly, is funded by “assessed contributions” from each Member State. These are determined by a formula that takes into account the size and strength of their respective national economies.

The UN regular budget should finance all activities mandated by the General Assembly and its subsidiary organs, including the Human Rights Council. Human rights are Charter responsibilities, recognized as one of the three pillars of the UN system, the other two being development, and peace and security. While the Secretary-General has clearly underscored the centrality of human rights to the work of the entire UN Secretariat, the regular budget allocated to human rights is highly limited. **The regular budget submission for the Office for 2024 is US\$192.21 million**, which represents just over five per cent of the total UN regular budget.

In previous years, the regular budget reflected “zero growth”, as well as a number of across-the-board reductions decided by the General Assembly. In reality, this means that the resources allocated from the regular budget to human rights are in decline: official human rights mandates continue to grow in number and scope, and Member States have formally requested consideration of an increase in the budget share for human rights. As a result, the Office has proposed in its 2024 regular budget submission, an increase of US\$9.5 million to strengthen the Office's capacity and the support in the implementation of mandated activities. At present, UN Human Rights continues to rely heavily on voluntary contributions to finance at least 20 per cent of the mandated activities that should be financed by the regular budget, primarily treaty body and special procedures work.

In a world facing increasing threats to human rights, relying on such limited UN regular budget resources is simply not adequate. This is why we will need to continue to count on support for extra-budgetary funding through voluntary contributions from a range of funding partners such as Member States, foundations, and the corporate sector.

<sup>1</sup> Includes amounts from the Proposed Programme Budget for 2024 (A/78/6), amounts proposed in the Report of the Secretary-General (A/78/574) on Revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Human Rights Council at its fifty-second, fifty-third and fifty-fourth regular sessions, and at its thirty-fifth special session, in 2023 as well as funds expected for the regular programme for technical cooperation for 2024.

## 2024 Financial Requirements



Children displaced by flooding collect water from a submerged hand pump. ©UNMIS/UN Photo/Tim McKulka

**23** To enable the Office to deliver on its broad mandate of achieving human rights for all with independence, we must secure **predictable, flexible and sustainable** funding through unearmarked and multi-year contributions. While all contributions are much appreciated, the ongoing trend toward earmarking constrains the effectiveness and agility of the Office to allocate resources where they are most urgently required and demands constant budgetary adjustments over the year. Early payment is also critical as it helps to mitigate cash flow constraints during the year.

Despite the generosity of our partners over the years, human rights work has remained drastically underfunded. Meeting the increasing demands requires greater financial support from a diverse funding base including Member States and other funding partners and the Office will continue to engage actively and explore opportunities to tap into new and additional funding sources, and advocate for **flexible** and **multi-year** contributions.

Total extra-budgetary resources needed for 2024 amount to US\$500 million. These are the funds the Office requires, in addition to the regular budget allocation, to be able to address all assistance needs, both requests received or those we have identified.

Rather than limiting ourselves to operating budgets, this Appeal represents the full extent of our financial requirements and their justification. At the same time, this overall budget remains limited to what can realistically be implemented within a single year. For this reason, some increases, notably in the field, remain modest. Expanding the reach of field presences requires a steady build-up of human resources and predictable budgets over time that allow for sustained growth and an effective operational critical mass.

**Total extra-budgetary resources needed for 2024 amount to US\$500 million**

# Regular budget allocation and extrabudgetary requirements for 2024

## Overview

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### OPERATING RESOURCES

All figures in US\$

	REGULAR BUDGET	EXTRABUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS	TOTAL (PLANNING FIGURES)
<b>Programme of Work</b>			
<b>Subprogramme 1</b> Human Rights Mainstreaming, Right to Development, Research and Analysis*	32,089,000	70,586,000	102,675,000
<b>Subprogramme 2</b> Supporting the Human Rights Treaty Bodies	18,782,000	4,534,000	23,316,000
<b>Subprogramme 3</b> Advisory Services and Technical Cooperation*	58,926,000	37,716,000	96,642,000
<b>Subprogramme 4</b> Supporting the Human Rights Council and its Special Procedures*	33,023,000	30,339,000	63,362,000
<b>Headquarters</b>			
Executive Direction and Management and New York Office	10,636,000	35,020,000	45,656,000
Policy-making Organs	12,446,000	-	12,446,000
<b>Other</b>			
Organisational effectiveness	-	25,000,000	25,000,000
Support to the Programmes	5,727,000	13,478,000	19,205,000
<b>Subtotal Headquarters</b>	<b>171,630,000</b>	<b>216,673,000</b>	<b>388,303,000</b>

