

**ANNUAL REPORT**

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UpRights<sup>7</sup>

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**UPRIGHTS**



# Building Partnerships To Advance Human Rights Through International Law

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## Get in touch with us!

Learn more about our work at [uprights.org](https://uprights.org) or contact us at [info@uprights.org](mailto:info@uprights.org)

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## **Dear Readers,**

*UpRights was formed in 2020 to address a non-controversial goal. Human rights must be respected and accountability for serious crimes must be ensured. It is choosing the means to reach these goals in light of an ever-shifting international landscape that is the real challenge. For this reason, we use our experience in international law to build partnerships with those most directly able to make an impact and utilize our practical and targeted expertise to support them.*

*So, what does this look like? We develop relationships with civil society, national governments and other organizations close to those most affected. We listen to their needs and ensure that the advice we provide is not simply a summary of international law but tailored to support their specific goals.*

*Why is this important? While the majority of accountability efforts are taking place at a local level, we have found that there is often an undue focus and concentration of expertise in traditional centers of power. Our own past experiences in international criminal tribunals, peacekeeping missions, and commissions of inquiry speaks to this reality. We strive to ensure that international law and pathways to justice are accessible to those undertaking the most critical and challenging work on the ground.*

*If national actors are not able to access or fully harness how international law can work for them, then it is unlikely to have a meaningful impact. We are constantly striving to identify models and modes of support that prioritize ownership by those best placed to promote human rights. So far, that has meant listening to the needs of civil society organizations in diverse contexts including South Korea, West Africa and Libya. It means cooperating closely with Ukrainian judges to ensure that international law is properly interpreted and accessible to adjudicate war crimes cases.*

*We are only at the beginning of this journey. There is a lot to learn. But we celebrate every step that allowed us to make a difference. We believe that listening to our partners, promoting meaningful relationships, and striving to make international law available and accessible to everyone is one small part of the larger puzzle to address the clear challenge - promote human rights, ensure accountability and build stronger and more resilient societies.*

**Valerie Gabard**  
Co-Director

**Asa Solway**  
Co-Director



# In line with its mission and values, in 2023 UpRights:



Trained the capacity of civil society, government actors, and members of judiciaries to document, investigate, and prosecute and adjudicate serious human rights violations and international crimes.



Authored expert reports on matters related to human rights due diligence, the situation of women and girls in crisis areas, and the implications of international agreements.



Assisted our partner GOTS in building a human rights due diligence framework and in bringing GOTS closer to the OECD framework.



Developed a foundational training on transitional justice for the civil service of Ukraine focused on recently de-occupied communities.



Trained South-Korean NGOs on the available pathways to accountability for crimes committed in North Korea.



Led research and publication of the “Benchbook for the Adjudication of International Crimes” available to over 2.000 Ukrainian judges.





# Our Approach: Pathways to Justice

**i. Building the Capacity of our Partners to Document Human Rights Violations and Collect and Analyse Evidence of International Crimes**

**ii. Supporting National and International Authorities to Prosecute and Adjudicate International Crimes**

**iii. Supporting Partners to Identify and Pursue Effective Legal Pathways to Provide Remedies and Ensure Accountability**

**iv. Promoting Transparent, Rule of Law-based Systems Including in Business and Human Rights and Transitional Justice**

Through its expertise in human rights and international law, UpRights builds impactful partnerships to promote human rights and pursue justice. Our experience has shown that genuine collaboration based on an understanding of our partners needs is the most effective way to help realize their objectives.

Recognizing the importance of partnerships as a catalyst for meaningful change, we work closely with a diverse array of partners, including victims, civil society organizations, government bodies, judiciaries, and international entities to identify effective and practical pathways to change.



# Documenting and Analyzing Human Rights Violations

Our experience has shown us that collaborating with partners who have a deep understanding of the context in which serious violations take place is the most effective way to promote human rights, ensure accountability and support the rule of law. Recognising them as those most proximate to a situation and most directly able to make an impact, we listen to their needs and empower them to make a direct impact.

