



IMPACT REPORT
HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH SWEDEN
SEPTEMBER 2021-SEPTEMBER 2022

HUMAN
RIGHTS
WATCH

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ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH SCANDINAVIA INSAMLINGSSTIFTELSEN

Human Rights Watch Scandinavia Insamlingsstiftelsen
Organisation number: 802478-1885
Legal Number status: Insamlingsstiftelse

Human Rights Watch Scandinavia Insamlingsstiftelsen (hereinafter HRW Sweden) was established in 2015 with a purpose to support high-level research and advocacy on human rights; bring Human Rights Watch's work to the attention of the Swedish public, the private sector, and the government; and intensify advocacy on key human rights issues both in Sweden and around the world. Establishing the first formal presence of Human Rights Watch in Scandinavia has been a critical step in enlisting Sweden's strong human rights culture to effect lasting improvements for victims of abuses worldwide. HRW Sweden collaborates closely with other parts of Human Rights Watch and shares its mission.

To accomplish its aims, HRW Sweden fundraises and organises larger public and smaller private events throughout the year. It promotes publicity for Human Rights Watch research through Sweden's media and supports a Swedish-language website (<https://www.hrw.org/sverige>). HRW Sweden regularly engages with Swedish decision-makers in government and other sectors as part of the organisation's advocacy work.



Nordic Director Måns Molander. © 2022 Human Rights Watch

HRW SWEDEN AND HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH'S WORK

Human Rights Watch Inc. is a nonprofit, nongovernmental human rights organisation that was established in 1978. Its headquarters in New York closely coordinates with a network of 13 independent sister charities that share its name (hereinafter “Human Rights Watch”), including HRW Sweden. This network encompasses 496 human rights professionals, including country experts, lawyers, journalists, and academics of diverse backgrounds and nationalities.



Visual content used in the reporting on war crimes in Idlib, “Targeting life in Idlib” © 2021 Human Rights Watch

Human Rights Watch is known for its accurate fact-finding, impartial reporting, effective use of media, and targeted advocacy, often in partnership with local civil society groups. Each year, Human Rights Watch publishes more than 1000 reports, dispatches, and briefings on human rights conditions in some 90 countries, generating extensive coverage in local and international media. With the leverage this brings, Human Rights Watch meets with governments, the United Nations, regional groups like the African Union

and the European Union, financial institutions, and corporations to press for changes in policy and practice that promote human rights and justice around the world. HRW Sweden participates in these activities whenever effective strategy calls for its involvement. For additional information about Human Rights Watch research on Sweden, please go to the Sweden country research page at <https://www.hrw.org/europe/central-asia/sweden>.



Human Rights Watch senior researcher Belkis Wille documents the remnant of a Tochka ballistic missile in Nova Basan in Chernihiv district, Ukraine, on April 16, 2022. Photo by Mariam Dwedat. © 2022 Human Rights Watch

HOW HRW SWEDEN AND HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH WORK



1. We investigate

HRW Sweden and Human Rights Watch are committed to systematically researching and analysing human rights conditions worldwide to uncover abuses. Researchers interview victims, witnesses, alleged perpetrators, local rights activists, and government officials to form an accurate and impartial picture of what happened. They also review media and academic reports, and domestic and international law and policy papers to gain a further understanding of the situation. In closed or conflict countries, we also draw on investigative tools such as remote sensing, geospatial techniques, and verified open source material.



2. We expose

Human Rights Watch is a media production and broadcasting powerhouse with the capacity to activate media coverage and mobilize audiences. All researchers in the Human Rights Watch network, including those serving HRW Sweden, publish their findings in the form of reports, articles, and multimedia. These are then made accessible to the public as well as local authorities to raise awareness of the abuses. The publications are available in multiple languages and formats and are often referenced in news articles worldwide. Our work is cited in the media some 6,000 times weekly.



