



CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS  
**IMPACT REPORT 2021**

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# IMPACT REPORT 2021

How does the work of Civil Rights Defenders influence the development of civil and political rights? A full overview of the Civil Rights Defenders' activities during 2021 can be found in the [Annual Report](#). This Impact Report provides a more comprehensive view of Civil Rights Defenders key aspects of work under the pillars of accountability and security.

Civil Rights Defenders is an international, non-profit, human rights organisation that is politically and religiously independent. For almost 40 years, Civil Rights Defenders has been working to defend and promote people's civil and political rights and empower human rights defenders at risk around the world. We engage in advocacy activities and legal processes, work with security and capacity building, and provide information on and create engagement for the situations concerning human rights.

We are a global organisation with a presence on four continents. In 2021, Civil Rights Defenders continued its efforts to support human rights defenders in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Eurasia, and Europe. With a long-term perspective, Civil Rights Defenders collaborates with more than 300 human rights organisations in over 50 countries. Together with the human rights defenders in our network, we jointly champion a world of democratic societies where we all enjoy fundamental rights and freedoms.

## CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS' VISION

*A world of democratic societies in which we all enjoy our civil and political rights*

## CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS' MISSION

*Our mission is to defend civil and political rights together with local human rights defenders to increase their security, capacity, and access to justice.*

*We work as a part of a global movement of human rights defenders and partner with those at risk. Through legal means and public advocacy, we hold states, individuals, and non-state actors accountable for human rights violations.*

*We advocate for the norms and values of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other relevant human rights standards, as we encourage people to use these rights to promote democratic societies.*

## THEORY OF CHANGE

Civil Rights Defenders' Theory of Change centres on the strength of the human rights movement to alter oppressive power structures and to ensure that authorities are held accountable in respecting democracy and human rights.

Strengthening capacity and security creates organisational structures providing a platform for impactful human rights work. Through awareness raising and organising, people are empowered to collectively challenge oppression collectively through concerted efforts.



### **SECURITY**

Through training, emergency assistance, and innovative security solutions, Civil Rights Defenders aims to support as many human rights defenders as possible, so they can continue their important work. Together with our partner organisations, we offer training in digital, physical, as well as psychosocial security, among other areas.



### **CAPACITY**

A strong civil society is key to sustainable democracy. We partner with local human rights organisations and provide support in skills development as well as long-term financial support based on their needs to increase their capacity to drive change.



### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

We work to ensure respect for people's fundamental rights and freedoms and demand accountability when this is not the case. On our own, or together with local human rights defenders, we evaluate laws and proposed legislation, as well as their implementation by the authorities. We also engage in legal processes and hold those in power to account when human rights are violated.



### **AWARENESS**

Knowing one's rights is a precondition for being able to exercise them. Through information activities, public campaigns, and advocacy, we strengthen the knowledge of and engagement for democracy and human rights in Sweden and globally.

In our [Annual Report, page 8-25](#), you can read more about our work on Security, Capacity, Accountability and Awareness in all our regions.

## **THE LIMITATIONS AND TIME FRAME OF THE IMPACT REPORT 2021**

The Impact Report covers two key subcomponents within of our work on accountability: Strategic Litigation and Forums; as well as one component on security: the Emergency Fund.

This Impact Report follows Giva Sverige's new and improved guidelines for impact reporting. The report covers activities during 2021. To get a comprehensive overview of all Civil Rights Defender's activities during 2021, please see our [Annual Report, pages 7-24](#).

## **CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS AND OUR RESOURCES**

### **Organisation**

Civil Rights Defenders has an independent, non-profit board of recognised human rights experts. The members of the board are elected during the Annual Meeting, which is the organisation's supreme decision-making body. The organisation has a secretariat led by the Executive Director, whose task it is to implement the decisions of the board and to handle the day-to-day operation of the organisation.

By the end of 2021, Civil Rights Defenders had 97 staff members stationed across the organisation's head office in Stockholm and our regional offices in Asia, Africa, Belgrade, Bogotá, Brussels, Istanbul, Pristina, Sarajevo, and Tirana.

Country programmes are managed and coordinated by five regional departments: Africa, Asia, Eurasia, Europe, and Latin America. The organisation has two thematic departments: the Legal Department, and the Security and Innovation department in addition to departments for Communications, Fundraising and Partnerships, and Finance.

