

# Annual Report 2024-25

An Asia Pacific where human rights  
are universally enjoyed and respected



Asia Pacific Forum



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# Glossary

|               |                                                          |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>APF</b>    | Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions |
| <b>APT</b>    | Association for the Prevention of Torture                |
| <b>CA</b>     | Capacity Assessment                                      |
| <b>CAR</b>    | Capacity Assessment Review                               |
| <b>CSOs</b>   | Civil Society Organisations                              |
| <b>GANHRI</b> | Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions    |
| <b>HLD</b>    | High-Level Dialogue                                      |
| <b>HRDs</b>   | Human Rights Defenders                                   |
| <b>MEAL</b>   | Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning        |
| <b>NHRI</b>   | National Human Rights Institution                        |
| <b>NPM</b>    | National Preventive Mechanism                            |
| <b>OHCHR</b>  | Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights         |
| <b>SCA</b>    | Sub-Committee on Accreditation                           |
| <b>SPC</b>    | The Pacific Community                                    |
| <b>UN</b>     | United Nations                                           |
| <b>UNDP</b>   | United Nations Development Programme                     |
| <b>UNFPA</b>  | United Nations Population Fund                           |



# About the APF

## Our story

Founded in 1996, the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF) has created a strong and united platform that brings together National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) from all corners of the Asia Pacific to address some of the most serious human rights challenges in our region.

Drawing on 29 years of human rights experience, a commitment to innovation and an outcomes-based approach to our work, our expertise lies in supporting the establishment of NHRIs and strengthening the capacity of our members to carry out their vital work.

We also work closely with governments, civil society organisations (CSOs), regional human rights bodies, and the international community to build strong partnerships and strengthen the impact of our members as they work to build fair, inclusive, and resilient communities.

From four founding members, the APF membership has expanded to 27 NHRIs. Our network supports over 3500 dedicated human rights defenders who work tirelessly on the ground to protect the rights of those most vulnerable.

Through the sustained and dedicated efforts of our members, the APF is helping to build an Asia Pacific where everyone can enjoy their human rights.



## What are NHRIs?

Unlike other parts of the world, there is no regional protection system in the Asia Pacific that people can turn to when their rights are violated. This makes the role of NHRIs in our region even more critical.

Strong, credible and effective NHRIs help bridge the 'protection gap' between the rights of individuals and the responsibilities of the State by:

- Monitoring the human rights situation in the country and making their findings available to the public.
- Providing advice to government so that laws and policies reflect national and international human rights standards.
- Receiving, investigating and resolving complaints so that victims of human rights violations can seek redress.
- Delivering human rights education programs that help change attitudes and behaviour.
- Engaging with the international human rights community to raise pressing issues and advocate for recommendations that make a difference back home.





## Our members

The APF currently has 27 members – eighteen ‘A status’ members, eight ‘B status’ members and one currently suspended member – drawn from all corners of the region.



**Afghanistan**  
Independent  
Human Rights  
Commission



**Australian**  
Human Rights  
Commission



**National**  
Institution for  
Human Rights in  
the Kingdom of  
**Bahrain**



**National**  
Human Rights  
Commission of  
**Bangladesh**



**Fiji Human**  
Rights and Anti-  
Discrimination  
Commission



**National**  
Human Rights  
Commission of  
**India**



**Indonesian**  
National  
Commission on  
Human Rights



**High Commission**  
for Human Rights  
of **Iraq**



**Jordan National**  
Centre for Human  
Rights



**National Centre**  
for Human Rights  
of **Kazakhstan**



**National**  
Human Rights  
Commission of  
**Korea**



**Ombudsman**  
of the **Kyrgyz**  
**Republic**



The depiction and use of boundaries, geographic names and related data shown on this map are not warranted to be error free nor do they necessarily imply official endorsement or acceptance by the APF.



## Chairperson's message

During 2024-25, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in the Asia Pacific continued to operate in complex environments including escalating conflicts, humanitarian crises, and threats to democratic institutions. NHRIs responded to human rights violations amidst increasing pressure on civic space, rapidly evolving digital risks and surveillance and worsening climate injustice.

Despite these challenges, NHRIs remained a vital pillar of national accountability, safeguarding rights, engaging with communities, advising governments, and advancing practical solutions that uphold human dignity.

The APF's strength lies in our membership and our shared commitment to cooperation and peer support. Our network has 27 members drawn from across the region, with a diversity of contexts and mandates that strengthens our collective efforts and reinforces the impact of a trusted regional network.

A central priority in 2024-25 was supporting our members to comply with the Paris Principles and to strengthen their independence and effectiveness. We provided targeted accreditation support to seven NHRIs and maintained a strong emphasis on practical capacity development, including leadership engagement, peer exchange through the Senior Executive Officers Network, and tailored support for torture prevention initiatives across the region. We also advanced gender equality through a regional baseline assessment, targeted programmes, and support to members to integrate gender data and promote regional learning through an intersectional approach.

The APF continued to amplify NHRI voices at regional and international levels, including through close engagement with GANHRI, participation in the UN Human Rights Council, and partnerships with relevant UN entities. In parallel, we sustained advocacy for respect of international human rights law in response to the ongoing conflict in Gaza, with a focus on the protection of civilians.

I extend my sincere appreciation to APF members for their dedication and leadership, and to our partners and donors for their continued support. I also acknowledge the members of the APF Governance Committee and Secretariat, whose commitment enables our network to deliver timely, responsive, and high-quality support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Samar Khaled Haj Hassan'.

**Samar Khaled Haj Hassan**

Chairperson, Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions  
Chairperson, Jordan National Center for Human Rights

# Highlights from 2024-25



NHRIs of **Nepal** and **Timor Leste** retain **A-status accreditation**, with APF support



Supported Pacific NHRIs to undertake **Human Rights Community-Led Development** projects



Supported Ombudsman of **Kyrgyzstan** with a **Capacity Assessment**



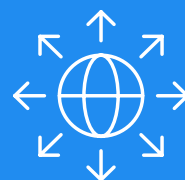
Conducted regional **NHRI Gender Baseline Assessment** to understand the capacity of APF member NHRIs to integrate gender into their work



Supported NHRI of **Sri Lanka** with a **Gender Audit**



Supported three NHRIs with small grants to implement national **Human Rights Defenders** projects



Launched **APF Library** showcasing the legal mandates and work of APF member institutions, including over 1000 publications



# Providing advice and support

## Outcome 1:

### More NHRIs in the Asia Pacific that comply with the Paris Principles and can exercise their mandate in safety

A fundamental goal of the APF is to support the establishment of independent NHRIs in the region and strengthen the mandates of those that already exist.

