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CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS is a politically and religiously independent human rights organisation. For more than 40 years, we have supported and worked with human rights defenders in some of the world's most repressive countries. We operate on four continents, with our headquarters in Stockholm. Through advocacy, litigation, and campaigns, we defend people's civil and political rights.

50

Civil Rights Defenders supports human rights defenders in more than 50 countries and has a local presence in 11 countries.

200

Since its launch in 2013, more than 200 human rights defenders have participated in the Natalia Project – the world's first GPS-based alarm system for human rights defenders at risk.

1,459

In 2024, we provided emergency support to 1,459 human rights defenders, including members of their families, across 34 countries.

91%

In 2024, 91 per cent of Civil Rights Defenders' total income went to programme expenses.

300

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

18%

Our income from private individuals supporting our work for democracy and human rights increased by 18 percent.



EUROPE

Even though many countries in Europe protect human rights on paper, they often fall short in practice. In many places, populism and discrimination against minority groups are on the rise while the respect for human rights is in decline, bringing widespread challenges to the region's democratisation. In collaboration with human rights defenders, we focus on advancing Roma rights and LGBTI+ rights, freedom of expression, accountability, and advocacy. We have regional offices in several countries and work to ensure that human rights are high on the EU's agenda.

LATIN AMERICA

In Latin America, more human rights defenders are killed than anywhere else in the world. Severe human rights violations and declining democracy are forcing many human rights defenders into exile, or they face daily risks to them and their families. We work long-term with horizontal capacity building, holistic security and digital solutions to support defenders to achieve greater impact while exercising their right to defend rights. We also support human rights organisations through international advocacy. Civil Rights Defenders regional office is located in Bogotá, Colombia.

AFRICA

Conflict and entrenched authoritarian governance continue to define the state of human rights in Africa. Civil Rights Defenders supports human rights defenders who strive to promote and defend universal human rights values at both grassroots and national levels. Women and young human rights defenders and their networks are at the forefront of our collaboration with local stakeholders. Our work on the continent focuses on enhancing organisational resilience and ensuring the individual safety of human rights defenders.

SWEDEN

While Sweden has come a long way in regard to human rights, there are still serious shortcomings. The country has gained a reputation for being a vocal defender of human rights internationally, yet fails to address human rights violations at home. Among other things, Civil Rights Defenders works to combat discrimination and hate crimes and to strengthen the rights of migrants and the rights of the indigenous Sámi people. Through legal action, advocacy efforts, and raising issues at a political level, we hold those in power accountable.

EURASIA

A lack of respect for human rights is pervasive throughout Eurasia. Regime critics and dissidents are imprisoned on political grounds, and freedom of expression is severely restricted. New repressive laws are regularly adopted, making it increasingly difficult for human rights defenders to carry out their work. The situation in Ukraine is particularly difficult due to the war. Since the organisation was founded, more than 40 years ago, we have worked to empower human rights defenders and monitor developments in the region.

ASIA

The state of democracy and human rights is deteriorating in many parts of Asia. In countries across the region, repressive legislation is used to silence critical voices and prevent the work of civil society organisations. People are increasingly prevented from organising and advocating for their civil and political rights. Ongoing conflicts across Burma since the 2021 military coup attempt have made it even more challenging for civil society to operate. We ensure that human rights defenders who defy the risks and fight back receive support, including increasing their capacity to sustainably continue their work and emergency support when danger arises.

MENA

Throughout the middle east region, civil and political rights are severely repressed. Human rights defenders are subjected to arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, discrimination, and other human rights violations. In the Middle East and North Africa, we collaborate with human rights defenders to monitor and report on the human rights situation in several countries. We support regional networks, initiatives, and projects working with three major themes: justice and the rule of law, discrimination, and freedom of expression.

DEFENDING RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY IN TIMES OF PROFOUND CHANGE

2024 was the year of the ballot, with national elections taking place in 64 countries, including many of the world's most populous nations. The year was thus a potentially pivotal moment for democracy and human rights in the world. But rather than reversing the trend, the now decades-long decline of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law continued unabated.

Democracy in the world is now at its lowest level since 1985, according to V-Dem who describe the developments during 2024 as a “global wave of autocratisation”. Driving factors we see include autocratic governments entrenching their hold on power, flawed elections, disinformation, a rise in populist sentiment, and discontent with the functioning of democratic government. These are happening against the backdrop of multiple crises such as conflicts, climate change, and migration flows, leading to an increasing emphasis by countries on their own national interests. Declines in freedom of expression continued at a frightening rate, and civic space for human rights defenders continued to shrink.

But there were some moments of hope during the year as well. Youth protest movements in Kenya, Serbia, and Bangladesh have demonstrated the power of civic activism and human rights defenders pushing for democracy, and the fall of the Assad regime in Syria has brought new opportunities for holding perpetrators of serious interna-

tional crimes accountable. In 2024, we awarded the Civil Rights Defender of the Year Award to Mariia Sulialina of the Ukrainian human rights organisation Almenda, who gives voice to the Ukrainian children in the territories occupied by Russia. The award highlighted the need for accountability and the importance of human rights defenders like Mariia who document war crimes to bring those responsible to justice.

We are now entering a period of deep uncertainty, with a fundamental shift in the norms upheld by traditional champions of democracy and human rights taking place. The most notable example is the rapidly altered global stance of the United States during the first months of 2025. This shift weakens the foundational and aspirational norms of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. The idea of a rules-based world order and the multilateral institutions built on these norms are under threat, which undermines international accountability mechanisms for human rights like the International Criminal Court. This directly harms human

rights work globally, impacting human rights defenders who rely on these institutions for accountability and on human rights norms to provide a core purpose for their work. A return to the “old normal” now appears impossible, meaning that the only way forward is to provide an alternative vision.

Our vision is a world of democratic societies in which we all enjoy our civil and political rights, and human rights defenders play a crucial role in advocating for and protecting the rights and freedoms of individuals and communities. Like the faint glimmers of light in the dark described by Andrei Sakharov in his 1975 Nobel Lecture, their joint efforts are essential for advancing democracy and human rights globally.

2025 marks 50 years since the Helsinki Final Act, a landmark international agreement for civil and political rights that in many ways exemplified the now-threatened aspiration toward an international order in which human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected. The Helsinki Final Act also directly led to the founding of Civil Rights Defenders

with the purpose of monitoring compliance with its human rights provisions and strengthening human rights defenders working behind the Iron Curtain, answering Andrei Sakharov's call. Now a global mission, that work is once again more important than ever.



John Stauffer, Legal Director and Acting Executive Director

Hanna Gerdes, Chair of the Board

Karin Ancker, Chief Financial Officer and Deputy Executive Director

THE KITCHEN TABLE WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

The story of the Helsinki Committees is a story of kitchens and kitchen tables – simple, unassuming spaces where history quietly takes shape. At one such table, oval in form and now standing in an apartment in central Stockholm, the Swedish Helsinki Committee was founded in 1982.

Democracy in the world is now at its lowest. This table belonged to Gerald and Monica Nagler, and on 11 October 1982, it became the gathering place for 13 co-founders who laid the foundation for what is now Civil Rights Defenders. Their initiative drew inspiration from the Helsinki Final Act, a diplomatic agreement signed in 1975, which for the first time linked human rights with international security. But even before this, Gerald and Monica had begun their work, offering support to Jewish scientists in the Soviet Union who faced persecution and antisemitism.

The couple navigated the dimly lit streets of Moscow to meet dissidents in small, cramped kitchens within the grey concrete high-rises of Soviet suburbs. These kitchens became hubs for knowledge and hope, hosting gatherings that defied the state's oppressive regime. Scientists and dissidents met to share ideas and courage, despite the police often being stationed just outside.

After Nobel laureate and human rights advocate Andrei Sakharov founded the first Helsinki Committee in Moscow, the movement spread worldwide. Sweden joined this effort

through the initiative of Gerald and Monica Nagler, backed by prominent figures such as Astrid Lindgren and Tage Danielsson.

As the Cold War drew to a close, the Helsinki Committees played a pivotal role in exposing human rights violations in Eastern Europe. By the time the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, Gerald Nagler had already spearheaded international efforts to support dissidents and amplify their voices.

Today, Civil Rights Defenders continues the legacy of the Helsinki Committees, supporting human rights defenders in over 50 countries. The organisation focuses on enhancing safety, building capacity, and holding perpetrators accountable. Projects like the Natalia Initiative – a GPS-based alarm system protecting activists – highlight Civil Rights Defenders' innovative approach to safeguarding human rights.

The kitchen table, as a symbol of alliances and collaboration, reminds us that meaningful change does not happen behind closed doors but through the collective efforts of people united by a vision for a better, more just world.



In August 1989, Monica Nagler interviews regime critic Václav Havel at his country house. Just four months later, he becomes the president of a free Czechoslovakia.

THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT – 50 YEARS LATER

The Helsinki Final Act (1975) was a landmark agreement signed by 35 nations, linking human rights to global security. It affirmed national sovereignty, human rights, and economic cooperation. The agreement laid the foundation for the Swedish Helsinki Committee, which later evolved into Civil Rights Defenders, shaping its mission to protect and promote human rights worldwide.

OUR VISION

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



BIGGEST PRIDE CELEBRATION YET

We supported Belgrade Pride in hosting its biggest celebration to date, with thousands marching proudly behind the rainbow banner. The banner even hung from the parliament window.

OUR STRATEGY 2023–2030



Democracy and human rights are in decline, and human rights defenders in all parts of the world face an abundance of challenges.

Based on our future trends analysis, our strategy factors in that the current decline of democracy and human rights will continue and will likely accelerate. Civil society and human rights defenders around the world will be under increasing pressure: increasing regulatory and legal pressure; increasing

discrimination based on the intersection of gender and other identities; increasing violence, imprisonment, and public ostracism; and increasingly innovative methods for repression. Human rights defenders will also contend with changing funding opportunities and a rapidly evolving digital environment.