Within the Legal Department and the Security and Innovations Department, at the centre of this Impact Report, is a team of over 20 staff members, specialised in diverse topics related to human rights including international law, safety, security, and innovative methods to support human rights defenders most at risk.

### **Partners**

We cooperate with more than 300 human rights organisations across East and Horn of Africa, Europe, Eurasia, Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Sweden. We believe that local forces are best placed to be driving human rights work due to their permanent presence and closeness to those who face human rights violations.

Civil Rights Defenders works with different partners, which can be organisations or individuals with whom we engage in activity-based or contractual collaborations. This may refer to grant partners or collaborative partners within a legally binding or otherwise established project. These partners are referred to as our Activity Partners. Civil Right Defenders also engages on regular basis with organizations and individuals for the purpose of sharing information, insights, analysis, cooperation, to strengthen our activities and advocacy. These may include similar non-governmental organizations, networks, umbrella organisations or other trusted contacts within formal bodies institutions. These partners are referred to as our Strategic Partners.

In the regions where Civil Rights Defenders works to increase the security and capacity of human rights defenders, we primarily engage with Activity and Strategic Partners that:

- Are human rights defenders or part of human rights-based organisations and communities
- Are affected by and/or at risk due to policies and practices, which affect their civil and political rights

- Have limited capacity to perform human rights work and/or formal structures – or partners that represent such actors
- Have, or that have the potential to, impact on the human rights situation in the local or regional context.

Both the Legal Department and the Emergency Fund work closely with Civil Rights Defenders' partners, but also provide support beyond the already established partner networks of the organisation.

## **Funding**

Civil Rights Defenders is a registered Swedish non-profit organisation with no religious and political affiliation. Our work is financed by governmental organisations and private funders, including foundations, corporate partnerships, and contributions from the general public. The support is essential to ensure our flexibility and ability to act quickly and to target actions where the need is greatest.

## **Public Grants**

In 2021, Civil Rights Defenders' income from grants from public bodies amounted to a total of SEK 81,482 thousand, which corresponds to an increase from the previous year of SEK 24,210 thousand or 42 per cent. The biggest grant-awarding bodies were Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, followed by the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society and the Swedish Inheritance Fund. Grants from state actors are important for maintaining long-term engagement, in Sweden and in the world.

## **Foundations and Organisations**

Foundations and organisations are an important source of funding for Civil Rights Defenders. The biggest contributions came from the Open Society Foundations, National Endowment for Democracy, Civicus, and the Gerald and Monica Nagler Foundation.

## **Funds Raised from the General Public**

During the year, Civil Rights Defenders raised SEK 6,925 thousand from private individuals, which corresponds to an increase of SEK 1,505 thousand or 28 per cent. The increase is due to a growing base of monthly donors that in turn is the result of several years of successful recruitment and loyalty building from lead to donor. The result also reflects the successful end-of-year campaign. Monthly donations remain important, as they allow for long-term planning and stability and reduce administrative costs. Growing the donor base through new recruitments along with continued upgrading activities remains a priority in the coming years.

## **Companies**

During the year, companies and organisations contributed SEK 16,414 thousand to Civil Rights Defenders, either through long-term partnerships or by making a one-off donation. In 2020, the corresponding income from companies was SEK 14,709 thousand, which represents an increase of 12 per cent. Donations and grants from companies are of great importance for our ability to meet the challenges ahead, and the organisation will continue to

focus on strengthening its partnerships with companies and organisations. Since 2013, Civil Rights Defenders is a beneficiary of the Swedish Postcode Lottery, and in 2021 the organisation received SEK 10,000 thousand. Other important partners that supported our operations included, among others, the Swedish Football Association, the Swedish Olympic and Paralympic Committees, Neptunia Invest AB, Weekday, Tele2, Meta, and Twitter. Several new corporate donors made contributions in connection with the 2021 end-of year campaign.

## INCOME

Total income incl. interest income and similar profit items for 2021: SEK 124,871 thousand (2020: SEK 101,771 thousand).

The distribution of income is shown below:

- **Public bodies** – 65% (56%)
- **Foundations and organisations** – 16% (24%)
- **General public** – 6% (5%)
- **Companies** – 13% (14%)

The outer circle shows the distribution of income for 2021 and the inner circle for 2020.