We provide advice to governments, NHRIs, and CSOs on the unique status of NHRIs, their roles, functions, relationships with government, parliament, and civil society, and the international accreditation process.

We also support NHRIs facing threats, ensuring they can continue exercising their mandates without fear of reprisals.

## Supporting the establishment of NHRIs in the Asia Pacific

We play a pivotal role in supporting the establishment of independent and effective NHRIs across the Asia Pacific region.

We do this by providing comprehensive legal and policy guidance to governments and parliaments to support the establishment of strong, independent NHRIs that comply with the Paris Principles, while also offering technical expertise on organisational structures, operational procedures, and resource management to ensure they function efficiently and effectively.

In 2024-25, we supported efforts to develop and strengthen NHRI legislation in line with the Paris Principles in five (5) countries: the **Cook Islands, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Vanuatu.**

## Assisting APF members with accreditation

APF members, along with NHRIs from the other three regions of the world, undergo a peer-based review process coordinated by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), through its Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA).

The accreditation process assesses compliance with the Paris Principles, the international minimum standards required by NHRIs to be independent, credible and effective. We support our members through the accreditation process by assisting with application preparation, interview readiness, and addressing the SCA's recommendations.

Accreditation outcomes directly affect an NHRI's membership of both GANHRI and the APF and determine their ability to participate independently in the UN Human Rights Council, significantly enhancing their global credibility.

Over the past year, we worked with seven (7) NHRIs: **Bahrain, India, Iraq, Myanmar, Nepal, Timor-Leste** and **Turkmenistan**, all of which were undergoing accreditation reviews.

Key achievements include **Nepal** and **Timor-Leste** retaining A-status.

Following sustained APF support, **Turkmenistan's** Ombudsperson applied for accreditation and was accredited with B-status.

We also participated in the SCA sessions in October 2024 and March 2025.

## Building confidence for accreditation

Our Annual Program on GANHRI Accreditation is a blended learning course designed to equip NHRI senior staff and leadership with the tools to navigate the accreditation process and understand the Paris Principles. The program aims to enhance participants' confidence in the accreditation process, improve accreditation outcomes, and foster knowledge exchange among NHRIs. By promoting collaboration and shared learning, the program supports members to engage effectively with GANHRI's SCA and support institutional improvements.

Participants from the NHRIs of **India, Iraq** and **Oman**, took part in the annual program, which featured an online course and an in-person workshop in Thailand in February 2025. The workshop included interactive panels and practical exercises, with facilitators from the NHRIs of **Pakistan** and **Sri Lanka** sharing their accreditation experiences. Representatives from GANHRI and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) also provided briefings on key aspects of the accreditation process.

# Providing legal and policy advice to our members

The APF provides technical assistance to its member NHRIs that are advocating for amendments to their existing legal mandates to strengthen their compliance with the Paris Principles.

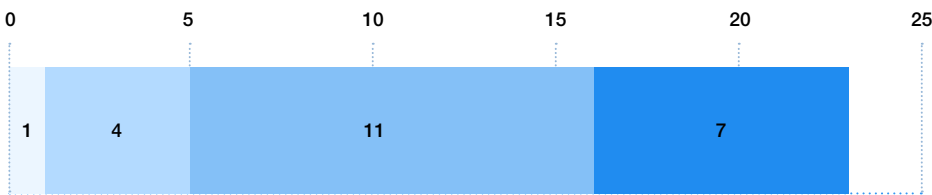
In 2024-25, we supported efforts to strengthen NHRI legislation in line with the Paris Principles with seven (7) NHRIs: **Bangladesh, Fiji, Iraq, Nepal, Oman, the Philippines, and Samoa.**

This included reviewing the National Human Rights Commission Act 2009 of Bangladesh and providing recommendations for amendments, in cooperation with OHCHR and UNDP. The APF also supported the Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission with advice and drafting support for proposed reforms, including regulations on commissioner appointments and amendments to its enabling Act. In addition, the APF provided an advisory opinion to the High Commission for Human Rights of Iraq on measures to strengthen institutional independence. It supported the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal through significant external consultations on proposed NHRC Act reforms, including with civil society (with advocacy linked to a positive accreditation outcome), reviewed proposed legal amendments advanced by the Oman Human Rights Commission, and continued to support the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines in advocating for the CHR Charter Bill to consolidate and safeguard its mandate and independence.

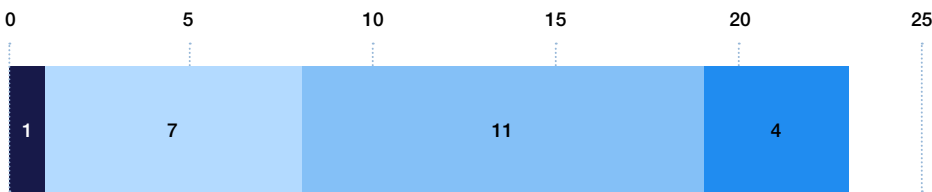
In Samoa, the APF provided targeted advice to the Ombudsman to support Paris Principles-aligned practice and preparedness for its upcoming GANHRI reaccreditation. Collectively, these engagements demonstrate how APF legal and policy support, from legislative reform to accreditation readiness, helps strengthen mandates, safeguard independence, and reinforce Paris Principles compliance.

Member feedback confirms the practical impact of this support: around 70% of respondents reported that APF advice on GANHRI accreditation and/or the Paris Principles contributed to changes in their institution’s legislation and/or practice to strengthen compliance with the Paris Principles.

## Value of APF support on Paris Principles and GANHRI Accreditation



Rate the value to your institution of any advice and support you have received from APF to advocate for amendments to your institution’s enabling legal framework to comply with the Paris Principles.



