

# Human Rights Watch



## Strategic Plan

*The Netherlands*  
***Fiscal Year 2026 – 2025/2026***  
***&***  
***Fiscal Year 2027 – 2026/2027***

*Updated July 2025*

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## 1. Introduction

Human Rights Watch, Inc. is a nonprofit, nongovernmental human rights organization made up of around 475 staff members around the globe, representing over 80 nationalities and a variety of backgrounds.

Human Rights Watch, Inc. is headquartered in New York and has a network of around 30 regional offices around the world that share its name (hereinafter “Human Rights Watch”), including Stichting (Foundation) Human Rights Watch Nederland.

Our staff of human rights lawyers, journalists, and academics are experts on over 100 countries and territories that we cover through our work. Established in 1978, Human Rights Watch is known for its accurate fact-finding, impartial reporting, and targeted advocacy, often in partnership with local human rights groups. Watch a [video](#) about Human Rights Watch and how we work.

## 2. Mission Statement

Human Rights Watch defends the rights of people worldwide. We scrupulously investigate abuses, expose the facts widely, and urge those with power to respect rights and secure justice. We are an independent, international organization that works as part of a vibrant movement to uphold human dignity and advance the cause of human rights for all. Our work is guided by international human rights and humanitarian law and respect for the dignity of each human being.

## 3. Core Values

Human Rights Watch is:

- **Committed to promoting equality, dignity, and justice worldwide.** Our work is grounded in standards contained in international human rights law, humanitarian law, criminal law, and refugee law. In applying these standards, we are guided by those most affected and by our partners, as well as by the principles of dignity, equality, and justice.
- **Independent.** We maintain neutrality in armed conflict, do not endorse political parties or candidates, and focus on promoting and advancing human rights rather than pursuing partisan agendas. We do not accept government funds, directly or indirectly, or support from any private funder that could compromise our objectivity, independence, or reputation.
- **Accurate, Objective, Transparent, and Ethical.** We maintain high standards in our research, communications, and advocacy to ensure that HRW investigates, assesses, and presents information that is accurate and impartial. We uphold high standards of ethics when engaging with victims, witnesses, partners, and others; responsibly collect data; and strive for transparency regarding our methodology, structure, and funding.

- **Focused on impact.** In pursuing our work, we focus on impact, whether immediate or in the long term. Incremental progress can sometimes involve curtailing or preventing worsening rights situations. We succeed when we contribute to positive and sustainable changes to laws and policies and their implementation, as well as concrete improvements in people's lives, through our direct work and in consultation and collaboration with others
- **Engagement with diverse moments for change.** Through mutual respect and reciprocity whenever possible, we seek active and sustained partnerships with a diverse range of activists and movements, especially those most affected by abuses and groups working alongside them. We work to defend civil society from attack, magnify the work of partners, and help secure the space that they require to operate.

## 4. Objectives

By investigating human rights violations, exposing them in the media, and advocating for improvements, we seek to make a positive change in the world. To achieve this, we must be responsive and nimble, able to leap into action quickly to respond to breaking events and document human rights abuses as they are occurring. Our ultimate goal is to protect and promote human rights for all people, especially those most vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. We elevate the voices of those who do not have the power to speak for themselves. We fight for the vulnerable, and we engage the powerful in their defense.

### How we prioritize and plan

We respond to and affect urgent developments as events unfold. At the same time, we undertake long-term, in-depth projects that break new ground and build a case for engagement in circumstances characterized by chronic repression, abuse, or neglect. We prioritize situations where the number of people affected is significant, the abuses are serious, there is an opportunity to move an influential regional or global actor, and Human Rights Watch's methodology and global platform can add value. We consult with those most affected and with partner organizations to select projects and shape our advocacy to understand how we can best support their efforts and where we can be most effective. We design all our projects to put a human face to ongoing harms so that powerful actors with authority to make change are forced to see the people their action—or lack of action—is affecting.

To prepare for the unexpected, Human Rights Watch has top-level researchers on our Crisis and Conflict team who can be deployed at a moment's notice. This capacity for emergency response means that Human Rights Watch may be the first or only organization reporting from the ground in conflict situations.

### Key programs

Human Rights Watch is organized both by region—Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe and Central Asia, Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and the US—and by theme—Children's Rights, Crisis, Conflict and Arms, Disability Rights, Economic Justice and Rights, Environment and Human Rights, Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, and Bisexual (LGBT) Rights, Refugees and Migrants, International Justice, Technology and Rights, and Women's Rights.

