



**CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS** is a politically and religiously independent international human rights organisation. The organisation defends people's civil and political rights and supports human rights defenders at risk. Civil Rights Defenders operates in Sweden and in the countries of the world where respect for human rights is at its weakest. We engage in advocacy activities and legal processes, and provide information on the situation with regards to human rights globally.

The map shows countries where we run extensive programme activities or collaborate with partner organisations. In total we support human rights defenders in more than 50 countries.

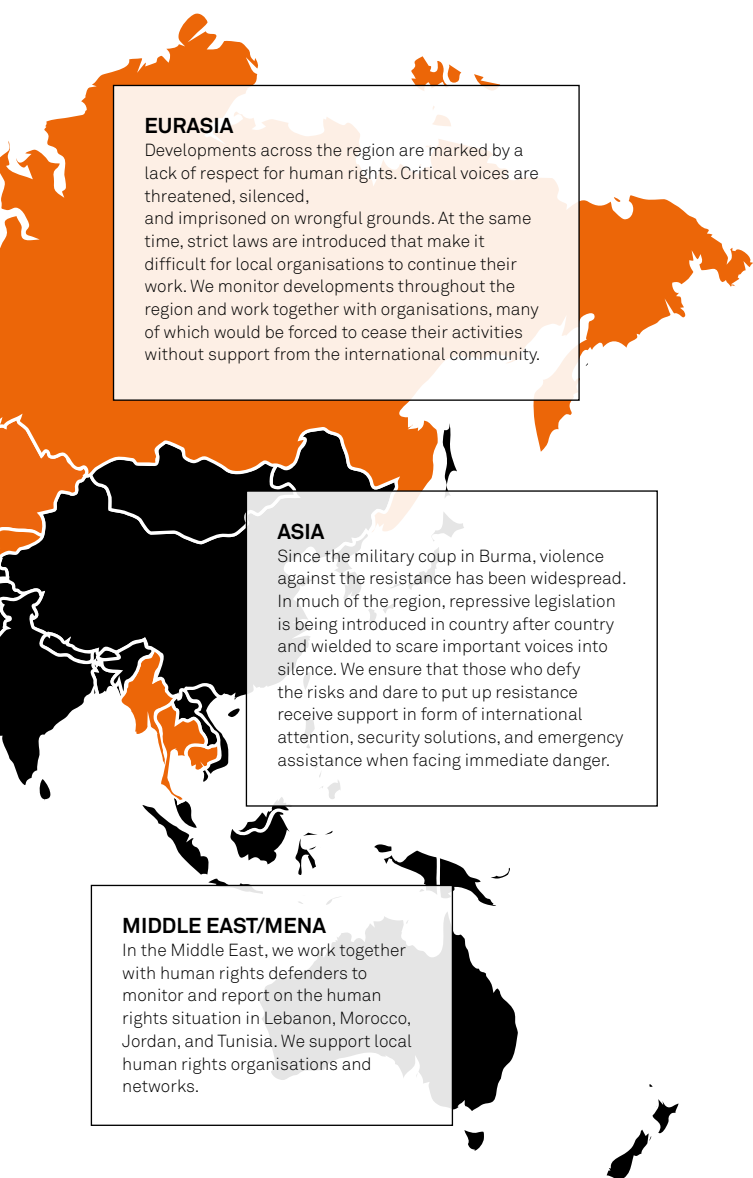


**1421**

In 2021, 1,421 human rights defenders in 30 of the most repressive countries in the world received support from Civil Rights Defenders' Emergency Fund.

**200**

At the end of 2021, more than 200 people were included in the Natalia Project – the world's first security alarm and positioning system for human rights defenders at risk.



### EURASIA

Developments across the region are marked by a lack of respect for human rights. Critical voices are threatened, silenced, and imprisoned on wrongful grounds. At the same time, strict laws are introduced that make it difficult for local organisations to continue their work. We monitor developments throughout the region and work together with organisations, many of which would be forced to cease their activities without support from the international community.

### ASIA

Since the military coup in Burma, violence against the resistance has been widespread. In much of the region, repressive legislation is being introduced in country after country and wielded to scare important voices into silence. We ensure that those who defy the risks and dare to put up resistance receive support in form of international attention, security solutions, and emergency assistance when facing immediate danger.

### MIDDLE EAST/MENA

In the Middle East, we work together with human rights defenders to monitor and report on the human rights situation in Lebanon, Morocco, Jordan, and Tunisia. We support local human rights organisations and networks.

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# 50

Civil Rights Defenders supports human rights defenders in more than 50 countries and maintains a local presence in 12 countries.

# 300

Civil Rights Defenders works together with more than 300 human rights organisations across the world.

# 88

In 2021, 88% of Civil Rights Defenders' income went to special purpose expenses.

# THE RESILIENCE OF DEMOCRACY DEPENDS ON HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

**Just like 2020, last year was extraordinary. The pandemic kept dominating the world scene – and in its shadow, space for civil and political rights continued to shrink, denying Human Rights Defenders and organisations the possibility to operate freely.**

The US Capitol insurrection on 6 January, the coup d'état in Burma, and violent crackdowns on the political opposition in Belarus and Russia are just a few examples of democracy in decline.

These democratic failures were brought about by autocratic minorities working purposefully and strategically to undermine democracy. Public opinion speaks in no uncertain terms – it is not the result of a majority demand for undemocratic governance.

For almost 40 years, Civil Rights Defenders' mission has been to promote fundamental civil and political rights. In accordance with the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and other international human rights agreements, we have worked to maintain the principles of the rule of law and to ensure a society with effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions. How can we, as an organisation, reverse this trend of increased autocracy and make democracy grow and prevail?

Civil Rights Defenders has a flexible approach: to support human rights defenders and civil societies under autocratic pressure through long-term partnerships and collaborations. At the same time, we are ready to intervene with urgent action when our partners are at risk. As long as they can stay alive, be free, and continue to work, we are making progress – then, resistance to oppression will continue to increase and civil societies grow ever stronger.

Collective efforts to promote human rights and democracy may not be a vaccine against armed conflict, but they serve as a long-term renewable

insurance policy. While the persistent work of human rights organisations around the world is not aimed to prevent war, it does provide the best protection against it. In modern times, no two democratic countries have ever been at war with each other.

It is in this context and for such a purpose that our partners around the world work. In these countries, democracy is often fragile, in decline, or sometimes completely non-existent. Despite threats, persecution, and at great risks to their own lives, our partners continue their struggle. In 2021, we have continued to support them in their important work through a series of innovative efforts.

In Latin America, along the Colombia–Venezuela border, we have expanded our work together with local human rights organisations, increasing their security and capacity to cooperate across the border.

In the Eurasia region we established, for the first time, a presence in the region by opening an office in Tbilisi, Georgia. This further strengthens our opportunities to support human rights defenders in the region.

In the Western Balkans, Turkey, and the MENA region, we have supported more than 30 human rights organisations in the fight to increase compliance with human rights in their respective countries and regions.

Our legal department has continued to take on grave international crime and demand accountability through documentation of crimes against international law, capacity-building, and strategic litigation under so called international jurisdiction.

As part of the early run-up to the Swedish elections in 2022, we created the board game, “Dictator of Sweden”. The game highlights what



democratic decline might look like in Sweden and reminds us of how fragile democracy is – everywhere.

Our Security and Innovation Department continues to develop its capacity to protect our partners, through our community-based security and alarm system for human rights defenders, the Natalia Project. The Belarusian human rights defender Nasta Lojka is one of more than 200 participants in the project since the start. In August, Nasta was arbitrarily detained by security police, but was able to send out a distress signal through her Natalia Project alarm. The signal immediately notified Civil Rights Defenders and her immediate contacts that something had happened, transmitting her exact coordinates. 72 hours later, she was released from custody.

In 2021, Civil Rights Defenders' Emergency Fund has received and processed the largest number of applications to date: emergency support was provided to human rights defenders and organisations at risk in more than 170 cases across 30 countries.

Looking ahead, the development of our work with security and innovation will be one of several

key factors for our continued relevance as an organisation. The use of technology as a method of oppression from authoritarian regimes is significant and will continue to occur. Experiments using artificial intelligence and facial recognition software are becoming more common, strengthening states in their ability to track, monitor, and act against human rights defenders. We will continue to identify innovative and creative methods to counteract this development and help our partners use technology to protect themselves better.

All of these measures share the same purpose: to increase the ability of our partners to operate by improving their safety and capacity, and by raising awareness and demanding accountability in breaches of civil and political rights.

With your help and support, we can continue this important work and reverse the trend of democratic backsliding in the world. Together, we can ensure that human rights and democracy regain a foothold.

*Anders L. Pettersson,  
Executive Director*

*Benedicte Berner,  
Chairperson of the Board*





**OUR VISION  
IS A WORLD OF DEMOCRATIC  
SOCIETIES IN WHICH WE  
ALL ENJOY OUR CIVIL AND  
POLITICAL RIGHTS.**

## **OUR MISSION**

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

We are 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.

# OUR STRATEGY 2021

In 2020, Civil Rights Defenders adopted a new strategy for the coming three years. In 2021, the strategy helped the organisation grow stronger than ever. Today, more than 100 colleagues around the world are working to support human rights defenders – by improving their security and capacity, and by increasing the awareness of and commitment to human rights, so that accountability can be demanded when rights are violated.



## 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 skills development as well as long-term financial support based on their needs to increase their capacity to incite change.



## ACCOUNTABILITY

We work to ensure that people's fundamental rights and freedoms are respected and demand accountability when this is not the case. On our own, or together with 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.



## SECURITY

# SERIOUS RISKS REQUIRE INNOVATIVE SECURITY SOLUTIONS

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.

## THE EMERGENCY FUND

— AFRICA, ASIA, EURASIA, EUROPE, MENA, LATIN AMERICA

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. We offer legal aid, advice on matters of security, relocation to safe housing, or help to leave the country when threats become too serious.

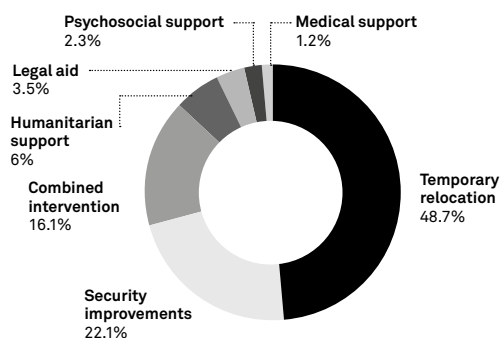
In 2021, we received almost twice as many applications to the Emergency Fund as compared to 2020 – the largest number of applications since the Emergency Fund was launched in 2012. During the year, 1,421 human rights defenders received support, often in the context of major humanitarian

crises around the world. For example, in connection with the aftermath of 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** – to name a few. Many human rights defenders cannot continue their work for human rights and democracy without the support of the outside world. Through the Emergency Fund, we enable human rights defenders to continue their vital work when it is needed the most. More than 90 per cent were able to continue their work after our intervention.

