



UNIVERSITY
OF OSLO

DEVELOPING KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTITUDES

Norwegian Centre for Human Rights
International Department



Regards from the team



In a world where human rights are increasingly under pressure, our commitment to making independent and high-quality knowledge accessible remains unwavering.

The International Department of the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights creates space for challenging discussions, breaking down knowledge barriers to enlightened debates on rights.

Our collaborators span academic and government institutions, United Nations bodies, individual practitioners, and civil society actors, and all our collaborations promote human rights in practice by developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes. With over 30 years of experience in international programming, we support change-makers who drive progress.

Our foundations are trust, long-term commitment, and respect for universal human rights, as well as openness towards the particularities of local contexts. We strive to reduce unequal access to resources and knowledge in all our endeavours.

We are proud to present this report, showcasing achievements made possible by the impactful work of our partners, colleagues, and donors. As we look to the future, this gives us a sense of excitement and optimism.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership.

—NCHR International Department



Promoting Human Rights internationally

Rule of Law



NCHR strengthens human rights knowledge among core actors within a country's chain of justice, including judges, prosecutors, and police. We develop standards and curricula on investigative interviewing that aim to contribute to preventing torture and judicial errors. In Indonesia, we work to develop human rights knowledge within the courts as well as with non-state actors such as human rights lawyers, academic institutions, and legal aid organisations.

Human Rights Education



NCHR offers courses and tuition in human rights, and helps develop quality-ensured curricula at important educational institutions. Our partners are local universities and experts who teach members of civil society, officials, and various professional groups, such as police, lawyers, and journalists. We work on strengthening knowledge of the UN Human Rights Mechanisms within civil society, promoting human rights in domestic contexts, and increasing the legitimacy of the international human rights system globally.

Religion and Human Rights



NCHR is the home of the Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief (OC). Established in 1999, the OC promotes freedom of religion or belief (FORB) by facilitating discursive spaces for scholars, religious leaders, civil servants, experts, and activists in the exploration of contemporary FORB-related topics, by issuing publications containing scientific research and resource materials for those working to advance FORB, and by teaching and building competence on FORB in cooperation with partners.

Business and Human Rights



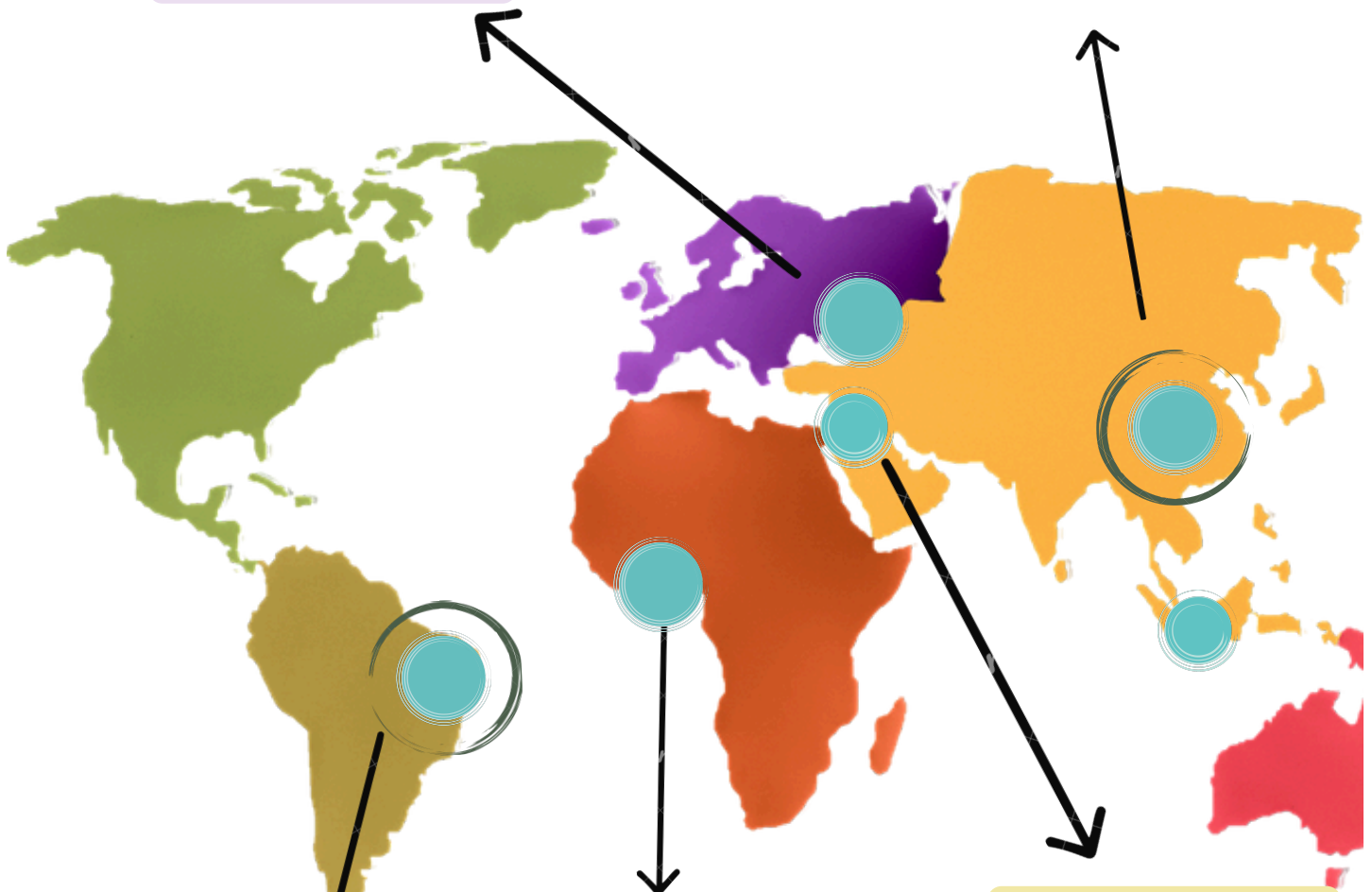
The expanding influence and impact of business enterprises have led to increased attention to their roles and responsibilities in relation to human rights. The NCHR seeks to advance knowledge on business and human rights among academics, government officials, and private-sector representatives. By offering master's courses and PhD opportunities, and through academic publications, seminars, and international collaboration, the NCHR provides a knowledge-based foundation for addressing human rights and business.