Stopping and reversing the decline of human rights and democracy globally is possible. But doing so requires that Civil Rights Defenders and our partners around the world become stronger and even more innovative in the years to come. Authoritarianism is contagious, and authoritarian regimes listen and learn from each other, sharing information

and tactics. Human rights defenders and democratic forces must do the same by working together to build a global human rights movement that is powerful and resilient.

Our strategy for 2023–2030 aims to meet these challenges. It is based on input from our global network of partners and builds on our vision, mission, core values, and theory of change. It describes our contribution to strengthening the global movement for democracy and human rights through delivering on our four strategic goals: security, capacity, accountability, and engagement.

CORE VALUES



STRATEGIC GOALS



SECURITY

Human rights defenders are secure.



CAPACITY

Human rights defenders have the capacity to defend human rights and democracy.



ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholders in society take action for human rights and democracy.



ACCOUNTABILITY

Duty bearers are held accountable.

NEW RISKS – INNOVATIVE SECURITY SOLUTIONS

Being a human rights defender has always been a dangerous job, and it has only gotten more dangerous in recent years. From persecution and harassment to arbitrary arrests and disappearances, defenders on the frontlines face daily threats to their lives and safety. Civil Rights Defenders is dedicated to ensuring that human rights defenders can manage their security effectively and that they always know that we have their back.

We have built up a range of tools to help improve the security of human rights defenders no matter what they face. We provide protection, physical equipment, digital security tools, emergency support, and a comprehensive programme of preventive security training opportunities to ensure our partners have the knowledge and tools they need to improve their physical and digital security.

“Rapid support after a threat can mean the difference between a human rights defender continuing their work or being forced to stop. By responding quickly, we help ensure they have the security and resources needed to keep protecting human rights and advancing democracy.”

Zinaida Muradova, Head of Rapid Response

EMERGENCY FUND: RAPID SUPPORT WHEN IT IS NEEDED

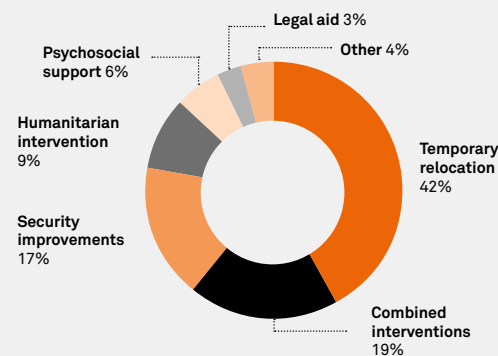
Defending human rights in many parts of the world means constantly facing risks and threats. When a human rights defender is confronted with a threatening situation, Civil Rights Defenders’ Emergency Fund provides rapid support to strengthen defenders’ security as quickly as possible. For instance, we provide legal aid, temporary relocation of people affected by persecution, and preventive measures such as security trainings and digital security solutions. The aim is to improve human rights defenders’ security, so they feel safe enough to continue their work.

In 2024, we provided support to 1,459 human rights defenders, including members of their

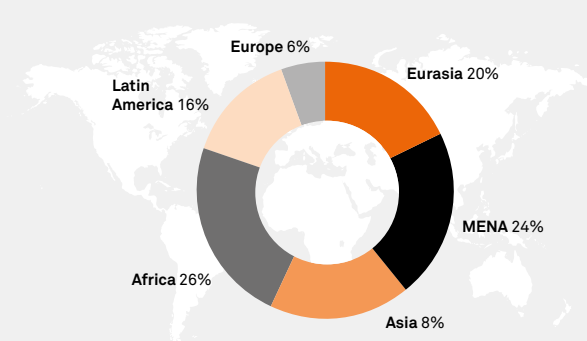
families, across 34 countries. This marked an 8% increase in total beneficiaries compared to 2023, despite funding cuts. This was possible thanks to our flexibility and adaptability, and our agile approach to change. Yet, despite shrinking funding, the demand for help has not decreased – on the contrary, it has grown.

While some regions saw a decline in beneficiaries compared to 2023, others, such as Eurasia and the Middle East & North Africa, saw a 143.5% increase, driven by emerging crises and growing needs.

BREAKDOWN BY TYPE OF SUPPORT



BREAKDOWN BY REGION



A photograph showing a group of Black women in an indoor setting. In the foreground, a woman with glasses and a black top is hugging another woman with a large afro hairstyle. They are both smiling and appear to be crying with joy. In the background, another woman is hugging a child. On a wooden shelf in the background, there are several traditional African clay pots. The overall atmosphere is one of emotional support and community.

CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE

Civil Rights Defenders conducts a range of security trainings for human rights defenders in various formats every year. The Champions of Change programme was a one-year programme organised by Civil Rights Defenders and the East African organisation Zengwe Hub. It aimed at strengthening the security capacity of human rights defenders in the East African region via regional networking, peer learning and tailored workshops and was funded by the Swedish Institute. The programme included elements of psychosocial, digital and physical security. In 2024, 23 human rights defenders completed the Champions of Change programme.

STRONG CIVIL SOCIETIES – THE KEY TO SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Civil Rights Defenders believes that it is only through a powerful and resilient global human rights movement based on strong civil societies that we can build a democratic world. We are committed to helping human rights defenders manage their work effectively and increase their organisational capacity so that they can make long-term positive change in their countries.

We provide human rights defenders in more than 50 countries with innovative, flexible, and defender-centric partner support. Support can take many forms: expert advice, security training, skill and organisational development, as well as long-term financial support.



“

Those of us working for democracy and human rights need to come together, to learn and inspire one another; we are all part of a vital global movement.”

John Stauffer, Legal Director and Acting Executive Director

BUILDING NETWORKS AND RESILIENCE IN THE FIGHT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



Being a human rights defender is often isolating and dangerous. But, for a few days in Stockholm, 120 human rights defenders from around the world were able to pause, refill their energy, network, and gain new knowledge.

Defenders' Days is one of the foremost conferences worldwide for human rights defenders. It offers a secure environment where these advocates can meet, share, and learn from each other. It's a chance to recharge and take a break from the threats and dangers many of them face in their home countries.

"We're seeing alarming numbers of people being threatened, imprisoned, and killed for fighting for a better world, which highlights the dangers of standing up for democracy and human rights. For a few days in Stockholm, they have the chance to set aside these threats, enhance their skills, and return home with renewed strength," says John Stauffer, acting Executive Director of Civil Rights Defenders.

STRENGTHENING EACH OTHER

During the week, journalists, lawyers, environmentalists, Indigenous rights advocates, and LGBTI+ activists from all over the world came together. They participated in trainings on topics ranging from digital security to mental health, joined workshops and discussions, and met with policymakers and civil society representatives in Sweden. Many were also interviewed and featured in Swedish media. And most importantly, they connected, shared experiences, and built their networks.

Defenders' Days Conference, which began in 2013, takes place biannually in Stockholm. In 2024, the event welcomed around 120 participants from 40 different countries.

“ *It was on the one hand heartwarming to know that we are not alone in our problems, and heartbreaking on the other thinking about how many people face the same problems.*

A participant at Defenders' Days 2024

WE HOLD THOSE IN POWER ACCOUNTABLE

Governments and those in power must be held accountable when human rights are violated. Civil Rights Defenders works – both independently and with human rights defenders in our networks – to influence laws, policies, and legal decisions in Sweden and globally, ensuring they uphold and expand civil and political rights. We also make sure that individuals have access to justice and redress by initiating legal proceedings against those in power when human rights are violated.



REACTIONS AFTER BASHAR AL-ASSAD BEING OVERTHROWN

Mariana Karkoutly is a Syrian human rights defender based in Germany. She is the co-founder of the organisation Huquqyat who has received support from Civil Rights Defenders. Huquqyat consists of women lawyers and legal practitioners working with legal accountability processes in Syria. We asked her about her thoughts when Bashar al-Assad was overthrown.

What are your feelings right now?

– I am very, very, very happy that the Assad regime is gone. I am worried as well. I just want to go there. Because, now we can actually help. We can do something.

What is next for you and your organisation?

– It is a lot. What happened is the beginning. It is a beautiful beginning, but it is only the beginning. We are needed now. We just need a couple of days to calm down and understand what occurred.

What are your hopes for the future?

– I hope to see perpetrators held accountable for their crimes. I hope to see the space, the energy and the time for Syrians to be able to deal with what has just happened for all of us. To deal with what happened for ten years. And we have to rebuild. That is my hope for Syria. To have the space and the time to start healing.

A NEW GLOBAL INITIATIVE TO END IMPUNITY

The persistence of impunity – the failure to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions – remains one of the biggest barriers to achieving justice for victims of international crimes and serious human rights violations.

When perpetrators avoid accountability for their actions, it erodes trust in institutions and fuels cycles of violence and inequality.

To tackle this, Civil Rights Defenders, along with eight other civil society organisations and two associate partners, has launched a four-year project: The Global Initiative Against Impunity for International Crimes and Serious Human Rights Violations: Making Justice Work. Co-funded by the European Union, this initiative spans 27 countries across Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, while also focusing on strengthening global accountability frameworks.

The project, formally launched during an event in June 2024, addresses serious human rights violations and international crimes such as genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and torture. It aims to support survivors by making sure their voices are heard in justice processes and to improve accountability by fostering better cooperation between survivors, justice providers, and policymakers. It also advocates for justice systems that are sensitive to trauma and gender issues.

In the summer, we invited civil society organisations across the world to apply for grants to support efforts to

combat impunity. By the end of fall, 16 out of more than 700 applications had been selected for funding.

The project also includes an Emergency Fund component that provides security support and small grants to those facing threats for seeking justice for serious human rights abuses. In 2024, we supported 252 individuals via this mechanism across six countries.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Ending impunity is no easy task. It requires overcoming resistance from perpetrators and from actors that oppose international justice, as well as addressing weaknesses in justice systems. By placing survivors at the centre, fostering collaboration, and addressing the root causes of impunity, this initiative aims to make justice work for those who need it most.