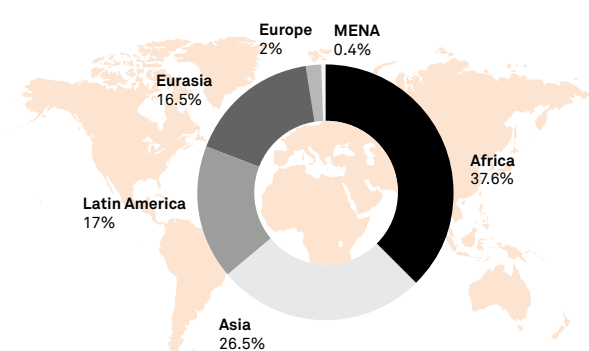
### NUMBER OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS WHO RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM THE EMERGENCY FUND



### DISTRIBUTION BY TYPE OF SUPPORT



### DISTRIBUTION BY REGION







## SUPPORT FOR BURMESE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN 2021

— ASIA

On 1 February 2021, the military seized power in Burma. The country's leader, Aung San Suu Kyi – whose party had celebrated a big victory in the elections three months prior – was arrested by security forces. In the year that followed, millions of people gathered in the streets across Burma to demonstrate peacefully against this undemocratic shift in power.

The demonstrations were met with deadly violence by the military and security services. Thousands of peaceful protesters were arrested during the year, and thousands more were injured. Despite this, demonstrations continued to grow in strength and become more organised, with violence from the military forces increasing

at the same rate. The need for support from the outside world was extensive.

During the year, Civil Rights Defenders worked to support human rights defenders across Burma. Among other things, we offered support through the Emergency Fund to those facing immediate danger or in need of proactive safety measures. Since the military coup, 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.

# THE NATALIA PROJECT

— AFRICA, ASIA, EURASIA, EUROPE, LATIN AMERICA, MENA

The Natalia Project is the world's first community-based security alarm system for human rights defenders. The system includes a GPS-based alarm, a safety plan, and extensive security training – all tailored to the specific needs of each defender.

In the event of an attack, Natalia Project participants can send out a distress signal through their alarm device. The individual's location is transmitted directly to Civil Rights Defenders and to selected allies in the human rights defender's own network, who can quickly mobilise support and

inform the outside world of the attack. Acting fast can mean the difference between life and death for a human rights defender.

In 2021, an internal evaluation and analysis of the project was carried out. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic posing major challenges to the Natalia Project, we were able to offer our members support at all hours of the day, and new contacts and expertise were added to the project. In total, more than 200 human rights defenders have been part of the Natalia Project over the past eight years.

## NATALIA PROJECT PARTICIPANT QUICKLY LOCATED AND RELEASED

— EURASIA



In August, an alarm went off at Civil Rights Defenders' office and for a few select individuals in Belarusian human rights defender Nasta Lojka's network. It was Nasta who had activated her Natalia Project alarm after she was arrested in central Minsk and taken away by the police, accused of tax evasion.

The Belarusian people and civil society have been calling for free elections and democracy since 2020, but President Lukashenko continues to keep an iron grip on power. Peaceful protests have been met with police brutality, and hundreds of demonstrators have been beaten, arrested, and tortured. Several key members of the opposition have been held in custody or forced into exile.

Nasta Lojka works for the organisation Human Constanta. As of July 2017, she is part of the Natalia Project, a community-based alarm system for the most vulnerable human rights defenders we work with. On 13 August at 1.00 pm, she was arrested and taken away by the police. Thanks to the alarm, we were able to quickly locate her and get her lawyer to her on the ground so that she could be released after 72 hours of detention and questioning.

"If I am arrested again in the future, the Natalia Project alarm ensures that information can be passed quickly and that the reaction will be swifter. Hopefully, that will lead to less repressive measures by the regime," Nasta said in an interview at her first security training session as a participant in the Natalia Project.

## THANKS TO THE EMERGENCY FUND, HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS CAN CONTINUE TO FIGHT FOR JUSTICE

In many places, standing up for human rights means putting one's life at risk. Despite threats, harassment, and violence, courageous human rights defenders continue to fight for justice, freedom, and equality. Paola, Jay, and Bekim are three of many who risk their lives in their activism. Through the Emergency Fund, they have received support to relocate to a safe place where they can continue their work without risking their own safety.



*“Today, in the place where I am based now, I can continue my work.”*

Yuly Paola Artunduaga,  
Women's Rights Defender, Colombia

Yuly Paola Artunduaga is a champion for women's rights from Colombia, the deadliest country in the world for human rights defenders. She and her family and colleagues have received death threats on several occasions because of their activism.

*“The support we receive from Civil Rights Defenders has enabled me to actually take time off and re-think, re-group, and re-strategize on how to continue my work safely”*

Jay Abang, LGBTI+ activist, Uganda

LGBTI+ persons in Uganda have long been subjected to widespread discrimination and harassment. Activist Jay Abang works for LGBTI+ women's rights, a struggle that has led to multiple threats.



*“I'm so grateful that we have a shoulder to lean on when our lives and those of our loved ones are in danger.”*

Bekim Asani, Human Rights Defender  
and LGBTI+ activist, North Macedonia

Due to his work for LGBTI+ rights and the rights of national and religious minorities in North Macedonia, Bekim Asani has been subjected to threats and harassment several times.





# A STRONG CIVIL SOCIETY – THE KEY TO SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY

A strong local civil society is key to long-term progress toward sustainable democracy. That is why we focus on partnering with and supporting local human rights defenders who are fighting for change in countries where their rights are not recognised. Based on our partners' needs, we

provide security training, expertise, organisational development, and long-term financial support. We also bring our partners together so that they can exchange experiences, learn from, and inspire each other.

## PROCESSSTÖD – A DIGITAL PLATFORM FOR LAWYERS

— SWEDEN

If a person with a disability does not receive proper support to fully understand the legal process, this can have dire consequences. That is why we launched the digital platform Processstöd in November 2021.

Processstöd is a platform for lawyers working with clients who have different needs or disabilities, where lawyers can find relevant information and practical tools to better assist their clients. The platform also contains information

about the responsibilities of the judicial authorities in these types of cases and a collection of caselaw from the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union, as well as recommendations from the United Nations' Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The project was carried out in close cooperation with disability rights organisations, the Swedish Bar Association, and individual lawyers.

## FEMINIST POCKETBOOK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

— SWEDEN



In June 2021, we launched a feminist handbook for human rights defenders. The book 'Building Feminist Practice' is the result of years of collaboration with activists and partner organisations around the world. The content

is based on knowledge and expertise from the feminist movement in Africa, interviews with human rights defenders in Africa, contributions from feminist institutes, and reviews of articles and reports on the subject.

The goal of the pocketbook is to provide readers with tools to help them both reflect on and use feminist principles and practices in their human rights work. The book is primarily aimed at human rights defenders and organisations on the African continent, but serves as a helpful resource in other parts of the world as well.

By deepening our knowledge and understanding of feminist theory and practice, we can strengthen our work and impact. Self-reflection is important in this kind of project and we must continue to challenge oppressive structures in society, in our organisations, and within ourselves.





## FEMALE JOURNALISTS' FIGHT IN ETHIOPIA

— AFRICA

Ethiopia ranks 101st out of 180 countries in Reporters Without Borders' press freedom index. Journalists are detained, often on unclear grounds, crimes against journalists are not properly investigated, and it is difficult to gain access to and report from areas of the country ravaged by conflict. It can also be difficult to obtain accurate information from official sources.

Conditions for women journalists in Ethiopia are particularly dire. Not only does the country have limited press freedom – the media landscape is also heavily dominated by men. To change that, Civil Rights Defenders and the

Ethiopian Media Women Association created a meeting place for female journalists.

During the meetings, participants had the opportunity to meet other female journalists, share experiences, and support each other. The idea behind the project is to create networks and increase solidarity among female journalists, so that more women can work as journalists and claim more space in the country's media landscape. Eight meetings were held throughout the year and more than 120 people participated. The women who took part continue to stay in touch via a chat group where they share information, offer advice, and help each other.

## RULE OF LAW FORUM EUROPE

— EUROPE

In September, Civil Rights Defenders and Aire Centre organised the eighth annual Regional Rule of Law Forum for South-East Europe. This year's forum focused on the theme of *Independence and Impartiality of the Judiciary*, bringing together more than 200 legal professionals from the Western Balkans for panel debates, lectures, and workshops.

The main conference was held in Dubrovnik, where Robert Spano, president of the European Court of Human Rights, and other experts took part in interactive panel discussions on this year's theme. The panel discussions were broadcast digitally at smaller, local hubs in Belgrade,

Podgorica, Pristina, Sarajevo, Skopje, Tirana, and Zagreb. Each panel discussion was followed by digital workshops between the main conference and the local hubs, where participants discussed lessons learned from their respective fields.

The Rule of Law Forum for South-East Europe has become a cornerstone in the efforts to strengthen the rule of law and democracy in the Western Balkans. The conference offers a space for legal professionals across the region to reflect on common challenges within the law and human rights, and where they can work together to increase the shared capacity required for positive change.



## DEFENDERS' DAYS BOOTCAMP

— AFRICA, ASIA, EURASIA, EUROPE, LATIN AMERICA, MENA, SWEDEN

Defenders' Days Bootcamp is a training concept developed when our biennial conference for human rights defenders – Defenders' Days – had to be cancelled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We wanted to continue offering our partners the opportunity to educate themselves remotely in areas such as digital security, psychosomatic support, and international advocacy, while also exchanging knowledge and experiences with each other. In 2021, we chose to develop the concept further, and have now made it a permanent part of our work.

The bootcamp gives human rights defenders a chance to take part in a variety of Civil Rights Defenders' training opportunities, as well as for Civil Rights Defenders to evaluate and develop our training concepts. Throughout the year, we successfully provided security focused capacity building support through remote trainings to 111 human rights defenders (of which 59 were women and 9 non-binary or gender non-conforming) from 23 countries. Psycho-social support and digital security have been among the well-needed topics for the trainings.





