

HUMAN
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TYRANNY HAS A WITNESS
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HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH ANNUAL REPORT 2013

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POWER *of* TRUTH
HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH ANNUAL REPORT 2013

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH ANNUAL REPORT | 2013

Inclusive of the organization's work and reflective of its supporters from July 1, 2012 to December 31, 2013.



Human Rights Watch mourns the death on June 1, 2012, of Marion O. Sandler, our dear friend and benefactor. Marion and Herb, her husband of 51 years, were key partners in the evolution of Human Rights Watch.

Their early gifts helped to launch our women's rights division and created a fellowship that each year introduces superb young human rights activists to our work. With time, they issued three multi-million dollar challenge grants over two decades that helped us to build an endowment, greatly expand the geographic scope of the countries we cover, and extend our advocacy and influence to emerging powers in the global South. Their generosity –and their reputation as discerning investors who sought and supported effective organizations—inspired many others to give to Human Rights Watch.

We miss Marion's friendship, generosity, and wise counsel. We remember her with enormous gratitude.

Cover Photo: Sondos Shabayek, 25, is a writer for independent Egyptian newspapers and magazines and a "citizen journalist" who participated in and tweeted the story of the Tahrir Square protests.

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Marion Sandler Headshot: Photo Courtesy of Sandler Foundation

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DEAR FRIENDS,

Few repressive governments admit to committing human rights abuses. Instead, they tend to lie and cover up. In 2013, as we have done so often in the past, Human Rights Watch cut through the lies with our in-depth investigations into the facts. We wielded the power of truth to protect the vulnerable and bring abusers to justice. We forced leaders to recognize that the only way to defend their reputation was not by deception but through a change in their conduct. And as much as possible, we did this as events unfolded, when the chance of saving lives was greatest.

Because we provided thoroughly researched, compelling evidence that was not available elsewhere, and dispatched it in real time, our interventions were powerful. In the past year, we helped to generate international pressure to end grave abuses in such places as Syria, Burma, Mexico, and Rwanda.

Human Rights Watch's increasing global reach has bolstered our impact, but the challenges before us are immense and continuing. In Syria we must keep the world focused on stopping the slaughter of civilians. We must confront the deadly violence that has engulfed the Central African Republic and South Sudan. And we must continue to pursue the ongoing or worsening repression in such places as North Korea, Sri Lanka, Egypt, China, and Russia.

As we reflect on 2013, we extend our warmest appreciation to James F. Hoge, Jr., who served as Human Rights Watch's Board Chair for the past three years. Under his leadership, Human Rights Watch entered a period of rapid institutional growth. We greatly deepened our research and enhanced our capacity to enlist the world's most influential governments, wherever they are located, to promote human rights. Thank you for the part that you play in supporting our vision for a more just world.



HASSAN ELMASRY, BOARD CO-CHAIR



JOEL MOTLEY, BOARD CO-CHAIR



KENNETH ROTH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

WHAT OUR RESEARCHERS DO

Frontline investigations by expert researchers are the heart of Human Rights Watch's work.

Samer Muscati, a researcher at Human Rights Watch, interviews displaced Eritreans in Tunisia during the Libyan conflict. June 2011.

© 2011 Sidney Kwiram/Human Rights Watch



Ole Solvang (center, left), senior emergencies researcher, and Anna Neistat (center, right), associate program director, interview victims of ethnic conflict in Kyrgyzstan, June 2010.
© 2010 Moises Saman for Human Rights Watch

Our researchers regularly examine events in some 90 countries around the world. They function as journalists, investigators, and advocates, and respond credibly and timely to violations by:

BEING THERE.

Our researchers go to the scene of atrocities to interview victims, witnesses, local activists, and government officials. They travel wherever they must to gather credible information, whether in war zones, areas under heavy surveillance, or other hostile environments.

CHECKING AND CROSS-CHECKING FACTS.

Our researchers visit victims and eyewitnesses wherever they can be reached, from refugee camps to prisons. They investigate data from military, hospital, morgue, and court records. Sometimes using new technologies like satellite imagery, they piece together as complete and accurate a picture as possible of abuses.

PARTNERING WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND GROUPS.

Our researchers immerse themselves in the cultures where they work, speak diverse languages, and work closely with local groups. They build networks of trust that can be relied on in a crisis. They also help to ensure that the concerns of local groups are heard by those with the power to make a difference.

EXPOSING EVIDENCE OF ABUSES.

Our researchers shine a light on wrongdoing by writing reports, news releases, opinion pieces, and multimedia productions. They use traditional and social media to shape the public debate. The media barrage helps make certain that policymakers learn of their findings and recommendations for change.

CONVINCING KEY DECISION-MAKERS TO ACT.

Our researchers share their findings with governments, international donors, and inter-governmental bodies. They press powerful actors to use their influence to curb abuse.

PROVIDING EXPERTISE.

Working behind the scenes and drawing upon their on-the-ground experience, our researchers answer questions from journalists, political leaders, and others. They have also served as expert witnesses in trials of those responsible for the world's worst crimes.

STAYING THE COURSE.

Our researchers stick with an issue until they get results. They recognize that some problems are entrenched and require long-term efforts to resolve. They stand with victims and are willing to put in the time that is needed.

RESEARCHER'S VOICE

“The scene is still vivid: a five-year-old girl who had been chained to a tree—outside, exposed, sitting next to her own excrement—alongside dozens of people, similarly tied to trees or wooden posts in one of Ghana’s many unregulated prayer camps. These men, women, and children were supposedly being treated for a mental disability. Instead they were deprived of food and water and forced to sleep, eat, and defecate in overcrowded cells or outside where they were chained. After we shared their stories, the UN’s special expert on torture visited these camps. He told us that he wouldn’t have visited them if he hadn’t read our report. He echoed our calls, spurring the Ghanaian government to form a mental health board to begin overseeing these camps and upholding the rights of this otherwise marginalized and invisible group.”