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	REGULAR BUDGET	EXTRABUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS	TOTAL (PLANNING FIGURES)
<b>Field Presences</b>			
Africa	4,840,000	105,096,000	109,936,000
Americas	2,183,000	58,291,000	60,474,000
Asia and the Pacific	4,929,000	24,911,000	29,840,000
Europe and Central Asia	995,000	29,645,000	30,640,000
Middle East and North Africa	4,821,000	45,282,000	50,103,000
Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation	2,809,000	-	2,809,000
<b>Subtotal Field Presences</b>	<b>20,578,000</b>	<b>263,220,000</b>	<b>283,798,000</b>
<b>Total Operating Resources (HQ + Field Presences)</b>	<b>192,208,000</b>	<b>479,893,000</b>	<b>672,101,000</b>
<b>OTHER TRUST FUNDS</b>			
Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture	-	13,927,000	13,927,000
Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples	-	1,085,000	1,085,000
Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery	-	2,565,000	2,565,000
Trust Fund for Universal Periodic Review - Participation	-	213,000	213,000
Trust Fund for Universal Periodic Review - Technical Assistance	-	920,000	920,000
Trust Fund for Participation of LDCs and SIDS in the HRC's work	-	832,000	832,000
Special Fund for the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture	-	565,000	565,000
<b>Total Other Trust Funds</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20,107,000</b>	<b>20,107,000</b>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>192,208,000</b>	<b>500,000,000</b>	<b>692,208,000</b>

\* Includes amounts from the Proposed Programme Budget for 2024 (A/78/6), amounts proposed in the Report of the Secretary-General (A/78/574) on Revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Human Rights Council at its fifty-second, fifty-third and fifty-fourth regular sessions, and at its thirty-fifth special session, in 2023 as well as funds expected for the regular programme for technical cooperation for 2024.

## Headquarters

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**SUBPROGRAMME 1 - HUMAN RIGHTS MAINSTREAMING, RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT, RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS** All figures in US\$

	REGULAR BUDGET	EXTRABUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS	TOTAL (PLANNING FIGURES)
Coordination and Management	407,000	20,236,000	20,643,000
Rule of Law, Equality and Non-discrimination Branch	7,077,000	18,489,000	25,566,000
Development, Economic and Social Issues Branch	5,819,000	31,861,000	37,680,000
Human Rights Council Mandates	18,787,000	-	18,787,000
<b>Subtotal Subprogramme 1</b>	<b>32,089,000</b>	<b>70,586,000</b>	<b>102,675,000</b>

**SUBPROGRAMME 2 - SUPPORTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS TREATY BODIES**

	REGULAR BUDGET	EXTRABUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS	TOTAL (PLANNING FIGURES)
Coordination and Management	0	510,000	510,000
Human Rights Treaties Branch	18,782,000	4,024,000	22,806,000
<b>Subtotal Subprogramme 2</b>	<b>18,782,000</b>	<b>4,534,000</b>	<b>23,316,000</b>

**SUBPROGRAMME 3 - ADVISORY SERVICES AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION DIVISION\***

	REGULAR BUDGET	EXTRABUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS	TOTAL (PLANNING FIGURES)
Coordination and Management	3,603,000	17,403,000	21,006,000
Africa Branch	2,188,000	3,677,000	5,865,000
Americas, Europe and Central Asia Branch	2,320,000	5,468,000	7,788,000
Asia-Pacific, Middle East and North Africa Branch	6,153,000	6,493,000	12,646,000
Human Rights Council Mandates	44,663,000	-	44,663,000
Investigation Capacity	-	4,674,000	4,674,000
<b>Subtotal Subprogramme 3</b>	<b>58,926,000</b>	<b>37,716,000</b>	<b>96,642,000</b>

