UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

GLOBAL PROGRAMME FOR STRENGTHENING THE RULE OF LAW, HUMAN RIGHTS, JUSTICE AND SECURITY FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

PHASE IV (2022-2025)

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Creating safe environments for communities to thrive. In Tunisia, UNDP supports businesses and institutions to uphold rights and enable people to build secure futures.

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FOREWORD

Development begins with institutions. Institutions that people trust to be fair, accountable, and accessible. Too often, governance, the rule of law, justice, and human rights are treated as separate agendas. In reality, they are the foundations upon which development rests.

People may not talk about the rule of law every day. But they experience its presence - or its absence - constantly. It shapes whether a woman facing violence can access protection. Whether a family can recover documents after a crisis. Whether businesses can invest with confidence. Whether communities can resolve tensions peacefully before they become conflict.
From virtual courts in Pakistan to local dispute resolution in Yemen, to support for accountability and rights protection in Ukraine, the lesson is consistent: when institutions function, rights are protected. When rights are protected, trust grows. And when trust grows, progress becomes possible.

Across more than 100 countries and territories, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) advances this work with our partners through our Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development. We are helping countries build institutions that can withstand pressure, protect rights, and create opportunity. I thank our donors and partners for their continued support. Sustainable development is not built on projects alone. It is built on trust. And trust is built through institutions that work. In an increasingly uncertain world, that is not only the foundation of development. It is the foundation of a more secure world.

Alexander De Croo,
Administrator, UNDP

INTRODUCTION

Across the world, communities are facing conflict, fragility and deep uncertainty. Yet even in the hardest places, people continue to seek justice, protection and accountability. In 2025, UNDP worked with national and local partners to strengthen the rule of law, advance human rights and support institutions that can serve people when they need them most.

The past year showed how severe those pressures can be. Armed conflict remained at historic levels, with the highest number of state-based conflicts recorded since the mid-1940s. People fled their homes, often leaving land, property and identity documents behind. Families were separated. Protection needs grew. Services disappeared just when they were needed most.

For UNDP, these realities cannot wait. Rule of law, human rights and justice are not separate from crisis response; they are part of it. They help people stay safe, claim their rights and begin to recover with dignity. The Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development has been UNDP's main vehicle for this work.

I am grateful to the governments of Austria, the European Union, Finland, Generalitat Valenciana, Germany, Iceland, Japan, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States for their generous support to the Global Programme. In 2025, the Global Programme completed its fourth phase. This report takes stock of what sustained investment in rule of law, human rights, justice and security can achieve, even in the most volatile settings.

Across countries, especially those in crisis and fragility contexts, millions of people gained access to justice and human rights support. Police and communities worked together to make neighbourhoods safer. Businesses adopted more responsible practices and found ways to support stability during crisis. Human rights commitments became practical tools for protection and action.

Our work is designed for fragile and conflict-affected settings. Justice, human rights and security cannot succeed in isolation. In crisis, their links become even clearer. The Global Programme brings them together so change can take hold, even where conditions are hardest.

In *Yemen*, more than 100 women paralegals showed what people-centred justice can look like. Working outside formal courts, but rooted in trust, ethics and their communities, they helped resolve nearly 3,000 disputes in Aden and Mukalla. Women made up 70 percent of those who sought help. The lesson is clear: even where crisis has weakened institutions, justice can move forward when it starts with people's needs and rights.

In *Ukraine*, UNDP support helped strengthen responses to human rights violations and gave more people a path to seek accountability. In *Somalia*, Local Police Partnership Boards are building trust between communities and law enforcement, helping to lay the ground for stronger security. In *the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, digital tools improved transparency and protection, while mobile courts delivered justice to hundreds of people with legal representation.

INTRODUCTION

Partnerships help us do more, especially under the pressure of crisis. The Global Programme has provided a platform for strong partnerships across the United Nations system and beyond. Through the UNDP-UN Women Gender Justice Platform, more than 900,000 people received legal aid in conflict and fragile settings. Through the UN Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law, UN expertise was mobilized to address justice and security challenges in places such as the *Central African Republic* and *Haiti*.