Funded by
the European Union



ENGAGEMENT DRIVES CHANGE

Across the world, governments are shaping narratives that erode human rights and democratic principles. Civil Rights Defenders, in collaboration with our partners, works to counter this trend by increasing public awareness and engaging individuals, civil society, and policymakers in meaningful action. Through strategic advocacy, campaigns, and media engagement, we promote human rights, challenge repressive policies, and shift harmful narratives. When necessary, we also act as a platform for those who cannot safely raise their voices themselves.



BACKADEMIN – EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

In 2024, Civil Rights Defenders launched Backademin, a specialised training programme for young activists committed to democracy and human rights in Sweden. The programme covered strategic communication, advocacy, digital security, and mobilisation, equipping participants with tools to drive change. Through workshops, mentorship, and peer learning, they strengthened their skills, built networks, and developed strategies to counter democratic backsliding.



CHALLENGING THE SWEDISH “SNITCH LAW” THROUGH STRATEGIC CAMPAIGNING

In 2024, Civil Rights Defenders ran a broad campaign against the proposed informant law, also known as the “Snitch Law” which aimed to require public sector employees to report undocumented individuals. The campaign sought to inform the public, mobilise opposition, and highlight the risks the law posed to human rights and professional integrity.

A combination of digital outreach, media engagement, and coalition-building helped broaden resistance. We gathered a coalition of 45 civil society organisations that published joint statements in Sweden’s largest newspapers, reaching 1.25 million readers. Meanwhile, the digital campaign gathered 25,767 signatures which were later submitted to the Swedish government.

To further drive awareness, we introduced a creative element: toilet paper rolls printed

with the proposal and a QR code linking to the petition. During the annual political week in Almedalen, Gotland, 200 rolls were placed in public bathrooms, catching the attention of both media outlets and decision makers. Interest grew as over 1,000 people ordered rolls to distribute nationwide, helping to amplify the campaign’s message.

By the time the government inquiry presented its final proposal, it was less extensive than initially feared. The campaign contributed to this shift while also strengthening collaboration within civil society, demonstrating the power of strategic communication in advocacy.



CAMPAIGNING FOR DEMOCRACY

The campaign "Jobbiga QR-koder" ("Annoying QR-codes") raised funds for Civil Rights Defenders by using QR codes to symbolise how donations can disrupt authoritarian leaders. AI-generated visuals showed dictators stumbling over QR codes that prompted users to donate, illustrating the tangible impact of financial contributions. The campaign was widely praised for its creative and impactful approach to fundraising.



Swisha och
ställ till det
för Orbán.



MARIIA SULIALINA

CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDER OF THE YEAR AWARD 2024

Mariia Sulialina, head of the Ukrainian human rights organisation Almenda, received the Civil Rights Defender of the Year Award 2024. She has given voice to the Ukrainian children in the occupied territories who are subjected to indoctrination and militarisation and who are at risk of deportation to Russia. She has fought for children's rights and freedoms and, together with Almenda, carried out the invaluable work of documenting war crimes in order to bring those responsible to justice.

"Children are our future. It is our obligation to protect them from militarisation and indoctrination and to ensure that the reintegration processes take their needs into account. This award is very important for our organisation as it brings more attention to children's rights in the occupied territories of Ukraine, and brings us closer to attaining accountability," says Mariia Sulialina, Director, Almenda.

THE WAR ON UKRAINE'S CHILDREN

Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, at least 545 Ukrainian children have been killed. Approximately 1.6 million school-age children in the occupied territories have also been constantly exposed to Russian propaganda.

"There are gross violations of human rights in the occupied territories. Nobody is safe, whether they are a child or an adult", says Mariia Sulialina.

The school system has been overrun with propaganda, depriving children not only of their childhood but also of their Ukrainian identity and culture. Instead, they have been forced to learn how to handle weapons so that they will be able to fight for the Russian army when they get older.

"The children in the occupied territories do not receive a proper education because

propaganda is such a large part of it. It clearly paints a picture of a future in which boys will become soldiers, girls will serve as their support, and the rest of the world is the enemy they must defend themselves against. The children are treated as a mobilisation reserve”, Mariia says.

Ukrainian children have also been deported to Russia. An estimated 19,000 children have been abducted. Children who have lost family members face a significantly higher risk of abduction or illegal adoption by a Russian family.

“They do not take the best interest of the child into account. What we have to do is to bring them back, rehabilitate them, give them psychological and physical help. We need to give them their future back, so they can become who they want to be, not who Russia wants them to be.”

EDUCATION AS THE FOUNDATION OF DEMOCRACY

Mariia Sulialina heads the Civic Centre for Education “Almenda”, which works to document and draw attention to war crimes and other grave human rights violations committed in Ukraine, to one day bring those respon-

sible to justice. They have also fought for the return of deported children. However, this has been difficult work, since legal processes take a long time, and Russia withholds information.

Mariia Sulialina aims to reduce the influence of propaganda by ensuring that children and young people have access to a Ukrainian education. She also works to reintegrate those who have already been indoctrinated. With the help of education, Almenda aims to equip children and young people with democratic values and give them back the right to determine their own identity, which she sees as a basic prerequisite for creating a democratic society.

According to Mariia, the award highlights the importance of Almenda’s work. She hopes that this will lead to increased attention and awareness of the war crimes taking place in Ukraine. Mariia’s fight for the children in the occupied areas of Ukraine continues.

“We have to show the world what is going on because there is still a lack of reaction to what is happening with our children in the occupied territories. It has been going on for 10 years already. So, we need to put more pressure on those responsible and raise awareness to bring justice.”

ABOUT THE CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Since 2013, each year Civil Rights Defenders 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, continues the fight for civil and political rights. The recipient of the award must carry out their work through peaceful means and as part of an independent human rights organisation.





INTRODUCTION

VISION AND STRATEGY

STRATEGIC GOALS

CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDER OF THE YEAR

ANNUAL REPORT



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 2024 FINANCIAL YEAR

MANAGEMENT REPORT

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE ORGANISATION'S ACTIVITIES

Civil Rights Defenders is a politically and religiously independent human rights organisation. 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 human rights situation globally.

Registered office: Stockholm, Sweden

VISION AND MISSION

Civil Rights Defenders' vision

A world of democratic societies where we all enjoy our civil and political rights.

Civil Rights Defenders' mission

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

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

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

WHY IS CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS' WORK IMPORTANT?

Guided by the principle of equal dignity for all, Civil Rights Defenders works toward a world of democratic societies in which we all enjoy our civil and political rights. Conflicts and human rights violations increasingly pervade our world, and a well-functioning, strong, and local civil society is becoming increasingly important. Civil Rights Defenders endeavours to bring about progress in politics, business, and civil society by working and developing together on the important issues of human rights. We believe that our engagement and expertise within our areas of knowledge help to bring about change and a better world for all.

GOALS

Civil Rights Defender's strategic goals outline our ambitions for the strategy period 2023 to 2030. The four strategic goals are reflected in the organisation's theory of change – security, capacity, engagement, and accountability. Each overarching objective has its own objectives that describe in more detail what the organisation is to have achieved by the end of the strategy period.

Security: Human rights defenders are secure

- Civil Rights Defenders has the capacity and resources to minimise security risks and mitigate the effects of human rights violations.
- Partners have the capacity and resources to minimise security risks and mitigate the effects of human rights violations.

Capacity: Human rights defenders have the capacity to defend human rights and democracy

- Civil Rights Defenders provides innovative, flexible, and defender centric partner support.
- Civil Rights Defenders is a resilient and sustainable organisation fit for purpose.
- Civil Rights Defenders is focused on using tools, methods, and technologies that are innovative, cutting edge, or data driven.

Engagement: Stakeholders in society take action for human rights and democracy

- Civil Rights Defenders and partners expand decision makers' narrative in favour of human rights and democracy.
- Civil Rights Defenders has engagement driven working methods and creates clear pathways to action for stakeholders to get involved.
- Civil Rights Defenders is highly respected as a defender centric human rights organisation, specifically for our work in the areas of security, capacity, and accountability.



On 6 December, Civil Rights Defenders arranged the Nordic Rule of Law Forum, which this year focused on the rule of law and how states use human rights to defend and justify their actions.

Accountability: Duty bearers are held accountable

- Civil Rights Defenders develops clear and efficient tools and methods to hold duty bearers to account.
- Duty bearers responsible for human rights are held accountable by Civil Rights Defenders or our partners.
- There is a strong international/regional framework for the advancement of human rights.
- Those affected by human rights violations have access to justice.

DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

To effectively achieve the strategic goals, the organisation needs to develop its organisational capacity. To do this, the organisation continuously works on a number of focus areas, prioritised areas where the organisation needs to develop. Civil Rights Defenders aims to have no more than three focus areas at any given time during the strategic period and develops an action plan for each focus area, detailing the current state to the desired state. Progress within the focus areas is monitored and evaluated quarterly. When the goals within a focus area are completed, it is concluded, and if necessary, new focus areas are developed in accordance with the strategy.

ORGANISATION

Civil Rights Defenders is a non-profit human rights organisation. The annual meeting is the organisation's highest decision-making body. Civil Rights Defenders is a membership organisation with individual members. To become a member, one must support the organisation's purpose and fundamental values (as expressed in international human rights agreements) and be willing to work towards these goals. The organisation's activities are not primarily funded by membership fees but through fundraising and received contributions.

The membership fee for 2024 was 300 kronor. The annual meeting elects a board, which at the turn of the year 2024/2025 consisted of eight members, five women and three men. During the year, eight board meetings were held, five of which since the annual meeting in May 2024. No remuneration is provided for the work performed by the Chair of the Board and board members.