NCHR around the world



In Europe, most of our work is directed at projects in **Georgia** and **Ukraine**, although over the years we have worked with participants and partners in 14 countries in the region.

In Asia, most of our work has been related to **China, Indonesia**, and **Thailand**. We actively include other partners in **the ASEAN region** and work with partners in **20 countries** there.



Our projects on rule of law in **Brazil** have spread across the **Latin American** and **Pacific region**, where we now have collaborations in seven countries.

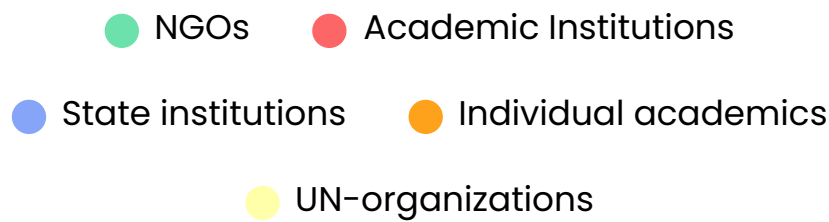
We work with partners in 9 countries in Africa, most notably our collaborations in **Nigeria** on freedom of religion or belief.

NCHR's projects in the **Middle East** largely concern religious courts in Lebanon and Jordan. Additionally, we have partners in seven other countries in the MENA region.

Who we work with



We work with a range of state institutions and non-governmental bodies. However, it is the work of passionate individuals that generates change and development within our projects, whatever the field. Through such people, we access the networks, knowledge, and personal engagement that we depend on to achieve our goals.





If the rules are too rigid and discriminatory, change them!

When Professor He Xia first applied for an undergraduate degree at universities in China, she was rejected on the grounds that she was too short to be a student.

At first she was shocked. She did not think China had a gender discrimination problem. This was before she started to research the impact of such discrimination in the country. In 2007 she received her doctoral degree and today she is an associate professor of law in southwestern China.

Discrimination remains a persistent problem, and the NCHR supports research and education activities promoting gender equality and women's rights in China.

Professor He Xia participated in a NCHR training program in 2017:

“

The NCHR training on gender and human rights that I attended gave me motivation and inspiration to set up my own university course for students. It also gave me a new framework and the necessary network for support.