Belgrade Pride took place on 18 September 2021 and attracted more than 2,000 people. The slogan for this year's Pride was 'Love is Law', highlighting the LGBTI+ movement's fight to legalise same-sex marriage in Serbia. Civil Rights Defenders co-organised this year's festival while urging the Serbian government to legalise same-sex marriage.



## ACCOUNTABILITY

# HOLDING THOSE IN POWER TO ACCOUNT

Civil Rights Defenders holds governments and those in power to account when people's civil or political rights are violated. We do this ourselves, or together with local human rights defenders. We evaluate laws and proposed legislation, as well as

their implementation by the authorities. We hold those in power to account when human rights are violated by bringing cases to national and international courts, committees, and tribunals.

## DEFENDERS' DATABASE

— AFRICA, ASIA, EURASIA, LATIN AMERICA, SWEDEN

Human rights violations are committed every day across the world – in Sweden, too. Due to the risks and difficulties involved in documenting and reporting such violations, many perpetrators are not held accountable for their actions. With the Defenders' Database, we hope to change that.

The Defenders' Database is a tool that helps human rights defenders and organisations document, organise, analyse, and visualise human rights violations globally. The database provides a safe place to store information until it can be used for advocacy purposes and to achieve justice and accountability.

In 2021, we upgraded the tool, which now includes templates for evidence gathering and

reporting serious international crimes. In **Cuba**, the database was used by numerous civil society organisations in 2021 to produce reports on topics such as academic freedom, arbitrary detentions, and political prisoners. The tool was also made available in **Ethiopia, Russia, and Sweden**.

In 2021, over 2,200 incidents composed of 8,307 human rights violations were registered in the Defenders' Database by partners in different countries around the world. The majority of documented incidents included threats, intimidation, and arbitrary arrests.



# 8,307

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS WERE  
DOCUMENTED BY OUR PARTNERS  
USING THE DEFENDERS'  
DATABASE IN 2021



## THE IRAN TRIAL

— SWEDEN, MENA

In August 2021, a historic trial began in Stockholm District Court against an Iranian national suspected of being complicit in mass executions and torture of political prisoners in Iran in the summer of 1988. The exact number of those executed, tortured, or 'disappeared' has not been possible to determine. Reports indicate at least 5,000 deaths, with fears of a great many more, but so far no one has been held accountable for the events.

Under Swedish law, it is possible for authorities to investigate and prosecute core international crimes committed in another country, even if there is no link to Sweden. This means that perpetrators of crimes against humanity, genocide, and war crimes can be investigated and sentenced in

Sweden, regardless of where the crimes were committed or the nationality of the perpetrator or injured party. Civil Rights Defenders has not been involved in the legal process in Stockholm District Court, though we are working to ensure that perpetrators of grave international crimes are held accountable for their actions. The trial is the first in the world to address the mass executions and torture of political prisoners in Iran during the 1980s. We have therefore monitored the trial closely, continuously publishing reports from the courtroom on our website.

## CHEMICAL WEAPONS ATTACK IN GHOUTA, SYRIA

— SWEDEN, MENA



In 21 August 2013, the Syrian regime carried out a chemical weapons attack in areas surrounding Syria's capital Damascus. The chemical weapons attack was the most fatal of its kind that the world had seen in three decades. It resulted in large numbers of dead and injured with more than a hundred of whom were children.

In 2021, Civil Rights Defenders and three other human rights organisations along with survivors filed a criminal complaint to the Swedish police. The same organisations have also filed similar complaints in Germany and France in 2020 and 2021. Following the complaints, all three countries have taken investigative action – including, for example, interrogating victims. When the legal system in the country where a violation has been committed lacks the will or ability to address the crime and when international courts do not have jurisdiction, it is crucial that these types of crimes can be investigated and prosecuted in other countries.



## THE ELECTORAL COMMITTEE CASE

— SWEDEN

In May 2019, media reported that voters who refused to hand over their ballot to a certain vote collector because of their ethnicity, would be referred to another, 'Swedish', vote collector. The guidelines came to light during a training session for vote collectors in Stockholm ahead of the European Parliament elections.

The vote collector Harry Peronius, who had been assigned as head of a polling station on election day, objected to the guidelines and pointed out that they were discriminatory and allowed for racism. He was subsequently dismissed from his position on the grounds that he had supposedly expressed his intention to deny voters their right to vote.

Civil Rights Defenders filed a lawsuit against the City of Stockholm for discrimination and the

trial began in January 2021. Soon after, the court concluded that voters may not decide who shall collect their vote, as this could be discriminatory. The district court also concluded that the Electoral Committee did not have sufficient grounds to dismiss Harry Peronius after he raised the alarm about the situation.

Because the case was subject to statute of limitations, Harry Peronius did not receive any compensation, but Civil Rights Defenders still considers the ruling a victory. In light of the ruling, the electoral committees in all of Sweden's municipalities and the Swedish Election Authority must clarify their guidelines and counteract discrimination and racism at our polling stations.





When the company Beowulf Mining applied for a permit to mine iron ore in Gállok, we called on the Swedish government to refuse their application. The affected Sami reindeer herding communities, as well as many Sami not participating in reindeer husbandry had said no to a mine, which would have disastrous consequences for the surrounding nature and Sami reindeer herding, hunting, fishing, and cultural heritage. Together with our Sami partner, Jonas Vannar, we also brought the case to the attention of the United Nations. As a result, at the start of 2022, the UN aimed sharp criticism at Sweden for the way the case had been handled.





## AWARENESS

# A PRECONDITION FOR EXERCISING ONE'S RIGHTS

Civil Rights Defenders works to increase the awareness of and engagement for human rights among the public, and to influence states and decision makers at the national and international level. We engage in opinion-shaping and advocacy activities, independently or together with local human rights defenders and organisations. We stimulate debate, run campaigns, and highlight

key issues in the media and digital media, through seminars, and in reports. When people have limited knowledge of or are denied information about their rights, there is an increased risk that these rights may be violated. In totalitarian states without a free press, we provide independent information through alternative media outlets and encourage discussion and debate.

## NEWSLETTER

— AFRICA, ASIA, EURASIA, EUROPE, LATIN AMERICA, MENA, SWEDEN

In repressive countries, the media is often controlled by the state. Access to relevant, reliable, and independent information through alternative media outlets is often in short supply. That is why we created the Time to Act Partner Newsletter, which is sent out to human rights defenders in our network of partners and organisations. Among other things, we communicate information about Civil Rights Defenders' activities, articles, and recommendations on security practices.

In addition to offering relevant and reliable information, the Time to Act Partner Newsletter

helps create a sense of community within our network, where many have felt isolated from the rest of civil society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Civil Rights Defenders also circulates three other newsletters – Voces del Territorio, Time to Act Europe, and Time to Act – which are shared with our network in Latin America, decision makers in Brussels, and our subscribers in Sweden. At the end of 2021, our Swedish newsletter had more than 25,000 subscribers.

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## THE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER PODCAST

— EUROPE, EURASIA

There are many human rights defenders with incredible stories that deserve to be heard. That is why we created the interview-based podcast the Human Rights Defender that explores the lives and work of brave human rights defenders.

One of our guests in 2021 was Evin Incir, a member of the European Parliament who is campaigning for Roma rights and the increased inclusion of Roma in society. We also spoke to the Russian human rights and media project OVD-Info's

co-founder, Daniil Beilinson – the 2021 recipient of our annual Civil Rights Defender of the Year Award. Beilinson talked about the human rights situation in Russia, their efforts to monitor police brutality, and what it has meant for them to be branded as “foreign agents”. Read more on page 24.

Other topics highlighted during the year include the Pegasus leak and LGBTI+ rights in Albania. The podcast is available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Civil Rights Defenders' YouTube channel.





PHOTO: ELENA ROSTUNOVA

## AWARENESS AS A TOOL FOR CHANGE

— EURASIA

In Russia, the space for civil society shrunk almost to non-existence in 2021. The rights to freedom of assembly and expression were stifled through repressive laws. Anyone going out into the street to protest now risked heavy fines or jail time.

Dissidents, critics, and human rights organisations were branded as “foreign agents” and restricted in their work or forced to close down their operations altogether. The country’s foremost human rights organisation, Memorial International, was forced to shut its doors in December.

Meanwhile, the country’s movement for democracy was growing. During the year, widespread demonstrations took place in more than 200 cities across Russia. The police responded with brutal violence in their attempts to curb the demonstrations. 17,000 people

were arrested and more than 150 were charged with crimes. The eyes of the world were on the systematic repression perpetrated by the Russian regime.

Civil Rights Defenders has monitored the situation for democracy and human rights in Russia since the organisation was founded 40 years ago. We conduct advocacy and raise awareness of the situation in the country among both the public and decision makers in Sweden and the world. In 2021, we published articles, analyses, and statements about Russia, while also highlighting current events through campaigns and films on our social media channels. We also presented our annual award, the Civil Rights Defender of the Year Award, to the Russian project OVD-Info. Read more about the prize on page 24.



PHOTO: CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS

## NORDIC RULE OF LAW FORUM

— SWEDEN

For the first time ever, Civil Rights Defenders organised the Nordic Rule of Law Forum in Stockholm. 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.

A number of prominent legal and human rights experts from the Nordic countries and Europe participated in the conference. Among the speakers were Robert Spano, president of the European

Court of Human Rights; Anne Ramberg, former secretary-general of the Swedish Bar Association; Anders Eka, president of the Supreme Court of Sweden; and Mari Heidenborg, Sweden's Chancellor of Justice.

The Nordic Rule of Law Forum will be an annual conference where legal professionals can exchange experiences and increase their knowledge in the field of human rights. By inviting current and former judges of the European Court of Human Rights as well as lawyers from other Nordic countries, we hope to strengthen international cooperation going forward.

## PRESS AND MEDIA

In order to raise awareness of human rights and democracy among both the public and policymakers, we provide journalists with expert knowledge on the issues we work with. We also engage in opinion-shaping and advocacy by writing op-eds, either on our own or together with partner organisations. In 2021, we wrote 25 op-eds and were mentioned in more than 1,600 articles or news segments in Swedish and international media.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is an essential tool for reaching out to our audiences. On Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, we publish posts, articles, and campaigns, highlighting current events and sharing stories about human rights defenders from the regions we work in. We are constantly striving to find new ways to be more effective in reaching out to our audiences. In 2021, we launched two new social media accounts that focus on our work in Sweden.