SHANTHA RAU BARRIGA,
Director, Disability Rights,
Human Rights Watch

© 2010 Human Rights Watch

“Amid a climate of fear in South Africa, we found that police failed to protect women who were targeted for rape because they were lesbians. In response, the government formed a hate crimes task team and used our recommendations as the road map to tackle violence against LGBT individuals. The government is now tracking and expediting sexual assault cases that involve LGBT people and promoting awareness to curb discrimination against these groups—critical steps that we had suggested.”



GRAEME REID, Director, Lesbian,
Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights
Program, Human Rights Watch

© 2012 Human Rights Watch

OUR GLOBAL IMPACT



Championing the Truth

Human Rights Watch lays the legal and moral groundwork for deep-rooted change. We help bring justice and security to people around the world. In the last year, our researchers and advocates worked on some of the world's toughest issues and stood up to some of the most unyielding governments. These efforts had a profound impact. Here is a look at some of our achievements in 2013.



North Korean soldiers seen across the North Korean border from Dandong, China, December 2013.
© 2013 Getty Images

NORTH KOREA
FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE

For decades, North Korea has hidden perhaps the world’s most repressive society behind a wall of isolation and defiance. This year, we achieved a breakthrough by leveraging Japan’s interest in resolving the cases of its citizens abducted decades ago into international action. After our request, the Japanese prime minister ordered his diplomats to advocate around the world in support of the UN Human Rights Council forming a commission of inquiry to investigate North Korean atrocities and ensure accountability for them. The Japanese effort overcame initial reluctance, and the council ended up unanimously launching the investigative commission. That put North Korea’s leaders on notice that their severe ongoing abuses could one day lead to their prosecution. It may also help to mitigate the worst of their repression.

RUSSIA
STANDING UP FOR BASIC FREEDOMS

After Vladimir Putin’s return to the presidency, Human Rights Watch documented a fierce crackdown on basic freedoms that targeted those promoting reform in Russia. Working with Russian activists, we shared our findings with journalists worldwide and helped to catapult the issue onto the international stage. We insisted that it is not a crime to speak out. The pressure that we helped to mobilize reduced the intensity of the repression. Although Russian human rights activists continue to lead a precarious existence, their organizations for the most part have not been shut down, some are winning lawsuits that the authorities filed against them, and their leaders remain at liberty.



Hundreds of protesters were arrested and dozens injured during protests on the eve of Vladimir Putin’s inauguration as president in Moscow, Russia on May 6, 2012.
© 2012 Yuri Kozyrev/Noor/Redux

THE RESEARCHER



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Human Rights Watch

“As I was about to embark on an investigation in the turbulent Russian province of Dagestan, I experienced first-hand the danger facing human rights defenders in Russia today. Suddenly I began receiving a series of anonymous text messages, pledging harm to me and my then unborn baby. The obvious aim was to frighten and silence us. Instead, we held a press conference, publicized the threats, and made clear that we held the Russian government responsible. These scare tactics only deepen our resolve to confront and reverse the Kremlin’s brazen crackdown.”

Tanya Lokshina, Russia program director, Human Rights Watch, based in Moscow



A prisoner covers her face while sitting outside a room that she shares with 15 other women prisoners in Afghanistan, March 2010.
© 2010 Farzana Wahidy

AFGHANISTAN
ENHANCING PROTECTION FOR WOMEN

In response to our in-depth report on the surge of women imprisoned for “moral crimes,” high-level government officials in Afghanistan clarified that “running away” from forced marriage or domestic violence is not a crime under Afghan law and issued orders instructing that such prosecutions cease. The government also established new specialized units to prosecute violence against women and pledged to put these units in all of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces.



A 16-year-old bone cancer patient at the MNJ Institute of Oncology in Hyderabad, India. Her leg was amputated at the hip.
© 2009 Brent Foster for Human Rights Watch

UKRAINE, KENYA, AND INDIA
DEMANDING DIGNITY DURING END-OF-LIFE CARE

Human Rights Watch has been conducting a global campaign to end arbitrary restrictions on access to morphine for people in excruciating pain such as late-stage cancer patients. In response, the government in Ukraine greatly simplified access to pain medications and registered oral morphine for production. In Kenya, the government established the right to free cancer care and started supplying morphine to public hospitals. In India, the government created and funded a plan to promote access to medication to ease suffering.



Elderly man in a Colorado prison.
© 2011 Jamie Fellner/Human Rights Watch

UNITED STATES

ADDRESSING
OVER-INCARCERATION

Human Rights Watch has long reported on and sought to end overly harsh prison sentences in the United States, focusing recently on individuals who are aged, dying, or seriously incapacitated. This past year, together with Families Against Mandatory Minimums, we assessed the compassionate release practices of the Bureau of Prisons, which operates the largest prison system in the country. The Bureau of Prisons welcomed our recommendations, and the Department of Justice in its own report echoed many of our findings. The US attorney general then announced reforms that followed our recommendation to significantly expand the use and criteria for early release of prisoners who are dying, incapacitated, or elderly.

“IT IS WORTH ASKING: WHAT DO WE AS A SOCIETY GET FROM KEEPING THESE PEOPLE IN PRISON? WE HAVE A PRISON SYSTEM THAT IS GROTESQUELY OVERCROWDED AND PRISONERS WHO POSE NO MEANINGFUL THREAT TO PUBLIC SAFETY, AND YET THEY ARE BEING DENIED RELEASE.”

Jamie Fellner, Senior Advisor, Human Rights Watch, and co-author of *The Answer is No: Too Little Compassionate Release in US Federal Prisons*

YEMEN

PROTECTING STUDENTS FROM ATTACK

We have been pursuing a global campaign to stop armies from using schools as barracks and bases. During the popular uprising in Yemen, we discovered that armed groups had based themselves inside schools in the capital, endangering

students and creating a surge in drop-out rates, especially for girls. Within several weeks of our raising the issue, military and opposition forces vacated six occupied schools, affecting roughly 7,000 children.



A girl student leaves al-Furadh School in Sanaa, Yemen at the end of the day, while soldiers relax outside the school walls. The soldiers lived in third-floor classrooms for several months, March 2012.
© 2012 Priyanka Motaparthy/Human Rights Watch

VOICE OF A VICTIM

“When [the soldiers] tortured the old man here, we got very scared. They beat him [and] electro-shocked him right in the courtyard of the school. It was during recess.”