Now Professor Xia teaches gender and law at the Southwestern University of Finance and Economics. She is also research director at the university's Anti-discrimination Research Centre. Hers are among the 10 most popular university courses, and she has won several awards in national teaching competitions. Since 2019 she has acted as an expert lecturer for NCHR-supported training workshops, specializing in approaches to domestic violence and teaching methods for younger university teachers.

Among several other prizes, Professor Xia has been awarded the title of “National Outstanding Individual for Protecting the Rights and Interests of Women and Children” and “National Woman Pace-setter” by the All-China Women's Federation in 2017 and 2018. She has also served as a member of the expert group for Promoting the Implementation of the ILO Convention No. 111 in China.

Working on discrimination and human rights issues can be challenging, but Professor Xia has found ways to manoeuvre within the existing space.

“

My solution-based approach seems to be working and leading to change in China. I focus on making change happen.”



A new voice in the field of religion and human rights

As part of a religious minority in Georgia, Emilya often experiences discrimination. Through her work she challenges existing norms and contributes to creating a space for dialogue among young people across religious divides.

In 2023 the Oslo Coalition/NCHR, together with the Tolerance and Diversity Institute (TDI) based in Tbilisi, held the first workshop on freedom of religion or belief in Georgia. Emilya was already interested in the themes, related to the human rights of women and ethnic minorities, and as a Muslim in a Christian-majority country she had often experienced discrimination and stigma. As a participant, Emilya did not expect the workshop to lead her in a new career direction. Today Emilya holds her own FORB workshops for other young people as well as church communities. She has utilized materials and teaching techniques from the Oslo Coalition/NCHR to start challenging conversations. The feedback has been largely positive, and participants find Emilya's courses to be an eye-opener.



“Many people lack knowledge about the right to freedom of religion or belief, including the fact that it is a fundamental human right. For example, many people don't know that freedom of religion or belief also entails the right not to believe.”

The Oslo Coalition/NCHR and TDI continue to develop and offer courses on FORB in Georgia, in the belief that competence on religion and human rights can motivate and create space for dialogue and cooperation around common interests.

“It is important for minorities to know their rights and be able to claim them.”





Highlighting Indonesia's roots in Human Rights

Eko Riyadi advocates for enforcing human rights through the national legal system. One major challenge is the perception of human rights as a Western construct that stands in opposition to traditional Indonesian values. However, Eko argues that human rights go hand in hand with the founding principles of the Indonesian nation.

“

Human rights principles are not new, they were just described in different terms historically.



Eko has been a friend and colleague of NCHR for more than 20 years, as NCHR has cooperated with his institution, the Centre for Human Rights Studies at the Islamic University of Indonesia (Pusham UII), since the early 2000s.

During this time he has become one of Indonesia's leading human rights scholars. Together, we have been engaged in the training of university lecturers and judges, the development of textbooks, and more. Outside the cooperation with NCHR, Pusham UII is also working with the police to address the rights of people with disabilities.

Mainstreaming human rights is one of Eko's main missions. His experience is that the Indonesian legal system is very departmentalised, and that human rights are often seen as a separate topic that is peripheral to how law is understood. He therefore seeks to influence Indonesian law faculties to understand human rights as an integral part of all types of law.

Among Eko's accomplishments is the first Indonesian textbook on human rights, published in 2008 as a collaboration between Pusham UII and NCHR. It has sold over 7000 copies so far and has been cited more than 600 times.

When speaking about his cooperation with NCHR, Eko emphasizes the many human rights trainings held for academics and legal practitioners.

“

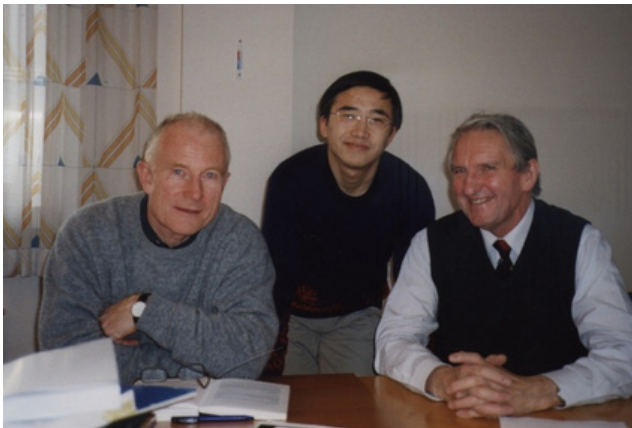
Those trainings were unique because they gave us the opportunity to understand human rights as an academic field, but also as a concept that can be applied in practice.