## WHY IS CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS' WORK NEEDED?

On the basis of the principle of equal dignity for all, Civil Rights Defenders works toward a world of democratic societies in which we can all enjoy civil and political rights. Conflicts and human rights violations increasingly pervade our world, and we believe that a well-functioning, strong, and local civil society is more important than ever. Civil Rights Defenders aims to contribute towards the expansion the space for human rights defenders by improving their security and capacity, and by increasing awareness and accountability in relation to civil and political rights.

This report will take an in-depth look at particular actions supported under the accountability and security pillars within Civil Rights Defenders work.

## ACCOUNTABILITY: STRATEGIC LITIGATION AND DISCUSSION FORUMS

Civil Rights Defender's works across different arenas to promote accountability and develop accountability capacities. Civil Rights Defender's legal department extends a diverse array of support services and advice in Sweden. The department also participates in diverse initiatives within supported countries by coordinating Regional Moot Court Competitions, International Forums and by building and strengthening of capacities in judicial matters. The support services in Sweden include legal advice for people who have been victims of discrimination or have suffered from the violation of their human rights. In November of 2021, Civil Rights Defenders through their legal department launched a digital platform Processstöd, which is a platform for lawyers working with clients who have different needs or disabilities. The platform facilitates relevant information and practical tools so lawyers can better assist their clients. Available information includes a collection of caselaw, information about the responsibilities of judicial authorities and recommendations from the United Nations' Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

This report dives into strategic litigation cases supported in 2021 as well as into the Nordic Rule of Law Forum. The breakdown of the results chain for the activities that support accountability: strategic litigation and forums is outlined below.

Table 1. Results chain for strategic litigation and forums

Activity	Resources	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Strategic litigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal resources from the legal &amp; communications departments</li> <li>Donor funds supporting strategic litigation processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selection of strategic litigation cases</li> <li>Legal assessment of case &amp; stakeholders               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence review</li> </ul> </li> <li>Strategy development</li> <li>Drafting legal documents               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparing claims</li> <li>Defining advocacy strategy and advocacy outputs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Filing of a claim to pertinent authorities</li> <li>Execution of advocacy strategy: articles, media, interviews, events, etc</li> </ul>	<p><b>Short-term outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Claims are admitted by authorities</li> <li>Investigative actions initiated by police under universal jurisdiction</li> <li>Awareness of social issues by civil society and other stakeholders</li> </ul> <p><b>Medium term outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement of civil society actors, decision makers, int. organizations, and other relevant actors</li> <li>Strengthening of regional cooperation within international jurisdiction contexts</li> <li>Outcomes of legal proceedings acknowledge human right violations resulting in indictments and sentencing perpetrators</li> </ul> <p><b>Long-term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the right to truth, justice and reparations for the victims of human rights violations               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies, legal frameworks and regulations adjusted</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights</b></p>
Forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal resources from legal &amp; communications departments</li> <li>Donor funds to support organization and logistics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification of strategic theme for the forum</li> <li>Identification of actors relevant in the thematic area</li> <li>Establishing the agenda and speaker coordination</li> <li>Logistics planning for the event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The execution of the forums were actors within the justice system and civil society can engage in dialogue.</li> <li>A space for where regional legal practitioners can exchange experiences and knowledge</li> </ul>	<p><b>Short-term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institutional settings, legal frameworks, processes and policies within target countries are critically analyzed</li> <li>Legal practitioners increase knowledge on regional challenges and best practices</li> <li>Regional networks of legal professionals are created and strengthened</li> </ul> <p><b>Mid-term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy recommendations and agenda setting regarding public service reach, vetting mechanisms, judicial strengthening aspects &amp; legislation and international mechanism observance</li> <li>Regional networks engage in advocacy and other initiatives to strengthen rule of law</li> </ul> <p><b>Long-term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy implementations regarding regarding public service reach, vetting mechanisms, judicial strengthening aspects &amp; legislation and international mechanism observance               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening of the judicial systems</li> <li>Increased access to justice for vulnerable groups</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Rule of law is strengthened furthering respect for human rights and ensuring access to independent, impartial, accountable legal systems.</b></p> <p><b>Systemic change</b></p>

## Strategic litigation

Civil Rights Defenders engages in strategic litigation work whereby our legal expertise is harnessed, sometimes in collaboration with other human rights organizations and international mechanisms. The general objectives of the work in strategic litigation are to support survivors of human rights violations through legal proceedings and strengthen their access to justice. Through strategic litigation, Civil Rights Defenders aims to raise broader questions about human rights within society and influence laws, regulations, and policies to ensure accountability. Strategic litigation also aims to raise civil society’s awareness of social issues which can infringe human rights. Underlying assumptions for this intervention involve that vulnerable populations who’s rights have been infringed can have an active role in exerting their rights and further take part in decision-making to address policy.