Ahlam, a 13-year-old student at a school in Yemen that was occupied by a rebel group

THE RESEARCHER



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Human Rights Watch

“After we met with the commander of one rebel group that was occupying many schools in the capital, he ordered his troops out of almost all of them. He told us that he had read ‘every word’ of our report, and had instructed his troops on our recommendations.”

Bede Sheppard, deputy director, Children’s Rights Division, Human Rights Watch, and author of *Classrooms in the Crosshairs: Military Use of Schools in Yemen’s Capital*



At a community center in Prince George, British Columbia, Georgia I. (a pseudonym) said that she was raped by a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police almost 40 years ago as a 16-year-old returning home from a pizza parlor, July 2012.
© 2012 Samer Muscati/Human Rights Watch

CANADA

DEFENDING INDIGENOUS
WOMEN FROM VIOLENCE

Human Rights Watch exposed the alarming failure of Canada’s police to protect indigenous women and girls from violence in the province of British Columbia. The day after we released our report, the Canadian parliament created a special committee to investigate. As pressure mounted, the government also permitted international human rights monitors to inquire about the murders and disappearances of indigenous women—a significant step towards justice for these women and their families.



Women work with mercury in the presence of small children at Baroya mine, Kéniéba cercle in Mali. April 2011. Miners habitually handle mercury in the course of gold processing.
© 2011 Juliane Kippenberg/Human Rights Watch

GLOBAL

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN FROM
ENVIRONMENTAL HARM

In October 2013, more than 140 countries adopted a landmark treaty on mercury, a toxic chemical used in small-scale gold mining that is especially harmful to children. Human Rights Watch helped shape the treaty through our detailed reports showing the effects of mercury. The treaty obligates

governments to protect children from mercury exposure in mining, take precautionary measures for communities near mines, and promote treatment for mercury-related conditions—all key recommendations that we had made.

POWER *of* TRUTH

Few repressive governments admit their atrocities. Instead, they lie and cover up. Human Rights Watch cuts through the lies with the facts. We wield the power of truth to protect the vulnerable and bring abusers to justice. **Tyranny has a witness.**

Monica Tabengwa, LGBT researcher for Human Rights Watch, interviews a same-sex couple in Monrovia, Liberia, on discriminatory laws criminalizing same-sex conduct between consenting adults.
© 2012 Glenna Gordon for Human Rights Watch

GOVERNMENTS LIE AND COVER UP ABUSES

Nearly all governments claim to respect human rights. Yet when rights prove inconvenient to their quest to retain or exercise power, some leaders are tempted to violate basic freedoms.

When they do, governments typically go to great lengths to hide their crimes, erecting a wall of defiance and lies. They may intimidate the political opposition, silence journalists, and jail activists who challenge them.



Syrian President Bashar al-Assad during an interview with the American Fox News channel in Damascus, on September 19, 2013.
Photo Courtesy of Reuters

“No wise government in the world would kill its own people.”

Syrian president Bashar al-Assad,
Fox News, September 19, 2013

Overcoming denial

When human rights abuses are met with denial, Human Rights Watch insists that victims be heard, their suffering recognized.

We force the media, the public, and influential governments to grapple with the facts and with the actual experience of the victims. If an abusive government tries to justify its conduct, we dig deeper than its sound bites. We pierce flimsy claims of national interest or security demands. We refocus public discussion on the real stakes, so that rights are not sacrificed. ■

PIERCING GOVERNMENT LIES

**We are human rights
fact-finders.**

Human Rights Watch investigates abuses. To uncover the facts, our researchers quickly deploy to the scene of alleged atrocities. We must often evade government crackdowns to get to the facts. Sometimes partnering with local groups, we piece together evidence by visiting hospitals, morgues, refugee camps, police stations, prisons, and graveyards. Because of this careful work, when Human Rights Watch publishes its findings, policymakers and media accept our reports as the authoritative record of what happened.

Lama Fakihi (left), middle east researcher, and Ole Solvang, senior emergencies researcher, interview witnesses about an airstrike attack in Latakia, Syria, February 2013.
© 2013 Marcel Mettelsiefen/Human Rights Watch



Priyanka Motaparthi (left), children's rights researcher, interviews a protester shot by security forces in Cairo, Egypt, September 2013.
© 2013 Human Rights Watch



Phelim Kine, deputy Asia director, holds a copy of the Human Rights Watch report "I Had To Run Away: The Imprisonment of Women and Girls for 'Moral Crimes' in Afghanistan," as he addresses a media conference in Kabul, Afghanistan, May 2013.
© 2013 Getty Images

WE FIGURE OUT WHO IS RESPONSIBLE

Our research is a catalyst for action. Beyond documenting abuse, we establish who is responsible. We also identify who can improve conditions and provide redress, and we map out the concrete steps that specific actors must take. We press officials who have leverage to bring their influence to bear, making it more likely that those who can make a difference actually do.

We shape public debate as it occurs

Because we provide thoroughly researched, credible information that is not available elsewhere, and dispatch it in real time, our interventions are powerful. When we speak out, media cover what we say, public opinion is influenced, and we begin to chip away at the false denials of abusive actors. Governments soon recognize that superficial public relations techniques are not enough to defend their reputations. Only a change in conduct will make a difference.



WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT US

"I discussed for instance the letter written by Human Rights Watch and the concerns in that letter. It is very important we have a frank dialogue."

British Prime Minister **David Cameron**, *The Daily Telegraph*, July 1, 2013, commenting on his meeting with the president of Kazakhstan, which seriously restricts fundamental freedoms.

We build pressure to act

When Human Rights Watch speaks out, officials at the highest levels of government are forced to take note, and decision-makers are compelled to act. We channel international outrage at abuses into targeted action against those we have identified as responsible. That pressure helps to stop grave crimes that assault our common humanity.

CASE STUDY:



RWANDA

The Rwandan government's support of an abusive rebel group in Congo.

Stop supporting murder and rape.

For nearly two years, the Rwandan government's significant military support enabled the M23 rebel group to terrorize civilians in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Families feared that the M23 would abduct their children to become soldiers, rape their wives, sisters, and mothers in their fields, or kill their brothers and husbands.