One of the first NCHR students is now a prominent human rights expert in China

In 1999 Xiaohui Liang came across a call for applications from NCHR. He applied and was accepted as one of the first students at the NCHR masters' programme on the theory and practice of human rights.



He is now one of the best-known experts in business and human rights in China, having taught the business and human rights (BHR) course at Peking University Law School since 2006. In 2016, Dr. Liang was recognized by the UN Global Compact as one of the world's first 10 Pioneers in Sustainability Development Goals.

He is now deputy chief economist at the China National Textile Information Centre and chief researcher at the Office for Social Responsibility, China National Textile and Apparel Council. Dr. Liang has had an interesting journey as one of the first in the field in China, and his knowledge has been in high demand:

“

China has been one of the fastest growing economies for decades, and Chinese business has been flourishing domestically and internationally since 1999. This makes the work on business and human rights in China even more relevant and interesting, because we get to affect companies and policies in and beyond China.

Dr. Liang says that many stakeholders are doing a formidable effort in implementing a human rights approach in their businesses. He also points out that challenges remain, such as the conflict between stakeholders' increasing expectations and businesses' low-level awareness and capacity to manage human rights impacts.

“

“I now have two hats on: one is in academia and knowledge development, and the other is in the practical implementation, working with industries and companies to help them reach international standards on business and human rights. I see both as equally important.”

The voluntary system of the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights works on some measurable and fundamental aspects, such as consensus building and instrumentality popularization, says Dr. Liang. However, he thinks the current rise of mandatory initiatives reflects the gap in pacing and efficacy between the BHR vision and the harsh reality. He therefore believes a collaborative governance system embracing both approaches is needed at domestic and international levels to serve the purposes of business and of human rights.

Dr. Liang wrote the first academic monograph on business and human rights in Chinese, titled *Business and Human Rights: From Legal Regulation to Collaborative Governance* (Peking University Press, 2019). He serves on the editorial board of Cambridge University's *Business and Human Rights* journal and has many other commitments within academia and beyond. At the forefront of knowledge development and exchange in the field, he also prioritizes good practice.



South to South: Sharia and human rights

How did a book on Indonesian law, developed through the support of the Oslo Coalition/NCHR and ICLRS/Brigham Young University, lead to the creation of a masters course on Islamic law and human rights in Nigeria?

NCHR has several stories of synergies created among partners in different countries. One involves a book with a very special journey.

The idea of creating a forum for constructive dialogue between Islamic law and human rights led to an expert conference on the development of a high-quality masters-level course. In exploring the relationship between Islamic legal theory and the human rights regime, the conference set up an informal working group to plan the course—intended to be teachable at any university, anywhere in the world—on the intersections, harmonies, and conflicts between sharia and human rights, particularly within the Indonesian context.

Titled “Sharia and Human Rights: Background and Core Issues in Contemporary Indonesia,” it launched at the Muhammadiyah University in Malang, Indonesia, in 2011 and was taught there again in 2012, 2013, and 2014. In 2015, the course was replicated with some changes at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, where it continues to be taught today.

After a few years of offering the masters-level course, the Indonesian organizers, in collaboration with representatives from the Oslo Coalition and the International Center for Law and Religion Studies, decided to formalize some of its content into a textbook. This would be useful for other professors interested in teaching courses on sharia and human rights, religion and human rights, and related topics. *Sharia and Human Rights: A Coursebook* is a bilingual volume available in English and Bahasa Indonesia, ensuring its accessibility to a wider audience inside and outside Indonesia.

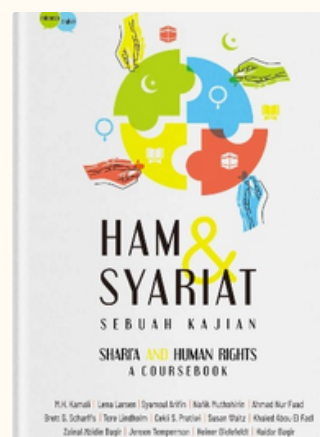
From Indonesia to Nigeria

The interplay between sharia law and human rights is a subject of discourse globally, not least in multi-religious societies like Nigeria. In response to the growing need for a nuanced understanding of this dynamic, Bauchi State University has introduced a masters course on sharia and human rights, tailored to the Nigerian context and drawing on the rich content of *Sharia and Human Rights: A Coursebook*, published in Indonesia. The academically rigorous program is designed to equip students with the tools to contribute meaningfully to the ongoing dialogue on human rights in legal environment shaped by sharia.