### Case 1. Challenging neutrality policies in Sweden

In 2021, Sara\* decided to start wearing hijab at work, she was told that it was not allowed. Since then, she was not given any shifts and had to look for a new job. The firm referred to its neutrality policies, which prohibit the use of political, philosophical, or religious symbols and expressions during working hours. However, Civil Rights Defenders considers that this prohibition of religious symbols constitutes a form of discrimination which predominantly affects Muslim women, and therefore filed a lawsuit against the security firm Rapid Security AB.

#### Strategic litigation case 1 outcomes

The initial outcome was represented by the police report which was successfully submitted in early 2021. Although, similar cases have existed in Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) and in Sweden, this case represents the first time in which the notion of neutrality policies is tried in court in Sweden. In the cases processed by the CJEU, the court only considered the ground of religion, and the court found an equality component in the application of the neutrality policy. In the Swedish case, Civil Rights Defenders' argues that the policy mainly affects Muslim women. The arguments also invoke alternate legal instruments when addressing the right to religious freedom: the Swedish Constitutional Law. Compared to other European legal frameworks, the Swedish constitution lacks a secular component which results in the increased protection of religious freedom.

The filing of the complaint was accompanied by several efforts to raise awareness on the case. For this purpose Civil Rights Defenders used traditional media channels such as the organisation's [website](#) and social media. Several publications featured in other media outlets such as Sweden's [Dagens Nyheter](#) and [Svenska Dagbladet](#). The case also gained significant traction within the Muslim community. The courtroom was packed during the days of the proceedings, and information about the case gained a lot of attention online. Amongst others, in the group "Muslimska kompetensportalen" on Facebook, which is the biggest forum for people of Muslim faith in Sweden, with around 40 000 members. In addition to publications, Civil Rights Defenders were also interviewed in [P1 Morgon on Sverige Radio](#) to discuss the case and engaged with the Muslim community to understand perspectives from the people who face discrimination. Although the case was lost in court, the process is not over since there is an appeal process in the Swedish Labour Court.

A mid-term outcome was achieved by successfully engaging the Equality Ombudsman in the appeal process. The Equality Ombudsman is a government agency in Sweden tasked with supervising the laws relating to discrimination on the basis of someone's sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age. In the past, a similar case had been presented to the Ombudsman and internally dismissed based on existing precedents from the CJEU. Nonetheless, the claims presented by Civil Right Defenders were broader depending on which legal ground was used. For direct discrimination Civil Rights Defenders argued that the wearing of a religious symbol is so intimately connected to the Muslim faith that every prohibition against religious symbols in the workplace will automatically negatively affect

Muslims. A second argument points to the existence of direct discrimination because of the way the policy was enforced in practice: only against Muslim women wearing the hijab. Two witnesses were called to the stand, both working for the same security-company, and both of which had tattoos of religious or philosophical symbols. Neither of them had received any repercussions because of their obvious apparent symbols. Finally, Civil Rights Defenders argued that the policy was indirectly discriminatory because it was applied against religious symbols as a whole, and thus affected the whole population of religious people in Sweden negatively in comparison to non-religious people. Indirect discrimination is at hand when a seemingly neutral rule in practice disproportionately affects a protected class of peoples, in this case, women of Muslim faith. Other groups which also wear mandated religious symbols, such as Hasidic Jews or Sikhs, for example, are far lesser in number in Sweden.

An additional outcome was observed when the legal department reached out about the case to a previous Equality Ombudsman (then: Jämlikhetsombudsmannen, a predecessor to Diskrimineringsombudsmannen), who is now a scholar of Law at Lund university. She is in the process of writing a book, which among other aspects, addresses employer's possibilities to police employee's clothing in the workplace. The case will feature in a chapter dedicated to religious clothing. The book is set to be published in 2023 and used as course literature.

Long-term outcomes contemplated for the case include having neutrality policies acknowledged as discriminatory and thus unlawful, as well as the increased awareness regarding the different forms of discrimination that affect Muslim women in Sweden.

In general, strategic litigation cases process is tracked based on legal documents, filing of complaints, court rulings and appeals. Civil Right Defenders tracks social media reach. In this case, articles and videos shared in our social media (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram) as well as the interview held over radio reached over 11,000 people (not unique).