# 1,600

MENTIONS IN ARTICLES  
OR NEWS SEGMENTS

# 25

OP-EDS PUBLISHED  
IN 2021

# 350,000

OUR FACEBOOK POSTS REACHED  
MORE THAN 350,000 PEOPLE  
A MONTH IN 2021

# 170,000

OUR TWITTER POSTS REACHED  
MORE THAN 170,000 PEOPLE  
A MONTH IN 2021





July 2021 saw the largest demonstrations in Cuba in several decades, as tens of thousands took to the streets to protest against unfreedom, poverty, and systematic attacks on the opposition. The protests were met with brutal violence by security forces and at least 1,447 people were arrested arbitrarily, according to Cuban organisations. Most were still in custody by the end of the year. Civil Rights Defenders has long been working closely with local human rights organisations to demand that the EU requires the Cuban government to implement democratic reforms. We also support human rights defenders in emergency situations, for example through the Natalia Project.



“

*I have no dream,  
I have plans.*

Grigory Okhotin, co-founder of OVD-Info

## ABOUT THE CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Since 2013, Civil Rights Defenders each year presents the Civil Rights Defender of the Year Award to a human rights defender, organisation, or project that, despite the risk to their own safety, continue the struggle for civil and political rights.



# OVD-INFO CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDER OF THE YEAR AWARD 2021



In October 2021, the Russian human rights and media project OVD-Info was awarded the Civil Rights Defender of the Year Award. OVD-Info is an independent human rights project shining a light on political arrests of people exercising their right to freedom of assembly. Their main goal is to spread information about arbitrary detentions during protests and to offer legal aid to those who have been arrested. They have been described as “Russia’s lifeline for detained protesters”.

“I have no dream, I have plans. I am quite sure that one day the Russian civil society will be stronger than this oppressive state apparatus. I don’t know when it will happen, but I’m sure that it will. We support those who dream about it and fight for it. It won’t be easy, but someday people will take their responsibility and build real institutional frameworks to protect human rights in Russia”, said Grigory Okhotin, co-founder of OVD-Info.

The right to freedom of assembly has become one of the most attacked rights in Putin’s Russia, where the space for dissent is shrinking fast. People exercising their fundamental right to

participate in peaceful demonstrations are one of the groups facing the most severe political repression.

“Russian authorities are doing everything in their power to stifle civil society and silence the independent media. Despite this, OVD-Info tirelessly continues to spread information about the repression and help those affected. This kind of courage and dedication deserves attention, it is projects like OVD-Info that keep the hope of democracy alive”, says Anders L. Petterson, Executive Director of Civil Rights Defenders.

Despite dismal developments in Russia, there is a strong conviction that the protest movement now emerging will grow so strong that the authoritarian regime is forced to give way to democracy and human rights.

“Being acknowledged with this award means recognition not only of our team efforts, but also of several thousands of volunteers and tens of thousands of supporters”, says Daniil Beilinson, co-founder of OVD-Info.

# FUNDRAISING AND ENGAGEMENT

During 2021, we continued to raise awareness of and drum up engagement and support for our human rights work. On our growing digital channels, we highlighted the struggles of many of the brave human rights defenders we cooperate with worldwide.

Our big campaign for the year focused on what democratic backsliding might look like in Sweden. As part of the campaign, we created Dictator of Sweden – a board game where players either preserve or destroy Swedish democracy. Earlier in the year, we also launched a spring campaign that

highlighted war crimes committed by the Syrian regime since 2011. We collected more than 13,000 signatures that were submitted to the Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde, demanding that Sweden take a leading role in holding all those who committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria to account.

During the year, we raised more than SEK 19,700,000 from companies and individuals. By the end of the year, we had approximately 12,000 active donors, 4,500 of whom signed up as new donors in 2021.

## DICTATOR OF SWEDEN

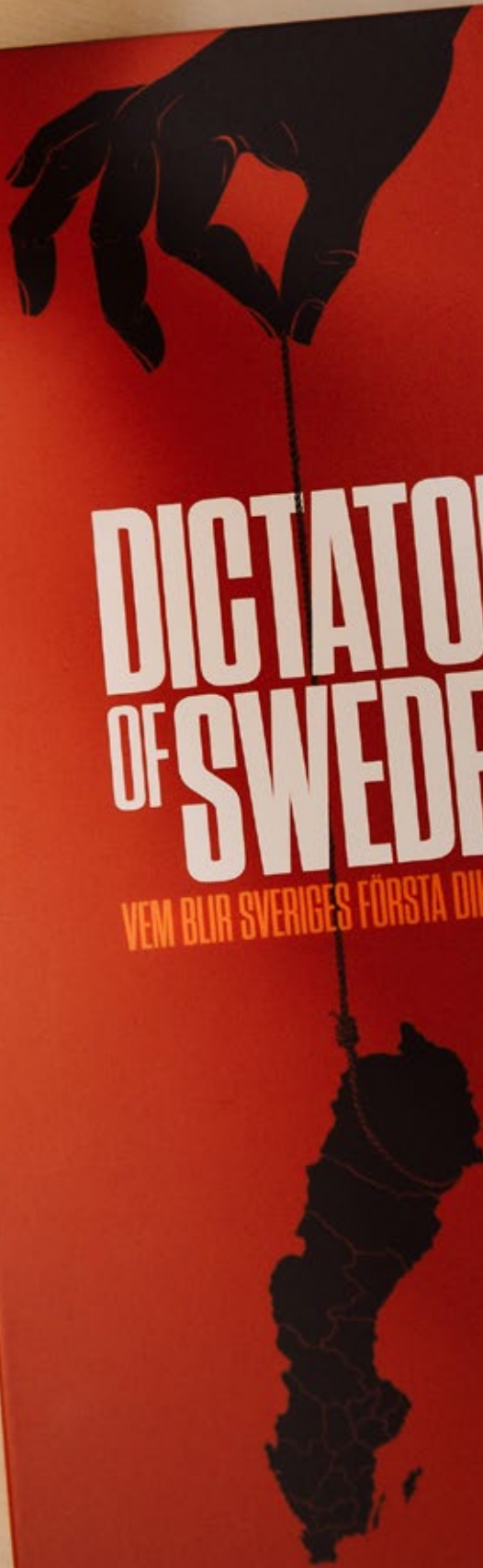


We live in a time of democratic backsliding. Even countries perceived as stable democracies are moving in an autocratic direction. In light of this, we developed a board game called Dictator of Sweden during the autumn. The game was launched before Christmas as a new way for people to support Swedish democracy – by abolishing it.

The project was an integrated fundraising campaign with the goal of recruiting new donors and building our brand.

Dictator of Sweden is about the struggle for democracy in Sweden, where every player has a hidden agenda. Through cunning, lies, and deductive reasoning, players must find out who is with or against them. Meanwhile, players must also navigate sneaky lobbyists, spying scouts, and viral scandals, where everything that happens in the game has been inspired by the reality from the countries we work in – illustrating what it might look like if it happened in Sweden.

The aim of the campaign in general, and the game in particular, is to remind the public not to take democracy of Sweden for granted. Our democracy could, by perfectly legal means, be abolished in just a couple of months. It only requires two majority decisions in parliament with an election in between. In this way, the campaign not only helped raise funds for Civil Rights Defenders' activities, but also sparked debate about what it means to live in a democratic country – both in the media and in homes around Sweden. The game received considerable media attention, with 3,241 copies sold during the year, at a total value of SEK 1,378,000.



# Dictator of Sweden

VEM BLIR SVERIGES FÖRSTA DIKTATOR?

CIVIL  
RIGHTS  
DEFENDERS





# ANNUAL REPORT

ORGANISATION ID NO. 802011-1442

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS  
HEREBY PRESENT THE ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE 2021 FINANCIAL YEAR.



# MANAGEMENT REPORT

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE ORGANISATION'S ACTIVITIES

Civil Rights Defenders is an international human rights organisation that is politically and religiously independent. The organisation defends people's civil and political rights and supports human rights defenders at risk in Sweden and in the countries around the world where respect for human rights is at its weakest. Civil Rights Defenders maintains a head office in Stockholm and engages in advocacy activities as well as legal processes, and provides information on the situation with regards to human rights globally.

Registered office: Stockholm, Sweden

## VISION AND MISSION

### Civil Rights Defenders' Vision

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

### Civil Rights Defenders' Mission

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

We are 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.

## WHY IS CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS' WORK IMPORTANT?

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 wants to drive politics, business, and civil society forward by working and developing together on the important issues of human rights. We believe that our commitment and knowledge within our areas of expertise can affect change and contribute to a better world for all.

## GOAL

Civil Rights Defenders' overall goal for the strategic planning period 2020–2022 is to expand 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.

1. Support human rights defenders at risk by:
  - providing emergency assistance and innovative security solutions.
  - organising trainings in digital, physical, and psychosocial security.
2. Strengthen the work of local human rights defenders and increase their capacity to affect and drive change by:
  - providing professional development and project support.
  - providing long-term support for organisational development.
3. Empower people to exercise their civil and political rights and induce states to take responsibility for the fulfilment of human rights by:
  - scrutinising and influencing legislation and the implementation of human rights.
  - improving access to legal aid and engaging in legal processes.
4. Improve the awareness of and engagement for civil and political rights by:
  - increasing access to information for human rights defenders.
  - informing, campaigning, and working with public advocacy to strengthen the engagement of the general public and to influence states and decision makers.

## WORKING METHODS

### Security and Innovation

Human rights defenders around the world are regularly subjected to threats, harassment, forced disappearances, and arbitrary arrests by authoritarian regimes. Through training, emergency support, and innovative security solutions, Civil Rights Defenders supports human rights defenders so that they can continue their important work. Together with our partner organisations, we offer training in digital, physical, and psychosocial security, among other areas.

### Strong Human Rights Actors

A strong civil society that can protect the rights of its citizens is Civil Rights Defenders' founding idea and key to sustainable democracy. We partner with local human rights organisations and provide professional development as well as long-term support to increase their capacity to drive change.

### Holding Those in Power to Account

Our fundamental rights and freedoms must be respected, and Civil Rights Defenders demands accountability when this is not the case. On our own, or together with human rights defenders, we scrutinise policy makers, engage in legal processes, and hold both states and other actors to account when human rights are violated.

### Awareness Leads to Change

Knowing one's rights is a precondition for being able to exercise them. Civil Rights Defenders works to increase the awareness of and engagement for civil and political rights among the public, and to influence states and decision makers at a national and international level. Through information activities, public campaigns, and advocacy, we strengthen the engagement for democracy and human rights in Sweden and globally.