3. We bring change

Following the identification and publication of human rights abuses, advocates for HRW Sweden and Human Rights Watch work closely with local authorities and organisations to advance credible policy solutions and apply pressure on those who abuse, profit from, or neglect human rights. We create spaces for partners and members of affected communities to speak directly to those in power. The ultimate goal of all advocates in the Human Rights Watch network is to ensure that human rights are upheld worldwide and to promote justice and change.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN SWEDEN

Since opening the Stockholm office in September 2015, HRW Sweden has hosted numerous events to grow its local community and further deepen its relationships with existing and potential supporters. HRW Sweden engages with key advocacy targets and media on a regular basis. Starting in 2016, HRW Sweden was selected as a beneficiary of the Swedish Postcode Lottery. Using funds raised in Sweden, HRW Sweden has supported and implemented several projects this past year, as described below. This report outlines impact from these projects.

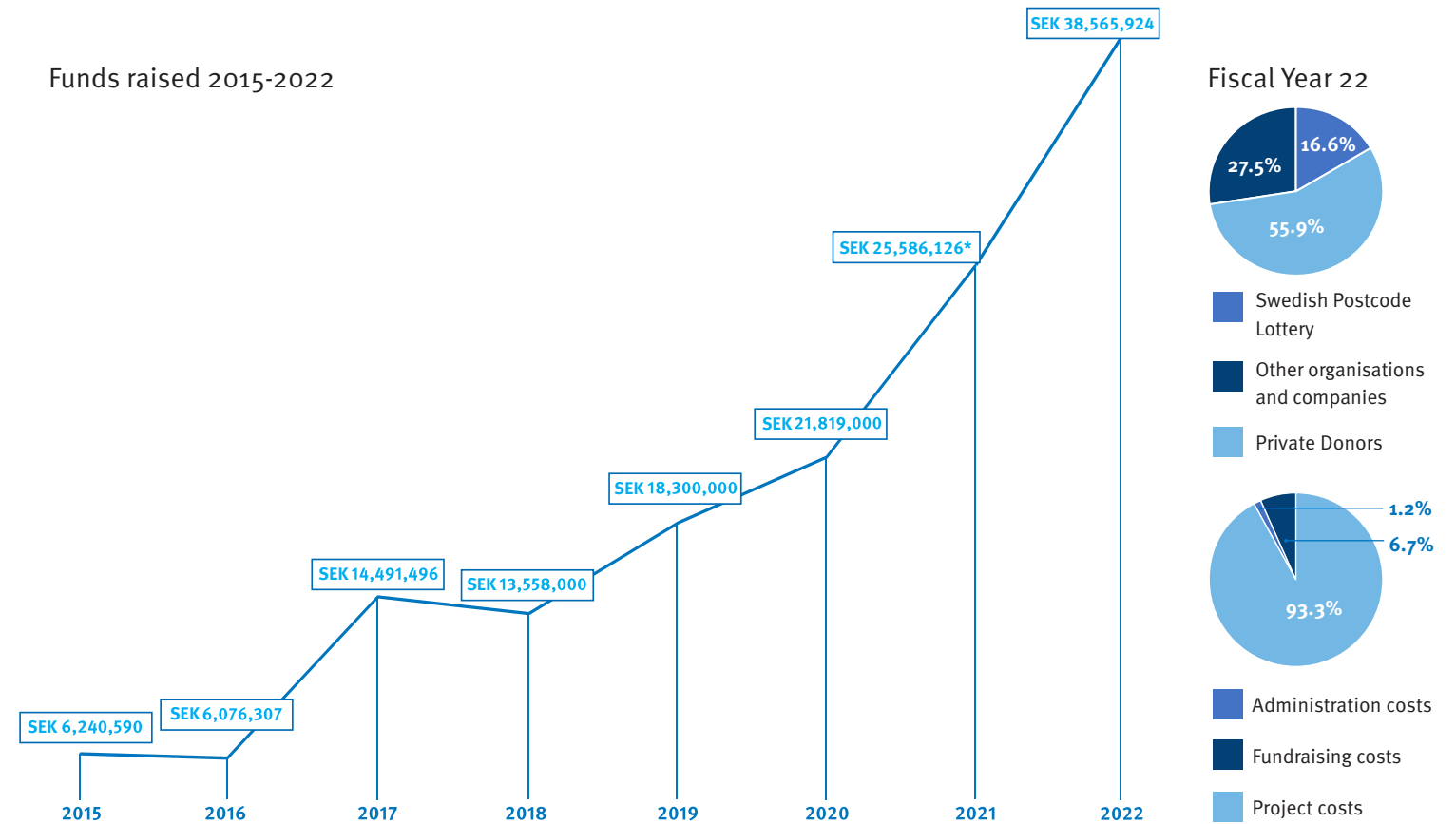
Growing HRW's Presence in Sweden

Over the past year, we initially continued to adapt to the evolving landscape amid the global Covid-19 pandemic. Many of our staff continued to work remotely. With restrictions being lifted early 2022, physical meetings have resumed, while we also keep learning from insights on how we can effectively create impactful online spaces. We continue to use hybrid methods of work as we have revived in-person events while observing safety protocols.



HRW NextGen Stockholm © 2022 Human Rights Watch

Funds raised 2015-2022



*Due to a miscalculation, there was an error in the data published in the Impact report 2021 regarding the total funds raised during FY21. The correct data for FY21 is presented above.

Throughout the year, HRW Sweden conducted advocacy with all the Nordic countries. This involved calling, emailing, and both virtually and physically meeting politicians and government officers on a wide range of issues. Among our top priorities, we worked to generate attention on the war in Ukraine, on China, Afghanistan and the global trend of shrinking democratic space.