The Global Programme is expanding as it enters its fifth phase in 2026 with a clear message: crisis is not a reason to delay investment in the rule of law. It is the reason to deepen it. Stronger investment, deeper local roots and closer links between justice, security and human rights are foundations for lasting peace.

Shoko Noda,
UN Assistant Secretary-General, UNDP Assistant Administrator; Director, UNDP Crisis Bureau

ABOUT THIS REPORT

In 2025, the Global Programme provided financial, technical and expert support to over 100 countries and territories worldwide. Nearly 40 of these are featured in this report, offering an overview of UNDP's integrated work on the rule of law, human rights, business and human rights, justice and security in conflict-affected, crisis, fragile or post-conflict contexts.

In addition to highlighting the Global Programme's achievements, this report outlines UNDP's broader contributions to advancing the rule of law, justice, security and human rights. It focuses on contexts where sustained and, in many cases, long-term support from the Global Programme has enabled the continuity of programming and/or catalysed additional resources and expanded efforts.

This report partly reflects on the programme's impact over phase IV of the Global Programme (2022-2025). In particular, the report highlights multi-year outcomes at the regional level and in countries where the Global Programme investments were sustained, including Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq and Somalia

At the same time, this document remains an annual report, with an emphasis on consolidating and presenting key achievements from the final year within a broader multi-year perspective.

Beyond country and territory level results, the report also presents progress under the Global Programme's core workstreams: human rights, people-centred justice, community security and business and human rights.

A key emphasis of the report is the Global Programme's unique role as a platform for partnerships across the UN system and beyond, in line with UNDP's designated role as an 'integrator' and in support of the One-UN approach.

The Global Programme continues to invest in improving how it captures, understands and communicates its impact – stimulating learning and facilitating knowledge sharing among partners and development practitioners. This report features a dedicated Lessons Learned section, summarizing key insights from UNDP's policy and programming work.

Over the past years, the Global Programme reinforced its role as a trusted platform for integrated justice, security and human rights solutions – reaching millions and shaping policies and practices at scale.

The Global Programme is being implemented under the Governance, Rule of Law and Peacebuilding Hub (GRP) which is jointly led by the UNDP Crisis Bureau and the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support.

With the launch of phase V in 2026, the Global Programme integrated peacebuilding and local action portfolios, alongside rule of law, justice, security, human rights and business and human rights.

In 2025, the Global Programme operated thanks to the generous contributions of Austria, European Union, Finland, Generalitat Valenciana, Germany, Iceland, Japan, Lichtenstein, Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States.

Law students are delivering community legal education at Khalla Masetti, Baramdev, Kanchanpur District, Nepal. | Photo: UNDP Nepal

IMPACT.
RESULTS BY COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

AFRICA

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

In 2025, rule of law, justice, security and human rights systems across Africa faced intensified pressure but also made significant progress. Violent extremist activity resurged in the Liptako-Gourma region and the Lake Chad Basin. Protracted conflicts, such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and South Sudan, *coups d'états* and military interventions in the Sahel and parts of West Africa continued to result in high civilian casualties, and fuel insecurity and human rights violations. A decline in the rule of law was recorded in most countries, with post-election violence unfolding in Cameroon, Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania. Despite these challenges, progress was recorded in advancing justice, governance and the rule of law across the continent. For example, 2025 was marked as the year of increased youth-led civic engagement, calls for greater accountability, progress on advancing people-centred justice and transitional justice, with the South Sudanese government approving the establishment of the Compensation and Reparation Authority (CRA) as part of transitional justice efforts.

These dynamics reinforced trends observed between 2022 and 2025, as expanding non-state armed groups and prolonged crises drove large-scale displacement and deepened protection gaps. Weak justice and security systems, unresolved land issues and limited access to services contributed to heightened social tensions. Economic transformation and the rapid expansion of extractive industries added further pressures, revealing gaps in regulatory frameworks and mechanisms for remedy.