## ORGANISATION

Civil Rights Defenders is a non-profit organisation working to promote human rights. Gerald Nagler is the organisation's founder and honorary chair. The annual general meeting (AGM) is the organisation's highest decision-making body. Membership is conditional on supporting the organisation's goals and core values (as expressed in international human rights treaties) as well as a willingness to work towards them. The organisation's activities are funded not primarily by membership dues but through fundraising and grants received. During 2021, the board discussed Civil Rights Defenders' organisational structure and decided that Civil Rights Defenders shall remain a membership organisation for individual members. The board also decided to increase the number of members.

Membership dues for 2021 were SEK 300. The AGM elects the board, which at the end of 2021 consisted of eight members – four women and four men. Six board meetings were held during the year, four of which took place after the AGM in May 2021. There is no remuneration for the work carried out by the organisation's honorary chair, the chairperson of the board, or the board members.

### BOARD OF CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS

- Benedicte Berner (Political Scientist) Chairperson of the Board (present at 6/6 board meetings)
- Carin Norberg (formerly Director, Nordic Africa Institute) Board Member (present at 6/6 board meetings)
- Christian Åhlund (Lawyer) Board Member (present at 6/6 board meetings)
- Christoffer Lindblad (Founder and Partner, Pelago AB) Board Member (present at 6/6 board meetings)
- Anne Ramberg (Lawyer) Board Member (present at 4/6 board meetings)
- Fredrik Andersson (Entrepreneur) Board Member (present at 5/6 board meetings)
- Lars Haggström (Senior Advisor, IMD Business School) Board Member (present at 5/6 board meetings)
- Lena Svensson (Economist) Board Member (present at 6/6 board meetings)

### BOARD OF CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS



Benedicte  
Berner



Carin  
Norberg



Christian  
Åhlund



Christoffer  
Lindblad



Anne  
Ramberg



Fredrik  
Andersson



Lars  
Haggström



Lena  
Svensson

## NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Therese Reinfeldt (Convenor), Viveka Risberg, and Kerstin Brunnberg make up the Nominations Committee.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Anders L. Pettersson

## MEMBERS

In 2021, Civil Rights Defenders had 20 members (2020: 18).

## CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS' PERSONNEL

Civil Rights Defenders' work is primarily carried out by employed staff at the organisation's head office in Stockholm, in regional offices, or through stationing in Asia, Africa, Belgrade, Bogotá, Brussels, Istanbul, Pristina, Sarajevo, and Tirana. The total number of employees at the end of 2021 was 97, compared with 75 at the end of 2020.

### Distribution by office

Stockholm, Sweden	67
Asia	1
Africa	1
Belgrade	10
Bogotá	7
Brussels	2
Istanbul	2
Juba	2
Pristina	1
Sarajevo	1
Tblisi	2
Tirana	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>

## SIGNIFICANT EVENTS DURING THE FINANCIAL YEAR

So far, Civil Rights Defenders' strategy for the period 2020–2022 has served the organisation well. The organisation has managed to build a broad and stable platform that has enabled rapid yet controlled growth and expansion.

In January 2021, Civil Rights Defenders' new organisational structure was launched, with a stronger cohesion among the regional units and a new global unit where methods, policy and planning, as well as follow-up and evaluation were given more prominent roles.

2021 was the first year that Civil Rights Defenders worked as a Strategic Partner Organisation to Sida, which involved new demands but also enables long-term, consistent funding from our biggest donor.

This year, too, was marked by the COVID-19 pandemic. Restrictions have meant that some activities had to be cancelled or carried out digitally and trips to visit partners have been postponed.

Despite the pandemic, Civil Rights Defenders has grown from 75 employees at the end of 2020 to close to 100 by the end of 2021. This expansion has taken place both in the regions where the organisation works and at our headquarters in Stockholm. It is worth noting that Civil Rights Defenders has established a presence with employees in Georgia, which in the long term will facilitate operations in a part of the world that has come to be marked by war and conflict. During the year, the organisation has also hired employees based in Juba, South Sudan.

The move from Sergels Torg and the transition to the new offices on Södermalm were broadly completed in early 2021. However, some adjustments were needed to adapt to the growing number of employees combined with a need to be able to conduct hybrid meetings. These adjustments will continue through 2022.

In the autumn of 2021, preparatory work was also started on Civil Rights Defenders' new strategy, which will last from 2023 through 2030 with annual revisions. This will enable us to maintain a long-term focus in our work while also ensuring that the strategy remains current and relevant.

During the autumn, an in-person ceremony for the Civil Rights Defender of the Year Award was held for the first time since 2019 at the Fotografiska Museum in Stockholm. This year's recipient was the Russian organisation OVD-Info.

Civil Rights Defenders' 2021 Christmas campaign – the board game Dictator of Sweden – has received five nominations to the Golden Egg Award 2022 and strengthened the organisation's brand among new audiences.

## USE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

All of Civil Rights Defenders' assets are deposited in bank accounts. No other financial instruments have been used.



## SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

### Work Environment

Throughout the year, Civil Rights Defenders' efforts in relation to the work environment have focused on the impacts of COVID-19 and subsequent adjustments to the psychosocial and physical work environment. Employees and management have received continued guidance in working remotely as well as individually designed support. Among other things, this has included technical and ergonomic equipment that, after an assessment by the HR and IT teams, has been delivered to the homes of employees.

In an effort to strengthen the organisation's management function, an evaluation of all managers was carried out and followed up with individual development plans.

The HR manager together with the Executive Director have been in regular communication with the safety representative as well as the local branch of Unionen to systematically follow up on efforts to improve the work environment. During the year, one safety round was also carried out at Östgötagatan 90.

### Staff Survey

In the autumn of 2021, Civil Rights Defenders carried out its annual staff survey with added questions about working remotely as part of preparations for a new policy on remote work. During the year, the organisation has recovered from the decline reflected in the survey in 2020 as a result of the pandemic.

The leadership index rose from 76 to 79 while the engagement index rose from 81 to 85 – the highest ever recorded within the organisation.

### Equality and Diversity

Civil Rights Defenders is an international organisation with employees from countries all over the world. More than 20 different languages are spoken within the organisation. Civil Rights Defenders uses competence-based recruitment as its standard, as part of its efforts to increase and ensure diversity within the organisation. In our Code of Conduct, which all employees and interns are required to sign, clear guidelines are provided on the equality of all and what to do if you discover or find yourself subjected to harassment or discrimination.

### Collective Labour Agreement and Professional Development

Civil Rights Defenders is party to a collective labour agreement for professional employees through FREMIA, Unionen, and Akademikerförbunden that apply to staff employed in Sweden. Local law and agreements apply for staff at local offices abroad. Skills development is discussed in connection with the annual performance review. Development plans and goals are written into individual documents for each year.

### Travel and Purchases

In accordance with the organisation's environmental policy, economic and social as well as environmental considerations shall be taken into account on the occasion of purchases of services, equipment, and materials for the organisation's offices, as well as in all other procurement. For travel and transport, the most environmentally friendly options must be chosen whenever possible. Civil Rights Defenders takes responsibility for its waste through waste separation and recycling of materials and uses electricity from renewable energy sources.

## RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Civil Rights Defenders performs systematic risk assessment and risk management by identifying, analysing, and working to ensure that unforeseen events or circumstances do not have a negative impact on activities and expected results. Through careful and systematic analysis, documentation, and monitoring of risks, their adverse effects can be avoided or mitigated. We differentiate between internal risks, such as the lack of adequate human resources, capacity or management functions, reporting of results, financial control, and corruption; and external risks, such as unexpected political, institutional, economic, environmental, social, or technical circumstances. Civil Rights Defenders uses an integrated risk management approach, which involves a continuous, proactive, and systematic process to understand, manage, and communicate risks from a broad perspective. It also means making strategic decisions that contribute to achieving the organisation's overall objectives.

The board of Civil Rights Defenders conducts an annual assessment of the risks reported by the executive management and how these have been

managed. Based on the analysis of risk assessment and risk management, the board decides on an annual risk management plan and assesses the extent to which it will influence strategic decisions and future operational directions. Civil Rights Defenders operates in countries with a high risk of corruption and where human rights work in many cases is prohibited. Taking preventive measures is therefore important. The organisation has a zero-tolerance policy and an anti-corruption working group consisting of representatives from the management and the board. The working group deals with reported suspicions of corruption and maintains and develops best practices for compliance with the policy. During the year, the policy has been updated and whistleblower reporting forms on the organisation's website have been clarified to make it easier to report suspicions of corruption.

## RESULT AND FINANCIAL POSITION

The organisation's results improved compared to the previous year. In 2021, the organisation had an operating profit of SEK 4,299 thousand. The work to redesign Civil Rights Defenders' financial model, where projects are to cover their own costs, which launched in February 2020 has shown results. Though the organisation is still using some of its funds raised to cover older agreements that partly lack full coverage. The organisation has also increased its funds raised during the year by 14 per cent compared to 2020, which has had a positive impact on the financial result.

The organisation's equity ratio, which improved during the year, will remain a focus moving forward in order to secure sustainable growth while maintaining, and preferably increasing, the equity ratio. Due to movements in exchange rates, the financial result for the year was impacted by a foreign exchange gain, yielding a result after financial items of SEK 5,626 thousand. The result of SEK 5,626 thousand is brought forward. Equity brought forward thus amounts to SEK 11,415 thousand.

## FUNDRAISING

Civil Rights Defenders' operating income during 2021 amounted to SEK 124,871 thousand, which represents an increase of SEK 23,100 thousand or 23 per cent compared to 2020. The income comes from both government and private funders and

includes both donations and grants. To ensure continued financial strength and long-term stability, the organisation will continue to prioritise increasing funds raised from government and private funders. The aim is also to continue developing both partnerships with businesses and philanthropists as well as individual donations.

Civil Rights Defenders is a member of Giva Sverige, which advocates for ethical and professional fundraising and strives for increased giving in Sweden and to improve conditions for collecting donations. Civil Rights Defenders has a seven-digit, so called 90 bank account, which functions as a seal of quality for non-profit organisations, foundations, and religious communities approved as 90-account holders by the charity-monitoring organisation the Swedish Fundraising Control.