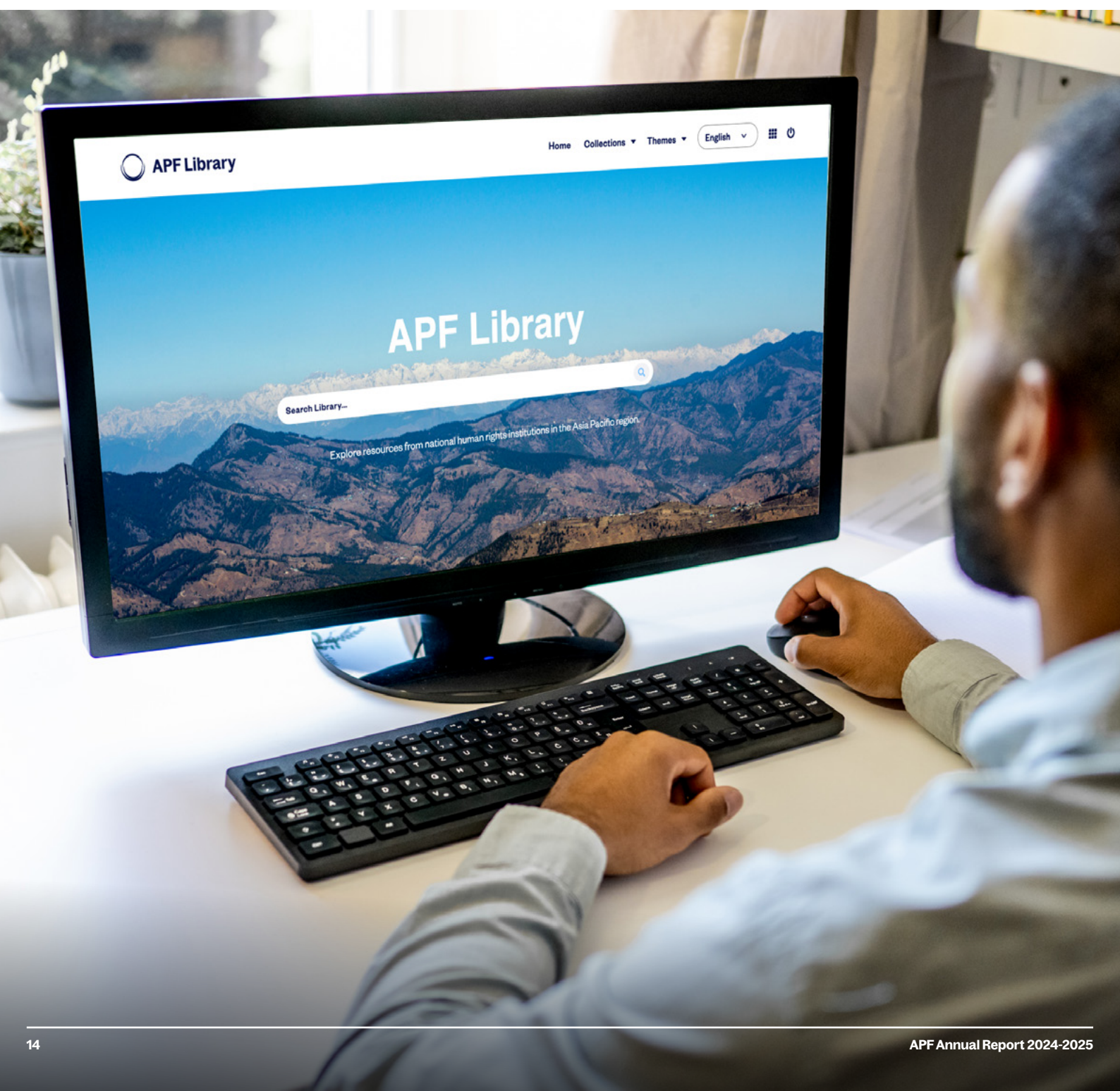
Rate the value to your institution of the role played by the APF in supporting you with GANHRI accreditation

Very Low   Low   Average   High   Very High   Not Applicable

## APF Library

The APF launched the 'APF Library' in September 2024, which coincided with the release of the new APF website. [The APF Library](#) is a publicly available online repository of publications and other resources from NHRIs across the Asia Pacific region, which is designed to showcase the legal mandates and work of APF member NHRIs to regional and global audiences.

The APF Library currently hosts over 1000 thematic publications, legal resources, United Nations materials, and regional publications by and about Asia Pacific NHRIs. The interface is available in English, Russian, and Arabic, but hosts publications in over 19 languages.



# Building stronger National Human Rights Institutions

## Outcome 2:

### NHRIs have strengthened capability to effectively promote, protect and respond to human rights issues

Our goal is to strengthen the capacity of NHRIs to protect and promote human rights by focusing on four key areas: operational efficiency, leadership, addressing human rights issues, and enhancing technical capabilities.

To achieve this, we deliver tailored capacity development programs, capacity assessments, training, mentoring, and NHRI resources. We also foster engagement, dialogue, and collaboration on key thematic issues to support our members.

## Supporting our members to strengthen their capacity

Our Capacity Assessment (CA) program, delivered in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), aims to strengthen the ability of NHRIs to protect and promote human rights at the national level.

CAs provide a detailed evaluation of the skills and resources needed to achieve institutional and human rights objectives. By comparing existing capacities with required ones, the assessments help identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities for growth.

This structured self-evaluation, facilitated by external experts, offers NHRIs valuable insights into their current capabilities and future needs, enabling them to develop strategies for improvement. Led by experts from the APF, UNDP, OHCHR, along with a peer NHRI, the process culminates in a draft report with actionable recommendations, guiding the NHRI's capacity development strategy and outlining steps to address challenges, enhance skills, and improve internal processes.

In May and June of 2025, we facilitated a CA of the Ombudsman of the **Kyrgyz Republic**. The CA team, in collaboration with the Ombudsman, reviewed key documents, conducted surveys and interviews with the Ombudsman, Deputies, managers and staff; and visit to regional offices in Osh and Naryn. Interviews were also held with representatives of Parliament, government agencies, provincial government officials, media and private sector representatives, civil society organisations and international organisations.

The CA resulted in a detailed report outlining strategies to strengthen the Ombudsman's capacity, staff development, internal processes, along with recommendations to address identified gaps.

In March 2025, we also supported the **Fiji** Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission (FHRADC) to publicly launch its Capacity Assessment Review ('CAR') report. The support resulted in the identification of recommendations for prioritisation by the FHRADC, including strategic areas for inclusion (e.g. data collection and analysis), and the identification of ways for its stakeholders to support the Commission.

## Strengthening the leadership of NHRIs

Supporting NHRI leadership is a core part of our work. We help leaders build institutions committed to promoting and protecting human rights in line with the Paris Principles, fostering independence and initiative. Our leadership services include high-level dialogues, virtual sessions, and outreach calls offering guidance and solidarity.