Public demand for justice and accountable governance grew increasingly strong. Youth-led mobilizations in Kenya and Madagascar, rooted in political and socio-economic concerns reflected the frustrations of young people and their heightened interest to meaningfully engage in political and policy discourse. In some instances, progress was made. Notable efforts to safeguard democratic norms in Malawi and Senegal, and the completion of political transitions in Gabon and Guinea in 2025, demonstrated that advances in governance, justice and peaceful transitions could be achieved, with sustained investment and commitment.

In response to these dynamics, UNDP's Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme) advanced policy reform alongside targeted country-level support. Interventions expanded access to justice for vulnerable populations contributing to conflict prevention and social cohesion.

Business and human rights

Between 2022 and 2025, UNDP consolidated its leadership in advancing the business and human rights (BHR) agenda in Africa, building systems, policies and capacities in cooperation with regional bodies and governments, anchoring responsible business conduct into governance and development processes.

In 2022, in cooperation with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, UNDP strengthened the role of national human rights institutions (NHRIs) encouraging the integration of human rights standards into emerging economic frameworks and across the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). A regional baseline assessment further clarified systemic gaps and priorities, laying the groundwork for coordinated regional and national action towards implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. From 2023 onward, UNDP expanded technical assistance and regional dialogue, supporting countries to initiate or advance National Action Plans (NAPs) on BHR. Several countries – Cameroon, DRC, Nigeria and Zambia – began formal NAP processes or adopted national frameworks, signalling growing political commitment and policy coherence. Engagement across the continent helped translate

regional momentum into national readiness and institutional strengthening.

By 2025, the agenda had matured, with stronger ownership and clearer pathways towards implementation. The four African BHR Forums, particularly the 2025 Forum – which was organized in Lusaka, Zambia and attended by over 620 delegates – played a pivotal role in consolidating political commitment, harmonizing regional priorities and accelerating NAP processes across five countries. UNDP's continued technical support enabled governments to move towards drafting, refining and operationalizing national BHR strategies, with growing emphasis on access to remedy and corporate accountability. This period marked a critical shift towards embedding BHR principles into governance systems across the continent.

Human rights systems

Between 2022 and 2025, UNDP supported African countries to move from human rights commitments to implementation by strengthening the capacity of governments, national human rights institutions (NHRIs), civil society and justice and security actors. A key entry point was the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), where the UPR+ initiative and peer exchanges helped countries improve preparation, tracking of recommendations, NHRI engagement and linkages with national priorities. Engagement in Ghana, Malawi and Nigeria illustrated how UPR processes can move beyond reporting to inform reforms, strengthen accountability and reinforce national human rights systems.

At the same time, UNDP advanced the operationalization of human rights through digitalization and justice sector reform. Countries such as Kenya, Malawi and Rwanda expanded e-justice platforms aligned with human rights-based approaches, while Mauritania and several West and Central African countries piloted data-driven tools to strengthen monitoring and evidence – guided by the new Digital Rights Dashboard framework. In fragile and conflict-affected settings, programmes in Cabo Delgado in Mozambique and in north-east Nigeria leveraged NHRI monitoring and outreach capacities to integrate human rights into stabilization and early warning systems. Regionally, partnerships with the African Union, the African Commission and the Network of African NHRIs strengthened coordination, while country-level initiatives expanded access to justice and accountability, particularly for populations facing exclusion, insecurity and constrained civic space.

People-centred justice

Growing demand for responsive, inclusive and accessible justice systems continued to elevate the importance of a people-centred justice approach across Africa. In 2025, UNDP leveraged this momentum by translating people-centred justice principles into policy dialogue and practice, together with national and regional partners.

The African Regional Forum on People-Centred Justice in Banjul, The Gambia, strengthened regional engagement on this agenda by deepening peer learning, expanding partnerships and encouraging coordinated action among justice actors. A key outcome was the collective agreement to pursue the development of a regional resolution of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights on people-centred justice, reflecting a shift from conceptual advocacy towards institutional uptake within the African human rights system.

These regional advances were reinforced by UNDP's country-level support for transformative justice efforts in DRC, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, South Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia. Interventions in these contexts improved access to and quality of legal aid services, broadened the use of alternative dispute resolution and supported community-based justice, enabling people to resolve disputes fairly and trust the institutions mandated to protect their rights.