The funeral of Stella Sekanabo, who was killed by unidentified men in Goma, North Kivu, on October 10, 2012.
© 2012 Marco Gualazzini/LUZ/Redux



PARALYZED BY GUILT

It has been nearly 20 years since the Rwandan genocide of 1994, when more than half a million people were murdered. The international community did virtually nothing to stop it. Instead, that task fell to a Rwandan rebel group, based in Uganda, which ousted the genocidal regime. Its leader, Paul Kagame, became the effective head of the country, ultimately serving as president of Rwanda.

The international community embraced him. But alongside significant strides in economic development, his government silenced dissent and made repeated military forays into neighboring Congo in which civilians suffered terribly. Rwanda stood to benefit from supporting abusive armed groups like the M23 by gaining indirect control of border crossings, territory, and natural resources. Yet, Western leaders usually expressed only timid concern. Finally, in part due to the work of Human Rights Watch, that has changed.

VOICE OF A VICTIM

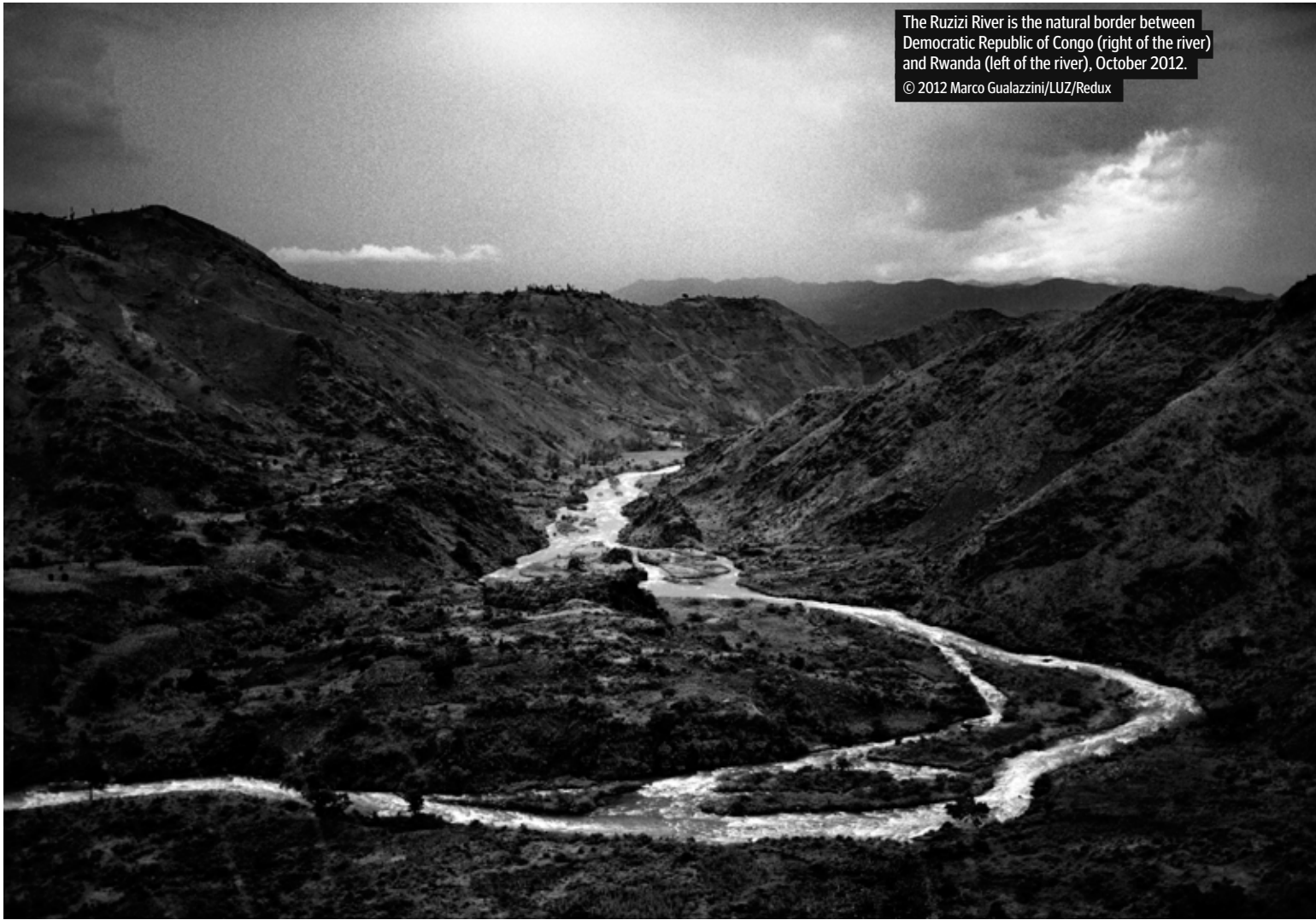
“I saw [an M23 fighter]. I started running, but I tripped on a piece of sugar cane and fell. The fighter caught up with me and said he would kill me because I tried to flee. I stopped then because I was very scared. Then he raped me. I cried out, but he closed my mouth.”

A 12-year-old girl interviewed by Human Rights Watch in July 2013 in eastern Congo

M23 rebels prepare to march back to Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo, on November 30, 2012.
© 2012 Marco Gualazzini/LUZ/Redux



The Ruzizi River is the natural border between Democratic Republic of Congo (right of the river) and Rwanda (left of the river), October 2012.
© 2012 Marco Gualazzini/LUZ/Redux



Piecing together the chain of command

For years our Rwanda and Congo-based researchers exposed horrific atrocities committed against civilians in eastern Congo, near the Rwandan border. Some of the perpetrators of recent abuses were from a rebel group known as the M23. Since April 2012, we detailed through eyewitness accounts the M23’s pattern of summary executions, rapes of women and girls, and forced recruitment of children.

Most significantly, we demonstrated that the M23 was not acting alone in Congo, but had received weapons, recruits, and supplies from Rwanda. That evidence of Rwanda’s military support proved to be the tipping point: for the first time ever, the international community began putting serious pressure on Rwanda to stop.

