

**DEFENDING  
OUR VALUES**  
ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2017



HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
WATCH

## ANNUAL REPORT 2017

Dear Friends,

It turns out the populists do not always have the wind at their backs. As politicians took power in various countries including the United States with policies of indifference or outright hostility to human rights, there were plenty of reasons for concern. But the reaction has been hearteningly powerful, with a real battle underway. Human Rights Watch is proud to be playing a central role in that response.

The big development of the past year turned out to be not the rise of the populists but the strength of those defending human rights and democratic values in the face of the populist assault. Protesters have taken to the streets. Journalists have shined a spotlight. Litigators have gone to court. Politicians have spoken out. And Human Rights Watch has deployed our trademark tools of investigating abusive policies, exposing them to public condemnation, and generating pressure to resist.

But it has hardly been business as usual. The populists represent a fundamental threat because they succeed in making the abuse of certain disfavored minorities popular. Our job—one we have tended to take for granted but now must make a central part of our work—is to reinforce the values of our cause. We must show the importance of treating others the way we want to be treated ourselves. We must explain how no system of rights is meaningful if the government can selectively undermine it with emotional appeals to people’s worst instincts.

These are challenging times, but we are up to the task. As part of a global movement resisting the populist attacks on basic rights, we are confident that we can halt and reverse these threats to the core values of our cause.

Our strength lies in the principles we espouse, the accuracy and credibility of our voice, and the community of supporters who make our work possible. Thank you for standing with us at this challenging moment.

  
**Hassan Elmasry**  
Board Co-Chair

  
**Bob Kissane**  
Board Co-Chair

  
**Kenneth Roth**  
Executive Director



HOW WE WORK INVESTIGATE EXPOSE CHANGE

## For nearly 40 years, Human Rights Watch has defended people at risk of abuse.

We practice a powerful, proven methodology: **investigate** abuses scrupulously, **expose** the facts widely, and relentlessly press those in power for **change** that respects rights.

**Inset:** L'Évêché displacement camp in Kaga Bandoro, Central African Republic (CAR), on September 29, 2016, two weeks before an attack by the Seleka, a group of mostly Muslim rebels from northern CAR. © 2016 Edouard Dropsy for Human Rights Watch

**Left:** L'Évêché displacement camp in Kaga Bandoro, Central African Republic, on October 19, 2016, one week after the Seleka attack. © 2016 Edouard Dropsy for Human Rights Watch



Hadeel al-Shalchi, former Middle East researcher, interviews a man in the city of Manbij in northern Syria in October 2016. The extremist armed group known as Islamic State (ISIS) controlled this city until August 2016. Human Rights Watch showed how ISIS, before it left, planted landmines in homes, schools, and hospitals, and on roads and bridges, which killed and injured civilians. © 2016 Ole Solvang / Human Rights Watch

HOW WE WORK INVESTIGATE EXPOSE CHANGE

## We are expert investigators.

Deep and careful research lies at the core of our ability to influence public debate and champion human rights. We stake our credibility on the facts we report, devoting great effort to ensuring the accuracy and fairness of every word we publish. Our researchers go to the site of human rights violations to interview victims and witnesses, to examine physical evidence, to identify those responsible, and to develop the most effective interventions.



Boris Dittrich (C), LGBT advocacy director, speaks at a press conference in Tokyo on May 6, 2016, surrounded by Kyle Knight (L), LGBT researcher, and Kanae Doi (R), Japan director. Human Rights Watch revealed widespread bullying of LGBT youth in Japan. In response, the government's policy to combat bullying was changed for the first time to protect sexual and gender minority students. © 2016 TORU YAMANAKA/AFP/Getty Images

HOW WE WORK INVESTIGATE EXPOSE CHANGE

## We are effective communicators.

Human Rights Watch exposes wrongdoing through all available media, often as events unfold. We empower victims to tell their stories and be heard. Personal accounts of suffering, infused with humanity and urgency, are often the key to overcome complacency and compel positive action.



Jose Miguel Vivanco (L), Americas director, shakes hands with Guillermo Gallegos, president of El Salvador's congress, during a meeting in San Salvador on May 4, 2017. © 2017 REUTERS/Jose Cabezas

CHANGE

EXPOSE

INVESTIGATE

HOW WE WORK

## We are determined advocates.

Our ability to access policymakers and influence the public, while offering concrete ways to stem violations, often secures results. Regularly backed by strong media coverage, we meet face-to-face with those who have the power to act on the realistic steps we recommend. Combining our watertight facts with human stories of the consequence of abuse is a proven formula to secure improvements.



