

[Annual Report | Supporting humanity's essential workers](#)

30.03.2021

It's difficult to encapsulate such a complex year in a word, but "interconnected" is one that comes to mind when reflecting on 2020. We are proud to have remained deeply interconnected with defenders and to have supported, protected and amplified their work at the national, regional and international levels. With them, the "essential workers" of our times, we strive for a 2021 full of freedom, equality, dignity and justice.



Together we made a significant contribution last year towards a world that is more fair, just and equal. A world where human rights defenders are better recognised, enabled and protected. Thank you for being such an important part of ISHR's work. Today, ISHR is thrilled to invite you to discover our latest annual report, outlining our key impacts during the last year and our vision for 2021 and the years ahead.

[Download ISHR's 2021 Annual Report](#)

Human rights defenders are people who, whether individually or in association with others, promote and protect the human rights of others. They are people who act with humanity, serve humanity and bring out the best in humanity.

Defenders are at the heart of ISHR's work. Throughout 2020 we supported human rights defenders, strengthened laws and systems for their protection, and contributed to a safe and enabling environment for their vital work at the national, regional and international levels.

What did we achieve in 2020?

We developed a new five-year [Strategic Framework](#) setting out the ways in which we will support and act in solidarity with defenders.

Our work, and that of defenders, contributed to achieving the following Sustainable Development Goals:



Here are just a few examples of our collective impact in 2020:

- Working with UN experts, governments from all regions, and major investors to issue public statements of concern regarding [human rights in China](#) and to call for independent investigation and monitoring of widespread and systematic violations in Xinjiang and Hong Kong
- Partnering with family members, human rights defenders and civil society partners to secure an urgent debate at the UN on the issue of [police violence and systemic racism](#) and to mandate the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights to investigate and report on this issue in the US and globally
- Working with civil society partners to ensure that key international [principles on equality and justice for LGBTI persons](#) are reflected in laws, policies, practices and jurisprudence at the national, regional and international levels
- Working with family members, civil society partners, UN experts and States to [increase pressure on Saudi Arabia for the release of detained women human rights defenders](#)
- Conducting our first ever [fully virtual Human Rights Defender Advocacy Programme](#) – providing training, strategic advice and advocacy support to 19 defenders over a 12 week period.
- Working with the African Commission on Human & Peoples’ Rights to conduct its [first ever virtual session and to develop and adopt a landmark resolution](#) on a human rights-based approach to COVID-19 in Africa
- Contributing to the UN Security Council’s first ever [dedicated discussion on reprisals and intimidation](#) against women human rights defenders and peacebuilders
- Strengthening our own governance, transparency, accountability and sustainability, including through the establishment of a Working Group on Wellbeing and a Working Group on Non-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion which reports both to the Director and directly to the Board.



Collective success

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

Phil Lynch - Executive Director

Vrinda Grover - Chair of the ISHR Board

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

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