Across Kenya, Malawi and Mali, UNDP enhanced the capacities of justice, security and human rights institutions to deliver more people-centred, responsive and accountable services: from advancing community-oriented policing and leadership development to strengthening the readiness of the Human Rights Commission in Malawi to address emerging needs, such as environmental justice.

Transitional justice

In 2025, UNDP deepened its partnership with the African Union (AU) to advance the operationalization of the African Union Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP) and promote survivor-centred approaches. UNDP also supported the establishment of AU platforms for women and youth in transitional justice, advancing inclusive, participatory approaches.

Furthermore, under the Africa in Conversation series, UNDP and the African Union co-organized one of the dialogues on the theme "Accountability and Justice for Democratic Resilience in Africa" in June 2025. The conversation served as a platform for deliberation on the continent's evolving justice and accountability architecture.

At the country level, UNDP, including through the Global Programme, provided financial and technical support to transitional justice processes in the Central Africa Republic (CAR), The Gambia, Liberia and South Sudan. In CAR and Liberia, accountability mechanisms were operationalized through the UN Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law (GFP), while in South Sudan the Gender Justice Platform – co-led by UNDP and UN Women – secured women's meaningful participation in two key transitional justice bodies. South Sudan also made progress towards the establishment of the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing (CTRH) by enacting the legislation to establish the CTRH and the Compensation and Reparation Authority.

These engagements provided practical entry points for national implementation while strengthening linkages among transitional justice, access to justice and community-based reintegration.

A court session at the Court of Appeals in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso. | Photo: UNDP Burkina Faso

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026, UNDP will prioritize consolidating recent policy gains into concrete implementation and scaling integrated approaches across rule of law, justice, security and human rights.

On human rights, UNDP will scale up support to national systems and protection mechanisms, with a focus on strengthening the capacity of NHRIs, oversight bodies and civil society to monitor, report and respond to violations. Engagement with regional mechanisms, including the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, will be deepened to reinforce accountability, peer learning and normative uptake.

On BHR, efforts will focus on advancing the development and adoption of National Action Plans in Malawi, Rwanda, Togo, Zambia and Zimbabwe, while strengthening implementation in countries already advancing this agenda, including Ghana, Liberia and Nigeria.

Across justice systems, priorities include scaling people-centred approaches, expanding legal aid and community-based dispute resolution, and advancing rights-based digital solutions. Environmental justice programming will also be broadened through country diagnostics and tailored interventions, strengthening accountability and improving access to remedies for climate and environment-related harms.

On security and peacebuilding, UNDP will scale up support to police and security sector reform, including the delivery of regional training programmes, technical assistance and institutional capacity-building, with a strong human rights-based approach. This will be complemented by expanded work on community security, the prevention of violence and strengthening trust between security actors and communities. Cross-border and regional approaches will be prioritized to address transnational risks and support coordinated responses.

Finally, UNDP will deepen its engagement on emerging areas, including the governance of digital technologies and artificial intelligence within justice, security and human rights systems, ensuring that innovation is aligned with international human rights standards and contributes to inclusive, accountable and resilient institutions.

BURUNDI

KEY RESULTS:

- Access to justice was improved through introducing and scaling virtual criminal hearings connecting courts and prisons. By 2025, 20 hearings had benefited 110 detainees, reducing delays and costs, decongesting detention facilities and better protecting detainees' rights.
- Digitization of the national prison population database enabled the release of over 800 detainees, including 132 women.
- UNDP expanded the National Independent Human Rights Commission's territorial presence, enhancing monitoring tools and supporting early warning mechanisms and detention visits, improving human rights oversight and consolidating its 'A' status under the Paris Principles.

Between 2022 and 2025, Burundi experienced a period of relative political stability, reinforced by the peaceful conduct of the 2025 general elections. Institutional consolidation continued under Vision Burundi 2040–2060, which prioritizes good governance, the rule of law, peace and social cohesion. This stability created space for major structural reforms, including a new administrative territorial reconfiguration and the decentralization of public services aimed at bringing security and justice services closer to communities.