APF also provided targeted leadership support to the Human Rights Unit of the **Samoa** Ombudsman/NHRI, the National Human Rights Commission of **Mongolia** and the **New Zealand** Human Rights Commission. This included induction and leadership outreach meetings to identify capacity-building needs, discuss accreditation priorities, support engagement with Parliament and outline opportunities for ongoing peer learning and participation in APF activities.

In January 2025, the APF supported the National Human Rights Commission of **Nepal** ('NHRC') to hold a two-day Leadership Dialogue as part of its follow-up to the 2024 Capacity Assessment ('CA'). The retreat provided a confidential and structured space for NHRC leadership to reflect on progress, strengthen internal cohesion, and agree on priorities to implement recommendations from the CA report.

Through facilitated discussions, the NHRC leadership team, comprising Commissioners and senior staff, identified key operational and communication challenges and co-developed practical internal actions to address them. The dialogue highlighted the importance of institutionalising leadership reflection and collective decision-making, particularly as the Commission approaches the latter half of its mandate.

The APF convened a meeting of the Senior Executive Officers ('SEO') network in September 2024. Bringing together representatives from 20 NHRIs, the meeting provided an important space for sharing challenges, successes, and innovative practices related to internal capacity development. The meeting resulted in stronger peer connections amongst SEOs, shared practical insights on capacity-building initiatives, and collective interest in maintaining ongoing exchange through a community of practice. Participants recognised the importance of regular engagement to sustain institutional effectiveness, especially in increasingly complex and politically sensitive environments.

## Capacity development programs to support APF members

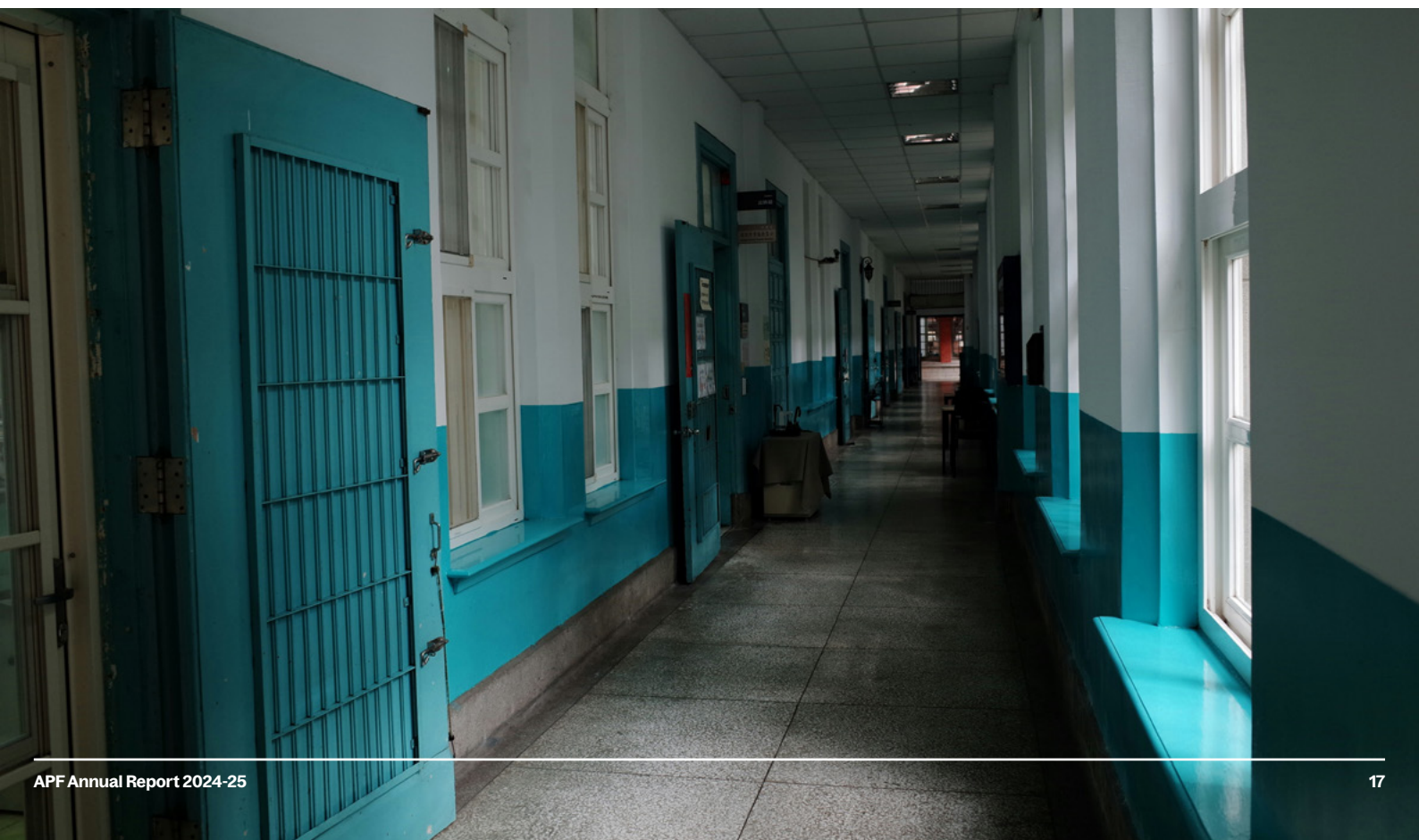
Our capacity development programs help NHRIs carry out their core functions including monitoring human rights, receiving and addressing complaints, advising governments, reviewing laws, and conducting human rights education.

We design our programs to address the evolving challenges NHRIs face in safeguarding human rights while building the skills and knowledge they need to fulfil their mandates effectively. Over the past year, our programs covered a wide range of topics, focusing on the APF's key thematic priorities of gender equality, the human rights impact of climate change, and the protection of HRDs.

## Supporting NHRIs to implement OPCAT and strengthen national preventive mechanisms

In December 2024, the APF and APT worked with the National Human Rights Commission of **Thailand** ('NHRCT') to deliver a week-long national torture prevention programme that combined high-level advocacy with practical capacity building. The national dialogue on ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture ('OPCAT') brought together parliamentarians, government agencies, civil society, media and international partners, followed by training on detention visits and preventive monitoring methodologies, including joint visits to a prison and police station.

The programme strengthened shared understanding of OPCAT safeguards, introduced practical tools for monitoring places of deprivation of liberty and supported the NHRCT to commit to follow up actions including campaigning for OPCAT ratification, refining monitoring tools and reviewing implementation of Thailand's Torture Prevention Act.