## 5. Methodology

Human Rights Watch is a leader in impartial documentation, wide exposure of violations, and effective advocacy that leads to concrete, on the ground change that improves the day-to-day lives of people around the globe. Our methodology to defend human rights consists of three steps:



Human Rights Watch **investigates** rights violations in some 100 countries, often in partnership with local groups. We interview victims and witnesses and use satellite data, drone imagery, and open-source material to compile accounts that will stand the test of time.

Human Rights Watch **exposes abuses and shares** its findings to the broadest possible audience, sharing compelling publications and powerful visual content with global media outlets—which cite our work nearly 1,200 times a day—and 14 million social media followers.

Human Rights Watch presses those in and with power for rights-respecting **change**. We mobilize the public through innovative campaigns, offer policymakers realistic solutions, and monitor the implementation of reforms.

## 6. Achievements

Our methodology has yielded significant impact:

- In addition to our Nobel-prize winning coalition work on the **international landmine ban**, we built political support for an international treaty **banning cluster munitions**, which are indiscriminate weapons that frequently maim or kill civilians.
- We wrote the **definitive history of the genocide in Rwanda** and testified as expert witnesses at the international tribunal, where those responsible for atrocities were being tried.
- We made a strong case for establishing a permanent court to prosecute the most heinous crimes in the world. We played a lead role in the founding of the **International Criminal Court**.

We have earned a reputation as a leading human rights defender because of our ability to take on a broad spectrum of human rights concerns—from discrimination to genocide. We

work to mainstream the rights of marginalized people and include them in the larger human rights framework, including women; children; LGBT people; people with disabilities; and victims of abuses related to the environment.

## **7. Evaluation**

Human Rights Watch is committed to rigorous, transparent, and consistent monitoring and self-evaluation. When looking at impact, the Human Rights Watch network determines whether it has met its goals to bring about positive change for those facing human rights violations. Human Rights Watch considers input on progress from key interlocutors, national human rights partners, and critics. They gauge how effectively they have allocated resources. To ensure that the Human Rights Watch network reaches the highest standards of accuracy and objectivity in its research and achieves the greatest impact from its advocacy, it engages in self-evaluation throughout the year.

Often, since it takes a great deal of time to bring entrenched human rights violations to an end, Human Rights Watch considers interim criteria for evaluation. These include:

- whether we have succeeded in generating prominent press coverage about the violations investigated;
- whether governments acted on these revelations by protesting the violations or exerting diplomatic or economic pressure on the abusive government;
- whether we succeeded in building or protecting outspoken opposition to violations;
- whether and how governments engage with the Human Rights Watch network or adopt and implement new policies to address the violations it identifies and documents;
- whether efforts are reflected in support from public media and donors; and
- whether the violations we have investigated and reported on decrease or come to an end.

Fundraising success is measured by whether we raise the operating budget each year. A leadership gifts team focuses on the strategy for exceptional gifts of USD \$50K+, while a team of four managing directors each oversee a portfolio of city directors, including the Netherlands director. Each city/country office determines its own goals in coordination with her/his managing director.

All Human Rights Watch employees are required to set annual goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and tangible. Annual performance reviews are completed for each employee by their supervisor, evaluating whether the employee is on track to realize those goals. Netherlands staff meet weekly to review all current projects and ensure efficient collaboration.

## **8. Beneficiaries**

The primary beneficiaries of Human Rights Watch's work are victims of human rights abuses or those at risk of having their rights violated. Local nonprofit organizations and civil society actors also benefit from our work, as we seek to protect their rights to operate freely and to improve the human rights environment in which they work. We use our reputation as an

internationally respected human rights organization to amplify the voices of local and regional civil society actors by connecting them with policymakers or funders to whom they may not otherwise have access.

As one of our target audiences, policymakers are well served by our timely reporting and advocacy. They often call on us for analysis in complex and fast-moving situations such as the refugee crisis in Europe. Our work elucidates complex situations from a human rights perspective, bringing to light little-known rights abuses and providing policymakers with concrete, realistic recommendations to address the issue. Media outlets also frequently turn to us for our analysis and insight on human rights stories. Our increasing use of multimedia plays a helpful role for media outlets, many of whom have had their foreign reporting budgets cut, by providing pre-packaged products—such as video, audio clips, and photo essays—that can be easily incorporated into their programming.

## **9. Human Rights Watch in The Netherlands**

Stichting Human Rights Watch Nederland (“the Foundation”) was founded in November 1996. It has ANBI charity status in the Netherlands and is part of the international Human Rights Watch organization.