BOARD OF CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS

At the 2024 annual meeting on 29 May, Théo Jaekel and Mårten Lundberg were elected to the Board. Lars Häggström and Niclas Kjellström-Matseke stepped down at the 2024 annual meeting. Anne Ramberg resigned from the Board in August 2024.

- Hanna Gerdes, Chair (attended 8/8 meetings)
- Ulla Andrén, Board Member (attended 8/8 meetings)

- Noura Berrouba, Board Member (attended 8/8 meetings)
- Lars Häggström, Board Member (attended 3/3 meetings)
- Théo Jaekel, Board Member (attended 5/5 meetings)
- Niclas Kjellström-Matseke, Board Member (attended 2/3 meetings)
- Mårten Lundberg, Board Member (attended 5/5 meetings)
- Anne Ramberg, Board Member (attended 4/4 meetings)
- Lena Svensson, Board Member (attended 8/8 meetings)
- Caroline Thunved, Board Member (attended 7/8 meetings)
- Christian Åhlund, Board Member (attended 7/8 meetings)

NOMINATION COMMITTEE

Since the 2024 annual meeting, the Nomination Committee has consisted of Marcela Mieres Eneroth, Catharina Mannerfelt, Carin Norberg, and Seher Yilmaz.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Anders L. Pettersson (until 14 August 2024)

ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

John Stauffer (from 14 August 2024)

DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Karin Ancker (from 14 August 2024)

MEMBERS

As of the end of 2024, Civil Rights Defenders had 32 members (2023: 30).

CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS' STAFF

The work of Civil Rights Defenders is primarily carried out by staff based at the organisation's head office in Stockholm, at regional offices, or stationed to locations in Asia, Africa, Belgrade, Bogotá, Istanbul, Juba, Pristina, Sarajevo, Tbilisi, and Tirana. At the end of 2024, the organisation employed 90 people across its 11 offices, compared to 102 at the end of 2023.

Distribution by office

Stockholm	69
Asia	1
Africa	4
Belgrade	5
Bogotá	5
Istanbul	1
Juba	1
Pristina	1
Sarajevo	1
Tbilisi	1
Tirana	1
Total	90



Ukrainian singer Maria Sur performing at the Civil Rights Defender of the Year Award ceremony. Photo: David Lagerlöf

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS DURING THE FINANCIAL YEAR

During the year, Civil Rights Defenders was affected by cuts in development aid announced by the Swedish government in its 2023 appropriation letter to Sida. Uncertainties surrounding the future of support previously received through Sida's Strategy for Sweden's Development Cooperation with Civil Society (the Civsam strategy) and bilateral agreements, along with reduced funding from other sources, also had a significant impact. Consequently, management had to issue two rounds of redundancy notices during the year, first in April, and then in June. The number of positions in the organisation has therefore decreased from 110 to 82 as of 1 January 2025. In the organisational adjustment, the goal was to downsize the organisation while maintaining essential capacity and donor relationships, with the ambition to grow again once new funding is secured.

As part of the initial, smaller round of redundancies in the first half of the year, the communications and fundraising departments were merged, and a new Head of Communications and Fundraising was recruited. During the second, larger round of redundancies, more positions were phased out across the organisation, and several managerial roles and units were also consolidated. In this process, the organisation also relocated director positions that had previously been based at the head office to regional offices. Efforts were also made to

identify opportunities for increased efficiency and to reduce non-fixed costs.

As an active participant in the Organisation of American States (OAS), Civil Rights Defenders, together with its partners, contributed to high-level discussions, attended the 2024 General Assembly, and strengthened the capacity of human rights organisations through targeted international advocacy.

Our office in Juba was closed at the end of 2024 following the conclusion of Swedish government funding for our programme in South Sudan. During the year, we maintained a regional presence in Bogotá, Addis Ababa, and Belgrade, as well as staff stationed in Turkey, Georgia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Albania, Kosovo, South Sudan, and Asia.

Executive Director Anders L. Pettersson concluded his tenure on 14 August 2024. During the recruitment period for a new Executive Director, the Board appointed a shared leadership structure with John Stauffer as Acting Executive Director and Karin Ancker as Deputy Executive Director.

During the year, Civil Rights Defenders organised several major events that were crucial to delivering on our strategic goals and our advocacy and communications work. In the spring, Civil Rights Defenders held its annual award ceremony at Fotografiska Museum in Stockholm. The Civil Rights Defender of the Year Award 2024 was presented to human rights defender Mariia Sulialina for her work on behalf of Ukrainian children in occupied territories who are

subjected to indoctrination, militarisation, and the risk of deportation to Russia.

In the autumn, Civil Rights Defenders hosted Defenders' Days, a three-day conference in Stockholm for partner organisations and external guests. The event brought together over 120 human rights defenders from around the world, with the shared goal of strengthening participants' capacity, networks, and security. The conference included workshops, lectures, and discussions covering topics such as digital security, psychosocial well-being, and advocacy strategies. Participants were also given the opportunity to exchange experiences and methods, fostering stronger global collaboration among human rights defenders. The event served as an important platform for dialogue and idea-sharing, and it raised awareness of the challenges and risks faced by human rights defenders in their work.

At the end of the year, Civil Rights Defenders also organised the Nordic Rule of Law Forum in cooperation with the University of Gothenburg. The forum aims to promote respect for human rights and the rule of law, and to increase interest and dialogue on these issues. In early December, 100 participants gathered to discuss a range of topics focusing on the theme "the rule of law and states' use of human rights to defend and justify their actions".

During Almedalen Week in Visby, Sweden, Civil Rights Defenders engaged in the political arena to highlight key human rights issues.

More than 150 people attended the organisation's game night and played our game Dictator of Sweden, which sparked conversations about democracy and human rights. Through seminars, panel discussions, and meetings with decision-makers, we raised awareness of human rights challenges and the risks faced by human rights defenders. The organisation also presented eight proposals to strengthen democracy in Sweden.

Civil Rights Defenders carried out major spring and winter campaigns during the year. The spring campaign aimed to raise awareness about the Swedish government's preparations of a proposal for a law forcing public sector workers to report undocumented people to authorities (commonly known as the "snitch law") and its consequences for human rights. The campaign also sought to mobilise public opinion against the proposal. The work included providing legal support and advice to those affected, as well as collaborating with other organisations as part of the "Backa Demokratin" project. Toward the end of the year, a major fundraising campaign was also launched featuring "troublesome" QR codes that tripped up authoritarians. The campaign was awarded the Silver Egg by the Swedish Association of Communication Agencies in early 2025.

USE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

All assets of Civil Rights Defenders are held in bank accounts. No other financial instruments are used.

SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

Work environment

The Head of HR and the Executive Director have maintained regular collaboration with the Work Environment Ombudsman and the local Union Club to systematically monitor the work environment. The focus during the year has been establishing a cooperation agreement between the local union and the employer to streamline collaboration as well as strengthening leadership capabilities to create conditions for a healthy work environment, given the organisation's financial challenges.

The Leadership Forum – a platform for managers with staff responsibility established in 2022 as part of strengthening the organisation's leaders – met five times during the year. Relevant topics were discussed in alignment with the human resources agenda for the year and Civil Rights Defenders' strategic goals. The purpose of these meetings is to provide a space for sharing information, reflecting on leadership, accessing colleagues' expertise, and developing leaders' capacity. The Leadership Forum has continued to develop, and in spring 2024, all managers were invited to attend an internal two-day leadership conference focusing on staff security and effective leadership.

Staff survey

In November 2024, Civil Rights Defenders conducted its annual staff survey. The results show continued strong team effectiveness.

However, scores related to leadership, engagement, and the organisational and social work environment were slightly lower compared to 2023, which aligns with management's expectations due to financial constraints, redundancy notices, and staff reductions.

Diversity and equality

Civil Rights Defenders is an international organisation with employees from countries across the globe. More than 20 languages are spoken within the organisation. As part of its systematic work environment efforts, the implementation of the new Policy Against Discrimination and Harassment was followed up in 2024 through various group-level work-

shops across the organisation. The aim was to raise awareness and promote understanding of how people with different backgrounds, cultures, ages, ethnicities, genders, and other characteristics can work together harmoniously.

Skills Development Initiatives:

Erasmus+ and PICK

Civil Rights Defenders began working with Erasmus+ in 2022. Through active participation in Erasmus+, the organisation has developed a shared pedagogical approach and strategic leadership framework. In 2024, 26 staff members had the opportunity to attend Erasmus+ training.



On 24 September, we arranged a drag queen story reading in the Swedish parliament together with Bland Drakar och Dragqueens. Photo: Olav Holten.

Through its participation in PICK – the Project for Skills Development in Non-Profit Welfare and Civil Society, initiated by Fremia and Famna in cooperation with Unionen – Civil Rights Defenders can offer employees a range of courses tailored to individual development needs.

Through initiatives like Erasmus+ and PICK, Civil Rights Defenders strengthens both individual and organisational capacity in line with our strategic goal to develop a resilient and sustainable organisation fit for purpose. The aim is to continue strengthen the organisation, make our work more resilient, and adapt quickly to current and future challenges.



The “Snitch Law” in Sweden is a crappy idea. To illustrate this, we put it on toilet paper. A little toilet paper never hurt anyone, but the “Snitch Law would hurt a lot.

Collective agreements

Civil Rights Defenders has collective agreements for employees through Fremia, Unionen, and Akademikerförbunden, which apply to employees based in Sweden. For employees working at regional offices outside Sweden, local legislation and agreements apply.

Travel and procurement

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

RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Civil Rights Defenders works systematically with risk assessment and risk management by identifying, analysing, and acting to ensure that unforeseen events or circumstances do not negatively affect operations or expected outcomes. By carefully and systematically analysing, documenting, and monitoring risks, the organisation aims to avoid or mitigate negative impacts.