HRW Sweden also engaged on issues such as human rights in Burma, Yemen, Libya, Syria, Philippines, Russia and Brazil; business and human rights, LGBT rights, gender equality, fully autonomous weapons (also known as “killer robots”), children’s rights, migration, access to education, and the environment and climate change. In cooperation with civil society organizations, HRW Sweden continued a series of digital seminars to increase understanding of human rights issues, reaching tens of thousands of viewers.

HRW Sweden experienced growing support from the donor community, seeing an increased number of supporters and overall income. Global events, such

as the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, and impactful research by Human Rights Watch, contributed to an improvement of the organization’s ability to attract and maintain funding over the past year.

HRW Sweden’s most devoted community of supporters, the Stockholm Committee, grew stronger. The Committee’s 18 members helped fundraising, advocacy, and outreach efforts throughout Sweden. A signature event, the HRW Voices for Justice Dinner, was arranged in Stockholm on 9 May 2022, gathering 170 supporters, and raising over 5,116,666 SEK to Human Rights Watch. We continued working toward the goal of diversifying our supporter base. We implemented a monthly giving program for recurring donations, as well as strengthened our Next Generation network in Stockholm for people aged 18-35. In the past year, this group continued to organize online and physical events, and also joined the Voices for Justice Dinner, ran social media communications, and helped spread awareness of human rights issues among young people.

IMPACT AROUND THE GLOBE

Ukraine / Russia conflict

Since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February, we have deployed a dozen staff to Ukraine and neighboring countries to investigate the impact of the war. We released 90 publications in the first six months of the war, exposing the occurrence of indiscriminate attacks, including with the use of cluster munitions, acts of torture, extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances. We also wrote about the situation for millions fleeing, and Russia's persecution of war critics.

90

Publications in the first six months of the war, exposing the occurrence of indiscriminate attacks

12

Staff deployed to Ukraine and neighboring countries to investigate the impact of the war.

Our steady stream of in-depth reporting and visual storytelling generated massive media coverage, broadened the public's understanding of the atrocities, and helped shift policies. We have used our research to urge both parties to respect the rights of civilians, and to advocate for accountability measures from the United Nations (UN).