**SUBPROGRAMME 4 - SUPPORTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL AND ITS SPECIAL PROCEDURES**

	REGULAR BUDGET	EXTRABUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS	TOTAL (PLANNING FIGURES)
Coordination and Management	1,846,000	4,240,000	6,086,000
Human Rights Council Branch	4,887,000	3,150,000	8,037,000
Human Rights Council Mandates	8,821,000	-	8,821,000
Universal Periodic Review Branch	7,066,000	1,394,000	8,460,000
Special Procedures Branch	10,404,000	21,554,000	31,958,000
<b>Subtotal Subprogramme 4</b>	<b>33,023,000</b>	<b>30,339,000</b>	<b>63,362,000</b>

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTION AND MANAGEMENT AND NEW YORK OFFICE**

	REGULAR BUDGET	EXTRABUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS	TOTAL (PLANNING FIGURES)
	10,636,000	35,020,000	45,656,000

**POLICYMAKING ORGANS**

	REGULAR BUDGET	EXTRABUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS	TOTAL (PLANNING FIGURES)
	12,446,000	-	12,446,000

**OTHER**

	REGULAR BUDGET	EXTRABUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS	TOTAL (PLANNING FIGURES)
Organisational Effectiveness	-	25,000,000	25,000,000
Support to the Programmes	5,727,000	13,478,000	19,205,000
<b>Subtotal Other</b>	<b>28,809,000</b>	<b>73,498,000</b>	<b>102,307,000</b>
<b>Subtotal Headquarters</b>	<b>171,630,000</b>	<b>216,673,000</b>	<b>388,303,000</b>

**OTHER TRUST FUNDS**

	REGULAR BUDGET	EXTRABUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS	TOTAL (PLANNING FIGURES)
Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture	-	13,927,000	13,927,000
Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples	-	1,085,000	1,085,000
Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery	-	2,565,000	2,565,000
Trust Fund for Universal Periodic Review - Participation	-	213,000	213,000
Trust Fund for Universal Periodic Review - Technical Assistance	-	920,000	920,000
Trust Fund for Participation of LDCs and SIDS in the HRC's work	-	832,000	832,000
Special Fund for the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture	-	565,000	565,000
<b>Total Other Trust Funds</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20,107,000</b>	<b>20,107,000</b>
<b>Total Headquarters and Trust Funds</b>	<b>171,630,000</b>	<b>236,780,000</b>	<b>408,410,000</b>

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## Field

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## AFRICA

All figures in US\$

## EXTRABUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS

## Country Offices

Burkina Faso	4,876,000
Chad	7,649,000
Guinea	5,326,000
Liberia	3,080,000
Mauritania	5,554,000
Niger	3,845,000
Sudan	11,698,000

## Regional Offices

Central Africa, Yaoundé - Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy	2,654,000
East Africa, Addis Ababa	11,468,000
Southern Africa, Pretoria	3,483,000
West Africa, Dakar	9,430,000

## Human Rights Advisers

Burundi	3,223,000
Equatorial Guinea	300,000
Eswatini	300,000
Kenya	3,185,000
Lesotho	200,000
Malawi	350,000
Nigeria	951,000
Republic of Congo	308,000
Rwanda	1,507,000
Sierra Leone	344,000
Tanzania	300,000
Zambia	408,000
Zimbabwe	317,000

## Human Rights Components in Peace Missions

Central African Republic	85,000
Democratic Republic of the Congo	13,087,000
Somalia	364,000
South Sudan	160,000
Sudan	100,000

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## EXTRABUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS

## Other

Ethiopia	5,585,000
Gambia	547,000
Guinea-Bissau	636,000
Madagascar	1,620,000
Mozambique	2,156,000
<b>Subtotal Africa</b>	<b>105,096,000</b>