In its risk management work, the organisation distinguishes between internal and external risks. Internal risks include, for exam-

ple, insufficient human resources, inadequate capacity or leadership, challenges in reporting results, financial control issues, and corruption. External risks may involve unforeseen political, institutional, economic, environmental, social, or technological factors.

Civil Rights Defenders applies an integrated risk management approach, which entails a continuous, proactive, and systematic process for understanding, managing, and communicating risks from a broad perspective. This also involves making strategic decisions that contribute to achieving the organisation’s overall goals.

The organisation operates in countries with high levels of corruption risk, where human rights work is often prohibited. Preventative work is therefore crucial. Civil Rights Defenders enforces a zero-tolerance policy on corruption and has established an anti-corruption working group consisting of members from both management and the Board.

This group handles reported suspicions of corruption and maintains strong compliance routines. All new employees are introduced to the organisation’s anti-corruption efforts. During the year, all staff members completed basic anti-corruption training.

FINANCIAL RESULT AND POSITION

The organisation had a negative operating result of -2,411 thousand SEK for the year. During 2024, one of the major agreements with Sida was changed at very short notice, and donations received were also slightly

down by -3.4% compared to the previous year.

The organisation’s financial result for 2024 was positive at +4,215 thousand SEK, due to the renegotiating interest-bearing accounts with the organisation’s corporate bank and actively utilising investment accounts with higher interest rates (+1,963 thousand SEK) as well as currency effects (+2,253 thousand SEK).

The organisation’s annual result is thus positive at +1,804 thousand SEK, compared to the previous year’s result of -4,803 thousand SEK.

The organisation’s equity, which has been strengthened over the past four years except in 2023, continues to grow and will remain a focus going forward to ensure sustainable growth with maintained and preferably increased solvency. The result of +1,804 thousand SEK is carried forward. The balanced equity thus amounts to 12,251 thousand SEK, an increase of 17.3% from 10,448 thousand SEK.

GOAL FULFILMENT

2024 was the second year of the organisation’s strategy covering the years 2023–2030. The focus was on continuing to implement and deliver according to the strategy and completing the work that remained within the focus area Organisational Capacity, which began in 2023. No new focus areas were initiated in 2024, but new focus areas will be initiated in 2025.

For more information about the organisation’s strategy, see <https://crd.org/strategy>.



SECURITY

Human rights defenders are secure.



CAPACITY

Human rights defenders have the capacity to defend human rights and democracy.



ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholders in society take action for human rights and democracy.



ACCOUNTABILITY

Duty bearers are held accountable.

Civil Rights Defenders' strategic goals

Security – Human Rights Defenders are Secure

During 2024, Civil Rights Defenders worked to improve human rights defenders' capacity to handle psychological pressure and physical risks. Civil Rights Defenders' emergency support reached 1,459 human rights defenders and their families in vulnerable situations during the year. Emergency Fund Support was provided to individuals from 34 countries.

Every year, Civil Rights Defenders organises security training worldwide. 66 human rights defenders from Venezuela and Colombia were trained in digital, physical, and psychosocial security. Civil Rights Defenders supported with psychological first aid and security advice.

In East Africa, Civil Rights Defenders, together with the organisation Zengwe Hub, created the one-year programme “The

Champions of Change,” where 23 human rights defenders from the East African region could gather, network, and receive psychosocial, digital, and physical security advice.

Capacity – Human Rights Defenders have the capacity to defend human rights and democracy

In the fall, Civil Rights Defenders organised “Defenders’ Days,” a three-day conference in Stockholm for our partner organisations and external guests. The conference was attended by approximately 120 human rights defenders from around the world with the goal of strengthening the capacity, networks, and security among the participants. The conference included workshops, lectures, and discussions on topics such as digital security, psychosocial health, and advocacy strategies. Participants also had the opportunity to share their experiences and best practices, which

contributed to strengthening collaboration between human rights defenders globally.

Capacity-building work takes many forms. For Civil Rights Defenders it is key to make use of both local and our own expertise to adapt efforts to the local context. In some countries, open training sessions can be held, gathering hundreds of individuals, while in other cases, a three-day training can make a difference for an organisation's work in a challenging context. In Asia, Civil Rights Defenders organised training for a partner organisation in the difficult context they work in, focusing on risk prevention and risk minimisation.

In Kyrgyzstan, the democratic space has significantly decreased, and a “foreign agents law” has been introduced. Human rights defenders have been subjected to increasing pressure and attacks. Civil Rights Defenders therefore organised a training for human rights defenders and local organisations to better handle reprisals and threats. The training was conducted by local lawyers.

Through our sub-granting support to partners in Latin America, Civil Rights Defenders has reached 400 human rights defenders from Nicaragua, Colombia, Venezuela, and Honduras. The efforts have in several cases led to human rights defenders being able to collaborate between countries and create regional networks.

Engagement – Stakeholders in society take action for human rights and democracy

In Sweden, Civil Rights Defenders launched a broad campaign to highlight the controversial government preparation of a proposal for a law forcing public sector workers to report undocumented people to authorities (commonly known as the “snitch law”). The campaign quickly spread and gathered 45 civil society organisations that supported a joint statement in three of Sweden's largest daily newspapers, reaching 1.25 million readers. The campaign contributed to the government's proposed legislation being less extensive than feared.

The Civil Rights Defenders of the Year Award 2024 was awarded to Mariia Sulialina, who leads the Ukrainian human rights organisation Almenda. She received the award for her work in giving a voice to Ukrainian children in the occupied territories who are subjected to both indoctrination and the risk of being deported to Russia.

An important part of Civil Rights Defenders' work to create engagement is to provide human rights defenders with a platform where their voices can be heard. In this way, knowledge about the abuses activists are subjected to and the crimes committed is spread. In Latin America, Civil Rights Defenders supported a film festival where directors from Venezuela, Colombia, and Nicaragua showed films about the human rights violations occurring in these countries. University students attended and interacted

with the films directors to learn about the human rights situation.

In Ukraine, Civil Rights Defenders worked with the NGO Public Television to raise awareness and engagement around the challenges human rights face in the ongoing war, specifically regarding freedom of expression. By highlighting and reporting on this, broad engagement was created, leading to changes in behaviours, policies, and practices within institutions.

Accountability – duty bearers are held accountable

In the work on accountability for grave human rights violations and international crimes during the year, Civil Rights Defenders has spread knowledge and increased engagement around accountability for international crimes. Part of this work has been done as part of a coalition of civil society organisations that together implement a four-year programme, partly funded by the EU. The programme spans 27 countries and addresses international crimes such as genocide and torture. The programme's goal is to strengthen the possibilities for accountability by creating better cooperation between survivors, human rights lawyers, and decision-makers.

As part of this work, Civil Rights Defenders has monitored and reported from the trial against representatives of the former company Lundin Oil, who are charged with complicity in international crimes committed in Sudan (now South Sudan). The trial is unique

in the world, and there is great interest both in Sweden and internationally, among lawyers and others. It is particularly important for the organisation to reach out with knowledge to victims and to highlight their perspectives. The trial began in 2023 and is expected to conclude in 2026.

In Asia, Civil Rights Defenders continued to support the work carried out by local civil society organisations that monitor and document human rights violations and cooperate with international mechanisms for accountability.

During 2024, Civil Rights Defenders contributed to several international reviews of compliance with human rights commitments. Together with partner organisations, the organisation participated in the Organisation of American States (OAS) General Assembly meeting in Paraguay and contributed to the discussion on human rights in the region.

The organisation also contributed to the UN's review of how Sweden has lived up to commitments in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, focusing on issues related to psychiatric compulsory care and rule of law. In connection with this, Civil Rights Defenders had several meetings with the Minister for Social Services, Camilla Waltersson Grönvall, where we presented our views. Regarding compulsory care, we also had dialogue with the Parliamentary Ombudsman (Justitieombudsmannen) linked to their mission as the National Preventive Mechanism to prevent inhuman treatment



Former Nicaraguan Vice President, Sergio Ramírez, in Stockholm discussing the situation in Nicaragua. The event was arranged by Nicadem in collaboration with Civil Rights Defenders, Instituto Cervantes, and Diakonia.

under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (Opcat), as well as with the National Board of Health and Welfare, which has a government mandate to reduce coercion and improve rule of law in compulsory care and forensic psychiatric care.

Ahead of the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review of Sweden's human rights commitments, we submitted a shadow report during the year, highlighting hate crimes and discrimination, the rights of the Sami as indigenous people, and restrictions on the right to privacy and freedom of assembly. Ahead of the review in May 2025, Civil Rights Defenders will present our views to the council's member states in Geneva.

REVENUE

Civil Rights Defenders' operating revenue in 2023 amounted to a total of 175,766 thousand SEK, which is at the same level as 2023 (175,590 thousand SEK). The revenue comes from both governmental and private sources and includes both donations and grants.

Fundraising

Fundraising revenue for 2024 amounted to 22,336 thousand SEK, which is a slight decrease of 3.4% compared to the previous year (23,113 thousand SEK).

To ensure continued financial strength and long-term stability, the organisation, in accordance with its strategy 2023–2030,

has continued to work to diversify the donor portfolio, where increased fundraising from private financiers remains a priority. The intention is also to continue developing collaborations with companies, foundations, and philanthropists to have more diversified funding for the organisation and thereby reduce the risk of being too heavily tied to one donor.

Civil Rights Defenders is a member of Giva Sverige, which advocates for ethical and professional fundraising and works to increase giving in Sweden and improve the conditions for fundraising.

The organisation has the Tryggt Givande label, a quality mark that means we meet Giva Sverige's quality code for ethical and economic fundraising as well as internal control and governance. Civil Rights Defenders has a so called "90-account" and works in accordance with the guidelines set by Svensk Insamlingskontroll.

Public grants

In 2024, Civil Rights Defenders' revenue from grants from public bodies amounted to a total of 108,115 thousand SEK, which is at the same level as the previous year (108,166 thousand SEK). The largest donors are Sida, followed by the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society and the Swedish Institute. Grants from public bodies are important for long-term work both globally and in Sweden.