Our approach involves tailored training programs and collaborative initiatives designed to meet the specific needs of our partners.

Through training courses, workshops, and formative resources, we equip our partners with the tools required for effective evidence collection and analysis.



In November, UpRights participated in a training session organised by the T.M.C Asser Institute to enhance the capacity of Ukrainian judges in international criminal law. Focusing on judgement drafting in international crimes cases, UpRights integrated insights from the Benchbook on the Adjudication of International Crimes in Ukraine.



Developed by Ukrainian judges, UpRights, and Global Rights Compliance in cooperation with the Ukrainian Supreme Court, the National School of Judges of Ukraine and with the support of the MATRA-Ukraine Project and under the overall guidance and support of the USAID Justice for All Activity, the Benchbook was created to aid judges in the interpretation and application of relevant domestic offenses in accordance with international law.







Throughout 2023, UpRights partnered with the Database Center for North Korean Human Rights (NKDB), to help shed light on the systematic human rights violations committed in North Korea.

Through this partnership UpRights provided NKDB with investigative and legal support concerning the collection of evidence, witness statements, and reporting on the command structure of senior officials. This included workshops designed to strengthen documentation and accountability-seeking efforts.

These efforts culminated in the release of NKDB's latest report, leveraging their database of over 140,000 cases, which outlined the organizational structure and systems of command within North Korean Ministries.







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In July, UpRights, in coordination with Global Rights Compliance, led a series of workshops hosted by the USAID Justice for All Activity.

Following the publication of the Benchbook on the Adjudication of International Crimes under Ukrainian Domestic Law, the workshops were designed to provide judges and other stakeholders with the opportunity to discuss substantial and procedural aspects of international crimes adjudication provided by the Benchbook.



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In January, UpRights led a training in Niamey (Niger) for the Commission Nationale des Droits Humains (CNDH).



Developed to enhance the capacity of the CNDH to draft human rights investigation reports, the training aimed at strengthening the quality of the CNDH's written outputs in terms of presenting the facts and conclusions of human rights investigations.



Through the discussion of practical examples and exercises, the training reinforced the ability of Commissioners and CNDH staff to write effectively, convincingly, and credibly about the results of field investigations into human rights violations and abuses.





# Supporting the Prosecution and Adjudication of International Crimes

We are dedicated to supporting government entities and international organizations engaged in the complex task of prosecuting and adjudicating international crimes.

Our purpose is clear. We aim to build the capacity of legal systems and institutions to use international law to effectively pursue justice against perpetrators.

Our approach is multifaceted and adaptive. We engage in needs assessments, case-mapping, and research to tailor our support to the specific requirements of each partner and contribute to the design and coordination of legal strategies.





In July 2023, the Benchbook on the Adjudication of International Crimes under Ukrainian Domestic Law was published by the Ukrainian National School of Judges and disseminated throughout the judiciary of Ukraine.

Developed by Ukrainian judges, UpRights, and Global Rights Compliance in close cooperation with the Ukrainian Supreme Court, the National School of Judges of Ukraine and with the financial assistance of the MATRA-Ukraine Project and under the overall guidance and support of the USAID Justice for All Activity, the Benchbook serves as a comprehensive resource for judges to adjudicate international crimes cases, referencing international instruments, the case law of international criminal tribunals and the ECtHR, and international best practices.







UpRights continued to pursue accountability efforts arising from the [Article 15 Communication](#) it produced and submitted in 2022 with StraLi for Strategic Litigation and Adala for All, urging the ICC to investigate international crimes committed against migrants and refugees detained in Libya following their interception at sea by the Libyan Coast Guard and the potential liability of Italy and Malta.



In December, UpRights gave a presentation on this subject as part of the [3rd Online Course on Advocacy for Protection](#) offered by the IHL in Sanremo.



Most recently, in cooperation with StraLi, UpRights released '[Navigating Troubled Waters - Italy's Human Rights Dilemma in the Mediterranean](#)', a report advocating for an amendment of the Memorandum of Understanding between Italy and Libya in a human rights-oriented perspective or for Italy to denounce the agreement.