“

By adapting this course to Nigeria’s distinct legal, cultural, and religious landscape, we have crafted a curriculum that not only explores the theoretical underpinnings of sharia and human rights but also emphasizes practical, policy-oriented solutions.

—Ahmed Garba, Dean, Faculty of Law, Bauchi University





Transforming law enforcement: Brazilian policing adopts investigative interviewing



The landscape of Brazilian law enforcement is undergoing a significant transformation.

NCHR partner CogJus has pioneered efforts to introduce “investigative interviewing,” a human-rights-compliant method of questioning subjects that relies on building rapport rather than resorting to coercion, to police forces in Brazil. The method is reflected in the six Méndez Principles, drawing from the work of UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Juan E. Méndez.

In 2018, a collaboration between NCHR, prominent psychologists in Rio Grande do Sul, and São Paulo’s police academy marked the beginning of a comprehensive shift. The subsequent establishment of CogJus, a network bridging academic research and policing, allowed for the spread of investigative interviewing, which expanded to seven states by 2022. By 2024, all 27 Brazilian states have committed to adopting the methodology after carrying out consultations with the Ministry of Justice and the federal police.

The adoption of these practices marked a notable shift from the confrontational tactics that previously dominant in Brazil.

“

“After the course, I kept thinking how many times during an interrogation I tried to observe the suspect’s behaviour—to catch a lie—when I should be paying attention to what the suspect was telling me. That would be much more important. I have no doubt that this knowledge will help in investigations. —the director of a Brazilian state police academy

One clear success story can be observed in Santa Catarina, where police have observed a strong correlation between the new interview methods and record-high clearance rates.

The implication is clear: ethical interviewing not only upholds human rights but is also effective in solving serious crimes. Beyond South Brazil, other regions have also embraced the change — from Goiás to Bahia, changes in police training and interviewing methods reflect a national movement towards more human rights compliant and reliable law enforcement.



Indonesia's National Police Commission recommends nation-wide implementation of investigative interviewing

Parallel to the project in Brazil, NCHR has worked with Indonesian police and provided several trainings in investigative interviewing. A long-term commitment for the NCHR, the work in Indonesia has been ongoing for the past 12 years.

The National Police Commission is now recommending the implementation of investigative interviewing and designated interview rooms for all police stations at province and district level across the country.

This is not only a testament to the innovative work done by in the Wonosobo district, where the first interview room was built, but a confirmation of the value of investigative interviewing methods in securing human-rights-compliant policing.



Kompolnas Apresiasi Polres Wonosobo Telah Menerapkan Investigative Interviewing



Read more (Indonesian): <https://t.ly/PrfoY>



An integral aspect of NCHR's work is the incorporation of a gender-sensitive approach. Strides have been made to ensure equality among police trainers and to conscientiously address inherent biases within the interviewing process. This helps guarantee the fair treatment of all individuals, irrespective of gender, and acknowledges the need for progressive change within traditional law enforcement.

Overall, NCHR's work in Brazil and Indonesia is reshaping the dialogue around policing, steering it towards internationally recognized human rights standards and illustrating the potential for education and international cooperation to reform entrenched systems. The impact extends beyond these two countries, providing a model for law enforcement that respects individual rights and fosters a culture of ethical practice globally.



The first UN Manual on Investigative Interviewing published



In February 2024, the Under Secretary-General of the Department of Peace Operations, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime all endorsed the first **UN manual on investigative interviewing for criminal investigations**. It spells out the fundamental principles, concepts, and approaches to non-coercive interviewing based on international human rights and criminal justice standards.

NCHR acted as the secretariat for the manual's development.

The manual not only serves as a guiding document for UN Police (UNPOL) to conduct ethical interviews but also establishes a system-wide foundational resource for police capacity-building and development initiatives in criminal investigation. Additionally, the manual is intended to inform the UN's wider efforts to support national law-enforcement agencies in implementing their mandates in line with international human rights obligations.