An M23 soldier near Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo, December 2012.
© 2012 Beatrice Petit/Reporters/Redux



Congolese families flee from fighting between the Congolese army and M23 rebels in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, July 2013.

© 2013 Getty Images



The cost to Rwanda of backing abusive rebels

In late June 2012, a UN group of experts confirmed Human Rights Watch's findings on Rwandan support for the M23. As it always had in the past, the Rwandan government simply denied any wrongdoing. But with the evidence that we and the UN experts had uncovered, its protests no longer convinced even its closest allies.

As public disquiet mounted, influential governments began publicly criticizing Rwanda's actions in Congo and imposing punitive measures. The UK government—the largest bilateral aid donor to Rwanda—withheld £21 million in 2012. Other governments soon followed. The United States, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Belgium, and the European Union all suspended or delayed millions in assistance to Rwanda.



Congolese families flee from fighting between the Congolese army and M23 rebels in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, July 2013.

© 2013 Getty Images

Rwandan-born Congolese warlord Bosco Ntaganda during his first appearance before judges of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands, on March 26, 2013.

© 2013 Getty Images



Overcoming Rwanda's Denial

With its reputation damaged and its pocketbook hurt, Rwanda was forced to stop its military support to the M23 beginning in October 2013. The M23 quickly withered and admitted defeat. Many of its fighters fled the Congo.

POWER OF TRUTH

“It is my sense that he [Kagame] does not like the reputational damage that has come from people saying that his country has given support to an illegal armed group. It doesn't fit the positive narrative he is building for his country.”

Russ Feingold, US special envoy for the Great Lakes region of Africa, Reuters, November 1, 2013

Looking ahead: Accountability.

Despite the defeat of the M23, numerous challenges remain. After Human Rights Watch highlighted his role in atrocities for several years, M23 leader Bosco Ntaganda surrendered to the US Embassy in Rwanda in March 2013 and now awaits trial by the International Criminal Court in The Hague for crimes against humanity. But other M23 leaders implicated in massacres and recruitment of child soldiers are still at large, and other armed groups in Congo continue to commit atrocities.

Human Rights Watch is pressing Rwanda and Uganda to stop shielding alleged criminals from justice. We are urging the Congolese government to ensure that any peace agreement with the M23 or other abusive armed groups does not absolve those who are responsible for war crimes. ■

CASE STUDY:

MEXICO



Denying abuses in
its “war on drugs”

After Mexico’s then-President Felipe Calderón launched a “war on drugs” in 2007, soldiers and police committed widespread torture, executions, and enforced disappearances in the name of fighting drug cartels. Torture victims were routinely accused of crimes they did not commit. In the face of inaction or threats by the police, victims’ relatives were left to search for missing loved ones on their own.

THE DISAPPEARED

Jose Fortino Martinez was taken from his home by men wearing navy uniforms. Jose’s wife took photos of the men who detained him and their vehicles. She trailed the convoy until a marine threatened to shoot her if she keeps following them. Days after Jose’s wife went to federal prosecutors to demand that they investigate his disappearance, their home was sprayed with bullets (no one was harmed). No marines have been charged in the crime.

Mexican military personnel patrol Ciudad Juárez, which has seen some of the worst “drug war” violence in Mexico, March 2009.
© 2009 Eros Hoagland/Redux

BLAMING THE VICTIMS

For years, Calderón adamantly denied that security forces had committed a single abuse. Instead, he claimed that nearly all the victims of drug violence were criminals whom rival cartels had targeted.

Challenging the President

From 2009 to 2011, Human Rights Watch went to the areas most affected by drug violence and collected compelling evidence of grave abuses. While we encountered many horrific acts attributable to the cartels, we also found extensive human rights violations committed by the military with almost total impunity: of nearly 5,000 investigations opened into serious military abuses, only four had led to convictions.

In a two-hour meeting in November 2011, we presented our findings to President Calderón. He not unexpectedly denied any abuses had occurred. So we began walking him through our evidence—literally reading the cases together—starting with the case of a young father forcibly disappeared by Mexican marines in November 2010 following a routine traffic stop.

As the president read and listened, the conversation shifted from whether these abuses had happened to what should be done about them.

After the meeting, Calderón publicly acknowledged for the first time that violations had occurred. Within weeks, he ordered an end to interrogations of suspects on military bases and approved new rules on the use of force by soldiers and police—both important recommendations that we had made.



A banner with photos of missing people during a protest in commemoration of “International Week of the Detained-Disappeared” in Mexico City, May 2012.

© 2012 Getty Images

Making the Government See the “Disappeared”

Even after our meeting with Calderón, reports continued to mount of people being abducted and never seen again. We documented hundreds of such enforced disappearances, many of which involved security forces corruptly working hand-in-hand with the drug cartels. Yet government investigators made little effort to search for the “disappeared” or to bring to justice those who had taken them.

In February 2013, we published a groundbreaking report on disappearances directed to Mexico’s new president, Enrique Peña Nieto. The same day, the government acknowledged for the first time that more than 26,000 men, women, and children had disappeared or gone missing in the “war on drugs.”

Calling the wave of disappearances a “humanitarian crisis,” the Peña administration announced the creation of a special prosecutorial unit to investigate disappearances, including all of those in our report. Based on our recommendations, the government also pledged to create a national database of the missing and to ensure that victims’ families did not lose access to basic social services that were tied to the victim’s employment.

Jose Miguel Vivanco, Americas director at Human Rights Watch, speaks to the media during the presentation of a report about people that went missing due to military actions during what the government of then-President Felipe Calderon called the “War against Drugs,” in Mexico City, February 2013.

© 2013 Getty Images



NIK STEINBERG

© 2013 Pierre Bairin/Human Rights Watch

THE RESEARCHER

“Disappearances are especially devastating because as long as the government continues to hide the fate of the victims, families must endure the anguish of not knowing what happened to their loved ones, making it difficult to mourn, come to terms with the loss, and rebuild their lives.”

Nik Steinberg, senior researcher, Human Rights Watch and author of *Mexico’s Disappeared: The Enduring Cost of a Crisis Ignored*

Looking ahead:
Holding the government to its commitments.