# Pursuing Effective Pathways to Remedy and Accountability



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UpRights centers on providing robust support to its partners in identifying and pursuing effective legal pathways for remedies and accountability.

The partnerships we build are based on our commitment to ensure that victims of human rights violations receive just remedies, and those responsible are held accountable.

Our advice provides honest assessments of what is and is not viable. Our experience also allows us to develop short, medium and long-term approaches which consider a number of pathways including legal redress, the formulation of new accountability pathways and ongoing advocacy efforts.



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In March 2023 the International Commission of Jurists and Amnesty International released “The Taliban’s war on Women – the crime against humanity of gender persecution in Afghanistan”.

UpRights provided legal and factual analysis, as well as drafting support throughout the development of the Report, which examined the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan since the takeover of the Taliban in August 2021.

Evaluating the conditions of women and girls in the country, the report notably assessed whether such situation could qualify as crimes against humanity and in particular as gender persecution.





In December 2023, UpRights provided legal and drafting support to Human Rights Activists (HRA) in Iran to file a submission before the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFMI).

Analysing information collected and verified by HRA and two partner organizations, the submission contends that crimes against humanity, and in particular persecution on political and gender grounds, have taken place in the Islamic Republic of Iran since at least 16 September 2022, in the context of the crackdown by the Iranian authorities on the peaceful protests following the death of Mahsa Amini



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# Promoting Transparent, Rule-of-Law-Based Frameworks



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UpRights is dedicated to enabling transparent, rule of law-based systems, including promoting evidence-based business and human rights solutions and developing transitional justice frameworks for conflict-affected or unstable regions.

In the context of business and human rights, we work with stakeholders to promote human rights due diligence, including in conflict-affected environments, by engaging in the development and implementation of frameworks that encourage responsible corporate conduct.

In the field of transitional justice, our efforts are based on the belief that transparent, rule of law-based systems are essential for fostering sustainable and just societies. This requires working with all parties to enable effective legal mechanisms, ensure public trust and promote dialogue.





In May, UpRights and the Hague Academy for Local Governance developed an online course on transitional justice for civil servants and local administrators in Ukraine.

Specifically tailored for civil servants in Ukrainian municipalities and regional administrations, the course was designed to introduce the fundamentals of transitional justice and its role in helping society cope with the past, ensure accountability, provide justice and promote reconciliation.

The training aims to equip participants with a framework to address societal challenges arising from periods of trauma or conflict.



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UpRights assisted the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) to effectively implement human rights standards and due diligence in its industry-leading work in the textile sector. UpRights in particular assisted in the creation of the GOTS Due Diligence Handbook for Certified Entities, a document designed to strengthen GOTS' existing frameworks to ensure that Certified Entities incorporate effective due diligence into their operations while bringing GOTS closer to the OECD frameworks.

The result will assist and empower all GOTS Certified Entities to conduct effective due diligence, tailored to the unique circumstances of each entity, through a practical, six-step process to proactively address risk of harm and adverse impacts to human rights and the environment.





In July, UpRights prepared an independent expert report assessing the Human Rights Due Diligence process of the Mozambique Liquefied Natural Gas Project operated by TotalEnergies.

The report, commissioned by Justiça Ambiental!, Friends of the Earth Europe, Friends of the Earth and Milieudefensie highlighted gaps and omissions in the 2020 HRDD assessment and in the subsequent Action Plan.

The report points to the significant disconnect between the project's public commitment to respect human rights and the actual implementation in the Project's operations, as well as the lack of implementation of heightened human rights due diligence applicable in conflict areas.



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# Our Partners: Shared Vision, Shared Impact

In 2023, our journey toward a more just and equitable world has been shaped by the invaluable collaborations with like-minded partners who share our unwavering commitment to human rights.

Our partnerships extend far beyond mere cooperation; they embody a shared understanding of the urgent need for meaningful action. Together with these dedicated collaborators, we have embarked on initiatives that transcend borders, challenge injustices, and amplify voices.