### **Case 2. Criminal complaint for crimes against humanity committed by the Assad regime in Syria**

In 2021, Civil Right Defenders partnered with the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM), the Syrian Archive and the Open Society Justice Initiative to file a complaint before the Swedish police's war crimes unit for the crimes against humanity committed by the government of the Syrian Arab Republic through sarin gas attacks against civilians in Khan Sheikhoun in 2017 and al-Ghouta in 2013, in which hundreds were killed and many more received serious injuries, including children. Swedish authorities have so-called universal jurisdiction over crimes against humanity and war crimes, which means that the authorities may investigate, indict, and sentence

perpetrators of the sarin gas attacks in Sweden despite the attacks taking place outside of Sweden by non-Swedish perpetrators against non-Swedish victims.

### **Strategic litigation Case 2 outcomes**

In order to initiate legal action, several activities had to be executed by Civil Rights Defenders and its partners, including the technical documentation of the violations of international law, the analysis of the collected material, the compiling and analysis of the material and testimonies from victims of the attacks, legal support to victims of the attacks, conducting a thorough analysis of the Syrian military chain of command, drafting of complaints and developing an advocacy strategy to raise public awareness about the case.

The initial outcome of filing these complaints was for the Swedish authorities to investigate the attacks and to cooperate with their French and German counterparts in the investigations. A mid-term outcome is for arrest warrants to be issued against those responsible for the attacks, while a long-term outcome is for those responsible to be indicted and sentenced for their involvement in the attacks. The over-arching goal of these measures, and advocacy initiatives which Civil Rights Defenders have engaged in, is for perpetrators of core international crimes in Syria to be held accountable for their crimes and for victims to be granted redress.

So far, the complaints have resulted in investigations into the two attacks being opened by the Swedish police's national war crime unit. Authorities in France and Germany have also taken steps to investigate the attacks during 2021, after similar complaints were filed to their authorities by our partners in 2020. As a result of an efficient media and communication strategy by Civil Rights Defenders and its filing partners, the filing of the complaints was covered widely in Swedish and international news outlets, including by Swedish Public Television (SVT), [Swedish Public Radio Ekot](#), Sweden's biggest daily newspaper [Dagens Nyheter \(DN\)](#) and by [AFP/Le Monde](#), amongst others, as a result of a successful media strategy by Civil Rights Defenders and our partners. In over 50 articles we reached over 6 million readers.

Furthermore, to meet the overarching goal of achieving accountability for core international crimes in Syria, we campaigned with a number of Syrian and international organizations to convince member states of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to strip Syria of its voting rights at the annual OPCW meeting that took place in 2021. We further urged EU and its member states to take a more comprehensive approach to ensure that perpetrators of core international crimes in Syria are held accountable for their actions and for the victims of such crimes are granted redress, inter alia, by advocating for the establishment of an EU Action Plan against Impunity with a special chapter on Syria and by advocating for a referral court for Syria. This was done through the publishing of public statements and letters to decision makers, and by organizing private meetings with diplomats.

To support the advocacy efforts Civil Rights Defenders also launched a [public campaign](#) in Sweden with the purpose of raising awareness about sarin gas attacks in Khan Sheikhoun and al-Ghouta and for building public support for accountability measures against the government of the Syrian Arab Republic. The campaign centred around a petition towards the Swedish government, raising 13,463 signatures which

were handed over the Minister of Foreign Affairs Ann Linde together with a letter urging Sweden to take the lead in demanding accountability for core international crimes committed in Syria and to achieve redress for victims of such crimes.

It was accompanied with films adapted for social media and a number of social media posts in all of Civil Rights Defenders social media channels and other communication efforts. On Facebook we had a reach of 530 000 during the campaign, we could also register 11 600 new subscribers to our monthly newsletter.

### **International Forums**

In 2021, Civil Right Defenders and partners organized the Rule of Law Forum for the Western Balkans as well as the Nordic Rule of Law Forum. Through these conferences, Civil Rights Defenders aims to strengthen regional cooperation, promote a discussion on the rule of law and human rights, and to encourage legal professionals across the region to reflect on common challenges within the law and human rights. It is a space where legal professionals can, through panel debates, lectures, and workshops, exchange experiences and gain knowledge on regional best practices. The underlying assumption for these interventions relies in the idea that civil society can work together to increase the shared capacity required for positive change.