Our work helped spur unprecedented mobilization by governments and judicial mechanisms to investigate war crimes:

- As a result of our joint advocacy the Human Rights Council **establish a Commission of Inquiry** on Ukraine.
- A Bulgarian telecommunications provider adopted our proposal to provide Ukrainian children with **free access to online textbooks**.
- Our advocacy against abusive prisoner-of-war images on social media led **Twitter to change its policy** and remove such content.
- Working with partners, we successfully advocated for **civilian evacuations** from besieged Mariupol.
- Our partnership work led to the **release of migrants** from a Ukrainian detention facility, days before a Russian attack.
- Building on years of research, our work on explosive weapons in populated areas in Ukraine spurred states to unite around **a global declaration to protect civilians** from these weapons.



Firefighters stand on a crane to extinguish a fire in an apartment building in Kyiv after air strikes on residential areas on March 15, 2022.
© 2022 Aris Messinis /AFP via Getty Images



A volunteer carries a Ukrainian child as refugees from Ukraine cross the border into Przemyśl, eastern Poland on February 25, 2022.
© 2022 Wojtek Radwanski /AFP via Getty Images



Damage from the shelling of a kindergarten in the settlement of Stanytsia Luhanska, Ukraine, February 17, 2022.
© 2022 Anton Skyba for Human Rights Watch



“Mary,” 17 years old, holds her three-year-old son in her family’s home. She no longer goes to school. Her parents told her they didn’t see the point of educating her now that she was a mother. © 2018 Smita Sharma for Human Rights Watch

Protecting Girls’ Right to Education in Africa

Following research and advocacy by Human Rights Watch and other organizations, Tanzania lifted its discriminatory ban on schooling for pregnant girls and young mothers in November 2021. We provided indisputable evidence on how the ban is harmful to students, including in our 2017 report; through numerous appeals to the World Bank, which is a major education donor to Tanzania; and most recently in an October 2021 report. Our findings highlighted how school and senior government officials upheld the ban by applying punitive and abusive measures against pregnant students.

In two pan-African reports and regular updates since 2018, we have consistently tracked how African governments support or hinder the rights of students who are pregnant, married, or adolescent mothers. Our pan-African reporting has become an important source for media, as well as organizations and

activists advocating for pregnant students’ right to education. By 2021, we found that nearly 30 African countries have adopted re-entry or continuation policies to ensure students who are pregnant or are parents can continue their education.

Keeping Students and Schools Safe During Conflict

As leader of the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, we helped spur a movement to launch the Safe Schools Declaration, which makes schools off-limits to militaries. Since its 2015 launch, 114 countries have endorsed the declaration. Under the commitments of the Safe Schools Declaration and accompanying guidelines, we now see countries restricting military use of schools, creating space for children to attend school safely.