Foundations and organisations

Foundations and organisations are important donors for Civil Rights Defenders, with 31,501 thousand SEK in revenue in 2024, an increase of just over 1,000 thousand SEK from 2023 (30,418 thousand SEK). The largest donors in 2024 were Open Society Foundation, International Federation for Human Rights, the Gerald and Monica Nagler Foundation, and Defend Defenders.

The general public

During the year, Civil Rights Defenders raised 11,578 thousand SEK from private individuals compared to 9,130 thousand SEK in 2023, an increase of 27%. At the same time, revenue from legacies decreased from 866 thousand SEK in 2023 to 249 thousand SEK in 2024, leading to a total increase from the segment of about 18%. During the year, the focus has been on increasing the number of new donors and monthly donors. This provides a good foundation for follow-up engagement and loyalty work for continuously increasing fundraising from private individuals in the long term. Monthly giving remains important as it enables long-term planning and stability, and reduces administrative costs. Growing the donor base through new donors along with continued upgrade activities remains a priority in the coming year.

Companies

During the year, companies contributed 24,081 thousand SEK to Civil Rights Defenders through either long-term collaborations or by giving a one-time donation. In 2023, corresponding revenue from companies was 26,910 thousand SEK, which corresponds to a decrease of 11%. Donations and grants from companies are of great importance to meet challenges going forward, and the organisation continues to focus on strengthening collaborations with companies and organisations. Civil Rights Defenders has been a beneficiary of the Swedish Postcode Lottery since 2013 and received 10,000 thousand SEK in 2024, as well as additional contributions via the Dream Project. Other important collaborations that contributed to the organisation included Meta.

EXPECTED FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AND SIGNIFICANT RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES

The changing security situation in Europe and the changes we see in funding for civil society from public bodies in Sweden and other countries, not least the USA, create uncertainty about how funding of our work from public bodies will develop in the coming years. The global situation presents challenges but also new opportunities for funding from new revenue sources that we are actively working on. The organisation's activities will develop and adapt according to the organisation's financial development during the year and to meet the challenges we see in the world.



One of several board game and civil society meetups, playing our board game Dictator of Sweden, in which you try to abolish democracy in Sweden.



REVENUE

Total operating income 2024: 175,766 thousand SEK
(2023: 175,590 thousand SEK)

The revenue is distributed as follows:

- Grants from public bodies – 61% (62%)
- Foundations and organisations –18% (17%)
- The general public – 7% (6%)
- Companies – 14% (15%)

The outer circle shows the revenue distribution for 2024, the inner circle for 2022, and the middle circle for 2023. The trend of decreasing funding from public bodies from 67% in 2022 to 61% in 2024 is clearly visible. During the same period, the share of revenue from the public and from foundations and organisations has increased by one percentage point each year.



PROGRAMME EXPENSES

Programme expenses for 2024 were 160,731 thousand SEK compared to 159,283 thousand SEK in 2023, an increase of 1%.

- Africa – 13% (12%)
- Asia – 5% (6%)
- Eurasia – 27% (22%)
- Europe – 8% (18%)
- Security and innovation – 14% (16%)
- Latin America – 9% (10%)
- Sweden – 10% (10%)
- Global – 13% (5%)
- Other – 1% (1%)

The outer circle shows the distribution of programme expenses for 2024, and the inner circle for 2023.

MULTI-YEAR COMPARISON

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Total revenue incl. interest income and similar items	180,051	175,775	189,793	126,198	101,771
Operating income	175,766	175,590	181,878	124,871	101,771
Result after financial items	1,804	-4,803	3,836	5,626	2,772
Programme expenses / total income	91%	91%	95%	88%	86%
Fundraising expenses / total income	6%	5%	4%	6%	5%
Administrative expenses / total income	4%	5%	4%	3%	6%
Equity ratio	17%	11%	20%	11%	7%

REPORTING ACCORDING TO GIVA SVERIGES QUALITY CODE

Civil Rights Defenders follows to Giva Sverige's Quality Code
– see <https://www.givasverige.se/in-english/>

INCOME STATEMENT

		Amounts in SEK thousand	
	Note	2024	2023
Operating income	3		
Membership fees		8,100	9,000
Donations		22,335,576	23,113,176
Grants		153,188,231	152,377,207
Net revenue		175,531,908	175,499,383
Other income		233,995	90,959
Total operating income		175,765,902	175,590,342
Operating expenses	4, 5		
Programme expenses	6	-160,731,261	-159,283,282
Fundraising expenses		-10,564,024	-9,311,477
Administrative expenses	7	-6,882,028	-9,072,351
Total operating expenses		-178,177,314	-177,667,110
Operating result		-2,411,412	-2,076,768
Financial items	8	4,284,908	184,819
Interest income and similar items	8	-69,906	-2,911,381
Interest expenses and similar items		4,215,001	-2,726,563
Result after financial items		1,803,590	-4,803,330
Net result for the year		1,803,590	-4,803,330

BALANCE SHEET

		Amounts in SEK thousand	
	Note	2024-12-31	2023-12-31
ASSETS			
Fixed assets			
<i>Tangible fixed assets</i>			
Equipment, tools and installations	9	854,864	1,175,438
Total tangible fixed assets		854,864	1,175,438
Current assets			
<i>Inventories, etc.</i>			
Inventories – game Dictator of Sweden		276,420	323,813
Current receivables			
Accounts receivable		0	969,638
Approved, not yet received grants	10	1,011,819	4,392,018
Other receivables		6,914,738	7,348,560
Prepaid expenses and accrued income	11	2,884,680	3,055,212
Total current receivables		10,811,237	15,765,428
Cash and bank balances		60,036,012	78,976,730
Total current assets		71,123,669	95,065,971
Total assets		71,978,533	96,241,409
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES			
Equity			
Donor-designated project funds		0	0
Closing equity		12,251,310	10,447,720
Total equity		12,251,310	10,447,720
Current liabilities			
Accounts payable		5,854,204	4,401,406
Liability for received but unused grants	12	39,869,390	71,197,478
Other liabilities		2,203,019	2,214,716
Accrued expenses and deferred income	13	11,800,610	7,980,089
Total current liabilities		59,727,223	85,793,689
Total equity and liabilities		71,978,533	96,241,409

CHANGE IN EQUITY

Amounts in SEK

	Restricted funds (Emergency Fund)	Retained earnings	Total equity
Opening balance 2024-01-01	0	10,447,720	10,447,720
Restricted by doner	0	0	0
Use of restricted funds from previous years	0	0	0
Result of the year	0	1,803,590	1,803,590
Closing balance 2024-12-31	0	12,251,310	12,251,310

CASH FLOW STATEMENT – INDIRECT METHOD

Amounts in SEK

	2024-01-01 –2024-12-31	2023-01-01 –2023-12-31
Operating activities		
Operating result	-2,411,412	-2,076,768
<i>Adjustments for items not included in cash flow</i>		
Depreciation	320,574	320,574
Interest received	1,962,532	184,819
Interest paid	-18,587	-10,898
Income tax paid	0	0
Cash flow from operating activities before changes in working capital	-146,893	-1,582,274
Cash flow from changes in working capital		
Change in inventories	47,393	-323,813
Change in accounts receivable	4,349,837	-5,327,479
Change in other current receivables	604,354	-5,101,017
Change in accounts payable	1,452,798	2,035,538
Change in other current liabilities	-27,519,264	21,227,480
Cash flow from operating activities	-21,211,774	10,928,435
Investment activities		
Investments in tangible fixed assets	0	0
Cash flow from investment activities	0	0
Cashflow of the year	-21,211,774	10,928,435
Opening cash and cash equivalents	78,976,730	70,948,778
Exchange difference for cash and cash equivalents	2,271,057	-2,900,483
Closing cash and cash equivalents	60,036,012	78,976,730

NOTES

NOTE 1 ACCOUNTING AND VALUATION PRINCIPLES

The organisation's accounting and valuation principles comply with the Annual Accounts Act, BFNAR 2012:1 (K3), and Giva Sverige's Governing Guidelines for Annual Reports.

INCOME STATEMENT

Operating income

Only the inflow of economic benefits that Civil Rights Defenders has received or will receive for its own account is recognised as revenue. Revenue is valued, unless otherwise stated below, at the fair value of what has been received or will be received. Membership fees include payments for membership in Civil Rights Defenders. The membership fee is recognised as revenue upon receipt of payment from the member. A transaction where Civil Rights Defenders receives an asset or service that has value, without giving back equivalent value in exchange, is a gift or a received grant. If the asset or service is received because Civil Rights Defenders has fulfilled or will fulfill certain conditions and Civil Rights Defenders has an obligation to repay the counterparty if the conditions are not met, it is a received grant. If it is not a grant, it is a gift. Gifts mainly refer to collected funds from individuals, companies, and organisations. Gifts are recognised on a cash basis, but if a gift pertains to a specific period, it is accrued over that period through allocation to programme funds in equity. To the extent that there are agreed but not received gifts from companies and organisations on the balance sheet date, these are recognised as revenue after individual assessment.

Grants are recognised as revenue when the conditions for receiving the grant have been met. Received grants are recognised as liabilities until the conditions for receiving the grant are met. This means that revenue recognition only occurs when it is highly probable that the grant will not be reclaimed. Revenue recognition also occurs for grants that are forwarded to partner organisations where Civil Rights Defenders is responsible to the grantor. Grants are mostly liquid funds from public law bodies and include grantors such as Sida, the Swedish Institute, MUCF, National Endowment for Democracy, and the Postcode Lottery. Revenue not related to Civil Rights Defenders' primary activities is recognised as Other Revenue in the relevant period.