## 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 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.

## 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.

### **EXPECTED FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AS WELL AS MATERIAL RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES**

The autocratisation of the past decade has continued and accelerated during the pandemic. The anti-democratic violence in the United States on 6 January 2021 is one of several global indications of democratic backsliding. This backsliding is by no means unique to the US, as freedoms have diminished and democracy deteriorated in more than 70 of the world's 195 sovereign states in the last year alone.

Civil Rights Defenders' continued work to strengthen formal and informal actors in civil societies in countries such as these contributes to maintaining the democratic qualities in societies,

in line with the organisation's vision and mission, and also contributes to SDG 16 to "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels".

While the number of democracies as well as people's freedoms and rights continue to shrink, protests are on the rise. In the words of our Russian 2021 award recipients, they don't dream of the future – they plan and work toward a better, more open and just society.

Civil Rights Defenders' ambitious strategy for 2020–2022 has formed the backbone of our efforts to strengthen the organisation so that we can do more for more partners, in more places, and in more countries. On the basis of the concept of critical mass, the organisation has strengthened and grown in resources and reach. At the end of 2021, the organisation had close to 100 dedicated colleagues and continues to see an increase in its turnover.

This growth is expected to continue in a controlled manner and lessons learned from the work over the past few years will be brought forward into the next strategy, beginning in 2023. The process of preparing a new strategy began at the end of the year and is expected to be completed by December 2022. It involves all staff, partners, and the board of directors, who are also the ones to decide on the new strategy.

One of the uncertainties that may affect the organisation going forward is the Swedish elections in the autumn of 2022 and their impact on the support provided by Sida. Sida remains Civil Rights Defenders' biggest donor and efforts to broaden the donor portfolio will intensify in 2022 in order to reduce the organisation's risk exposure.

### **CODE REPORT BASED ON GIVA SWEDEN'S GUIDELINES**

Civil Rights Defenders follows the Code of Quality issued by Giva Sverige.



## 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.



## SPECIAL PURPOSE EXPENSES

Special purpose expenses for 2021 were SEK 109,858 thousand compared to SEK 87,538 thousand in 2020, corresponding to an increase of 25%.

- Africa – 7% (7%)
- Asia – 7% (6%)
- Eurasia – 20% (18%)
- Europe – 32% (42%)
- Security and innovation – 13% (14%)
- Latin America – 10% (8%)
- Other – 10% (4%)

The outer circle shows the distribution of special purpose expenses for 2021 and the inner circle for 2020.



## 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%

## INCOME STATEMENT

Amounts in SEK

	Note	2021	2020
<b>Operating income</b>	3		
Membership dues		6,000	5,400
Donations		19,788,455	17,386,614
Grants		105,063,272	84,364,765
Other income		13,402	14,191
<b>Total operating income</b>		<b>124,871,129</b>	<b>101,770,970</b>
<b>Operating expenses</b>	4, 5		
Project expenses	6	-109,857,887	-87,538,378
Fundraising expenses		-7,372,644	-4,932,472
Administrative expenses	7	-3,341,279	-6,035,393
<b>Total operating expenses</b>		<b>-120,571,810</b>	<b>-98,506,243</b>
<b>Operating profit/loss</b>		<b>4,299,319</b>	<b>3,264,727</b>
Other interest income and similar profit items	8	1,327,139	5
Interest expenses and similar loss items	8	-356	-492,503
<b>Total profit from financial investments</b>		<b>1,326,783</b>	<b>-492,498</b>
<b>Profit/loss after financial items</b>		<b>5,626,102</b>	<b>2,772,229</b>
<b>Profit/loss for the year</b>		<b>5,626,102</b>	<b>2,770,898</b>

## BALANCE SHEET

Amounts in SEK

ASSETS	Note	2021-12-31	2020-12-31
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
<b>Tangible fixed assets</b>			
Movables, equipment, and installations	9	1,240,531	1,343,596
<b>Total tangible fixed assets</b>		<b>1,240,531</b>	<b>1,343,596</b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
<b>Current receivables</b>			
Accounts receivable		155,448	26,964
Current tax asset		37,789	10,000
Other receivables		1,472,249	1,603,757
Prepaid expenses and accrued income	10	2,937,697	2,454,705
<b>Total current receivables</b>		<b>4,603,183</b>	<b>4,095,426</b>
<b>Cash and bank balances</b>		<b>100,345,709</b>	<b>72,093,039</b>
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>104,948,893</b>	<b>76,188,465</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>106,189,424</b>	<b>77,532,061</b>
<b>EQUITY AND LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Equity</b>			
Special purpose funds		0	75,946
Profit brought forward		11,415,051	5,713,004
<b>Total equity</b>		<b>11,415,051</b>	<b>5,788,950</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Accounts payable		5,317,484	1,214,398
Income tax liabilities		277,376	132,266
Liabilities – received, unutilised grants	11	80,290,966	63,020,592
Other liabilities		1,622,505	1,347,356
Accrued expenses and deferred income	12	7,266,043	6,028,499
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>94,774,373</b>	<b>71,743,111</b>
<b>Total equity and liabilities</b>		<b>106,189,424</b>	<b>77,532,061</b>



## CHANGES IN EQUITY

Amounts in SEK

	Special purpose funds (Emergency Fund)	Profit/loss brought forward	Total equity
Opening balance 2021-01-01	75,946	5,713,003	5,788,949
Special purpose designated by donor	0	0	0
Utilisation of special purpose funds from previous year	-75,946	75,946	0
Profit/loss for the year	0	5,626,102	5,626,102
<b>Closing balance 2021-12-31</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11,415,050</b>	<b>11,415,050</b>

Around the world, brave people are standing up for the rights of others – without a thought to their own safety. The Emergency Fund is part of our special purpose funds and enables us to assist these people when at risk and in emergency situations.

## CASH FLOW ANALYSIS – INDIRECT METHOD

Amounts in SEK

	2021-01-01 –2021-12-31	2020-01-01 –2020-12-31
<b>Operating activities</b>		
Operating profit/loss	4,299,319	3,264,727
Adjustments for non-cash transactions		
Depreciation expenses	207,709	55,437
Interest received	809	5
Interest paid	-356	-5,994
Income tax paid	0	-1,331
<b>Cash flow from operating activities before changes in working capital</b>	<b>4,507,481</b>	<b>3,312,844</b>
Changes in working capital		
Change in accounts receivable	-128,484	95,286
Change in other current receivables	-379,274	-1,888,692
Change in accounts payable	4,103,086	-575,782
Change in other current liabilities	18,928,176	35,439,885
<b>Cash flow from operating activities</b>	<b>27,030,985</b>	<b>36,383,541</b>
Investment activities		
Acquisition of tangible fixed assets	-104,644	-1,399,033
<b>Cash flow from investment activities</b>	<b>-104,644</b>	<b>-1,399,033</b>
<b>Cash flow for the year</b>	<b>26,926,341</b>	<b>34,984,508</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year</b>	<b>72,093,039</b>	<b>37,595,041</b>
<b>Exchange rate differences related to cash and bank balances</b>	<b>1,326,330</b>	<b>-486,510</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at year end</b>	<b>100,345,709</b>	<b>72,093,039</b>

## NOTES

### NOTE 1 ACCOUNTING AND VALUATION PRINCIPLES

The accounting and valuation principles comply with the Swedish Annual Accounts Act, BFNAR 2012:1 (K3), Giva Sverige's governing guidelines for annual reports, and BFNAR 2020:1 (on certain accounting issues due to the corona virus).

The principles are unchanged from the previous financial year.

#### INCOME STATEMENT

##### Operating income

Only the inflow of economic benefits that Civil Rights Defenders has received, or will receive, for its own use is recognised as income. Income is recognised at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable unless otherwise stated. Membership dues comprise payments received for membership in Civil Rights Defenders. Membership dues are recognised as income when payments are received from the members. A transaction in which Civil Rights Defenders receives an asset or a service with a value attached, without providing anything of the same value in return, constitutes a donation or a grant. If the asset or service is received because Civil Rights Defenders has met or will meet certain conditions, and the organisation has an obligation to repay the counterparty if such conditions are not met, such an asset or service is classified as a grant. If it does not constitute a grant, it is a donation. Donations are mainly funds raised from private individuals, companies, and organisations. Donations are reported on a cash basis, but if a donation refers to a specific time period, it is allocated to that period through provisions for special purpose funds in equity. If there are donations from companies and organisations that have been agreed but not received at the reporting date, these are recognised as income following individual assessment.

Grants are recognised as income when the conditions attached to them have been met. Grants received are recognised as a liability until the conditions attached to them have been met. This means that income is only recognised when it is highly probable that the grant will not be reclaimed. Grants forwarded to partner organisations where Civil Rights Defenders is responsible to the awarding body are also recognised as income. Grants consist mainly of cash and cash equivalents from public bodies, including the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the Swedish Institute, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and the Swedish Postcode Lottery. Income not connected to Civil Rights Defenders' primary operations is reported under Other income for the respective period.

##### Operating Expenses

Operating expenses include project expenses, fundraising expenses, and administrative expenses. Joint expenses such as IT, accounting, operational management, and communication expenses are allocated to project expenses, fundraising expenses, and administrative expenses according to an allocation key. Project expenses are those that are directly associated with the fulfilment of Civil Rights Defenders' purpose according to its statutes. These include expenses for personnel engaged to carry out activities adopted by the board, in and outside of Sweden, and any administrative expenses directly arising from the obligations the organisation has assumed in order to fulfil its purpose. Project expenses also include 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. Project expenses also include activity-related support expenses, which are allocated to the relevant activity using allocation keys. 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. This includes existing donors and efforts to identify new donors through campaigns, mailings, and maintenance of donor registers. Fundraising expenses also include costs of printed materials, postage,

salaries, and allocated joint support expenses. Administrative expenses are those required to manage and run the organisation. The organisation's administration is a guarantee of quality for the project and the donor. Examples of such expenses relate to board meetings and annual general meetings, accounting and annual reports, the handling of payroll and social security contributions, VAT and tax declarations, audits of the organisation itself, and Giva Sverige's code of quality, as well as administrative systems such as accounting systems, the purchasing ledger, and asset register. Expenses not related to projects or fundraising are classified as administrative expenses. Administrative expenses may also include any joint support expenses that have not been allocated to project, fundraising, or membership expenses. All leases are recognised as operating leases, which means that lease payments are recognised on a straight line basis over the term of the lease. Remuneration of employees in the form of salaries, social security contributions, and other benefits are recognised as an expense as and when the employees perform the services. Pension obligations are classified as defined-contribution pensions and recognised as an expense in the year in which the pension is earned. Civil Rights Defenders is a non-profit association and as such is not liable to pay taxes.