## AMERICAS

## Country Offices

Colombia	15,163,000
Guatemala	6,247,000
Honduras	6,565,000
Mexico	3,771,000

## Regional Offices

Central America, Panama City	5,642,000
South America, Santiago	4,776,000
Caribbean	1,700,000

## Human Rights Advisers

Argentina	151,000
Barbados	511,000
Belize	105,000
Brazil	131,000
Ecuador	134,000
Guyana	73,000
Paraguay	100,000
Trinidad and Tobago	185,000

## Human Rights Component in Peace Mission

Haiti	3,868,000
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## Other

Bolivia	402,000
El Salvador	1,300,000
Nicaragua	231,000
Peru	2,446,000
Venezuela	4,790,000
<b>Subtotal Americas</b>	<b>58,291,000</b>



**ASIA AND THE PACIFIC****EXTRABUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS****Country Offices**

Cambodia	2,106,000
Republic of Korea - Field-based structure	527,000

**Regional Offices**

South-East Asia, Bangkok	8,306,000
Pacific, Suva	4,027,000

**Human Rights Advisers**

Bangladesh	477,000
Maldives	425,000
Mongolia	108,000
Myanmar	334,000
Nepal	96,000
Papua New Guinea	856,000
Philippines	2,096,000
Samoa	260,000
Sri Lanka	1,455,000
Timor-Leste	545,000

**Human Rights Component in Peace Mission**

Afghanistan	213,000
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**Other**

Micronesia (Fiji-Marshall Islands)	300,000
Myanmar	2,780,000

**Subtotal Asia and the Pacific 24,911,000****EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA****Regional Offices**

Central Asia, Bishkek	3,787,000
Europe, Brussels	2,000,000

**Human Rights Advisers**

Bosnia and Herzegovina	1,000,000
South Caucasus (Georgia)	2,555,000
Kazakhstan	207,000
Montenegro	310,000
Republic of Moldova	4,507,000

Republic of North Macedonia	116,000
Serbia	593,000
Tajikistan	241,000

**Human Rights Mission**

Ukraine	13,589,000
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**Other**

Russian Federation	740,000
<b>Subtotal Europe and Central Asia</b>	<b>29,645,000</b>

**MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA****Country Offices**

State of Palestine*	12,054,000
Syria	5,004,000
Tunisia	4,655,000
Yemen	9,003,000

**Regional Offices**

Middle East and North Africa, Beirut	5,837,000
South-West Asia and the Arab Region, Doha - Training and Documentation Centre	3,115,000

**Human Rights Adviser**

Jordan	301,000
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**Human Rights Components in Peace Missions**

Iraq	1,128,000
Libya	163,000

**Other**

Egypt	1,530,000
Iran	1,000,000
Saudi Arabia	1,492,000

**Subtotal Middle East and North Africa 45,282,000****Total Field 263,220,000**

\*Reference to Palestine should be understood in compliance with UN General Assembly resolution 67/19.

# Trust Funds

Voluntary contributions to support UN Human Rights' activities are channelled and managed through nine United Nations trust funds, as well as three special funds. In addition, the Office receives contributions from United Nations multi-partner

trust funds. While UN Human Rights encourages funding to be unearmarked whenever possible, contributions to some of these Funds must be specifically earmarked in order to be attributed.

## UN TRUST FUNDS ADMINISTERED BY UN HUMAN RIGHTS

### UN Trust Fund for the Support of the Activities of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Established in 1993 to supplement regular budget resources, it is the largest fund administered by UN Human Rights and is used to manage approximately 80 per cent of all extra-budgetary funds received, including unearmarked funds.

### UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment and Punishment

Established in 1981, it awards grants to organizations working to alleviate the physical and psychological effects of torture on victims and their families. The types of assistance provided by Fund-supported organizations range from psychological, medical and social assistance to legal aid and financial support.

### UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples

Established in 1985, it provides indigenous peoples with the opportunity to raise issues faced by their communities at the international level and participate in the development and implementation of international standards and national legislation for the protection of their rights. Funds are distributed in the form of travel grants that enable indigenous peoples to participate in UN meetings and events.