**By strengthening NHRI staff confidence and practical skills in community-led development, the programme helped member institutions design and deliver more trusted, locally grounded human rights work that was shaped by communities' priorities rather than institutional assumptions.**

Fasoha Aishath, Gender Equality and Capacity Development Manager  
(APF Human Rights Community-led Development Activity Report, 16 April 2025)

### **Strengthening NHRI capability on torture prevention through online learning**

In early 2025, The APF and APT built on lessons from the national programme with **Thailand** to design and deliver a regional online course on torture prevention for NHRI staff in May 2025. The course combined four self-paced modules with live discussions on international standards, the role of NHRIs under OPCAT, safeguards in places of deprivation of liberty and the Méndez Principles on effective interviewing.

Sixty-five staff from 19 NHRIs participated in the programme with participants reporting increased knowledge and confidence to integrate torture prevention into monitoring visits, internal training and advocacy for OPCAT ratification and implementation.

## Strengthening NHRI capability for human rights community-led development

From February to April 2025, the APF delivered a regional online Human Rights Community-led Development (HRCLD) programme for NHRIs, drawing on lessons from the Pacific Pilot Project (July 2024 – May 2025) and the APF guide “Building Human Rights Communities”. Fifty-nine participants (34 women, 24 men and one gender-diverse participant) from 19 member institutions completed four modules and joined weekly live sessions in two time-zone-friendly streams, with Arabic and Russian interpretation, exploring HRCLD concepts: ethics, practical steps and the use of a gender lens; supported by case studies from the Cook Islands, Fiji and Samoa.

Of the 59 registered participants, 35 (59%) completed all four modules, with completions spanning 20 women and 15 men from 14 NHRIs. Pre- and post-lesson surveys showed an average 1.3-point increase in confidence (from 2.84 to 3.78 out of 5), with end-of-course ratings of 3.75/5 for overall confidence to facilitate HRCLD, 3.75/5 for likelihood of applying the approach and 3.9/5 for applying gender considerations; Lesson 15 on using a gender lens recorded a shift from 2.4 to 3.9 out of 5.

Participants reported acquiring concrete tools and a fresh perspective on working with communities, particularly around child rights, engagement with indigenous communities and building trust with groups who may distrust state institutions, laying the groundwork for a regional HRCLD practitioner network and future APF peer learning and mentoring.



# APF NHRI Gender Baseline Assessment:

## Key findings across 5 areas:

### 1. Structure and decision-making

Most NHRIs integrate gender into strategic statements, action plans and reporting: 80% of survey respondents said gender is considered most or all of the time, and the document review found 17 of 24 NHRIs (70.8%) referenced gender in strategic plans and annual reports.

### 2. Gender equality in external work

This is the highest rated GBA area, with evidence of gender equality in external work found in documentation for all 24 NHRIs reviewed.

### 3. Human resource management, policies and procedures

Most NHRIs have gender-related HR policies and practices in place (e.g., sexual harassment and anti-discrimination measures, family-related leave and related supports), and 84% of survey respondents said gender is considered most or all of the time in HR policies and practices.

### 4. Internal gender expertise, capacity

Most NHRIs have formal or informal gender specialists, and 19 of 24 NHRIs reported they are delivering internal gender-based capacity development.

### 5. Organisation culture and practice

While this is the lowest-rated area overall, the survey still shows strong intent: 76.19% of respondents said gender is considered most or all of the time in values, structures, systems and processes.

A Gender Baseline Assessment was conducted in July 2024, aimed at understanding the current capacity of APF member NHRIs to integrate gender into both their internal operations and external work.

Applying 21 indicators across five key areas, the assessment found strong commitment to gender equality across the region – particularly in external activities – while identifying gaps in internal gender mainstreaming, leadership representation, capacity development and gender-responsive budgeting.

The assessment was undertaken to support the APF and its members in planning effective gender equality strategies, and to set a benchmark for future monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning.

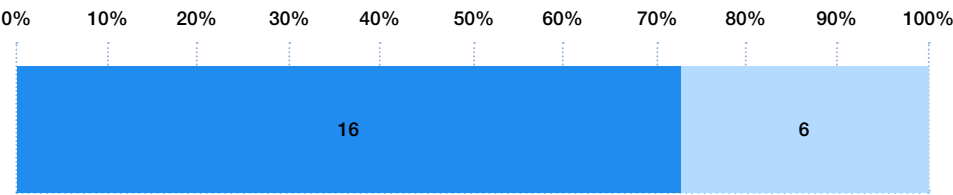


## Strengthening NHRI gender equality practice through online learning

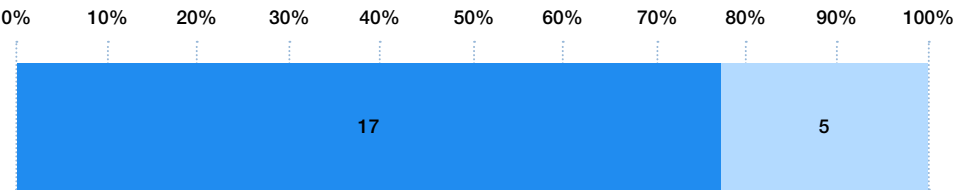
In November 2024, forty-eight participants from 23 NHRIs took part in a four-week online NHRI Gender Equality Programme as an immediate follow-up to the 2024 Gender Baseline Assessment. The course, hosted on APF’s learning platform, combined an updated “Gender Equality for NHRIs” module and optional micro-courses with weekly live sessions in two time-zone streams, supported by Arabic and Russian interpretation and integrating content on climate change and human rights defenders.

Survey results showed clear gains in confidence to apply a gender lens to institutional work and strategies. Participants reported concrete follow-up actions, including internal trainings, integrating gender equality into strategic plans and audits, and mainstreaming gender across programmes, inquiries and reports. The programme has laid the groundwork for continued online engagement and tailored support as NHRIs develop and implement their own gender equality strategies.

## Provision of APF training



Has the provision of APF training and capacity development activities led to any local or national advocacy?



Has the provision of APF training and capacity development activities led to any changes, internally or externally, to your institution?

■ Yes    ■ No

## Gender Audit

The APF supported the Human Rights Commission of **Sri Lanka** ('HRCSL') to undertake a comprehensive gender audit of its institutional structures, policies, and practices. The initiative responded to the HRCSL's strategic commitment to strengthen its internal and external efforts to promote gender equality, particularly in light of ongoing gender-based human rights violations in Sri Lanka. Facilitated by APF gender experts, the audit was conducted using a participatory approach, involving staff at all levels, commissioners, and external stakeholders through surveys, interviews, focus groups, and document review.

