

[Annual Report | Supporting defenders, serving humanity](#)

06.04.2020

As we embark on a new decade, the world faces tremendous challenges, from climate change to COVID-19. There are plenty of reasons for anxiety and concern. But we see even more reasons for ambition and hope. We take hope from courageous human rights defenders across the world who continue their vital work to make human rights a reality for all of us. We are proud to serve them, with the solidarity and support of people like you.



Together we made a significant contribution last year, and in the past decade, towards a world that is more fair, just and equal. A world where essential actors of change - human rights defenders - are better recognised, enabled and protected. Thank you for being such an important part of ISHR's work. Today, ISHR is thrilled to invite you to discover our latest annual report, outlining our key impacts during the last year and decade, and our bold vision for 2020 and the years ahead.

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Human rights defenders are the lifeblood of the human rights movement - and our societies. And they are at the heart of ISHR's work. Throughout 2019 we supported human rights defenders, strengthened laws and systems for their protection, and contributed to a safe and enabling environment for their vital work at the national, regional and international levels.

We pursue this mission by achieving three complementary goals:

Goal 1: We support human rights defenders to use international and regional human rights standards and systems to expose violations, seek accountability and remedy, and promote national implementation	Goal 2: We strengthen international and regional standards and systems to make them more accessible, effective and protective for human rights defenders and victims	Goal 3: We partner with local civil society to secure a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders at the national level
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What did we achieve in 2019?

Our work directly contributed to achieving the following Sustainable Development Goals:



Here are just a few examples of our collective impact in 2019:

- We provided intensive training and strategic advocacy support to over 375 defenders from around the world to develop networks of support and influence, to build energy and resilience and to become even more effective advocates for national-level change.
- The launch of our innovative [e-learning space](#) provided over 1,200 human rights defenders with unprecedented access to information, tools, tips and tactics.
- We worked with over 1,300 civil society organisations from 174 countries to secure the overwhelming adoption of a resolution, and the [renewal of the mandate](#) of a mechanism, to combat violence and discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.
- As climate activists around the world face stigmatisation and harassment, we worked with Norway and civil society partners to draft and then secure the consensus adoption of the [first ever UN resolution on environmental rights defenders](#).
- We focused attention on the situation of defenders in highly restrictive environments, such as China, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, increasing political pressure for the release of arbitrarily detained defenders, extracting a political cost for attacks and reprisals against them, and highlighting cases in the international and national press.
- Following extensive consultations, we developed and launched a series of ['action sheets' on diplomatic initiatives](#) for the protection of defenders.
- We partnered with national actors in more than a dozen countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East to promote a safe and enabling environment for defenders' vital work.



What's next on our agenda?

In 2020, with your continued and additional support, ISHR will further develop two vital areas of work to better achieve our mission:

- We will develop and test new narratives and build new coalitions which strengthen public and political support for human rights defenders and other civil society actors
- With the international human rights framework under attack precisely at the time when it is becoming the one and only avenue available to defenders working in highly restrictive environments, we will strengthen international mechanisms to make them more accessible, effective and protective for human rights defenders and victims of violations

Collective success

We would like to thank you for your support to ISHR and the defenders with whom we work. Your contributions are vital to our collective human rights impact and success. Now more than ever, we need people who serve humanity. Thank you for supporting ISHR.

Phil Lynch - Executive Director

Lucia Nader - Chair of the ISHR Board

PS. We'd love you to share our annual report with friends and colleagues who share your passion for human rights and who might be interested in supporting ISHR to achieve human rights impact and change!

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