Human Rights Watch will closely monitor the steps that the Mexican government takes to keep its commitments to address disappearances. Our aim is to clarify the fate of the victims so families can move forward with their lives and perpetrators can be punished. ■

CASE STUDY:

BURMA



Burma: failing to protect a vulnerable minority.

Ethnic cleansing

The riverine Rohingya Muslim village of Zailya Para in Minbya Township, Burma burns after attacks by Arakanese mobs in October 2012.

© 2012 Private

Amid waves of mob violence targeting ethnic Rohingya and other Muslims in Burma's Arakan State in June and October 2012, Burmese security forces largely stood by and did nothing. Some even joined the attackers.

Entire Muslim villages were burned to the ground, killing hundreds.

In Yan Thei village in Mrauk-U township, a mob hacked several dozen people to death, including 28 children.

Tens of thousands of terrified Rohingya took to barely seaworthy boats to escape. Many drowned or were turned away upon reaching foreign shores.

Rohingya are a vulnerable, stateless minority. The Burmese government effectively denies them citizenship and views them as Bengali immigrants, even though families have lived in Burma for several generations.

CHALLENGING THE GOVERNMENT’S STORY

The ongoing violence against the Rohingya people comes against a backdrop of decades-long official discrimination and persecution. Today more than 150,000 displaced Rohingya remain separated from the Buddhist majority, forced to live in squalid conditions. They are so unpopular in Burma that even the main opposition party, led by Nobel-prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi, has refused to speak out in their defense, even as men, women, and children were slaughtered.

The government spun the massacres of Rohingya as part of a communal conflict between Muslims and Buddhists in Arakan State. But we showed that something more sinister, and formally orchestrated, was occurring.

We found that state authorities, security forces, and community and religious leaders engaged in an organized campaign to systematically target Muslims. Our evidence showed that the abuses amounted to “ethnic cleansing” and crimes against humanity.

Providing Indisputable Before-And-After Pictures

In Burma, we used satellite imagery to complement the on-the-ground reporting of our research team and cut through the government’s denial of atrocities. Burmese officials claimed that witnesses lied about the burning of villages, but the before-and-after pictures that we obtained were indisputable. International media quickly seized on our images to show the seriousness of the crisis.

PUTTING THE GOVERNMENT ON THE DEFENSIVE

“This is not ethnic cleansing, outside elements are exaggerating, this is fabricated news, there is no ethnic cleansing at all.... This is a smear campaign against the government, this is over-exaggerated news, what happened in [Arakan] was not ethnic cleansing.”

Burmese President **Thein Sein**, France 24, July 19, 2013

Bangladesh border officials denying boatloads of Rohingya refugees from Burma entry at the port town of Shah Porir Dweep, Bangladesh, on June 18, 2012.
© 2012 Richard Pearshouse/Human Rights Watch



ETHNIC MUSLIM AREA IN ARAKAN STATE OF BURMA BEFORE ARSON ATTACK (FEBRUARY 11, 2011)



ETHNIC MUSLIM AREA IN ARAKAN STATE OF BURMA IMMEDIATELY AFTER ARSON ATTACK (OCTOBER 31, 2012)



Pre-attack and post-attack satellite images show the largest concentration of building destruction in Sittwe, Burma.
Damage Analysis: Human Rights Watch; Image © GeoEye 2012; Source: e-geos



A police officer points his weapon at street level in the town of Sittwe in June 2012, where security forces killed an unknown number of ethnic Rohingya. The government claims 167 people had died in the violence, but Human Rights Watch research indicated a far greater loss of life.

© 2012 Private

VOICE OF A VICTIM

“First the soldiers told us, ‘Do not do anything, we will protect you, we will save you,’ so we trusted them. But later they broke that promise. The [local Buddhist population] beat and killed us very easily. The security did not protect us from them.”

25-year-old survivor of Yan Thei massacre on October 23, 2012, in an interview with Human Rights Watch.

Winning the Debate

Human Rights Watch helped mitigate further escalation of the violence against the Rohingya.

On the eve of US President Barack Obama’s historic visit to Burma in November 2012, we drew attention to the Burmese government’s complicity in displacing Rohingya and enflaming hostilities. Obama echoed our calls for the violence to stop in his speech at the University of Yangon in Burma.

In a ground-breaking step, Burmese President Thein Sein pledged to grant full humanitarian access to ethnic conflict areas including Arakan State and to allow UN human rights monitors to establish an office in the country. The president also committed to release political prisoners. Later, he disbanded the Nasaka security force, notorious for committing human rights abuses against the Rohingya.



THE PRESSURE

“There is no excuse for violence against innocent people. And the Rohingya hold within themselves the same dignity as you do, and I do. National reconciliation will take time, but for the sake of our common humanity, and for the sake of this country’s future, it is necessary to stop incitement and to stop violence.”

US President **Barack Obama**, speech at University of Yangon, November 19, 2012

Looking ahead:
A Voice of Caution.

Burma remains at a precarious stage. Major reforms have occurred, but the military remains deeply and corruptly enmeshed in the economy. Repression of peaceful assembly and expression continues. Years of abuses by the military in ethnic areas remain unaddressed, with army units continuing to use forced labor there. The government promises, including humanitarian assistance and the opening of a UN rights office, have yet to be fully kept. As elections approach in 2015, Human Rights Watch is urging concerned governments to condition re-engagement in the country on reforms that respect human rights. ■

CASE STUDY:

SYRIA



Were people gassed by their government in Syria?

Children suffering from a suspected chemical weapons strike, breathe through oxygen masks in the Damascus suburb of Saqba, August 21, 2013.

© 2013 Reuters

Children were found in their pajamas, frothing at the mouth, blue, dead. In the early morning hours of August 21, 2013, hundreds of Syrian civilians were gassed in a horrific chemical weapons attack in Ghouta on the outskirts of Damascus. Many children were among the dead, possibly because they had sought refuge from the intense shelling to sleep in the basements of buildings, where dense sarin vapors accumulated and suffocated them.