“

This guidance serves as a fundamental resource for police development and reform initiatives across the United Nations system. It is an effective resource for promulgating international good practices in criminal investigation and advancing human rights-based policing globally.

– **Faisal Shahkar**, UN Police Adviser and Director of the Police Division, Police Commissioner



Effective Practical Ethical Sensitive

The manual provides a practical introduction to investigative interviewing, an effective, ethical, sensitive and human rights compliant approach to interviewing victims, witnesses and suspects of crime.



Watch video: tinyurl.com/UN-Manual

The methodical approach to ethical interviewing outlined in the manual represents an evolution of the PEACE model, refined through experience and new research. On the one hand it is founded on normative legal frameworks that prohibit torture and other forms of ill-treatment, and on the other hand it is based on the Méndez Principles, which establish for the first time the minimum international requirements for good practice in lawful interviewing.

The manual will be instrumental in promulgating the essential principles of presumption of innocence and freedom from arbitrary arrest, torture, and other ill-treatment, as guaranteed by international human rights law and articulated in the UNPOL's Strategic Guidance Framework for International Policing (SGF).

NCHR in partnership with the UN and the Norwegian Permanent Missions to the UN in New York and Vienna hosted and organised two launch events for the Manual in 2024.

“

Congratulations on this monumental accomplishment! I'm grateful for all of the efforts of the NCHR, as a proponent for what will be, a profound change in global policing practice.

– **Mark Fallon**, former NCIS special agent and Homeland Security Senior Executive.



Scan/click me to
[access the manual](#)



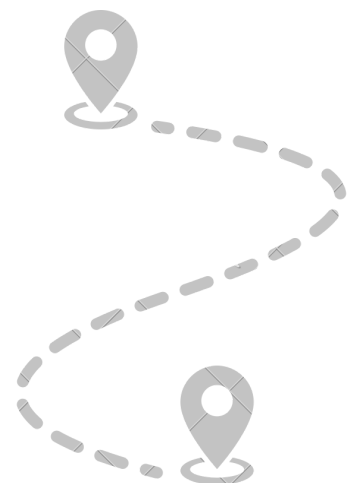
Judges from Lebanese religious courts agree on a roadmap for improving human rights standards



Leading judges from the six largest religious groups in Lebanon have endorsed a roadmap for including human rights standards in the work of the courts. This milestone follows a one-year pilot project for which NCHR facilitated workshops and roundtable meetings for judges and attorneys.

Representatives from the six types of court drafted a roadmap that identifies challenges and objectives for improving the human rights standards of the courts. In 2023, this roadmap was endorsed by court heads and plans have been made to accomplish its ambitious goals.