#### BALANCE SHEET

Tangible fixed assets and intangible assets are measured at cost and reduced through depreciation according to plan and devaluation. Activation of a fixed asset takes place in case of acquisition at a value of more than SEK 20,000. Depreciation is calculated using a linear model over the estimated useful life of the asset. A depreciation period of seven years is applied to all movables. Movables refer to modifications to facilities in the Stockholm office and are written off during the validity period of the contract – a maximum of seven years, until 2027. Assets and liabilities are measured at cost unless otherwise stated below. Foreign currency receivables and liabilities are measured at the closing rate. Accounts receivable are measured individually at the amounts expected to be received. Equity comprises funds, such as donations, that have been provided to enable the organisation to fulfil its purposes and have not been paid out at the reporting date, and for which there is no legally binding obligation classified as a liability or provision. As there are restrictions on the use of various funds, the following division is made:

- **Special purpose funds:** This capital may be used, but only for the purpose or purposes specified by the donor or the Board of Directors. Such funds are generally used in the following financial year. The funds include fundraising donations where a specific project was specified, and which have not yet been utilised.
- **Equity brought forward:** This capital consists mainly of unused funds that have been provided to the organisation without restrictions, as well as the organisation's profit or loss. Unused funds that have been provided to the organisation without restrictions are at the disposal of the Board of Directors and may be used in accordance with the organisation's statutes and to fulfil the organisation's purposes. The profit or loss for the year (before allocation), as recognised in the income statement, represents the difference between operating income, operating expenses, and profit from financial activities.
- **Liabilities – received, unutilised grants:** When Civil Rights Defenders has received a grant but not yet met the attached conditions, it is recognised as a liability.
- **Contingent liabilities:** Civil Rights Defenders discloses a contingent liability where the organisation has a possible obligation that due to events occurred and the existence of which will only be confirmed by one or more uncertain events in the future, which are not entirely within Civil Rights Defenders' control, occurs or does not occur, or if Civil Rights Defenders has an existing obligation arising from events occurred that is not recognised as a liability or provision because an outflow of resources is unlikely to be required to settle the obligation or the scope of the obligation cannot be calculated with sufficient reliability.

The cash flow analysis has been prepared using the indirect method and is based on the operating profit/loss from the operating activities. The operating profit/loss is adjusted for non-cash items and changes in inventories, accounts receivable, accounts payable, and other operating receivables and operating payables during the time period. Cash flow effects from investing activities and financing activities are also adjusted for. Cash and cash equivalents include cash and bank balances.

## NOTE 2 ESTIMATES AND ASSESSMENTS

No material items in the organisation's income statement and balance sheet are based on estimates and assessments.

	<i>Amounts in SEK</i>	
<b>NOTE 3 FUNDS RAISED</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
<i>Donations recognised in the income statement</i>		
<b>Funds raised</b>		
The general public	6,924,596	5,419,074
Companies:		
Swedish Postcode Lottery	10,100,000	11,003,570
Other companies	1,118,973	403,970
Other organisations	616,496	555,000
External foundations	1,028,389	5,000
<b>Total funds raised (a)</b>	<b>19,788,455</b>	<b>17,386,614</b>

Pro-bono services received have not been recognised in the income statement and in 2021 mainly related to services within data communication, advertising, and law (b).

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
<i>Grants recognised as income</i>		
<b>Funds raised (grants according to private law)</b>		
Foundations and organisations:		
Open Society Foundations	13,484,340	15,592,062
National Endowment for Democracy	2,523,594	3,218,667
CIVICUS	1,714,877	2,872,164
Gerald & Monica Nagler Foundation	678,394	500,002
Fair Trial	367,357	565,721
Other	1,262,472	1,603,086
Companies:		
Swedish Postcode Lottery	3,141,048	2,741,113
Facebook META	408,969	–
<b>Total funds raised (c)</b>	<b>23,581,051</b>	<b>27,092,815</b>
<b>Public grants</b>		
EU	75,027	270,378
Sida	28,431,841	40,821,744
Sida – Strategic Partner Organisation	36,628,488	1,092,545
Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs	7,559,470	5,029,889
MUCF	3,447,419	1,893,235
Swedish Inheritance Fund	3,114,103	2,663,709
Swedish Institute	1,024,017	1,151,802
Vinnova	295,680	1,464,412
Minister of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands	10,971	826,033
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Germany	83,694	703,190
Other	811,512	1,355,012
<b>Total public grants (d)</b>	<b>81,482,220</b>	<b>57,271,950</b>



Amounts in SEK

**NOTE 3 FUNDS RAISED, CONTINUED**

	2021	2020
<b>Total funds raised comprise the following</b>		
Donations recognised in the income statement (a)	19,788,455	17,386,614
Donations not recognised in the income statement (b)	150,000	–
Grants in accordance with private law recognised as income (c)	23,581,051	27,092,815
<b>Total funds raised</b>	<b>43,519,507</b>	<b>44,479,429</b>

**NOTE 4 SALARIES, OTHER BENEFITS, AND SOCIAL SECURITY CONTRIBUTIONS**

	2021	2020
<b>Salaries</b>		
Board of Directors	–	–
Executive Director	1,026,935	1,016,424
Other employees	31,397,550	25,778,101
Social security contributions	10,439,341	7,411,691
Pension expenses	3,484,684	2,930,334
<b>Total salaries and benefits</b>	<b>46,348,410</b>	<b>37,136,550</b>

The Executive Director's pension expenses accounted for SEK 427,239 (SEK 384,237) of total pension expenses.

The period of notice between Civil Rights Defenders and the Executive Director is six months. There is no severance agreement.

Remuneration below one half of the base amount totalled SEK 23,687 (SEK 56,414) and relates to expert groups within projects.

	2021	2020
<b>Geographical distribution of salaries and other benefits:</b>		
Sweden	24,225,968	19,739,835
Other countries	4,652,545	3,872,313
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,878,513</b>	<b>23,612,148</b>
<b>Average number of employees, Sweden</b>		
Men	22	19
Women	45	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Average number of employees, other countries</b>		
Men	14	10
Women	16	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Members of the board</b>		
Men	4	4
Women	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Directors</b>		
Men	3	6
Women	3	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>

Amounts in SEK

**NOTE 5 LEASES**

Civil Rights Defenders mainly rents office premises in Sweden and in other parts of the world. Expenses for the year amounted to SEK 4,148,857. Future office expenses are due as follows:

	2021	2020
Within 1 year	4,599,787	3,880,144
2–5 years	13,262,167	12,565,430
After 5 years	2,323,755	5,422,095

As of 1 September 2020, Civil Rights Defenders has signed a seven-year lease with a new landlord for our offices in Stockholm. The notice period for the contract is 12 months and the extension period is three years. From December 2020, Civil Rights Defenders transitioned to leasing its computers. The expenses for the periods of '2–5 years' and 'After 5 years' are not index-adjusted.

**NOTE 6 PROJECT EXPENSES**

	2021	2020
Africa	7,987,106	5,993,165
Asia	7,899,224	5,560,793
Eurasia	22,250,498	16,006,349
Europe	24,216,672	27,963,735
Latin America	10,471,162	6,810,951
Security and innovation	14,658,833	12,071,980
Sweden	11,252,478	9,216,013
Other	11,121,913	3,915,392
<b>Total project expenses</b>	<b>109,857,887</b>	<b>87,538,378</b>

**NOTE 7 ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES**

	2021	2020
Accounting expenses and administration	389,478	224,527
Human resource expenses	1,891,210	4,537,744
Project management and financial management systems	70,126	182,656
Office expenses	963,409	1,062,448
Board and membership expenses	27,057	28,018
<b>Total administrative expenses</b>	<b>3,341,279</b>	<b>6,035,393</b>

**NOTE 8 OTHER INTEREST AND SIMILAR PROFIT/LOSS ITEMS**

	2021	2020
Interest income	809	5
Interest expenses	-356	-5,994
Exchange rate differences, cash and bank balances	1,326,330	-486,509
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,326,783</b>	<b>-492,498</b>

**NOTE 9 MOVABLES, EQUIPMENT, AND INSTALLATIONS**

	2021-12-31	2020-12-31
Opening acquisition cost	1,399,033	–
Purchase costs	104,644	1,399,033
Closing accumulated acquisition costs	1,503,677	1,399,033
Opening accumulated depreciation	-55,437	–
Depreciation for the year	-207,709	-55,437
Closing accumulated depreciation	-263,146	-55,437
Closing carrying value	1,240,531	1,343,596
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,240,531</b>	<b>1,343,596</b>

Depreciation as per schedule is calculated based on a useful life of seven years.

Amounts in SEK

**NOTE 10 PREPAID EXPENSES AND ACCRUED INCOME**

	2021-12-31	2020-12-31
Prepaid expenses:		
Rent	801,435	795,082
Rent deposit	1,273,745	1,273,745
Other items	862,517	385,878
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,937,697</b>	<b>2,454,705</b>

**NOTE 11 LIABILITIES – RECEIVED, UNUTILISED GRANTS**

	2021-12-31	2020-12-31
Liability, unutilised grant from Sida	19,728,185	11,927,319
Liability, Sida Strategic Partner Organisation	8,105,035	20,386,452
Liability, unutilised grant from the Swedish Postcode Lottery	12,026,204	15,166,628
Liability, unutilised grant from others	40,431,543	15,540,193
<b>Total</b>	<b>80,290,966</b>	<b>63,020,592</b>

**NOTE 12 ACCRUED EXPENSES AND DEFERRED INCOME**

	2021-12-31	2020-12-31
Accrued social security contributions	1,388,155	1,016,530
Holiday pay liability	4,388,809	3,372,610
Other items	1,489,078	1,639,359
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,266,043</b>	<b>6,028,499</b>

**NOTE 13 PLEDGED ASSETS AND CONTINGENT LIABILITIES**

There are no pledged assets and contingent liabilities.

**NOTE 14 SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AFTER THE END OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR**

The war in Ukraine that broke out in late February 2022 has led Civil Rights Defenders to raise more funds, from businesses, individuals, as well as organisations, to increase the work in the region.

The government's decision in April that funds for the reception of Ukrainian refugees in Sweden will be drawn from the aid budget will have an impact on Swedish civil society organisations, as Sida has announced that they will need to cut down on funding in 2022. Civil Rights Defenders maintains a dialogue with Sida regarding all the agreements that may be affected, in order to quickly be able to take any action necessary.