The audit provided an in-depth assessment of five key areas: governance and decision-making, organisational culture, human resource management, internal gender expertise, and the Commission's gender responsiveness in external work. It engaged over 100 staff members and commissioners—across regions, roles, and gender identities—and ensured equitable participation through language and accessibility measures. A two-day on-site workshop further deepened staff understanding of gender equality principles and allowed for collective reflection on findings.

The final Audit Report will serve as a basis for developing a Gender Equality Strategy, and includes:

- A baseline assessment of the HRCSL's gender equality performance and the identification of institutional strengths and gaps.
- Development of 15 context-specific recommendations, including the establishment of a gender strategy, strengthened complaints mechanisms, gender-responsive human resource policies, and a capacity-building plan for staff.
- Strengthened internal awareness and commitment across the organisation to integrate a gender perspective into all areas of work.
- Enhanced understanding and ownership of gender equality measures among senior leadership; and
- Positioning the HRCSL to lead by example and support gender equality initiatives across other public institutions.

## Climate change mitigation and adaptation

In 2024, the APF in partnership with Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law ('RWI'), and South Asian University ('SAU') conducted a Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis to evaluate the capacity of six South Asian NHRIs to engage in climate change mitigation and adaptation ('CCMA') initiatives through a human rights and gender-responsive lens.

The findings underscore the need for targeted support across five key areas: training, technical tools, internal policy development, stakeholder engagement, and participation in international climate forums. The assessment sets a foundation for strengthening NHRI capacity to contribute meaningfully to climate justice and human rights protection in the region.

## Human rights defenders' small grants initiative

The APF's Regional Action Plan of Human Rights Defenders 2021-2025 ('RAP') sets up an agenda for actions to champion the rights of human rights defenders across the Asia-Pacific region. The Action Plan also realises a key commitment of the APF and its member NHRIs under the 2018 Marrakesh Declaration, which establishes a global framework of actions by NHRIs to support the rights of human rights defenders ('HRDs').

Over the last year the APF developed extensive guidelines and toolkits to support and safeguard HRDs, acknowledging their crucial role in promoting justice, equality, and fundamental freedoms. These include:

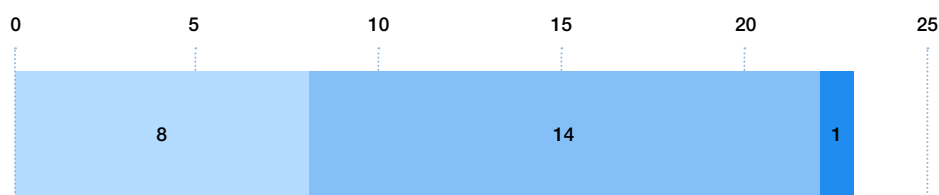
- [Data Protection Guidelines for National Human Rights Institutions: Practical advice on how NHRIs can protect personal information relating to HRDs.](#)
- [Engaging with Regional and International Actors Toolkit: A practical guide for NHRIs on engaging with regional CSOs, regional human rights mechanisms and international actors for the protection and promotion of HRDs' rights.](#)
- [Relocation and Respite Toolkit: A Practical Guide for NHRIs on facilitating relocation and respite of HRDs from threats of reprisals.](#)

These resources offer practical guidance, strategic insights, and essential tools to help NHRIs tackle challenges, reduce risks, and enhance their advocacy. By providing NHRIs with clear frameworks and actionable recommendations, the aim is to foster a safer and more supportive environment for human rights across the Asia Pacific region.

To consolidate and apply the knowledge and skills acquired from the APF's capacity development programs, the APF launched a small grants initiative to support NHRIs in enhancing their national data monitoring and reporting. The initiative focuses on innovative approaches using the 'right to defend rights tool' ('R2DRT') and aims to improve information and monitoring systems for HRDs, document their contributions and challenges, and enhance NHRI dialogue with governments and stakeholders on these issues.

The NHRIs of the **Maldives**, **Mongolia** and **Nepal** received funding under this initiative to implement national-level projects.

## Value of APF activities to strengthen NHRI capability to effectively promote, protect and respond to human rights issues



Rate the value to your institution of the APF's training and capacity development activities

Very Low Low Average High Very High Not Applicable



# Engaging at the regional and international levels

## Outcome 3:

### NHRI voices are amplified in regional and international fora

Our goal is to amplify the voice, awareness, and collective impact of NHRIs at the regional and international levels. We focus on increasing NHRI participation and influence, fostering collaboration on regional human rights issues, and enhancing NHRI advocacy and recognition.

We serve as a collective voice for NHRIs in the Asia Pacific, advocating for shared human rights priorities and raising awareness of their vital role on the global stage.

## Increased regional and international engagement

We work to strengthen NHRI engagement with regional and international bodies, including the United Nations, GANHRI, and other human rights mechanisms, by creating opportunities for NHRIs to address critical human rights issues. Collaborating with member institutions and partner organisations, we actively contribute to global and regional human rights protection systems.

As one of GANHRI's four regional networks, we participate in its annual General Assembly and at least two Bureau meetings each year, while also engaging in GANHRI-UNDP-OHCHR tripartite meetings and task forces focused on specific human rights concerns.

In 2024-25 we participated in the following GANHRI meetings:

- Bureau meeting held in Qatar from 26 to 28 November 2024;
- Bureau and General Assembly meetings held in Switzerland from 10 to 12 March 2025;
- GANHRI-OHCHR-UNDP Tripartite meetings held in the United States from 17 to 19 June 2025.

In these meetings the APF Chairperson, elected Bureau representatives from APF NHRIs, in association with elected representatives from the other three regional networks, discussed a range of administrative and policy related issues. In preparation for these meetings the APF provided advice and written reports to the APF Chairperson, its elected Bureau members and the broader APF membership on the issues for consideration and decision.

A key focus at this year's GANHRI General Assembly was the role of NHRIs in advancing gender equality and strengthening human rights protection for women and girls, providing an opportunity for participants to collaborate on solutions and enhance efforts toward gender equality. GANHRI Chairperson, Ms. Maryam Al Attiyah, opened the session with a call to action to all NHRIs and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, highlighted the essential role of NHRIs, emphasising their deep understanding of both global legal frameworks and national contexts.