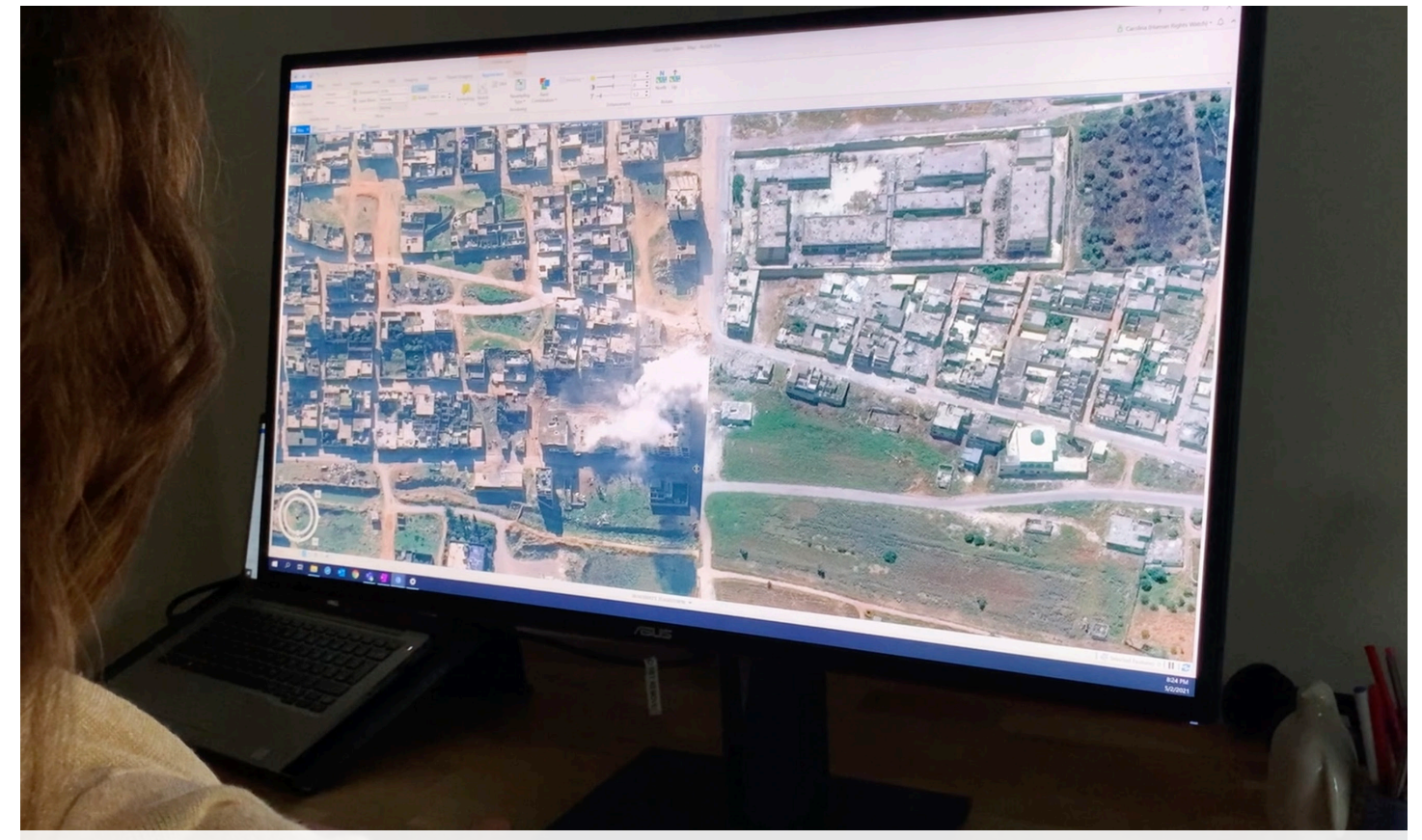
© 2016, Zalmi for Human Rights Watch

Going forward, we aim to get more countries to sign on to the declaration and commit to ending the military use of schools. In the war in Ukraine, we have documented attacks on schools, including in a news release about Russian attacks that damaged infrastructure, including schools, in Kharkiv and the shelling of schools in eastern Ukraine. Deliberate

attacks on civilian targets, such as schools, can be prosecuted for war crimes. We are documenting these abuses for future accountability and to highlight how important it is that militaries do not use or target schools, not only to keep students and teachers safe during conflict, but also to keep the schools intact and ready for classes to resume once the fighting ends.

The Open-source Investigations Unit and the Digital Investigations Lab

Despite travel restrictions and social distancing mandates, we have worked on some of the world's most pressing issues and emergencies, helping to protect communities at risk.



Carolina Jorda Álvarez conducting remote research. © 2022 Human Rights Watch

Our Digital Investigations Lab has **conducted original research in places such as Yemen, Nagorno-Karabakh and Myanmar, and trained homebound staff** across the organization on new research methods, such as advanced internet research, photo verification, and metadata analysis. This pivot has been critical in helping Human Rights Watch adapt to extraordinary circumstances.

Using findings we had made through these methods, we urged both Ukrainian authorities and internet companies to stop posting videos of captured Russian soldiers, which violates protections under the Geneva Convention. We also met with Twitter officials, and they announced they would remove tweets by governments and state-affiliated media that depict prisoners of war.

Defending the Environment and Human Rights

When the OECD announced in January 2022 that it would open a formal accession process that could lead to Brazil's membership in the organization, we acted quickly to shape media coverage of the announcement and counter Brazil's efforts to spin it as a political victory for President Jair Bolsonaro.