### UN Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights

Established in 1987, it supports national efforts to build human rights protection frameworks, including strong legal frameworks, effective national human rights institutions, independent judiciaries and vibrant civil society organizations.

### UN Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

Established in 1991, it distributes small grants to grassroots projects that provide humanitarian, legal and financial aid to victims of contemporary forms of slavery. The Fund primarily focuses on projects that assist individuals who are suffering from the most severe forms of human rights violations occurring in the context of contemporary forms of slavery and other forms of exploitation.

### UN Trust Fund for a Human Rights Education Programme in Cambodia

Established in 1992, its aim is to contribute to the development and implementation of a human rights education programme in Cambodia to promote the understanding of and respect for human rights.

### UN Voluntary Fund for Participation in the Universal Periodic Review mechanism

Established in 2008, it facilitates the participation of official representatives from developing and least developed countries in the UPR process and to provide training for the preparation of national reports.

### UN Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance for the Implementation of the Universal Periodic Review

Established in 2008, it provides financial and technical support to implement recommendations issued under the UPR review process, at the request of and in consultation with the country concerned.

### Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to Support the Participation of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States in the work of the Human Rights Council

Established in 2013 through Human Rights Council resolution 19/26, it enhances the institutional and human rights capacity of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States by providing targeted training courses, travel assistance for delegates attending Council sessions and fellowship programmes.

## SPECIAL FUNDS ADMINISTERED BY UN HUMAN RIGHTS

### Contingency Fund

Established in 2006, this Contingency Fund enables the Office to respond to human rights emergencies in a timely and adequate manner. The revolving Fund is maintained through voluntary contributions to facilitate, implement or carry out activities within the priorities, overall strategies and policies of the Office, in particular in the context of the establishment of a rapid response capacity. The Fund has greatly increased the capacity of UN Human Rights' headquarters to provide conceptual and operational support to unforeseen mandates or situations that require a rapid response.

### Special Fund established by the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture

Established in 2006 through article 26 of OP-CAT, this Fund helps finance the implementation of recommendations issued by the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (SPT), following a visit of the Subcommittee to a State Party, as well as education programmes of national preventive mechanisms (NPMs). Recommendations have to be contained in a report made public upon request of the State Party. Applications may be submitted by State Parties and NPMs, by national human rights institutions compliant with the Paris Principles and NGOs, provided that the proposed projects are implemented in cooperation with State Parties or NPMs.

### Special Fund for the Participation of Civil Society in the Social Forum, the Forum on Minority Issues and the Forum on Business and Human Rights

Established in 2013 by Human Rights Council's decision 24/118, it facilitates the broadest possible participation of civil society representatives and other relevant stakeholders. It also aims to give priority to the participation of local or national-level non-governmental organizations active in relevant fields, with particular attention to participants from Least Developed Countries, in the annual meetings of the three forums. The Special Fund became operational soon after the receipt of the first contributions in 2014.



Human Rights 75 Open Day at Palais Wilson. As part of its celebrations for the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UN Human Rights opened its Geneva headquarters, Palais Wilson, to schools and to the public. September 29, 2023, Geneva, Switzerland. ©OCHCHR/Pierre Albouy





Alejandro Gerardo Pérez, President of the local committee for the defense of water in San Matías Chilazao, Mexico, June 16, 2022 explains the importance and operation of water retainers to UN Human Rights staff. ©Consuleo Pagaza/OHCHR

# PARTNER WITH UN HUMAN RIGHTS

To help build resilient societies, UN Human Rights strives every day to advance human rights in every corner of the world. But this is not a job we can do alone.

Human rights belong to us all. By partnering with us, you can help make human rights a reality for everyone, no matter who they are, where they live, or where they come from.

We rely on voluntary donations from governments, private partners and businesses. To carry out our mission, maintaining our independence is vital – and so is diversifying our funding mix.