Expanding to a regional scale



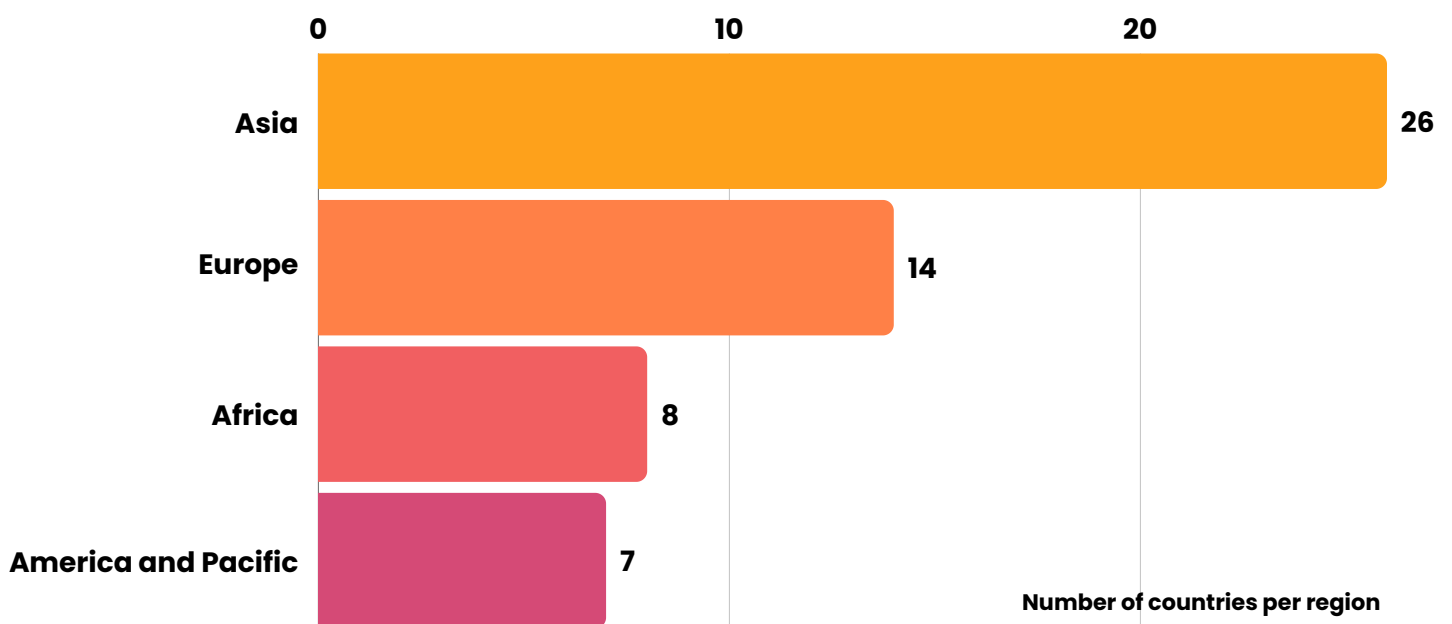
NCHR will continue its work with religious courts in the years to come. In 2024 it has expanded the project to a regional scale: by starting a similar process in Jordan, the aim is to create synergies in the region among religious courts, civil society, and academics across borders.

Recent results in numbers

Between 2022–2023 NCHR contributed to over



In more than 50 countries around the world



About the University of Oslo

As a leading European university, the University of Oslo has shaped Norwegian society for over 200 years. It is Norway's oldest and highest-ranked educational and research institution, and is now home to 28,000 students and 7000 employees. With its broad range of academic disciplines and internationally recognised research communities, UiO is an important contributor to society. Through knowledge, responsibility, and commitment, UiO is helping build a sustainable future.

Its Faculty of Law, the country's oldest and largest educational and research institution in the field of law, educates about 75% of all new legal candidates in Norway and acts as a work and study place for about 400 employees and 4200 students. In addition to its national masters program in law, the faculty holds international masters programmes in criminology, the law of the sea, public international law, and the theory and practice of human rights.

About the centre

The Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (NCHR) is an academic interdisciplinary centre at the University of Oslo's Faculty of Law. Through research, teaching, and dissemination, the NCHR promotes human rights as an academic field while strengthening its own international position as a central actor and useful partner within human rights. NCHR has about 30 employees, 80 masters students, and an active guest-researcher program.