At the socio-economic level, persistent poverty and the steady depreciation of the Burundian franc increased the cost of public services and constrained the operational capacities of national institutions, particularly within justice, human rights and security areas. Chronic issues such as court backlogs, arbitrary arrests and prison overcrowding continued to undermine fairness and efficiency across the justice chain.

Against this backdrop, UNDP delivered multi-year, system-level results contributing to a more coherent and people-centred rule of law system. In 2024, UNDP developed an integrated portfolio designed to modernize the judicial system, strengthen social cohesion and embed human rights standards across institutions. The Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme) provided catalytic funding and technical guidance – particularly on digital justice, human rights integration and sexual and gender-based violence prevention – enhancing the portfolio's strategic coherence.

A key milestone was the rollout of virtual criminal hearings linking courts without detention facilities to prisons, significantly reducing the logistical burden and costs associated with prisoner transfer while improving access to justice. Launched in 2023, the virtual hearings became fully operational in six prisons and seven courts, despite electricity and connection issues in some places. As of 2025, 20 virtual hearings were held, benefiting 110 prisoners, including 20 women. This mechanism, combined with UNDP-supported inspections of penitentiary facilities, enabled the decongestion of detention places and had a positive effect on the fulfilment of the rights of persons deprived of liberty. For many detainees, these hearings represented their first opportunity, after months of waiting, to appear before a judge. ***"We had been hopeless for a long time. The fact that the case is finally being heard has shown us that justice is moving forward,"*** said a family member of one detainee.

Further impact followed the UNDP-supported review and update of the national prison population database in November 2025, which enabled the Public Prosecutor's Office to release over 800 people, among which were 132 women. In addition, nearly 700 detainees, including 108 women received legal and psychosocial assistance, reducing vulnerabilities linked to prolonged pre-trial detention.

The capacities across the justice chain were strengthened at scale: 866 local leaders, 200 judicial police officers, 174 magistrates and 138 judicial and prison officers were trained from January 2024 to December 2025, to enhance case management, reduce backlogs and reinforce procedural safeguards.

Access to justice was further strengthened through the expansion of Radio Justice that reached approximately 75 percent of the country. By offering interactive programmes explaining human rights, judicial procedures and available remedies, the radio helped bridge the gap between institutions and communities, increasing legal awareness nationwide. ***"Now we know our rights and where to go when we face injustice,"*** said a Radio Justice listener. The initiative contributed to greater empowerment and improved trust between communities and justice institutions.

Despite challenges, national assessments showed progress in the protection of human rights, driven by the expanded territorial presence and strengthened technical capacities of the National Independent Human Rights Commission (CNIDH). This included the establishment of new provincial branches, improved monitoring tools and an operational early-warning mechanism. UNDP's support to CNIDH further enhanced its monitoring and oversight functions, especially through increased detention visits, contributing to the consolidation of its 'A' status under the Paris Principles.

Strengthened community-based mechanisms for conflict prevention and responses to sexual and gender-based violence have been institutionalized, building on early warning systems overseen by CNIDH. These mechanisms serve as structured channels for communities to engage with authorities, enabling more timely reporting, reinforcing the protection of rights and contributing to social cohesion.

Together, these results strengthened institutional performance, expanded access to justice and reinforced human rights protection, acting as catalysts for a more accessible, efficient and people-centred justice system and laying the foundations for long-term institutional transformation. Innovations advancing the digitalization of the criminal justice system improved case traceability, coordination and overall accountability, while underscoring the importance of reinforcing the entire justice chain through coordinated collaboration among courts, prosecutors, judicial police, prison authorities and the CNIDH. At the same time, close partnerships with national institutions and civil society promoted national ownership of reforms and enhanced human rights monitoring capacity. Collectively, these approaches represent key levers for sustainable judicial reform and for strengthening effective and equitable access to justice.

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026 and beyond, UNDP will focus on digitalizing the criminal justice chain to enhance transparency, accelerate case processing and strengthen institutional coordination. Expanding digital case-management tools and establishing secure information-sharing mechanisms among judicial actors will be central to building a more efficient, accountable and coordinated criminal justice system that delivers justice for all.