## MEMBER STATES

We highly encourage Member States to explore the various modalities for funding which exist within their national structures and to discuss available options with us. While the most common budget lines used for our work are those that correspond to human rights, there is also wide scope for the Office to receive money from other budget lines, such as development, environment, humanitarian assistance, as well as peace and security.

## FOUNDATIONS

The Office has partnered with several foundations on country-specific and thematic programmes. This support has been critical to ensuring positive impact for human rights around the world. We welcome new opportunities to strengthen and expand our cooperation with foundations on shared priorities.

## CORPORATE SECTOR

Human rights are not just inalienable, but a shared global interest. They bring productivity and prosperity, as well as resilience and stability. In short, human rights are good for business. We invite companies to demonstrate their commitment to these rights through greater engagement. Support can come in many forms:

- Making human rights central to all corporate strategic decisions and practices, taking into account the effect of its operations on supply chains, employees and customers.
- Working with us to develop policies that make companies' commitment to human rights a reality.
- Engaging in strategic discussions to improve human rights wherever a company holds business interests.
- Developing a genuine partnership with UN Human Rights where businesses' skills, experience and resources are used to advocate for, promote and improve respect for human rights.
- Providing pro bono or financial support, to help us achieve the goals in our ambitious strategic plan.

## INDIVIDUALS

Individual contributions provide UN Human Rights with invaluable flexibility to respond in real time to the greatest needs. From uplifting the voices of human rights defenders worldwide, urgently responding to an emergency, or scaling an innovative idea that proves transformational – unrestricted funding ensures that UN Human Rights teams on the ground can provide more effective support to the people they serve. The Office receives donations from individuals through the following website: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/donation>



If you, or the organization you represent, would like to make a contribution, please contact UN Human Rights' Donor and External Relations Section in Geneva, or go to our website to make an online donation.

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# Climate change, pollution threaten Iraq's ancient marshes



A man contemplates the dried lands in the marshes of southern Iraq. ©REUTERS/Essam al-Sudani

**“There is a change operating in the environment. One of the reasons is climate change and its effect on water levels in the Euphrates and Tigris in Iraq,” said Al-Asadi.**

Jassim Al-Asadi was born in a boat in the marshes of southern Iraq. Sixty-six years later, his life still revolves around the marshes, now as an environmental activist and a water-resources engineer fighting to save them from extinction.

*“This used to be green pastures and reeds, but the place has dried up,”* said Al-Asadi as he walked in blistering heat in a landscape of barren, cracked earth. *“Over there is a house where a buffalo rancher used to live, but he abandoned it and moved near the Euphrates River. There are no more buffalo pastures.”*

The Marsh Arabs, the wetlands' indigenous population of Iraq, have fished and cultivated crops here for 5,000 years, raising water buffaloes and building houses from reedbeds on floating reed islands at the place where the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers meet before flowing into the Gulf.

But climate change, water pollution, oil exploration and the construction of upstream dams are threatening the survival of this delicate ecosystem and its ancient Mesopotamian culture, which some trace back to the Sumerians.

Al-Asadi, head of the leading conservation group Nature Iraq, said a drought now in its fourth year is turning vast areas of once flourishing wetlands and agricultural land into desert. Salinity is rising in the shrinking channels and waterways, killing fish and making buffaloes sick.

*“There is a change operating in the environment. One of the reasons is climate change and its effect on water levels in the Euphrates and Tigris in Iraq,”* said Al-Asadi.

According to a report from the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization and Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture released last July, the current drought is the worst in 40 years. The area's rich wildlife, including migratory birds, is under threat, and

buffalo breeders are forced to migrate in precarious conditions to urban areas like Basra, Najaf or Baghdad.

Haider Mohammed's life depends on his herd. Despite living by a waterway near Chibayish in the central marshes, he must bring fresh water from other places to feed his buffaloes, which produce milk, meat and dung for fuel.

*“The water here is salty and polluted,”* said Mohammed. *“We once had 70 buffaloes, but only 20 survived.”* Beyond the line of green reeds that surround his house, the change becomes dramatic: no longer marshland, but scarred and salty dry land.