### **Our registration information is:**

KvK-number: 41216606

Fiscal/RSIN number: 816121977

### **Contact details:**

Stichting Human Rights Watch Nederland

Email: [Netherlands@hrw.org](mailto:Netherlands@hrw.org)

Website: <https://www.hrw.org/about/get-local/netherlands>

### **9.1 Objectives Stichting Human Rights Watch Nederland**

The general goal of the Foundation is to defend human rights and support the work of Human Rights Watch, as follows:

- a. Protecting human rights around the world in times of war and peace by documenting violations, publishing the findings, and using this information to stop the violations and prevent violations in the future; and
- b. Undertaking any other educational, humanitarian, literary, or scientific activities in this context.

The specific objectives of the Foundation are:

- a. Fundraising to support the worldwide operations of Human Rights Watch; and
- b. Advocacy and communication initiatives supporting the work of Human Rights Watch.

The Foundation’s primary purpose is to raise money in the Netherlands to support the worldwide operations and programs of Human Rights Watch. In January 2009 the

Netherlands Committee of Human Rights Watch was founded, a group of volunteers who support the office through fundraising, outreach, and advocacy initiatives. The group had 30 members in June 2025.

## 9.2 Organizational Structure

In September 2010, Human Rights Watch opened its Netherlands office in order to support the work of Human Rights Watch worldwide, as well as to intensify its advocacy on key global human rights issues.

### Employees

As of June 2025, the staff in the Netherlands office working on fundraising, outreach, and advocacy consists of a Netherlands Director, Manager, and Associate.

Also based in the Netherlands are a Senior Operations Manager, Senior Associate Director (Foundations), and Senior Officer (Executive).

### Board of Directors

Chair:	Minjon Tholen - <i>Director of Diversity, Equity &amp; Inclusion, HRW</i>
Secretary and Treasurer:	Marusya Lazo – <i>Chief Financial Officer, HRW</i>
Member:	Janet Visbeen - <i>Partner, PricewaterhouseCoopers</i>

### External relationships

Since its founding, the Dutch team has strengthened relations with Dutch donors, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and multiple members of parliament, among others. Human Rights Watch Netherlands also bolsters domestic press coverage of human rights issues by preparing and distributing materials tailored to the Dutch media. Human Rights Watch's research, findings, and recommendations are covered weekly by leading Dutch news outlets, including *NOS Journaal* and *Nieuwsuur*. In addition, our researchers and advocates are frequently interviewed by a large variety of national news outlets, including *Trouw*, *de Volkskrant*, *NRC*, and *Telegraaf*.

## 9.3 Core activities and methods

The core activities of Stichting Human Rights Watch Nederland are development and outreach. The main fundraising event in the Netherlands is the bi-annual 'Voices for Justice' Dinner. Organizing this bi-annually provides our team with the resources and capacity to produce other key fundraising and outreach events, such as smaller dinners and other informative events. The revenue from our fundraising events supports the organization's work worldwide and constitutes a significant portion of the funds raised in the Netherlands. Beyond fundraising, these events deepen relationships with existing supporters, attract new supporters, and further develop Human Rights Watch's reputation in the Netherlands.

In addition to organizing the successful Voices for Justice Annual Dinners, the Dutch team regularly hosts smaller donor cultivation events with existing and prospective donors. These events, as well as the daily activities of the development team, have secured a significant amount of funding over the years. Donors include individuals, organizations, trusts, and foundations. The largest donor in the Netherlands is currently the Dutch Postcode Lottery, which has been supporting the organization since 2009.

The main outreach event in the Netherlands is a yearly collaboration with the International Documentary Festival Amsterdam (henceforth IDFA). During IDFA, the Stichting Human Rights Watch Nederland organizes movie screenings and panel discussions where Human Rights Watch researchers and advocates give firsthand accounts of their work alongside relevant documentaries. In November 2024 this consisted of a screening of the film “My Stolen Planet,” which tells the story of an Iranian woman navigating the contrast between domestic freedom and external oppression. The panel discussion that followed featured the film’s director Farahnaz Sharifi.

A crucial partner in Human Rights Watch’s development and outreach in the Netherlands is the Stichting Run for Human Rights Watch. This initiative was founded in 2009 by a group of enthusiastic young professionals with the support of the Netherlands Committee. As a part of this initiative, around 40 participants travel from the Netherlands to New York each year to participate in the New York City Marathon. In the lead up to the marathon, the group organizes fundraising and outreach events to raise funds and awareness for Human Rights Watch. The Brook Foundation generously matches Stichting Run for Human Rights Watch’s gift each year. Human Rights Watch supports Stichting Run for Human Rights Watch’s efforts, especially by providing experts to speak during its events.