Operating expenses

Operating expenses include programme, fundraising, and administrative expenses. Common expenses such as IT, accounting, operational management, and communication expenses are allocated according to a distribution key between programme, fundraising, and administrative expenses. Programme expenses are classified as expenses directly related to fulfilling Civil Rights Defenders' purposes according to the statutes. This includes, among other things, the expenses of personnel employed to enable the implementation of activities, within and outside Sweden, as determined by the board, as well as administrative expenses that are a direct consequence of the commitments Civil Rights Defenders has undertaken to fulfill the purposes. Programme expenses also include expenses for advocacy and information activities regarding Civil Rights Defenders' mission. Follow-up, reporting, and auditing of projects are also programme expenses. Programme expenses also include allocated operational support expenses. Operational support expenses are allocated to each activity using distribution keys. Fundraising expenses are expenses aimed at generating external revenue in the form of gifts and grants from all donors, i.e., both individuals and companies. This includes both existing donors and efforts to seek new donors through campaigns, mailings, and maintenance of donor registers. This includes expenses for printed materials, postage, and salaries. Fundraising expenses also include allocated common support expenses. Administrative expenses are those needed to run and administer the organisation. Administration constitutes a quality guarantee for the programme and for the donor. Examples of such expenses are board and annual meetings, accounting and annual reports, handling of salaries and social security contributions, VAT and tax declarations, auditing of the organisation itself, as well as Giva Sverige's quality code and administrative systems such as accounting systems, accounts payable, and

asset registers. If an expense is neither related to programme nor fundraising, it is classified as administrative expenses. Administrative expenses also include the part of the common support expenses that are not allocated to programme, fundraising, or membership expenses. All leasing agreements are recognised as operational, i.e., the leasing fee is recognised linearly over the leasing period. Employee compensation in the form of salaries, social security contributions, and similar expenses are recognised as the employees perform services. Pension obligations are classified as defined contribution and recognised as expenses in the year the pension is earned. Civil Rights Defenders is a non-profit association and therefore not subject to tax.

BALANCE SHEET

Assets and liabilities are valued at acquisition expense unless otherwise stated below. Receivables and liabilities in foreign currency are valued at the exchange rate on the balance sheet date. Accounts receivable are individually valued at the amount expected to be received. The inventory consists of unsold copies of the game "Dictator of Sweden" and is measured at acquisition expense. The acquisition expense refers to the printed games during the financial year and includes direct expenses for printing and production. Civil Rights Defenders is a non-profit association – without profit motive and external owners – which means that concepts such as result and equity have a different meaning than in other legal forms, such as limited companies. Equity consists of the funds provided to the organisation to fulfill its purposes, such as gifts, and which on the balance sheet date have not been paid out and where there is no legally binding obligation classified as liability or provision. Since there are restrictions on the use of different funds, the following division is made:

- **Programme funds:** This capital can be used but only for purposes specified by the donor. These funds are normally used in the following financial year. This includes gifts from collections where a specific purpose has been specified and which have not yet been used.
- **Balanced capital:** The capital mainly consists of unused funds provided to the organisation without restrictions and the organisation's result. Unused funds provided to the organisation without restrictions can be disposed of by the board, to be used in accordance with the organisation's statutes and to fulfill the organisation's purposes. The annual result, according to the income statement (before allocation), constitutes the difference between operating income, operating expenses, and the result from financial activities.

NOTE 2 ESTIMATES AND JUDGEMENTS

There are no significant items in the association's income statement and balance sheet that are based on estimates and judgements.

All amounts in SEK

NOTE 3 THE ORGANISATIONS INCOME

Donations recognised in the income statement

Donations raised	2024	2023
General public	11,577,808	9,129,805
Bequests and legacies	249,198	866,011
Companies		
The Swedish Postcode Lottery	10,000,000	10,000,000
Other companies	403,163	1,681,656
Other organisations	52,870	1,190,517
Other Foundations	52,537	245,187
Total collected funds (a)	22,335,576	23,113,176

Pro-bono services received have not been recognised in the income statement and in 2024 mainly related to services within data communication, advertising, and law (b).

Grants recognised as income

Private Grants	2024	2023
Foundations and organisations		
Open Society Foundations	12,140,220	19,555,841
International Federation for Human Rights	9,502,204	442,884
Defend Defenders	2,055,292	0
National Endowment for Democracy	1,138,750	1,709,938
CIVICUS	0	2,422,192
Gerald & Monica Naglers Foundation	2,126,898	1,226,789
Natur & Kultur Foundation	1,655,441	856,686
Hugo Stenbecks Foundation	447,246	343,034
Barbro Osher	500,000	0
AIRE Center	199,365	263,307
The Foundation for Democracy & Pluralism	1,000,000	1,044,125
Other	630,143	1,117,100
Companies		
The Swedish Postcode Lottery	8,318,193	6,998,124
META	5,250,091	8,219,443
Other companies	109,489	11,635
Total collected funds (c)	45,073,331	44,211,098

Public Grants	2024	2023
Sida – Strategic Partner Organisation	52,704,260	59,734,170
Sida	50,789,447	42,659,986
Dutch Emassy	729,829	0
Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society	1,557,205	1,634,526
Svenska Institutet	1,406,545	2,415,970
Erasmus	426,030	508,552
Swedish Consulate Istanbul	290,377	0
Swedish Inheritance Fund	0	972,422
Other	211,207	240,483
Total public grants (d)	108,114,901	108,166,109

Summary of total fundraising income

	2024	2023
Donations recognised in the income statement (a)	22,335,576	23,113,176
Donations not recognised in the income statement (b)	100,000	100,000
Private grants recognised as income (c)	45,073,331	44,211,098
Total fundraising income	67,508,907	67,424,273

All amounts in SEK

NOTE 4 SALARIES, OTHER BENEFITS, AND SOCIAL SECURITY CONTRIBUTIONS

Salaries	2024	2023
Board of Directors	–	–
Executive Director	1,462,191	1,145,046
Other employees	45,736,432	43,930,576
Social costs	14,474,234	13,577,058
Pension costs	4,416,315	4,161,729
Total salaries and benefits	66,089,172	62,814,410

The Executive Director's pension expenses accounted for SEK 378 445,77 kr (358 529 kr) of total pension expenses. Remuneration below half a price base amount amounted to SEK 34 807 kr (16 898 kr) and refers to the expert group in a project.

Salaries and other benefits by country	2024	2023
Sweden	31,463,121	31 096 425
Abroad	6,745,382	7 799 241
Total	38,208,503	38 895 666

Only monthly salaries are included in the above figures. Compensation for holidays, sick pay, and other forms of remuneration (e.g. consultants and similar) are not included.

Number of employees – Sweden	2024	2023
Men	23	23
Women	46	51
Total	69	74

Number of employees – Abroad	2024	2023
Men	7	11
Women	14	17
Total	21	28

Board of Directors, number of members	2024	2023
Men	3	3
Women	5	6
Total	8	9

Executive management, number of members	2024	2023
Men	2	3
Women	3	3
Total	5	6

NOTE 5 LEASING

Civil Rights Defenders mainly rents office premises in Sweden and in other parts of the world. Expensed leasing charges during the year amounted to SEK 6,540,804. Future leasing charges fall due as follow:

	2024	2023
Falling due and payable within 1 year	5,254,433	5 225 217
Falling due and payable within 2–5 years	7,686,396	9 101 862
Falling due and payable after 5+ years	0	0

Civil Rights Defenders signed a seven-year agreement with a new landlord for offices in Stockholm starting from 1st September 2020. The notice period for the contract is 12 months, with an extension period of 3 years. From December 2020, Civil Rights Defenders transitioned to leasing computers. The costs for “2-5 years” and “later than 5 years” are not index-adjusted.

NOTE 6 PROGRAMME EXPENSES

	2024	2023
Africa	20,575,339	21,202,408
Asia	7,578,825	8,934,550
Eurasia	43,313,700	35,677,655
Europe	13,123,339	26,180,690
Latin America	15,195,309	15,743,448
Security and innovation	22,481,963	25,015,641
Sweden	16,543,945	16,096,598
Global	20,484,541	8,373,296
Other	1,434,302	2,058,994
Total	160,731,261	159,283,282

NOTE 7 ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

	2024	2023
Accounting and general administration	1,224,290	771,436
Personnel costs	4,311,633	5,396,616
Project management and financial systems	420,454	652,899
Office expenses	849,264	2,178,793
Board costs	76,388	72,607
Total	6,882,028	9,072,351



All amounts in SEK

NOTE 8 OTHER INTEREST INCOME AND SIMILAR EXPENSES

	2024	2023
Interest income	1,962,532	184,819
Interest expenses	-18,587	-10,898
Exchange rate differences in cash and cash equivalents	2,271,057	-2,900,483
Total	4,215,001	-2,726,563

NOTE 9 EQUIPMENT, TOOLS AND INSTALLATIONS

	2024-12-31	2023-12-31
Opening acquisition value	2,048,271	2,048,271
Purchases during the year	0	0
Closing accumulated acquisition values	2,048,271	2,048,271
Opening accumulated depreciation	-872,833	-552,259
Depreciation for the year	-320,574	-320,574
Closing accumulated depreciation	-1,193,407	-872,833
Closing carrying amount	854,864	1,175,438
Total	854,864	1,175,438

Depreciation according to plan is calculated based on a useful life of 7 years.