## **“OUR LIFE DEPENDS ON WATER”**

Sheikh Lebnan Abdul Al-Khayoun warned that a millennia-old lifestyle based on breeding, fishing and harvesting could disappear unless something is done.

*“Our life here depends primarily on water. If these marshes dry up, we will have a big living problem,”* he said as he sipped tea inside a mudhif, a traditional reed structure that serves as a meeting centre for the Marsh Arabs, or Ma'adan as they are known in Arabic.

*“We are not traders or employees and we do not have other professions to provide us with incomes. The marshes are the profession of our fathers and forefathers,”* he said, estimating that the livelihoods of three to four million people depend on the ecosystem of the marshes.

## **POLLUTION AND OIL**

The UN Environment Programme has identified Iraq as one of the countries most vulnerable to the impact of climate change due to high temperatures, lack of rain, drought, water scarcity, and frequent sand and dust storms.

Besides recurrent droughts, pollution is contributing to the collapse of the area's environment, as millions of cubic metres of industrial waste are dumped into the rivers and waterways that feed the marshes, environmentalists say.

Activists say pollution caused by fossil fuel projects in Basra province, which boasts most of Iraq's vast oil and gas reserves, has reached alarming levels and are a significant source of cancerous diseases, kidney failure and other ailments.

During a visit to southern Iraq in August 2023, Human Rights Chief Volker Türk said the country was living a climate emergency and the world must confront this era of boiling climate. In 50-degree heat, Türk visited an area that was once lush with date palms but is now a dry, barren field. *“What is happening here is a window into a future that is now coming for other parts of the world if we continue to fail in our responsibility to take preventive and mitigating action against climate change,”* said Türk.

In an open letter ahead of COP28 in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, Türk urged negotiators to steer away from short-sighted decisions and put human rights at the centre of climate action.

## **REGIONAL COOPERATION**

Al-Asadi, who has been involved in many water management projects to balance the environment and agriculture and restore the marshlands, said the problem of water scarcity goes beyond Iraq and called for a regional solution.

As climate change aggravates the water crisis, countries of the Tigris-Euphrates basin must cooperate to fulfil the human rights to water and development, Al-Asadi said.