BURKINA FASO

KEY RESULTS:

- Mobile courts in underserved localities allowed nearly 1,000 people, including women and internally displaced persons (IDPs), to obtain essential civil status documents, resolve legal matters and strengthen trust in judicial institutions.
- More than 23,000 people, including women, IDPs and minors, obtained legal identity documents, facilitating freedom of movement, access to essential services, protection from discrimination and access to education for children.
- The development and scale-up of digital platforms increased online access to nationality certificates and electronic criminal records. Since these platforms became operational in 2022, 600,000 criminal records and 100,000 national identity documents have been issued.

In Burkina Faso, political and security instability has fuelled social uncertainty and weakened confidence in state institutions tasked with upholding rights and ensuring accountability. The humanitarian situation remained severe. According to the National Humanitarian Response Plan, almost 4.5 million people were identified as vulnerable, including over 1.2 million IDPs, over 2.2 million members of host communities and approximately 900,000 returnees. Access to justice remained limited, eroding public trust in the judiciary. Many lacked the financial means to pursue justice due to logistical and procedural constraints and deep-seated institutional distrust – barriers that disproportionately affect women. Rural women experienced even greater obstacles: travelling to urban courts is often impossible because of the lack of money, transportation options and heightened caregiving responsibilities, leaving women with minimal opportunities to resolve disputes or secure essential legal documents.

To address these systemic barriers, UNDP's Social Cohesion, Security and Rule of Law Programme[1] (CoSED, 2019-2025) focused on access to justice in high-risk areas, and strengthening human rights institutions, civil society and security actors. The support from the Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development contributed to empowering communities, especially women, creating accessible and affordable avenues for justice.

To reach people facing the greatest obstacles in accessing justice, UNDP organized three mobile court hearings in the localities of Boulsa, Houndé and Toma. These sites were identified in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice to ensure that interventions targeted communities with the most urgent needs. Nearly 1,000 individuals benefited from the hearings, including 341 women and 16 IDPs. More than 1,000 legal documents were issued, ranging from criminal records and certificates of nationality to corrections of erroneous civil status documents. The presence of magistrates also enabled host municipalities to administer the oaths of three land officials and a president of departmental courts, supporting the continuity of judicial and administrative functions at the local level.

Overall, the mobile court hearings expanded access to justice, reinforced trust in judicial institutions and improved community understanding of legal procedures. The civil status documents issued through these sessions will facilitate legal identification for beneficiaries, enabling freedom of movement and improved access to essential public services.

Furthermore, the Courts of Appeal of Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso held 11 civil and criminal hearings, benefiting 1,406 individuals, including 519 women. The criminal hearings of the Courts of Appeal enabled the adjudication of 84 cases, thereby reducing the backlog of cases in these jurisdictions.

1 A multi-partner programme that brings together government institutions and civil society organizations coordinated by the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights.

Around two million people in Burkina Faso (approximately 10 percent of the population) are not registered with the civil status service and therefore lack essential documents such as birth certificates and national identity cards. Securing these documents is critical for enabling mobility, accessing public services and exercising fundamental rights, particularly for women whose movement is often restricted. In 2025, more than 23,000 people obtained legal identity documents with UNDP support, including more than 1,800 IDPs, 2,700 women and 1,500 minors, enabling the latter to sit school examinations and continue their education.

In addition, more than 1,400 individuals at risk of discrimination received legal assistance or support in accessing administrative services.

Digital innovation for justice was one of the project priorities. Four digital tools were developed or scaled up, including the new Criminal Justice Platform that enables users to report violations across the criminal chain, file complaints and submit requests for prison visits online. A digital platform for issuing nationality certificates was expanded to cover a total of 11 jurisdictions. In 2025, almost 47,000 nationality certificates were requested with 39,000 (83 percent) issued online. The issuance of electronic criminal records also continued to expand, with over 97 percent of requests processed and delivered online. In total, since these platforms became operational, 600,000 criminal records and 100,000 national identity documents have been issued electronically.