USING FACTS TO DEBUNK LIES

With the early morning gassing of sleeping families, world leaders finally moved from complacency to outrage. But they deadlocked on the question of who was responsible. Less than three weeks after the attack, Human Rights Watch published our analysis of the chemical attack on Ghouta, demonstrating the responsibility of government forces. A subsequent UN report supported our key findings.

Russia continued to offer its defense of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, pointing to discredited online sources to blame the attack on opposition forces. But our evidence left little doubt about government responsibility, and helped compel international action. Breaking a two-and-a-half year stalemate over Syria, the UN Security Council passed a resolution ordering Syria to rid itself of chemical weapons. The government has largely been cooperating.

Exposing Atrocities
in Real Time

Parallel to the armed conflict in Syria has been an information war, with each side downplaying or denying its own atrocities while highlighting its opponent’s wrongdoing. One role that Human Rights Watch plays is to cut through these propaganda efforts and establish the truth.

In the case of the Ghouta chemical attack, the Russian and Syrian governments insisted that opposition forces were responsible. With the area under siege by government forces, we were forced to interview eyewitnesses by video conference. We also analyzed satellite imagery, and compared video and photographic evidence of weapons remnants and usage that had been made available through social media.

Our facts were concrete and specific. We plotted the location of the coordinated attack on two regions in Ghouta 16 kilometers apart, eliminating the possibility of a chemical accident. We identified the launching platforms of the weapons—330mm and 140mm

rockets—which only the government is known to have in its arsenal. We calculated the amount of nerve agent—hundreds of kilograms—a quantity way beyond what anyone contended that opposition forces possessed.

Identifying Who Was Responsible

Six days after the Human Rights Watch report, an analysis by UN inspectors confirmed our key findings. The inspectors declared with clear and convincing evidence that surface-to-surface rockets containing the nerve agent sarin were used in Ghouta. Their mandate did not allow them to say who was responsible for the deadly barrage. But we and others were able to read between the lines.

One day after the UN issued its findings, we mapped the sarin rockets’ flight path. Using precise measurements from the UN report, we traced the trajectory of the rockets—from where they had struck back to their likely origin—which pointed to areas under the control of the Syrian military. This additional evidence left little doubt of government responsibility.



A young victim of an alleged chemical attack on Ghouta, Syria, recuperating in a hospital on August 22, 2013.
© 2013 Associate Press

OUR RESEARCH

“Six days before the publication of the U.N. report, Human Rights Watch released its own investigation of the Aug. 21 attack that also found evidence ‘strongly’ suggesting that the government of President Bashar al-Assad was responsible. Not for the first time, this kind of independent report made front-page news in the world’s newspapers, which, for the most part, were unable to confirm the facts on the ground with their own reporting.”

New York Times, September 27, 2013



Russian President Vladimir Putin and then-wife Lyudmila welcome Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his wife, Asma, in Moscow on January 25, 2005.
© 2005 Reuters

Fighting Propaganda with Evidence

This forensic work by Human Rights Watch was pivotal to winning the public debate.

Key foreign ministries used and cited our research. Media outlets credited our forensic analysis for demonstrating the government’s responsibility for the sarin attacks.

Put on the defensive, the Syrian government admitted publicly for the first time to possessing chemical weapons. That laid the groundwork for the US-Russian agreement ordering Syria to surrender those weapons.



PETER BOUCKAERT
© 2013 Human Rights Watch

THE ADVOCATE

“On the day the UN report was released [September 16, 2013], the Russian foreign minister did another interview in which he claimed the evidence of the chemical weapons attack on August 21 was ‘fabricated.’ But Russia doesn’t have a single shred of credible evidence for these claims. Human Rights Watch has done its homework, and can make the case.”

Peter Bouckaert, emergencies director, Human Rights Watch



A United Nations arms expert collects samples while investigating a suspected chemical weapons strike in Ghouta, Syria, on August 29, 2013.
© 2013 Getty Images



PHILIPPE BOLOIGNON
© 2013 Human Rights Watch

THE ADVOCATE

“If the killing of civilians by conventional weapons continues unabated, the chemical weapons agreement will be remembered as an effort to draw a red line, not save civilian lives. It’s high time for Russia to allow the Security Council to act to protect civilians.”

Philippe Boloignon, UN director, Human Rights Watch

Looking ahead:
Conventional weapons.

The agreement for the government to surrender its chemical weapons will not alone resolve Syria’s crisis. Far more Syrian civilians have been killed by conventional weapons, including indiscriminate and targeted attacks using air-dropped bombs, cluster bombs, incendiary bombs and ballistic missiles, not to mention countless massacres and summary executions. Human Rights Watch will keep the world focused on stopping the slaughter of civilians regardless of the weapon used or the party responsible. ■

TYRANNY HAS A WITNESS

A Kachin woman rests after giving birth, at a displaced persons camp in Kachin State, Burma, January 2012. She fled Burmese army advances while nine-months' pregnant. Since fighting renewed between the Burmese military and the Kachin Independence Army in June 2011, an estimated 75,000 ethnic Kachin have fled from their homes.

© 2012 Ryan Roco

“Our researchers are trained to cut through the tendency of people in politically charged situations to lie, exaggerate, or color the facts. Researchers learn how to determine what actually happened and who is responsible. Their careful work is crucial to debunking false government denials and ensuring that those with the power to make a difference actually do so.”

Kenneth Roth, executive director, Human Rights Watch

Human Rights Watch pursues the truth about the world's worst crimes. We overcome government efforts to deny or cover up abuses. We pay tribute to the suffering of victims, create a record of atrocities, and deter leaders from inflicting future horrors.