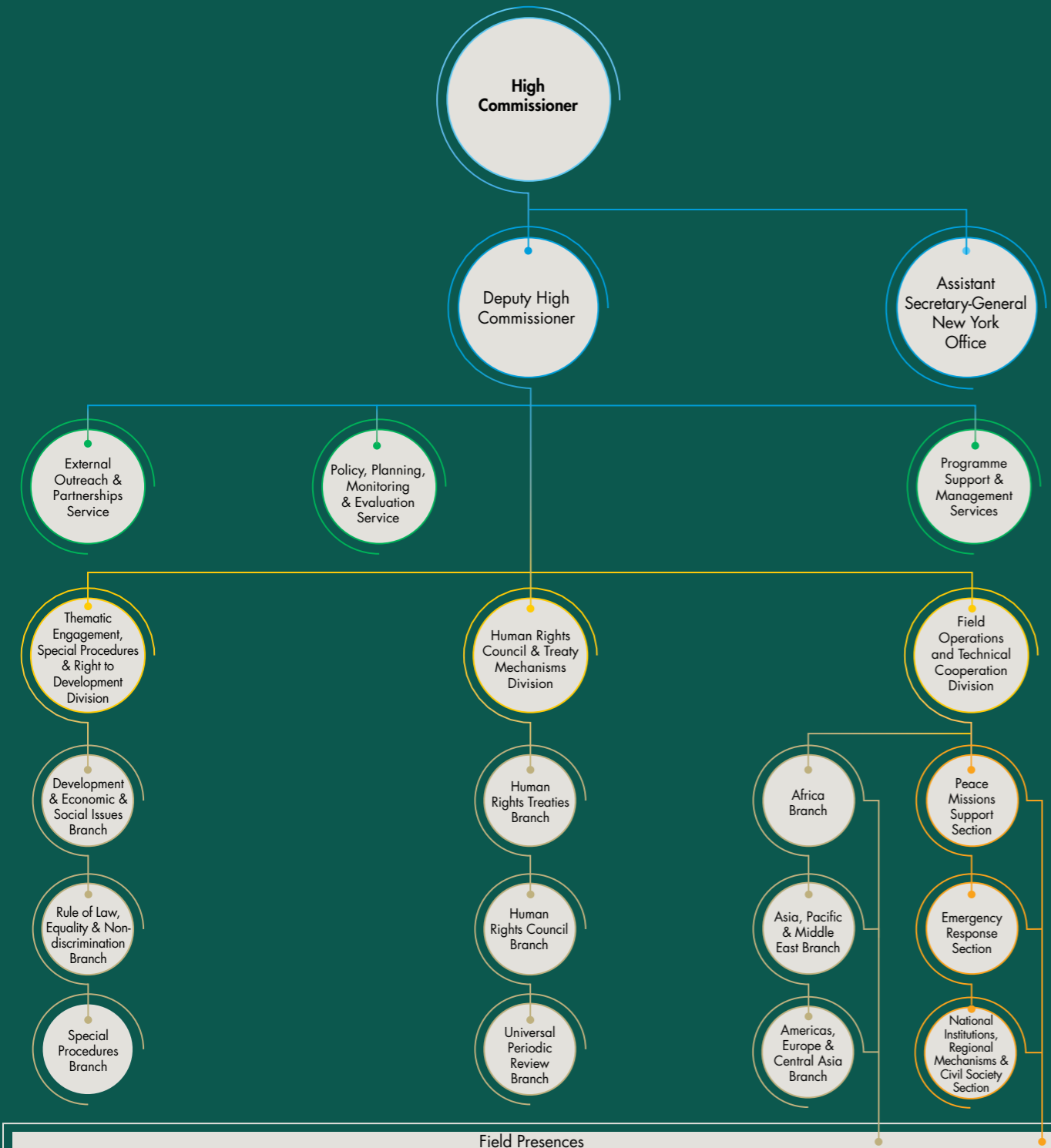
In Iraq, UN Human Rights is supporting efforts by civil society groups and human rights defenders for safe access to water for all people and for the sustainable and equitable use of water.

Al-Asadi said fighting for human rights and the marshes is worth it despite the dangers. Environmental activists in Iraq regularly face threats, harassment and arbitrary detention. Earlier this year, Al-Asadi was abducted and beaten up by an unidentified armed group before being released two weeks later.



# ANNEXES

## UN Human Rights Organization chart



## UN Human Rights Abbreviations and acronyms

- ASG**  
Assistant Secretary-General
- BINUH**  
United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti
- CEDAW**  
Committee on the elimination of discrimination against women
- CED**  
Committee on enforced disappearances
- EC**  
European Commission
- ECOSOC**  
Economic and Social Council
- HQ**  
Headquarters
- HC**  
High Commissioner
- HRA**  
Human Rights Adviser
- HRC**  
Human Rights Council
- MINUSCA**  
United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
- MINUSMA**  
United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
- MONUSCO**  
United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
- NGO**  
Non-governmental organization
- NPM**  
National Preventive Mechanism
- OEAP**  
Organizational effectiveness action plan
- OHCHR**  
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
- OMP**  
OHCHR Management Plan
- OP-CAT**  
Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture
- RO**  
Regional Office
- SDG**  
Sustainable Development Goal
- SC**  
Security Council
- SG**  
Secretary-General
- SPT**  
Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- UN**  
United Nations
- UNAMA**  
United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
- UNAMI**  
United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
- UNITAMS**  
United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan
- UNCT**  
United Nations Country Team
- UNDP**  
United Nations Development Programme
- UNMIK**  
United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
- UNMISS**  
United Nations Mission in South Sudan
- UNODC**  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- UNSMIL**  
United Nations Support Mission in Libya
- UNSOM**  
United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia
- UPR**  
Universal Periodic Review
- USG**  
Under-Secretary-General

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