NOTE 10 APPROVED, NOT YET RECEIVED GRANTS

	2024-12-31	2023-12-31
Sida – Strategic Partner Organisation	0	2,458,289
Swedish Institute	748,752	731,836
EU-Impunity	0	442,884
Fundatia Pentru Integrare Regionala	0	417,786
Stieg Larsson Foundation	0	205,067
The Swedish Postcode Lottery	74,776	0
Erasmus+	67,432	0
Other	120,859	136,155
Total	1,011,819	4,392,018

NOTE 11 PREPAID EXPENSES AND ACCRUED INCOME

	2024-12-31	2023-12-31
Prepaid rent	974,090	960,352
Rent depositions	1,273,745	1,273,745
Other prepaid expenses and accrued income	636,845	821,115
Total	2,884,680	3,055,212

NOTE 12 LIABILITY, RECEIVED BUT NOT UTILIZED GRANTS

	2024-12-31	2023-12-31
Sida	12,894,047	25,844,359
Sida Strategic Partner Organisation	147,755	0
Open Society Foundation	4,259,046	16,366,485
The Swedish Postcode Lottery	12,298,133	20,541,550
Other grants	10,270,409	8,445,084
Total	39,869,390	71,197,478

NOTE 13 PLEDGED ASSETS AND CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

There are no pledged securities or contingent liabilities.

NOTE 14 SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AFTER THE END OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR

Civil Rights Defenders' new Executive Director, Sofia Walan, will begin on 8 May 2025.



This annual report has been signed electronically.
Stockholm, on the date stated by our electronic signature.

Hanna Gerdes
Chair of the Board

Ulla Andrén
Board Member

Noura Berrouba
Board Member

Théo Jaekel
Board Member

Mårten Lundberg
Board Member

Lena Svensson
Board Member

Caroline Thunved
Board Member

Christian Åhlund
Board Member

Our audit report has been issued on the date indicated by our electronic signature.

Ernst & Young AB

Jenny Göthberg
Authorised Public Accountant

AUDITOR'S REPORT

TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENDERS, CORPORATE IDENTITY NUMBER 802011-1442

REPORT ON THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

Opinions

We have audited the annual accounts of Civil Rights Defenders for the year 2024.

In our opinion, the annual accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Annual Accounts Act and present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Civil Rights Defenders as of 31 December 2024 and its financial performance and cash flow for the year then ended in accordance with the Annual Accounts Act. The statutory administration report is consistent with the other parts of the annual accounts.

Basis for Opinions

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISA) and generally accepted auditing standards in Sweden. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities* section. We are independent of Civil Rights Defenders in accordance with professional ethics for 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 opinions.

Responsibilities of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director

The Board of Directors and the Executive Director are responsible for the preparation of the annual accounts and that they give a fair presentation 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 is necessary to enable the preparation of annual accounts that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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 going concern and using 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, to cease operations, or has 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 error, and to issue an auditor's 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 ISAs and generally accepted auditing standards in Sweden will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these annual accounts.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs, We exercise professional judgment 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 error, 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 error, 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 in the circumstances, but not for

the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's 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.
- Conclude 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 auditor's 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 auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the 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 of significant audit findings during our audit, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identified.

REPORT ON OTHER LEGAL AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

Opinions

In addition to our audit of the annual accounts, we have also audited the administration of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director of Civil Rights Defenders for the year 2024.

We recommend to the general meeting of members that the members of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director be discharged from liability for the financial year.

Basis for Opinions

We conducted the audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards in Sweden. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the

Auditor's Responsibilities section. We are independent of Civil Rights Defenders in accordance with professional ethics for 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 opinions.

Responsibilities of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director

The Board of Directors and the Executive Director are responsible for the association's organization and the administration of the association's affairs.

Auditor's responsibility

Our objective concerning the audit of the administration, and thereby our opinion about 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 can 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 actions or omissions that can give rise to liability to the association.

As part of an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards in Sweden, We exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism 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 judgment with starting point in risk and materiality. This means that we focus the examination on such actions, areas and relationships that are material for the operations and where deviations and violations would have particular importance for the association's situation. We examine and test decisions undertaken, support for decisions, actions taken and other circumstances that are relevant to our opinion concerning discharge from liability.

Stockholm, on the date in the electronic signature.

Ernst & Young AB

Jenny Göthberg

Authorised Public Accountant

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Hanna Gerdes***Lawyer (Chair of the Board)*

Hanna Gerdes has worked nationally and internationally for 20 years to strengthen the protection of human rights and influence the development of society. Hanna is a lawyer in international law and has previously worked in strategic management and development roles at the Swedish Armed Forces, the Human Rights Fund, the Prime Minister's Office and the Equality Ombudsman. Hanna has extensive experience in board work, in organisations such as RFSU and Forum Syd. She has also been a member of the Swedish Committee on Constitutional Damages and has authored several books and publications on human rights. Hanna was awarded the Diversity Index Award in 2018.

**Ulla Andrén***(Board Member)*

Ulla Andrén has worked with development cooperation and diplomacy for over 40 years, primarily within Sida and the Foreign Ministry, with a focus on Africa and Eastern Europe. Ulla has been Head of Department at Sida and the Swedish Ambassador to Mozambique. For the past five years, she has been Head of the Regional Development Cooperation Section at the embassy of Sweden in Addis Abeba. Ulla has also worked as a consultant specialised on development cooperation, as well as with efficiency audits at the Swedish National Audit Office. In total, she has lived and worked for almost 20 years in Africa.

**Noura Berrouba***Chief of Staff, Daniel Sachs Foundation (Board Member)*

Noura Berrouba is the Chief of Staff at the Daniel Sachs Foundation. For over a decade, Noura has been active in national and international contexts, focusing on issues related to democracy, human rights, peace, and security. Previously, Noura served as the chairperson of LSU – The National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations. Noura has worked at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, including at the Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa, as well as at Sweden's Permanent Representation to the EU in Brussels.

**Théo Jaekel***Fristående rådgivare inom företag och mänskliga rättigheter (Board Member)*

Théo Jaekel is a lawyer, specialising in business and human rights and international law. His previous experiences include leading the global legal human rights team at Ericsson, establishing and leading the human rights work at the law firm Vinge, and conducting investigations on corporate responsibility at Swedwatch. Théo has extensive experience in board work within organisations such as Transparency International Sweden, UN Global Compact Sweden, and the Global Network Initiative. Théo now works as an independent advisor on business and human rights.



Mårten Lundberg

CHRO/CMO Loomis AB (Board Member)

Mårten Lundberg has a background in various international CHRO positions, has been responsible for sales and marketing for 10 years and has served as interim CEO. He is employed at Loomis AB since 2014 and is a member of the group management as CHRO / CMO. Mårten works with international business development and its effects on organization, leadership, and relevant HR areas. He is also the founder and CEO of ML Consult AB whose area of service is consulting within the above.



Lena Svensson

Economist, senior advisor focusing on the nonprofit sector (Board Member)

Lena Svensson is a former certified public accountant and partner at PwC. She has several years of experience as an accountant and advisor in the nonprofit sector and has, among other things, worked with organisations within the fundraising and international development sectors. Beyond leading numerous audit teams, Lena has held several leadership roles within PwC, namely as group manager and business area manager, and has been responsible for developing PwC's nonprofit sector department. Today, Lena holds several board positions and works as a consultant, specialising in associations and foundations.



Caroline Thunved

CEO Swedish Communication Association (Board Member)

Caroline Thunved has over 25 years of experience working in communication, marketing and business development in both civil society and private industry. Caroline works as CEO of the Swedish Communication Association. She has extensive experience as a leader and has previously worked at Save the Children Sweden, the Guides and Scouts of Sweden and the Employers' Organisation IDEA. She ranked high on Resumé's top list of Business Supercommunicators and she won the award Stora Kommunikatörspriset 2016.



Christian Åhlund

Lawyer (Board Member)

Christian Åhlund has been a member of the Swedish Bar Association since 1983 and has since focused on international human rights law, labour law, and criminal law. Christian was instrumental in the formation of the International Legal Assistance Consortium (ILAC) in 2002 and served as its Secretary-General until 2015. Christian has previously chaired the Swedish Bar Association's Human Rights Committee and the European cooperation body Human Rights Committee within the CCBE (Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe). He was Sweden's representative on the Council of Europe's "European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)" from 2005 to 2020 and its chair from 2014 to 2018.



DEPARTMENTS AND REGIONAL OFFICES AT THE END OF 2024

HEAD OFFICE STOCKHOLM (SWEDEN)

John Stauffer, Legal Director and Acting Executive Director
Karin Ancker, Chief Financial Officer and Deputy Executive Director

Östgötagatan 90, SE-116 64 Stockholm, Sweden
Phone: +46(0)8-545 277 30, Email: info@crd.org

DEPARTMENTS, HEAD OFFICE

Global Department

Gabrielle Gunneberg, *Director Global Department*
Erik Jennische, *Deputy Director Global Department*

Africa and Middle East Department

Mesfin Bekele, *Director Africa and Middle East Department*

Asia Department

Rosanna Ocampo, *Director Asia Department*

Eurasia Department

Helen Rask, *Director Eurasia Department*

Europe Department

Ivana Randjelovic, *Director Europe Department*

Latin America Department

Pia Alvira, *Director Latin America Department*

Legal Department (incl. activities in Sweden)

John Stauffer, *Legal Director and Acting Executive Director*
Martin Nyman, *Interim Deputy Legal Director*

Security and Innovation Department

Zinaida Muradova, *Interim Director of Security and Innovation*

Communications and Fundraising Department

Morgan Olofsson, *Communications and Fundraising Director*

Finance and Operations Department

Karin Ancker, *Chief Financial Officer and Deputy Executive Director*

REGIONAL OFFICES/STATIONINGS

AFRICA

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ASIA

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SUPPORT THE WORLD'S BRAVEST PEOPLE

Civil Rights Defenders is a 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.

SUPPORT US

with a private donation, become a monthly donor or make a corporate donation. Please visit crd.org/support-us for more information.

COMPANIES

Do you share our values and want to positively develop your business with respect for human rights? Contact us to discuss how we can set up a partnership.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



FACEBOOK
Civil Rights Defenders



INSTAGRAM
[@crdefenders](https://www.instagram.com/crdefenders)
[@crdefenderssverige](https://www.instagram.com/crdefenderssverige)



LINKEDIN
Civil Rights Defenders



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