Our analysis—published in Folha de São Paulo, Valor Econômico, and other outlets—emphasized that the OECD will condition Brazil's accession on the country's performance in a variety of areas, including fighting deforestation in the Amazon and respecting human rights. In June the OECD unveiled a roadmap incorporating many of our recommendations, reflecting a crucial understanding that we cannot protect the Amazon without also protecting the people who are on the front lines of efforts to save it.

In October 2021, weeks ahead of the United Nations COP26 climate summit in Glasgow, the **UN Human Rights Council adopted two landmark resolutions on the environment** that we and our partners had played a key

role in promoting and that significantly strengthen the human rights tools available to address environmental injustices. With Brazilian and Indigenous partners, we also helped move **US lawmakers and the European Commission to propose bills restricting imports of agricultural commodities linked to deforestation** or violations of domestic laws on use or ownership of land. The **UK Parliament passed a similar law** in November. In addition to our deforestation-related work, we launched a new body of research to highlight abuses related to forest conservation efforts, including the forced displacement of Indigenous communities in **Malaysia, Cambodia, and Kenya** who steward the health of forests critical to combatting climate change.



A child collects coal in front of a coal-fired power plant in Emalahleni in the coal-rich province of Mpumalanga, South Africa, June 2, 2021. © 2021 REUTERS/Siphiwe Sibeko

EVALUATION OF HRW SWEDEN'S PROGRESS

HRW Sweden and Human Rights Watch are committed to rigorous, transparent, and consistent monitoring and self-evaluation. When looking at impact, Human Rights Watch determines whether it has met its goals to bring about positive change for those facing human rights violations. HRW Sweden and Human Rights Watch consider input on progress from key interlocutors, local human rights partners, and critics. They gauge how effectively they have allocated resources.

To ensure that Human Rights Watch 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 abuses to an end, we at HRW Sweden and Human Rights Watch consider interim criteria for evaluation. These include whether we have succeeded in generating prominent Swedish media coverage about abuses we investigate; whether the Swedish or other governments act on our findings by protesting the abuses or exerting diplomatic or economic pressure on the abusive government; whether we succeeded in building or protecting Swedish opposition to abuses; whether and how Swedish and other governments engage with Human Rights Watch or adopt and implement new policies to address the abuses it identifies and documents; and whether efforts are reflected in support from public media and Swedish donors.

Measured against these criteria, we have seen considerable accomplishments. Over the course of the last year, more than 3,000 Swedish articles referred to Human Rights Watch's work. Key radio and news outlets regularly interview, and often seek out, the Nordic Director Måns Molander, researchers, and advocates for expert advice with a human rights perspective on current political affairs. Swedish media including Swedish Radio, SVT, TV4, Dagens Nyheter, Svenska Dagbladet, and TT News Agency, among many other news outlets, regularly interview HRW staff. As a result, Human Rights Watch is one of the leading commentators

in Sweden on global human rights issues. Furthermore, HRW Sweden engaged in more than 100 virtual and physical advocacy meetings with governments and decision-makers in Denmark, Finland, Norway, Iceland, and Sweden.

We held our annual fundraising dinner, Stockholm Voices for Justice Dinner, as an in-person event for the first time since 2019. The dinner was held at a new venue, the Museum of Performing arts, gathering 170 guests, and raising a record number of SEK5,116,666 to our work on Ukraine, technology and human rights, environment and human rights and children's rights. The Human Rights Watch Stockholm committee played a central part in this event and HRW Next Gen as well as artists from the HRW Creators Society also contributed to the successful outcome.

HRW Sweden and Human Rights Watch recognise the critical role of partnerships and beneficiaries in all our work, including the planning and evaluation process. When Human Rights Watch evaluates its work it regularly speaks to victims, partner groups, advocacy targets, media, and others. Their feedback is invaluable in helping the organisation further improve its strategies on a project basis and design and implement subsequent projects to be undertaken by Human Rights Watch.

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