## APF Side Event at the UN Human Rights Council

The APF held a side event during the 58th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council on 12 March 2025 on 'National Action in International Issues: The roles of NHRIs in relation to extra-territorial human rights cases and situations'. The side event was facilitated by the APF Chairperson, Ms Samar Haj Hasan, and included presentations from Professor Chris Sidoti, Mr Issam Aruri, Commissioner General of the **Palestinian** Independent Commission for Human Rights, and Ms Pornprapai Ganjanarintr, Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission of **Thailand**.

The side event considered how NHRIs can address human rights violations beyond their borders and provided guidance and practical examples of how NHRIs have acted on international issues, while working within their existing legal frameworks. The side event outlined five key NHRI functions that can be applied in relation to extra-territorial cases:

- Investigating and resolving human rights violations
- Conducting national inquiries into systemic abuses
- Providing advice and recommendations
- Engaging in international cooperation
- Advancing human rights education

## Sexual and reproductive rights

In partnership with the United Nations Population Fund ('UNFPA') — including the Asia Pacific Regional Office ('APRO'), Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office ('EECARO'), and the UNFPA Programme Division — from 10 to 11 June 2025 the APF facilitated a two-day webinar to strengthen NHRI capacities in monitoring and reporting on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights ('SRHR'). This initiative aimed to address persistent gaps in the institutional engagement of NHRIs on SRHR, GBV, and harmful practices, despite commitments under the Amman and Kathmandu Declarations.

The programme convened 114 participants representing 19 NHRIs and corresponding UNFPA regional and country offices. 24 were male and 90 were female, reflecting strong gender representation. Simultaneous translation in Russian ensured accessibility for participants across Central Asia and Eastern Europe.

Delivered through a participatory, analytical format, the sessions combined expert presentations, NHRI-led case studies, facilitated Q&A discussions, and regional exchange.



# International Conference on Gender Inclusion

Representatives from 19 NHRIs from across the Asia Pacific gathered in Kathmandu, Nepal, from 3 to 5 September 2024, for the International Conference on Gender Inclusion in National Human Rights Institutions.

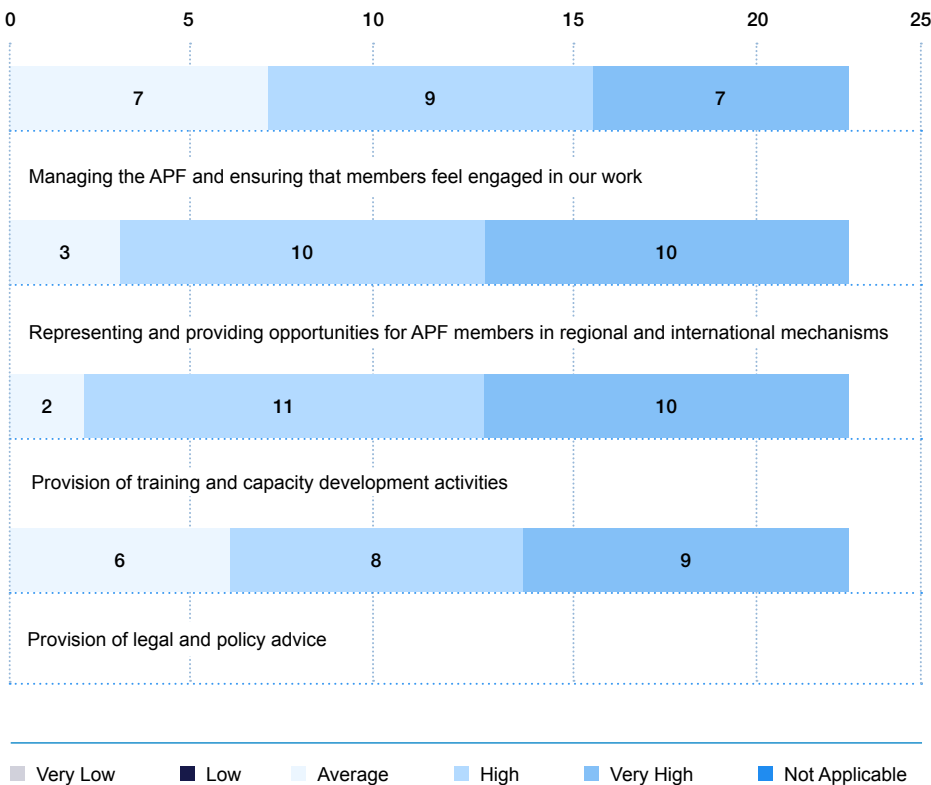
Organised by the National Human Rights Commission of **Nepal** ('NHRC') with support from the United Nations Population Fund ('UNFPA'), UN Women, and the APF, the conference aimed to tackle global challenges and institutional barriers to advancing gender equality, while fostering regional collaboration to drive meaningful change.

Participants shared strategies and experiences in promoting gender equality, emphasising the crucial role NHRIs play in advocating for the rights of women, girls and people of diverse gender identities. They also discussed the current progress and obstacles NHRIs face in integrating gender perspectives into their operations and governance structures.

The conference, inaugurated by Nepal's Prime Minister, Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli, showcased two key papers developed by the APF: Gender Equality and the Paris Principles and Gender Baseline Assessment of Asia Pacific NHRIs. These papers were designed to help APF members plan gender equality strategies and activities, while establishing benchmarks for future monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning.

Key outcomes of the conference included a renewed commitment by NHRIs to advance gender equality within their organisations and strengthen regional cooperation on gender mainstreaming. A major highlight was the development of the Kathmandu Declaration, a strategic roadmap for NHRIs to enhance gender mainstreaming efforts. Participants emphasised the need to address internal challenges, such as gender imbalances in leadership, and to step up advocacy for women's rights at national and international levels.

## Satisfaction with the APF's commitment to gender equity and equality in the implementation of APF outcomes





# Strong organisational leadership and governance

## Outcome 4:

### The APF is a well-functioning and governed network with an engaged membership

We strive to maintain an active and engaged membership by prioritising accountability, efficiency, and participation, ensuring the APF's sustainability and continued support for NHRIs.

Our approach focuses on four key areas: strong governance to guide decision-making, efficient management systems to support staff, accurate measurement and communication of our impact, and securing sustainable funding sources.

## Governance

As an independent, non-profit entity, the APF is governed by a diverse board of directors – the Forum Council – representing our regional membership. Established under the APF Constitution, the Forum Council includes one voting councillor from each full member. The General Assembly sets strategy and makes key decisions, with A-status members holding voting and participatory rights, while B-status members have participatory rights.