Across the globe our methodology and reporting is respected and found credible. Because of this, we have access to media, governments, civil society groups, the United Nations, and other key international actors. We use these connections to shine a spotlight on government abuses. With dishonest government denials no longer an option, we force leaders to recognize that the only way to defend their record is to change their conduct. And we do all of this as events unfold, when the chances of saving lives is greatest.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2013

	USD				UNAUDITED			
					EURO (1.30)*		EURO (1.26)*	
PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	2013 FY TOTALS	2012 FY TOTALS	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	2013 FY TOTALS	2012 FY TOTALS
Public Support:								
Contributions and grants	15,710,308	29,593,171	45,303,479	62,539,707	12,084,852	22,763,978	34,848,830	49,634,688
Special Events	9,961,835	-	9,961,835	10,514,594	7,662,950	-	7,662,950	8,344,916
Total Public Support	25,672,143	29,593,171	55,265,314	73,054,301	19,747,802	22,763,978	42,511,780	57,979,604
Revenue:								
Net investment income	214,785	8,140,618	8,355,403	(3,166,003)	165,219	6,262,014	6,427,233	(2,512,701)
Net investment income from limited partnerships	-	256,613	256,613	442,801	-	197,395	197,395	351,429
Publications	40,522	-	40,522	67,549	31,171	-	31,171	53,610
Other	750,636	-	750,636	113,260	577,412	-	577,412	89,889
Total Revenue	1,005,943	8,397,231	9,403,174	(2,542,393)	773,802	6,459,408	7,233,211	(2,017,772)
Net assets released from restrictions	40,539,423	(40,539,423)	-	-	31,184,172	(31,184,172)	-	-
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Public Support and Revenue	67,217,509	(2,549,021)	64,668,488	70,511,908	51,705,776	(1,960,785)	49,744,991	55,961,832
EXPENSES								
Program Services								
Africa	6,701,049	-	6,701,049	6,404,355	5,154,653	-	5,154,653	5,073,560
Americas	2,082,806	-	2,082,806	1,755,871	1,602,158	-	1,602,158	1,391,009
Asia	5,673,630	-	5,673,630	5,443,146	4,364,331	-	4,364,331	4,312,085
Europe and Central Asia	4,378,452	-	4,378,452	4,282,969	3,368,040	-	3,368,040	3,392,988
Middle East and North Africa	4,036,220	-	4,036,220	3,867,015	3,104,785	-	3,104,785	3,063,467
United States	3,091,029	-	3,091,029	2,367,775	2,377,715	-	2,377,715	1,875,762
Children's Rights	2,060,254	-	2,060,254	1,873,626	1,584,811	-	1,584,811	1,484,295
Health & Human Rights	2,241,712	-	2,241,712	2,077,916	1,724,394	-	1,724,394	1,646,135
International Justice	1,721,901	-	1,721,901	1,587,843	1,324,539	-	1,324,539	1,257,897
Women's Rights	2,609,151	-	2,609,151	2,533,126	2,007,039	-	2,007,039	2,006,754
Other Programs	15,078,129	-	15,078,129	13,477,056	11,598,561	-	11,598,561	10,676,587
Total Program Services	49,674,333	-	49,674,333	45,670,698	38,211,025	-	38,211,025	36,180,539
Supporting Services								
Management and general	4,187,580	-	4,187,580	3,493,157	3,221,215	-	3,221,215	2,772,347
Fundraising	11,481,137	-	11,481,137	9,560,361	8,831,644	-	8,831,644	7,587,588
Total Supporting Services	15,668,717	-	15,668,717	13,053,518	12,052,859	-	12,052,859	10,359,935
Total Expenses	65,343,050	-	65,343,050	58,724,216	50,263,884	-	50,263,885	46,540,474
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS								
Unrestricted	1,874,459	-	1,874,459	10,870,318	1,441,892	-	1,441,892	8,693,283
Temporarily restricted	-	(2,549,021)	(2,549,021)	917,374	-	(1,960,785)	(1,960,785)	728,075
Total Change before Foreign Currency Adjustment	1,874,459	(2,549,021)	(674,562)	11,787,692	1,441,892	(1,960,785)	(518,893)	9,421,358
Foreign Currency Translation Adjustment	-	-	-	-	(456,779)	(5,008,940)	(5,465,719)	7,583,068
Total Change in Net Assets	1,874,459	(2,549,021)	(674,562)	11,787,692	985,113	(6,969,725)	(5,984,612)	17,004,426
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	18,705,055	205,116,083	223,821,138	212,033,446	14,845,282	162,790,542	177,635,824	160,631,398
Net Assets, End of Year	20,579,514	202,567,062	223,146,576	223,821,138	15,830,395	155,820,817	171,651,212	177,635,824

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2013

	USD		EURO (1.30)*		EURO (1.26)*	
	2013 FY	2012 FY	2013 FY	2012 FY	2013 FY	2012 FY
ASSETS						
Cash and cash equivalents	38,808,215	32,971,423	29,852,473	26,167,796		
Investments, at fair value	87,984,496	76,140,410	67,680,382	60,428,897		
Investments, in limited partnerships	13,418,546	14,036,967	10,321,958	11,140,450		
Contributions receivable, net	83,917,731	101,194,982	64,552,101	80,313,478		
Other receivables	159,081	1,677,802	122,370	1,331,589		
Prepaid expenses	730,359	669,386	561,815	531,258		
Security deposits	243,128	242,907	187,022	192,783		
Fixed Assets, Net	2,758,605	2,578,006	2,122,004	2,046,037		
Total Assets	228,020,161	229,511,883	175,400,124	182,152,288		
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS LIABILITIES:						
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	4,153,959	4,877,329	3,195,353	3,870,896		
Accrued pension expense	141,619	100,236	108,938	79,552		
Deferred rent	556,527	691,700	428,098	548,968		
Deferred revenue	21,480	21,480	16,523	17,048		
Total Liabilities:	4,873,585	5,690,745	3,748,912	4,516,464		
COMMITMENT NET ASSETS:						
Unrestricted	20,579,514	18,705,055	15,830,395	14,845,282		
Temporarily restricted	202,567,062	205,116,083	155,820,817	162,790,542		
Total Net Assets	223,146,576	223,821,138	171,651,212	177,635,824		
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	228,020,161	229,511,883	175,400,124	182,152,288		

A complete version of the Human Rights Watch financial statements for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2013, is available at: HumanRightsWatch.org/financials

*Financial statements for the years ended June 30, 2013 and 2012 were translated to Euros using a blended rate derived by Human Rights Watch. This method is not in accordance with US GAAP and has not been audited.

Human Rights Watch meets all standards of the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance.



Human Rights Watch is among a leading group of charities that boast the 4-star rating from Charity Navigator.