## What Our People Do

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

Our researchers examine situations in some 90 countries around the world. They function as investigators, journalists, and advocates.



Jonathan Pedneault, Africa researcher, interviews civilians displaced by conflict in South Sudan. Our investigations indicate that as the conflict spread, hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese faced violations, famine, and displacement. © 2017 Human Rights Watch

**Top:** Tanya Lokshina, Russia director, documents abuses by Ukrainian forces and Russia-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine. © 2014, Ole Solvang/Human Rights Watch

**Bottom:** Belkis Wille, Middle East senior researcher, interviewing witnesses of a July 12, 2015 Saudi-led coalition airstrike in Sanaa, Yemen that killed 23 people. © 2015 Ole Solvang/Human Rights Watch



## Being on the **front line**

Our researchers go to the scene of atrocities to interview victims, witnesses, local activists, and government officials. They gather credible, first-hand information, whether in war zones, sites of repression, or other hostile environments.



## Checking and cross-checking **facts**

Our researchers visit victims and witnesses wherever they can be reached, including refugee camps and prisons. They examine records and data from hospitals, morgues, courts, and the military. They use photos, video, forensic tools, statistical analysis, and satellite imagery—everything they can to piece together as complete and accurate a picture as possible.



Liesl Gernholtz, women's rights director, interviews women displaced by an earthquake about sexual violence in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. © 2010 Human Rights Watch



## Partnering with local activists and human rights groups

Our researchers immerse themselves in the communities where they work. They often live in-country, speak local languages, and partner with domestic organizations. They build networks of trust that can be relied on in a crisis to guide us in safely gathering reliable facts. They help to ensure that the concerns of local groups are heard by those with the power to make a difference.



Two men kiss at an LGBT rally in Berlin on June 30, 2017, the day the German parliament legalized same-sex marriage. © 2017 TOBIAS SCHWARZ/AFP/Getty Images

Top: Ole Solvang, emergencies deputy director, documents the aftermath of a Saudi-led coalition airstrike on a residential compound in Mokha, Yemen, that killed at least 65 civilians on July 24, 2015. © 2015 Human Rights Watch

Bottom: Leidy Cordova with four of her five children at their home in Cumana, Venezuela on June 16, 2016. Their broken refrigerator held the only food in the house: a bag of corn flour and a bottle of vinegar. © 2016 Meridith Kohut



## Exposing evidence of abuses

Our researchers shine a spotlight on wrongdoing by writing reports, news releases, and opinion pieces, supplemented by original photographs and video. We distribute these materials through both traditional and social media to shape public debate and to ensure that policymakers learn of our findings and feel pressure to heed our recommendations for change.

## Convincing key decision-makers to act

Our researchers share their findings not only with the target government but also with other governments and international institutions with clout. We ask (and sometimes demand) that they use their influence to help curb human rights abuses.

**Top:** Priyanka Motaparthy, emergencies researcher, talks to reporters during a press conference in Kuwait City on October 6, 2010. Our research exposed how government policies put migrant domestic workers at risk of abuse and exploitation, prompting a new law that gave domestic workers enforceable labor rights. © 2010 YASSER AL-ZAYYAT/AFP/Getty Images

**Middle:** Richard Pearshouse, environment and human rights associate director, speaks in the Bangladesh capital Dhaka on April 6, 2016. An estimated 20 million people in Bangladesh – mostly rural poor – still drink water contaminated with arsenic that is above the national standard. © 2016 MUNIR UZ ZAMAN/AFP/Getty Images

**Bottom:** Letta Tayler, senior counterterrorism researcher, explains our 2013 findings on US drone strikes and other air strikes in Yemen. © 2013 AP Photo/Susan Walsh



Kenneth Roth, executive director, launches our September 2017 report on Chinese government efforts to harass independent activists who attempt to participate in UN human rights forums. © 2017 FABRICE COFFRINI/AFP/Getty Images

## Providing expertise

Our researchers respond to growing demands for on-the-ground, credible information from journalists, political leaders, and policymakers. Sometimes we share our work quietly, other times through the media, at government hearings, or even as expert witnesses in criminal trials.



From across the border in Bangladesh, ethnic Rohingya Muslims watch as their villages burn in Burma. Human Rights Watch found that Burma's military committed ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, and forced over half a million Rohingya out of Burma in August to October 2017. © 2017 Masfiqur Sohan/NurPhoto via Getty Images

## Staying the course

Our researchers stay with an issue until they get results. They recognize that some problems are entrenched, and their solution requires long-term resolve.