## **10. Fundraising**

Human Rights Watch reserves the right to refuse donations from individuals or institutions if the organization determines that such funds might undermine Human Rights Watch’s credibility, independence, or reputation. To maintain its independence, Human Rights Watch does not accept government funding. Our work is supported entirely by private donations from a diverse, influential, and vibrant international community of supporters, including the Human Rights Watch Council—a network of over 1,000 philanthropists, investors, and influencers.

Human Rights Watch’s fundraising strategy is informed and guided by its program. Just as our programmatic work enlists top-level advocacy targets who can effect change (presidents, foreign ministers, party or rebel group leaders, legislators, and others in positions that allow them to directly make a difference), so is our fundraising strategy, designed to target donors who can most dramatically impact the organization. We strive to keep our global fundraising budget to less than 20 percent of the organization’s total budget, investing frugally but smartly into our fundraising operations. As our program colleagues have come to learn, such a strategy—reaching out to the few who can advance the cause most effectively—gives us the best results and represents the most efficient use of resources.

## **11. Managing Funds**

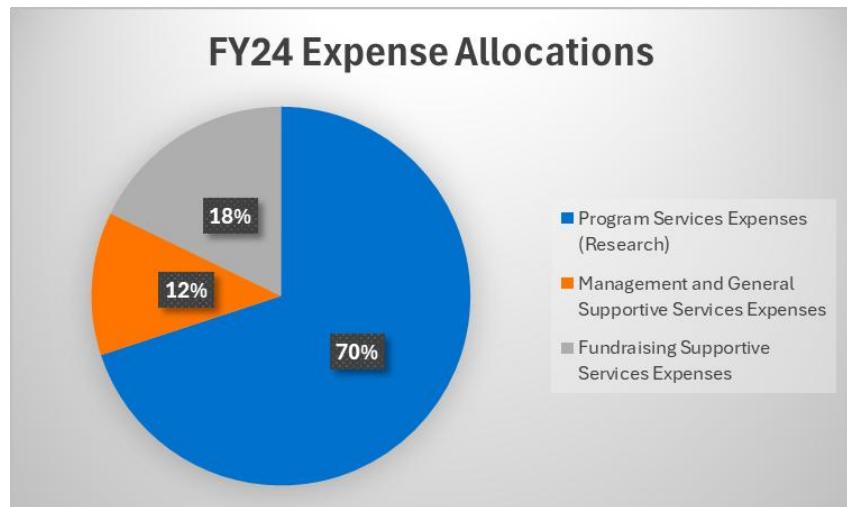
### **11.1 Managing Funds Globally**

Human Rights Watch seeks to adequately fund all planned activities of the organization in a reasonable and transparent manner. There are two broad types of revenue that support the strategic, operational, and programmatic activities core to the mission of the organization: unrestricted revenue and donor restricted revenue. Utilizing project-based budgeting to help manage grant projects and divisional budgets, HRW continuously tracks the funding of

individual projects and divisions. Once a project is fully funded by donor restricted revenue, additional received gifts are allocated to future fiscal years. Most work, however, is not fully funded by donor restricted revenue, and is partially supported by unrestricted revenue, as that provides HRW the discretion to allocate funds towards any work or funding gap throughout the organization.

Please find below the allocation of expenses and statement of activities of Human Rights Watch for fiscal year 2024, ended 30 June 2024.

For more financial statements and annual reports of Human Rights Watch, please visit <https://www.hrw.org/financials>.