An elected Governance Committee is responsible for considering and making recommendations to the Forum Council and General Assembly on a range of issues.

## Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is a formal meeting held once a year. It is a legal requirement for the APF as a non-profit organisation. The AGM serves as an opportunity for APF members to review the operation of the APF over the past year and enables A-status members to make decisions on policy, hold elections, ratify audit and financial requirements, consider the APF's annual report, directors' report, performance report and consider applications for membership. We also hold a biennial conference every two years.

The 29th APF Annual General Meeting, held in Thailand in September 2024, brought together APF member institutions, as well as observers from the Asia Pacific region.

# APF Governance Committee

Ms. Samar Haj Hasan, Chairperson of the Jordan National Centre for Human Rights, was elected as the new APF Chairperson and leads the APF Governance Committee with her colleagues from Indonesia (Deputy Chairperson), Korea, Pakistan and the Philippines.

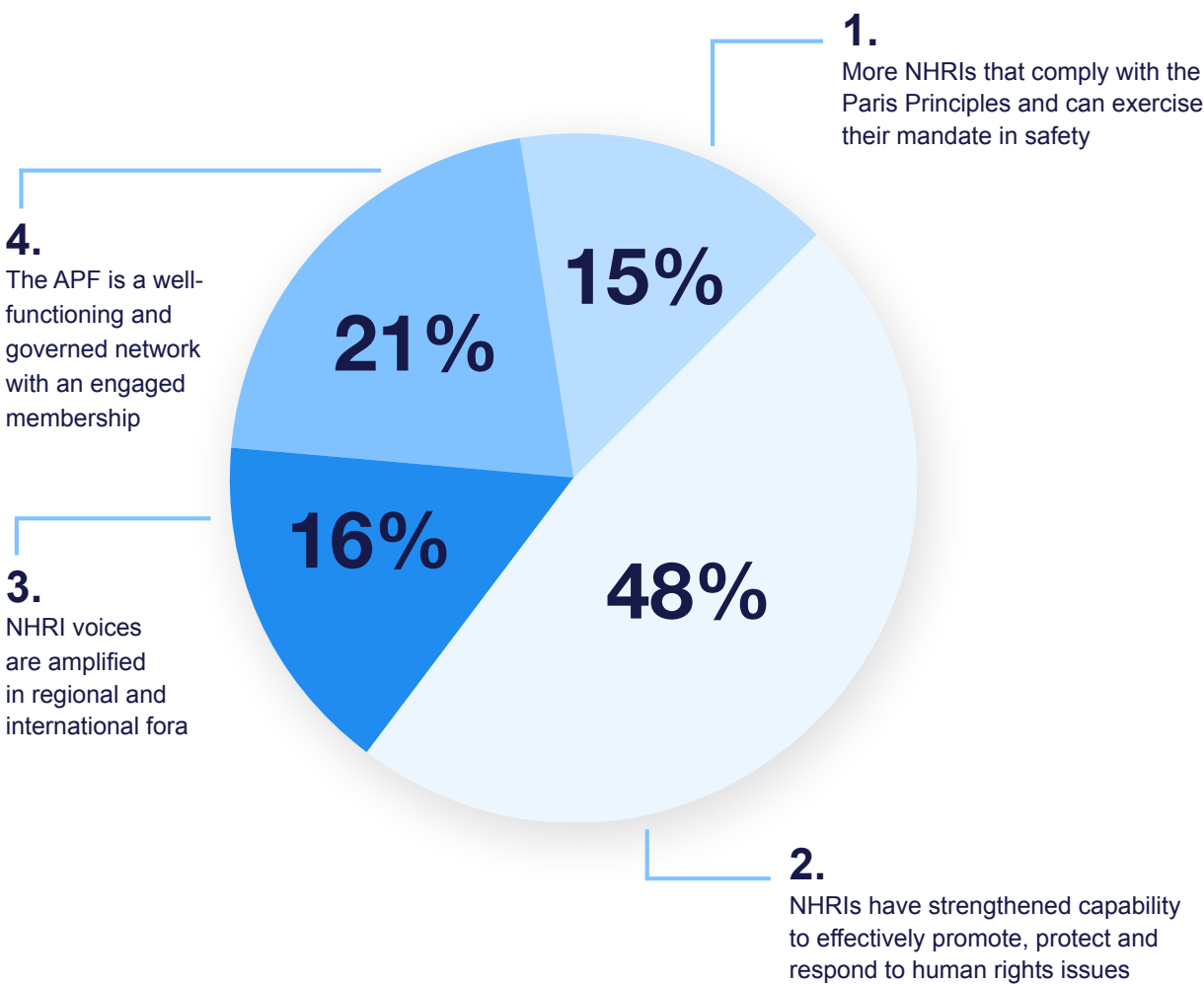
The Governance Committee met regularly throughout the year to consider a range of strategic, operational and policy related issues.

## Financials

We receive funding from governments, institutional donors and member contributions.

We are grateful for the support of our donors and partners who share our commitment to an Asia Pacific where human rights are universally enjoyed and respected.

## Expenditure by outcomes



# Our team

## Our governance

The governance structure of the APF consists of two bodies, the Governance Committee and the Forum Councillors.

## The APF Governance Committee 2024-25

Ms. Samar Haj Hasan

Chairperson, Jordan National Centre for Human Rights  
(Chairperson)

Dr. Atnike Nova Sigirot

Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission of Indonesia  
(Deputy Chairperson)

Mr. Ahn Chang Ho

Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission of Korea  
(Member)

Ms. Rabiya Javeri Agha

Chairperson, National Commission for Human Rights of Pakistan  
(Member)

Mr. Richard P. Palpal-Latoc

Chairperson, Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines  
(Member)

## The APF Forum Council

The Forum Council is the decision-making body of the APF. Established by the APF Constitution, the Forum Council operates as the APF's 'board of directors'.

The Forum Council sets the APF's policies and priorities, decides membership applications and exercises all the powers set out in the constitution.

The Forum Council is made up of senior representatives from the APF's Full members. Each Full (or 'A status') member nominates one voting councillor to participate on the Forum Council.

Forum Councillors may establish 'committees of Councillors' to administer different aspects of the APF's operations.

## Our staff

The APF secretariat reports to the Governance Committee, Forum Council and General Assembly through the APF Chairperson.

# Connect with us on social media



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