#### **2021 Nordic Rule of Law Forum: Effective Remedies to Ensure Access to Justice**

The Nordic Rule of Law Forum is a high-level event that Civil Rights Defenders organized for the first time in the Nordics. The conference was inspired by the Rule of Law Forum for South-East Europe, an annual conference that Civil Rights Defenders has organised in various locations around the Western Balkans since 2014. The Nordic Rule of Law Forum brought together judges, regulatory authorities, lawyers, and civil society organisations for talks and discussions on ways to claim our rights. The forum brought together current and former judges of the European Court of Human Rights as well as lawyers from Nordic countries, and other relevant actors.

#### **Outcomes**

The event provided an opportunity for civil society actors to engage with institutional actors that facilitate justice mechanisms, in a neutral space where decision makers and legal professionals could interact without the traditional pressures from a courtroom or other more adversarial situations. Stakeholders discussed topics such as the alternate routes to ensure access to justice and how to prevent these from constituting bureaucratic obstacles; the event resulted in relevant discussions regarding the underrepresentation and barriers faced by groups such as children, people with disability and other minorities and what this means for the access to justice for vulnerable populations. It also facilitated in a participatory approach the increased awareness of decision makers about the challenges faced by people within alternate

justice mechanisms. The topics presented by speakers included discussions on national solutions to ensure States uphold the rights and freedoms established in the European Convention on Human Rights; a recount of the institutions contributing to access to justice; and potential dualities faced by oversight mechanisms in Sweden.

Such advocacy activities are measured by the number of participants and number of decision makers that participate in or engage in the process, the typology of questions raised, networks created or strengthened, changes in knowledge, and an evaluation of the event. Mid- and long-term outcomes include that discussions contribute to problematization, agenda setting, and change in institutional policies.

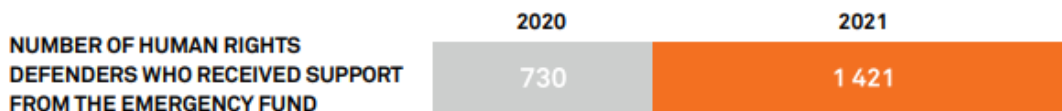
## **SECURITY: THE EMERGENCY FUND IN 2021**

Across the world, human rights defenders face serious threats. Activists on the front line face a qualified and forceful opposition in their daily work. This can involve anything from harassment and stalking to smear campaigns, arbitrary arrests and disappearances, office burglaries, or having their email accounts hacked. Living and working in such an environment is stressful, affecting individuals both physically and psychologically.

The synergies created by a combination of different measures are essential to strengthening their security. Civil Rights Defenders provides support to human rights defenders at risk through a combination of innovative security solutions. This report analyses the flexible, rapid response granting initiative: Emergency Fund.

### **Emergency Fund**

In many parts of the world, defending human rights is becoming increasingly dangerous. Civil Rights Defenders' global Emergency Fund provides rapid support and assistance to human rights defenders and their families at risk. The Emergency Fund programme facilitate reactive and preventive measures such as temporary relocation, psychosocial support, legal aid, medical aid, support to family members, capacity building, and humanitarian support to defenders and organizations at risk.



In 2021, more than 1,420 human rights defenders including family members received support through Emergency Fund Grants, effectively duplicating the support provided the previous year. Request were often associated to important humanitarian crises that took place in 2021 such as the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the military coup in Burma, widespread protests in Colombia, attacks on civil society in Belarus, the civil war in Ethiopia, and the Taliban's takeover in Afghanistan.