“In partnership with local activists, we document the truth, resist abuse, and support people who most need the protection that human rights afford.”

**Iain Levine**

Deputy Executive Director  
Program



Female students walk home from a government school in Kabul, Afghanistan where they study in tents or in the open air, while boys study in buildings built by foreign donors. © 2017 Paula Bronstein for Human Rights Watch

## Thank You

Looking back at the challenges of the past year, I urge you to consider the real stories of hope, resilience, and inclusion that have kept our movement strong. Despite the threats to our cause, Human Rights Watch has worked with partners and supporters to differentiate fact from propaganda, to put a human face on often-complex issues, and to secure concrete changes in policy and practice.

Human Rights Watch is an independent, international organization that does not accept any government funding. Generous private investments in our work make possible every interview with a victim, exposé in the media, and advocacy meeting. Our ability to make a difference in the world depends on our global community of informed, dedicated supporters.

**We could not do it without you.**



*Michele Alexander*

**Michele Alexander**  
Deputy Executive Director  
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## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

For the fiscal year ended 30 June 2017

	USD				UNAUDITED			
	2017		2016		€ (1.1300)*		€ (1.1105)*	
	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	FY TOTALS	FY TOTALS	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	FY TOTALS	FY TOTALS
<b>PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE</b>								
<b>Public Support</b>								
Contributions and grants	\$ 22,554,175	\$ 16,510,714	\$ 39,064,889	\$ 42,898,776	€ 19,959,447	€ 14,611,251	€ 34,570,698	€ 38,630,145
Special Events	19,286,339	—	17,989,483	17,989,483	17,067,557	—	17,067,557	16,199,444
Less: Direct cost of special events	(2,966,235)	—	(2,687,420)	(2,687,420)	(2,624,987)	—	(2,624,987)	(2,420,009)
<b>Total Public Support</b>	<b>38,874,279</b>	<b>16,510,714</b>	<b>55,384,993</b>	<b>58,200,839</b>	<b>34,402,017</b>	<b>14,611,251</b>	<b>49,013,268</b>	<b>52,409,580</b>
<b>Revenue</b>								
Net investment income	2,669,749	16,780,423	19,450,172	(2,673,035)	2,362,610	14,849,932	17,212,542	(2,407,055)
Publications	21,998	—	21,998	24,806	19,467	—	19,467	22,338
Other	(27,022)	—	(27,022)	161,278	(23,913)	—	(23,913)	145,230
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>2,664,725</b>	<b>16,780,423</b>	<b>19,445,148</b>	<b>(2,486,951)</b>	<b>2,358,164</b>	<b>14,849,932</b>	<b>17,208,096</b>	<b>(2,239,488)</b>
Net assets released from restrictions	31,893,311	(31,893,311)	—	—	28,224,169	(28,224,169)	—	—
<b>Total Public Support and Revenue</b>	<b>73,432,315</b>	<b>1,397,826</b>	<b>74,830,141</b>	<b>55,713,888</b>	<b>64,984,350</b>	<b>1,237,014</b>	<b>66,221,364</b>	<b>50,170,093</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>								
<b>Program Services</b>								
Africa	7,700,677	—	7,700,677	6,901,267	6,814,758	—	6,814,758	6,214,558
Americas	2,540,237	—	2,540,237	2,784,132	2,247,997	—	2,247,997	2,507,098
Asia	6,835,126	—	6,835,126	7,057,293	6,048,784	—	6,048,784	6,355,059
Europe and Central Asia	4,752,950	—	4,752,950	5,213,958	4,206,150	—	4,206,150	4,695,145
Middle East and North Africa	6,061,736	—	6,061,736	5,595,560	5,364,368	—	5,364,368	5,038,775
United States	2,643,144	—	2,643,144	2,470,582	2,339,065	—	2,339,065	2,224,747
Children's Rights	2,838,833	—	2,838,833	2,727,677	2,512,242	—	2,512,242	2,456,260
LGBT	1,746,144	—	1,746,144	1,601,683	1,545,250	—	1,545,250	1,471,689
International Justice	1,756,980	—	1,756,980	1,794,361	1,554,850	—	1,554,850	1,615,814
Women's Rights	3,315,363	—	3,315,363	3,578,837	2,933,950	—	2,933,950	3,222,726
Other Programs	17,444,066	—	17,444,066	17,938,017	15,437,227	—	15,437,227	16,123,718
<b>Total Program Services</b>	<b>57,635,256</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>57,635,256</b>	<b>57,663,367</b>	<b>51,004,651</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>51,004,651</b>	<b>51,925,589</b>
<b>Supporting Services</b>								
Management and general	5,156,234	—	5,156,234	5,013,111	4,563,039	—	4,514,283	4,514,283
Fundraising	13,636,226	—	13,636,226	12,798,207	12,067,457	—	13,944,734	13,944,734
<b>Total Supporting Services</b>	<b>18,792,460</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>18,792,460</b>	<b>17,811,318</b>	<b>16,630,496</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>18,459,017</b>	<b>18,459,017</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>76,427,716</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>76,427,716</b>	<b>75,474,685</b>	<b>67,635,147</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>70,384,606</b>	<b>70,384,606</b>
<b>Total Change in Net Assets before Foreign Currency Adjustment</b>	<b>(2,955,401)</b>	<b>1,397,826</b>	<b>(1,597,575)</b>	<b>(19,760,797)</b>	<b>(2,650,797)</b>	<b>1,237,014</b>	<b>(1,413,783)</b>	<b>(17,794,504)</b>
Foreign Currency Translation Adjustment	—	—	—	—	(379,367)	(2,956,220)	(3,335,587)	561,151
<b>Total Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>(3,030,164)</b>	<b>(1,719,206)</b>	<b>(4,749,370)</b>	<b>(17,233,353)</b>
<b>Net Assets, Beginning of Year</b>	<b>24,413,060</b>	<b>190,238,840</b>	<b>214,651,900</b>	<b>234,412,697</b>	<b>21,983,845</b>	<b>171,309,176</b>	<b>193,293,021</b>	<b>210,526,374</b>
<b>Net Assets, End of Year</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>
Unrestricted	21,417,659	—	21,417,659	24,413,060	18,953,681	—	18,953,681	21,983,845
Restricted	—	191,636,666	191,636,666	190,238,840	—	171,309,176	169,589,970	171,309,176
<b>Total Net Assets, End of Year</b>	<b>\$ 21,417,659</b>	<b>\$ 191,636,666</b>	<b>\$ 213,054,325</b>	<b>\$ 214,651,900</b>	<b>€ 18,953,681</b>	<b>€ 171,309,176</b>	<b>€ 188,543,650</b>	<b>€ 193,293,021</b>