**Human Rights Watch, Inc. and Subsidiaries**

**Consolidated Statement of Activities**

**Year Ended June 30, 2024**

	2024 USD			2024 Euro		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
<b>Public support and revenue:</b>						
Contributions and grants	\$ 26,589,947	\$ 35,002,936	\$ 61,592,883	€ 24,817,482	€ 32,669,668	€ 57,487,151
Contributed service and property revenue	4,616,631	-	4,616,631	4,308,890	-	4,308,890
Special events	18,678,333	-	18,678,333	17,433,250	-	17,433,250
Less direct cost of special events	(2,321,295)	-	(2,321,295)	(2,166,559)	-	(2,166,559)
<b>Total public support</b>	<b>47,563,616</b>	<b>35,002,936</b>	<b>82,566,552</b>	<b>44,393,063</b>	<b>32,669,668</b>	<b>77,062,732</b>
<b>Revenue:</b>						
Net investment return (loss)	1,377,628	17,709,733	19,087,361	1,285,796	16,529,216	17,815,013
Publications	5,011	-	5,011	4,677	-	4,677
Change in value of beneficial interest in split-interest agreements	(50,020)	-	(50,020)	(46,686)	-	(46,686)
Other	220,440	-	220,440	205,746	-	205,746
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>1,553,059</b>	<b>17,709,733</b>	<b>19,262,792</b>	<b>1,449,533</b>	<b>16,529,216</b>	<b>17,978,750</b>
<b>Net assets released from restrictions</b>	<b>66,117,236</b>	<b>(66,117,236)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>61,709,914</b>	<b>(61,709,914)</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total public support and revenue</b>	<b>115,233,911</b>	<b>(13,404,567)</b>	<b>101,829,344</b>	<b>107,552,511</b>	<b>(12,511,029)</b>	<b>95,041,481</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>						
Program services:						
Africa	8,545,509	-	8,545,509	7,975,872	-	7,975,872
Americas	3,798,676	-	3,798,676	3,545,459	-	3,545,459
Asia	10,934,103	-	10,934,103	10,205,244	-	10,205,244
Europe and Central Asia	8,055,816	-	8,055,816	7,518,822	-	7,518,822
Middle East and North Africa	8,287,038	-	8,287,038	7,734,631	-	7,734,631
United States	5,472,763	-	5,472,763	5,107,953	-	5,107,953
Children's rights	4,915,575	-	4,915,575	4,587,907	-	4,587,907
Women's rights	5,409,786	-	5,409,786	5,049,174	-	5,049,174
Disability rights	3,919,491	-	3,919,491	3,658,221	-	3,658,221
LGBT rights	2,574,481	-	2,574,481	2,402,868	-	2,402,868
Other programs	21,608,134	-	21,608,134	20,167,753	-	20,167,753
<b>Total program services</b>	<b>83,521,372</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>83,521,372</b>	<b>77,953,904</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>77,953,904</b>
Supporting services:						
Management and general	14,610,791	-	14,610,791	13,636,847	-	13,636,847
Fundraising	21,268,218	-	21,268,218	19,850,496	-	19,850,496
<b>Total supporting services</b>	<b>35,879,009</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>35,879,009</b>	<b>33,487,343</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>33,487,343</b>
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>119,400,381</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>119,400,381</b>	<b>111,441,247</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>111,441,247</b>
Change in net assets before foreign currency translation (loss) income	(4,166,470)	(13,404,567)	(17,571,037)	(3,888,737)	(12,511,029)	(16,399,766)
Foreign currency translation (loss) income	\$348,796	(718,423)	(369,627)	325,545	(670,533)	(344,988)
<b>Change in net assets</b>	<b>(3,817,674)</b>	<b>(14,122,990)</b>	<b>(17,940,664)</b>	<b>(3,563,191)</b>	<b>(13,181,563)</b>	<b>(16,744,754)</b>
<b>Net assets:</b>						
Beginning	9,939,801	213,590,472	223,530,273	9,277,222	199,352,702	208,629,924
<b>Ending</b>	<b>\$ 6,122,127</b>	<b>\$ 199,467,482</b>	<b>\$ 205,589,609</b>	<b>€ 5,714,031</b>	<b>€ 186,171,139</b>	<b>€ 191,885,170</b>

## 11.2 Managing funds in The Netherlands

The previously shared statistics concern the financials for our global organization. For more information about the financials of Stichting Human Rights Watch Nederland specifically, please consult the [Stichting Human Rights Watch Nederland Annual Report 2022-2023](#) and [Stichting Human Rights Watch Nederland Annual Report 2023-2024](#).

Stichting Human Rights Watch Netherlands works collaboratively with Human Rights Watch, Inc., to raise funds to support the overall work and objectives of Human Rights Watch Inc., globally. Throughout the year, the Foundation monitors the cashflow and funds needed for the continuity and earmarked reserve.

When there is a surplus, the foundation will request a fund transfer to Human Rights Watch Inc., with the condition that the cashflow requirement of the Foundation is kept. Before requesting a fund transfer it must be determined whether it concerns unrestricted and/or restricted funds.

### Unrestricted funds

The Foundation will request a funding proposal from the writing team at Human Rights Watch Inc. The Foundation will receive grant proposals for underfunded projects, which include a description of each project. The proposal must be in line with the statutes and overall priorities of Human Rights Watch Netherlands. Thereafter, the proposal is presented and submitted to the board of Stichting Human Rights Watch Nederland for approval. Once approved, the funds can be transferred to Human Rights Watch Inc.

### Restricted funds

The Foundation will present an overview including proof of restrictions to the Board for their approval. Once approved, the funds can be transferred to Human Rights Watch, Inc.