*This annual report has been signed digitally.*  
Stockholm, on the day shown in our electronic signature.

**Benedicte Berner**  
Chairperson

**Anne Ramberg**  
Board Member

**Carin Norberg**  
Board Member

**Christoffer Lindblad**  
Board Member

**Fredrik Andersson**  
Board Member

**Lars Häggström**  
Board Member

**Lena Svensson**  
Board Member

**Christian Åhlund**  
Board Member

**Anders Pettersson**  
Executive Director

Our audit report has been issued on the date shown in our electronic signature.

**Grant Thornton Sweden AB**

**Lena Johnson**  
Authorised Public Accountant



# AUDIT REPORT

## TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS, ORGANISATION ID NO. 802011-1442

### REPORT ON THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

#### Opinion

We have audited the annual accounts for Civil Rights Defenders for the year 2021. The association's annual accounts are included on pages 28–43 of this document.

In our opinion, the annual accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Swedish Annual Accounts Act and present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the association on 31 December 2021 and its financial performance and cash flow for the year then ended. The statutory administration report is consistent with the other parts of the annual accounts.

We therefore recommend that the annual general meeting adopt the income statement and the balance sheet.

#### Basis for opinion

We conducted the audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISA) and generally accepted auditing standards in Sweden. Our responsibilities under these standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities section. We are independent of the association in accordance with ethical requirements for professional accountants in Sweden and have otherwise fulfilled our ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

#### Information other than the annual accounts

This document also contains information other than the annual accounts and can be found on pages 28–43. The Board of Directors and the Executive Director are responsible for this other information.

Our opinion on the annual accounts does not extend to this information and we do not express any form of confirmation regarding this other information.

In connection with our audit of the annual accounts, it is our responsibility to read the information identified above and consider whether the information is materially inconsistent with the annual accounts. During this procedure, we also take into account our knowledge otherwise obtained during the audit and assess whether the information appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work performed concerning this information, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

### Responsibilities of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director

The Board of Directors and the Executive Director are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the annual accounts in accordance with the Annual Accounts Act. The Board of Directors and the Executive Director are also responsible for such internal control as they determine necessary to enable the preparation of annual accounts that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or mistake.

In preparing the annual accounts, the Board of Directors and the Executive Director are responsible for the assessment of the association's ability to continue as a going concern. They disclose, as applicable, matters related to the going concern and use of the going concern basis of accounting. The going concern basis of accounting is, however, not applied if the Board of Directors and the Executive Director intend to liquidate the association, cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

### Auditor's responsibility

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the annual accounts as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or mistake, and to issue an audit report that includes our opinions. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISA and generally accepted auditing standards in Sweden will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or mistake and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users made on the basis of these annual accounts.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISA, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the annual accounts, whether due to fraud or mistake, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinions. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from mistake, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- obtain an understanding of the association's internal control relevant to our audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate to the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the internal control.

- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Board of Directors and the Executive Director.
- draw a conclusion on the appropriateness of the Board of Directors' and the Executive Director's use of the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the annual accounts. We also draw a conclusion, based on the audit evidence obtained, as to whether any material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the association's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our audit report to the related disclosures in the annual accounts or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion about the annual accounts. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our audit report. However, future events or conditions may cause an association to cease to continue as a going concern.
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the annual accounts, including the disclosures, and whether the annual accounts represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We must inform the Board of Directors of, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit. We must also inform them of significant findings during our audit, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we have identified.

## REPORT ON OTHER LEGAL AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

### Opinion

In addition to our audit of the annual accounts, we have also examined the Board of Directors' and the Executive Director's administration of Civil Rights Defenders for the year 2021.

We recommend that the annual general meeting discharge the members of the board and the Executive Director from liability for the financial year.

### Basis for opinion

We conducted the audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards in Sweden. Our responsibilities in this regard are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities section. We are

independent of the association in accordance with ethical requirements for professional accountants in Sweden and have otherwise fulfilled our ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

### Responsibilities of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director

The Board of Directors and the Executive Director are responsible for administration in accordance with the statutes.

### Auditor's responsibility

Our objective for the audit of the administration, and therefore our opinion regarding discharge from liability, is to obtain audit evidence to assess with a reasonable degree of assurance whether any member of the Board of Directors or the Executive Director in any material respect has undertaken any action or been guilty of any omission which could give rise to liability to the association.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards in Sweden will always detect an action or omission which could give rise to liability to the association.

As part of an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards in Sweden, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. The examination of the administration is based primarily on the audit of the accounts. Additional audit procedures performed are based on our professional judgement, with a starting point in risk and materiality. This means that we focus the examination on such actions, areas and relationships that are material for operations and where deviations and violations would be of particular importance for the association's situation. We examine and test decisions made, support for decisions, actions taken, and other circumstances that are relevant to our opinion concerning discharge from liability.

Stockholm, 2022

Grant Thornton Sweden AB

**Lena Johnson**

*Authorised Public Accountant*

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



## **Benedicte Berner**

*Political Scientist (Chairperson of the Board)*

Benedicte Berner is a lecturer in Media and Democracy at Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris. She has lectured on freedom of expression at Harvard University and is an associate at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard. Benedicte

has previously worked at the International Red Cross and IOM (International Organization for Migration) in Moscow, and as Director of International Issues at the European Institute for the Media. She is also a member of the Swedish Society for International Affairs.



## **Lars Häggström**

*Senior Advisor, IMD Business School (Board Member)*

Lars Häggström works at IMD Business School in Lausanne, Switzerland, taking clients and as a lecturer and researcher in leadership and change. He is also the founder and CEO of the corporate and personal development company Enable

Performance AB. Lars previously worked as HR Director of Stora Enso and before that as HR Director of Nordea. He has also worked in the pharmaceutical industry in the UK and the US. Lars has a degree in Behavioural Science and Economics from Uppsala University.



## **Anne Ramberg**

*Lawyer (Board Member)*

Anne Ramberg is an honorary doctor at the Faculty of Law and chair of the University Board at Uppsala University. For twenty years, she served as Secretary General of the Swedish Bar Association. She is one of Sweden's ad hoc judges on the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), a member of

the board of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), and co-chair of the International Bar Association (IBA) Human Rights Institute. Anne also holds a range of board assignments in Sweden, including as chair of the board of the Stockholm Prize in Criminology and a member of the board of the Raoul Wallenberg Institute.



## **Lena Svensson**

*Economist and Advisor within the Non-Profit Sector (Board Member)*

Lena Svensson previously worked as an authorised accountant and partner at PwC. She has many years of experience as an accountant and advisor within the non-profit sector and has worked with fundraising and international development

organisations, among others. Within PwC, Lena has held a number of leading roles, such as business area manager and responsible for PwC's development of a unit for the non-profit sector. Today, she serves on a number of boards while also offering advisory services to associations and foundations.



## **Carin Norberg**

*Former Director, Nordic Africa Institute (Board Member)*

Carin Norberg holds a master's degree in Political Science from Uppsala University. She worked for Sida in 1971–2002, as an advisor to the United Nations Commissioner for Namibia in New York in 1984–1987, and as the director of the Nordic Africa Institute

in Uppsala in 2006–2012. Carin has also served on several boards, including the Swedish Institute in Alexandria, TI Sweden, the Africa-Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies, and the Center for Economic and Social Rights in New York.



## **Christoffer Lindblad**

*Founder and Partner, Pelago AB (Board Member)*

Christoffer Lindblad is founder of and a partner in Pelago, a prominent Nordic leadership services company. Christoffer was previously the country manager for Sweden and a partner in Alumni, a leading company in executive recruitment and

leadership development. He has a broad network within the Nordic business community and extensive experience in board and executive recruitment for large international corporations and organisations. Christoffer holds a law degree from the University of Lund and has previously worked for the law firm Mannheimer Swartling.



## **Fredrik Andersson**

*Entrepreneur (Board Member)*

Fredrik Andersson has extensive experience in strategic communications consultancy and entrepreneurship, both in Sweden and internationally. He also has a long track record working with social, political, and rights issues. Fredrik is a partner in and a member of the board of the Militon Group,

a leading communications company in the Nordic countries with 250 employees in Helsinki, Tallinn, Stockholm, Brussels, and Washington D.C. He is also a partner in Fotografiska and a member of the board of the MEDEA Award for Dramatic Arts in Sweden. In 1998, he founded the Public Affairs Section at the PR agency Prime, where he worked for 14 years.



## **Christian Åhlund**

*Lawyer (Board Member)*

Christian Åhlund has been a member of the Swedish Bar Association since 1983 with a focus on international humanitarian law, labour law, and criminal proceedings. Christian served as the executive director of the International Legal Assistance Consortium (ILAC) until 2015. Christian has

previously chaired the Swedish Bar Association's Committee on Human Rights and the European joint Human Rights Committee within the CCBE (Conseil Consultatif des Barreaux Européens). In 2005–2020 he also served as Sweden's representative on the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe, acting as its chairman in 2014–2018.



# DEPARTMENTS AND REGIONAL OFFICES AT THE END OF 2021

## HEAD OFFICE STOCKHOLM (SWEDEN)

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## DEPARTMENTS, HEAD OFFICE

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### Global Programme

Gabrielle Gunneberg, *Global Programme Director*

### Africa Department

Mesfin Negash, *Director Africa Department*

### Asia Department

Gabrielle Gunneberg, *Global Programme Director*

### Eurasia Department

Anna Furtuna, *Director Eurasia Department*

### Europe and MENA Department

Goran Miletic, *Director Europe and MENA Department and Deputy Global Programme Director*

### Latin America Department

Erik Jennische, *Director Latin America Department*

### Legal Department (incl. activities in Sweden)

John Stauffer, *Legal Director and Deputy Executive Director*

### Security and Innovation Department

Marcin de Kaminski, *Security and Innovation Director*

### Communications Department

Maria Granefelt, *Communications Director*

### Finance Department

Karin Ancker, *Chief Financial Officer*

### Fundraising and Partnerships Department

Anna Magnard, *Development Director*

## REGIONAL OFFICES/STATIONINGS

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# SUPPORT THE WORLD'S BRAVEST PEOPLE

Civil Rights Defenders is an international human rights organisation founded in Sweden in 1982. We work for and together with thousands of human rights defenders who fight for democracy and respect for people's civil and political rights across the world. Our task is to make sure that they can be safer, smarter, and faster in their work. We engage in advocacy activities and legal processes, and provide information on the situation with regards to human rights globally. With your support, we can accomplish more.



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