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

For the fiscal year ended 30 June 2017

	USD		€ (1.2000)*		€ (1.1105)*	
	2017 FY	2016 FY	2017 FY	2016 FY	2017 FY	2016 FY
<b>ASSETS</b>						
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 33,577,749	\$ 23,110,238	€ 27,981,458	€ 20,810,660		
Investments, at fair value	142,650,418	136,423,275	118,875,348	122,848,514		
Contributions receivable, net	35,733,542	52,513,880	29,777,952	47,288,501		
Other receivables	163,255	1,077,852	136,046	970,601		
Prepaid expenses	1,173,142	1,269,563	977,618	1,143,235		
Fixed Assets, Net	6,294,587	6,226,200	5,245,489	5,606,664		
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 219,592,693</b>	<b>\$ 220,621,008</b>	<b>€ 182,993,911</b>	<b>€ 198,668,175</b>		
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 1,028,315</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>				
<b>Liabilities</b>						
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 5,196,459	\$ 4,655,335	€ 4,330,383	€ 4,192,107		
Deferred rent	1,341,909	1,313,773	1,118,258	1,183,046		
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>6,538,368</b>	<b>5,969,108</b>	<b>5,448,640</b>	<b>5,375,154</b>		
<b>Net Assets</b>						
Unrestricted	21,417,659	24,413,060	17,848,049	21,983,845		
Temporarily restricted	191,636,666	190,238,840	159,697,222	171,309,176		
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>213,054,325</b>	<b>214,651,900</b>	<b>177,545,271</b>	<b>193,293,021</b>		
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 219,592,693</b>	<b>\$ 220,621,008</b>	<b>€ 182,993,911</b>	<b>€ 198,668,175</b>		

A complete version of the Human Rights Watch financial statements for the fiscal year ended 30 June 2017 is available at: [HRW.org/financials](http://HRW.org/financials)

\*Financial statements for the years ended 30 June 2017 and 2016 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.

## Cover Photo:

Melida Ruiz photographed with her daughter, Mercedes, and grandson, Christopher. Melida, a lawful permanent resident, has lived in the United States since 1981. Immigration authorities held Melida in detention for seven months in 2011 when she fought deportation based on a 2002 misdemeanor drug conviction.  
© 2013 Platon/The People's Portfolio for Human Rights Watch

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Human Rights Watch Annual Report 2017 is inclusive of the organization's work and reflective of its supporters from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017.



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