Cutting-edge research

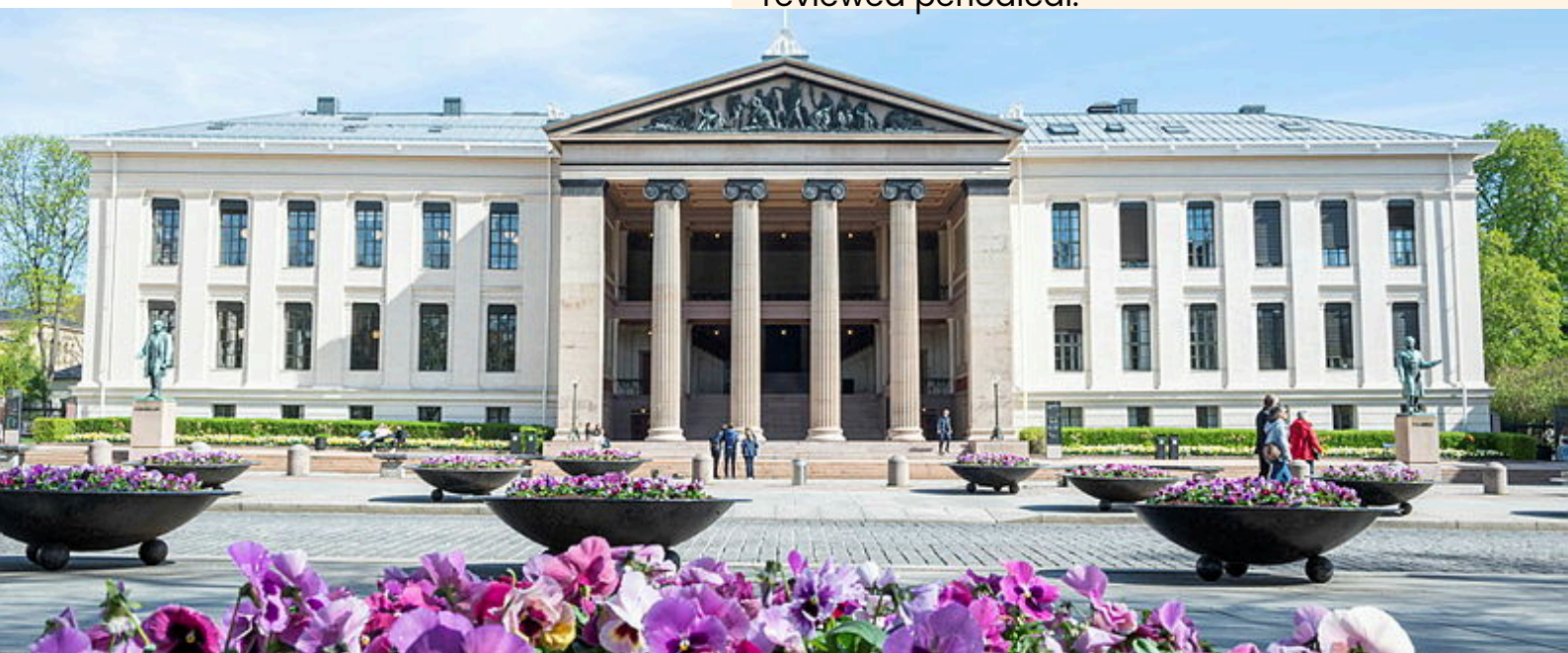
NCHR continually generates new research that helps resolve domestic and global human rights challenges.

Education

NCHR offers several educational programmes, most crucially the two-year masters qualification titled "The Theory and Practice of Human Rights," an annual one-week intensive course in human rights, research training, and PhD opportunities. It is also involved in teaching human rights and international humanitarian law for law and other students at the University of Oslo.

Publishing

NCHR publishes the Nordic Journal of Human Rights, an internationally esteemed peer-reviewed periodical.



Meet the team



**RITA FURUSETH
SANDBERG**

**Head of the International
Department**
r.f.sandberg@nchr.uio.no



DR. LENA LARSEN

Director, Oslo Coalition
Religion and Human
Rights
lena.larsen@nchr.uio.no



YI WANG

Senior Adviser
Human Rights Education
yi.wang@nchr.uio.no



CECILIE FIGENSCOU BAKKE

Programme Director
Global China, Human
Rights Education and
Women's Rights
c.f.bakke@nchr.uio.no



SUSANNE H. FLØLO

Senior Adviser
Rule of Law, Thailand,
UN Cooperation
s.h.flolo@nchr.uio.no



JENNIE HOLCK-CLAUSEN

Senior Adviser
Religion and Human
Rights, Asia, Brazil, Georgia
and Nigeria
jenniemh@uio.no



AKSEL TØMTE

Senior Adviser
Rule of Law, Indonesia,
Human Rights Education
aksel.tomte@nchr.uio.no



JULIE VIKER AANENSEN

Adviser
Rule of Law, Middle-East &
UN Human Rights
Mechanisms
j.v.aanensen@nchr.uio.no



KNUT D. ASPLUND

Acting
Rule of Law, Indonesia
k.d.asplund@nchr.uio.no



GISLE KVANVIG

**Head of Multilateral
Cooperation**
Rule of Law
gisle.kvanvig@nchr.uio.no



**KATARINA LAVRINENKO
FRIIS-OLSEN**

Senior Executive Officer
Investigative Interviewing
in Ukraine
k.l.friis-olsen@nchr.uio.no

CONTACT

Visiting address: Domus Juridica, Kristian
Augusts gate 17, 0164 Oslo
Postal address: P.O. Box 6706, St. Olavs plass
NO-0130 Oslo, Norway
info@nchr.uio.no
www.jus.uio.no/smr/english/about/id

SOCIAL MEDIA



[UniOslo.smr](#)



[Linkedin](#)



[Newsletter](#)