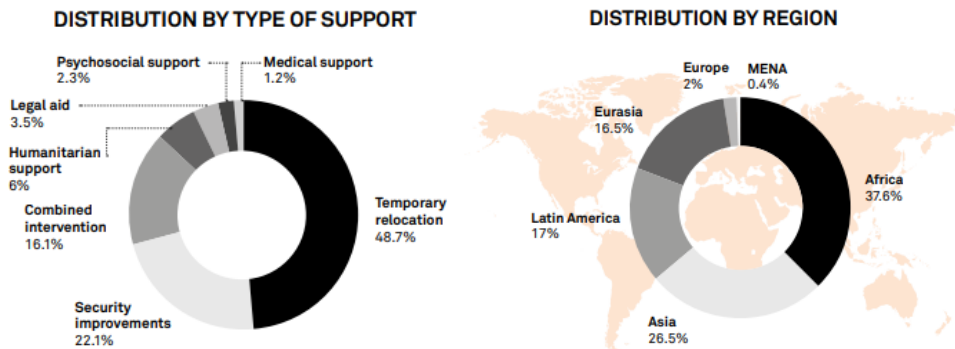


Table 2. Results chain for the Emergency Fund

Activity	Resources	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Emergency fund	Internal resources from the Security and Innovation Department Donor funds supporting the Emergency Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case assessment and verification</li> <li>Type of support and budget definition</li> <li>Internal approval</li> <li>Fund disbursement process</li> <li>Reporting and internal audits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitation of legal aid, psychosocial support, humanitarian support, medical aid</li> <li>Changes in knowledge about coping mechanisms; physical and digital security related practices</li> <li>Bringing people to safety through temporary relocations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Short-term outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased ability to identify and address risk factors</li> <li>Effective use of coping mechanisms</li> <li>Self-reported increased sense of safety</li> <li>Increased personal and digital security</li> </ul> <p><b>Mid-term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A human right defender that feels empowered to continue their work in human rights</li> </ul> <p><b>Long-term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased resilience of human rights movements</li> </ul>	Empowered human rights base

During 2021, Civil Rights Defenders worked to support human rights defenders across several regions. Most defenders supported in 2021 live in Africa (37.6%) and Asia (26.5%). Since the military coup in Burma, a total of 417 Burmese activists and human rights defenders have received support from Civil Rights Defenders’ Emergency Fund.

The majority of the support went toward safe housing for human rights defenders and safe office spaces as well as secure channels for communication. Several assumptions are contemplated within the Emergency Fund intervention and can vary according to the specific support provided. Assumptions include that all risks are mitigated, that the intervention is sufficient to neutralize significant risks from violence exerted by State and non-state actors, etc

As part of the reporting and internal audit process, information is systematically collected regarding potential changes and future perspectives in the status of the organisation’s or individual’s work in human rights, perceived benefits of the intervention.

## THE COSTS OF CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS’ OPERATIONS

Civil Rights Defenders total operation costs for 2021 was SEK 120,571,810. The total operating expenses include project expenses (SEK 109,857,887), fundraising expenses (SEK 7,372,644), and administrative expenses (SEK 3,341,279). Project expenses are those that are directly associated with the fulfilment of Civil Rights Defenders’ purpose according to its statutes, including expenses for personnel engaged to carry out activities, expenses for

opinion-shaping and information activities regarding Civil Rights Defenders' mission. The monitoring, reporting, and auditing of projects are also classified as project expenses.

Fundraising expenses are expenses intended to generate external income in the form of donations and grants from all donors and grant-awarding bodies, i.e. both private individuals and companies.

Administrative expenses are those required to manage and run the organisation i.e. expenses not related to projects or fundraising are classified as administrative expenses.

Examples of such expenses relate to board meetings, accounting and annual reports, the handling of payroll and social security contributions, VAT and tax declarations, audits of the organisation itself, as well as administrative systems such as accounting systems.

## MULTI-YEAR COMPARISON

	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
<b>Total income including net interest income (SEK thousands)</b>	<b>126,198</b>	<b>101,771</b>	<b>89,042</b>	<b>91,454</b>	<b>82,800</b>
Operating income	124,871	101,771	88 954	91,125	82,782
Profit/loss after financial items	5,626	2,772	-1,335	-2,384	-353
Project expenses/total income	88%	86%	90%	91%	87%
Fundraising expenses/total income	6%	5%	4%	5%	7%
Administrative expenses/total income	3%	6%	7%	7%	6%
Equity ratio	11%	7%	8%	11%	13%

*For more details, see Annual Report 2021 page 35.*

The activities mentioned in the Impact Report for 2021; Strategic litigation, Nordic Forum and Emergency Fund are supported through funds from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF), the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Swedish Postcode Lottery.

### **EMERGENCY FUND**

<b>2018</b>	800,000 SEK
<b>2019</b>	2, 650,000 SEK
<b>2020</b>	3, 700, 000 SEK
<b>2021</b>	7, 230 566 SEK

## **LESSONS LEARNED AND HOW CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS MEASURE ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES**

Civil Rights Defenders is engaging in a continuous process to incorporate monitoring, evaluation and learning frameworks to better understand the effectiveness of the institution's interventions. There are opportunities to strengthen analysis and evaluative approaches. For example, through understanding broader advocacy and social listening indicators.