As we reflect on the year gone by, we extend our deepest gratitude to our partners who have stood with us on this transformative journey.



Global Rights Compliance



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HUMANITARIAN LAW



USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE





# Beyond Borders: Our Global Impact

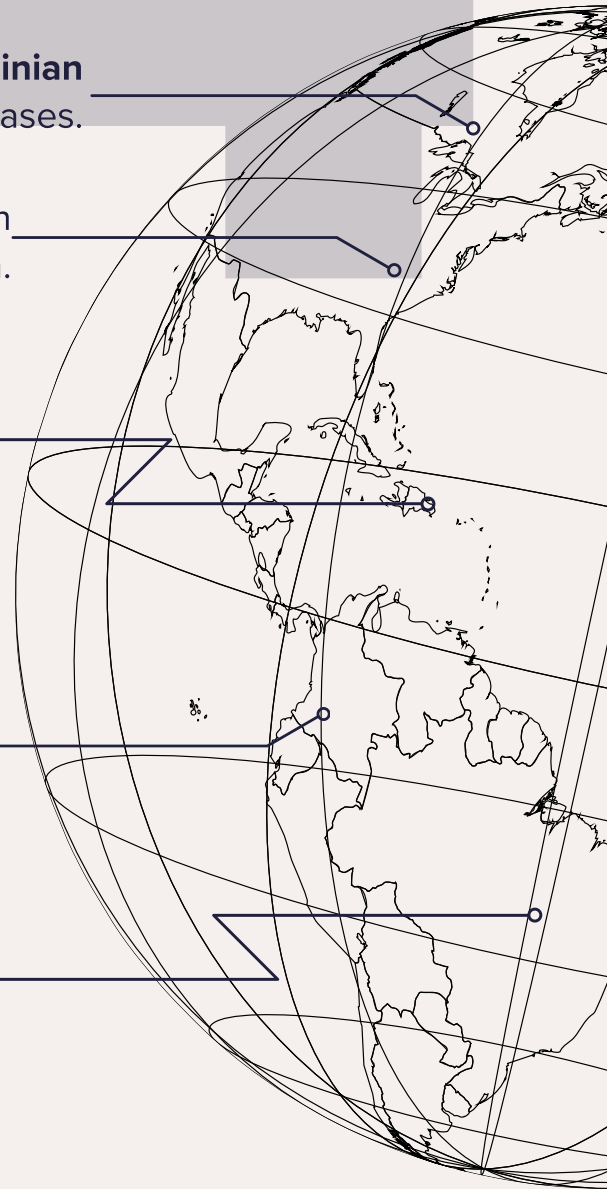
**Disseminated the Benchbook to over 2,000 Ukrainian judges** to assist in thousands of pending war crimes cases.

**Trained judges and many other stakeholders** on aspects of international crimes adjudication.

**Assisted 6 partners in the drafting and submission of reports** on human rights and international criminal law issues.

**Strengthened the capacity of the personnel of an international organization and national human rights institutions** to analyze information collected during investigations and to report on it for the purpose of accountability.

**Conducted trainings for civil society organisations** in South Korea on pursuing accountability in different forums for crimes in North Korea





# Financial Overview - 2022

## Assets

<b>Fixed Assets</b>	<b>1.438,5</b>
<i>Financial Fixed Assets</i>	<b>1.438,5</b>
<i>Other, Long-Term Receivables</i>	<b>1.438,5</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>	<b>30.578,1</b>
<i>Receivables</i>	<b>24.646,5</b>
<i>Debtors</i>	<b>15.937,0</b>
<i>Other Receivables</i>	<b>8.709,4</b>
<i>Cash and Cash Equivalentents</i>	<b>5.931,7</b>
<i>Payment Accounts</i>	<b>5.931,7</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>32.016,7</b>

## Liabilities

<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>23.011,4</b>
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## Revenue and Expenses

<b>Net Revenue</b>	<b>254.972,9</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>231.199,7</b>



# UpRights<sup>1</sup>

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