Amid Burkina Faso's ongoing transition, the context has been conducive to advancing reforms and strengthening constitutional justice. In 2025, UNDP supported the Constitutional Council in assessing its democratic achievements and identifying reform prospects to reinforce the rule of law. This support included the organization of an international conference that brought together more than 200 national and international experts from seven African countries to review 25 years of the Council's operations and outline priority reforms. In parallel, the capacities of Constitutional Council members were strengthened to enhance their understanding and application of constitutional law in light of recent developments and normative tensions. Additionally, UNDP supported the production of a compendium of over 800 Constitutional Council decisions, providing a critical resource for practitioners, researchers, public institutions and partners to support training, research, inter-institutional dialogue and the design of future reforms.

"The day when I got a lawyer, I felt relief. As if a heavy burden was lifted. I felt that somebody was truly there for me," said a mother from Burkina Faso who won a custody case.

Photo: UNDP Burkina Faso

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026, UNDP will continue to support Burkina Faso in addressing the interlinked challenges of insecurity, fragility and social cohesion through integrated rule of law, human rights and security interventions aligned with national priorities. Key efforts will focus on improving access to justice by strengthening people-centred and locally adapted justice systems, including digital justice solutions in contexts where traditional mechanisms are disrupted. UNDP will support justice and security institutions to better respond to terrorism-related cases, promote alternatives to detention and improve prison conditions. Preventing violent extremism and managing conflict will remain central, with an emphasis on inclusive approaches grounded in dialogue, community mediation and the reinforcement of social and economic cohesion. In the area of human rights, UNDP will explore ways to promote responsible business practices in the gold extractive sector, including through awareness raising across communities and supporting the government in fulfilling its obligations.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

KEY RESULTS:

- Mobile hearings and investigations conducted by at least nine courts in remote areas, alongside criminal sessions in Bambari and Bouar, helped reduce judicial backlogs, resulting in more than 100 cases adjudicated and progress in 80 others.
- Fifty detainees in Mbaïki prison received training in agriculture and poultry farming, which improved reintegration prospects, strengthened food security and equipped them with practical skills for post-release livelihoods.
- Catalytic support sustained the core functions of the Special Criminal Court during a funding crisis and enabled the deployment of justice and corrections experts, contributing to the design of a new joint programme and strengthening national capacities in managing high-profile detainees and advancing priority corrections reforms.

Between 2022 and 2025, the Central African Republic (CAR) continued to face deep structural fragility. Political instability, the legacy of past conflicts and weak justice and security institutions remained persistent challenges. Despite this context, measurable progress was achieved in upholding the rule of law. Key advances included the implementation of the Justice Sector Policy, the rehabilitation of judicial infrastructure and the resumption of court sessions.

UNDP, in partnership with United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)[2], supported justice and penitentiary reforms through targeted capacity-building, the development of legal aid mechanisms and improvements in detention conditions. These interventions strengthened institutional performance and improved access to justice. UNDP's Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme) played a central role by facilitating resource mobilization and promoting integrated approaches. This laid important foundations for long-term improvements in human rights protection and the effectiveness of the justice system.

In 2025, significant challenges persisted, notably prison overcrowding and high rates of pre-trial detention. UNDP therefore focused on the reduction of judicial backlogs and the improvement of detention conditions, applying a people-centred justice approach.

Key achievements included support to the organization of two criminal sessions at the Courts of Appeal of Bambari and Bouar, prioritizing cases that involved prolonged pre-trial detention. In addition, at least nine courts conducted mobile hearings and investigations in remote areas. These efforts resulted in the adjudication of more than 100 cases and progress in more than 80.

Reintegration initiatives complemented judicial interventions. At Mbaïki prison, 50 detainees received training in agriculture and poultry farming. These activities improved food security in the prison and provided practical, marketable skills to support reintegration after release.

Under the framework of the UN Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law (GFP), UNDP focused on advancing the new Joint Justice and Corrections Programme. At the same time, it worked to safeguard the operations of the Special Criminal Court (SCC) during a severe funding crisis. GFP catalytic funding was critical in maintaining the SCC's core prosecutorial, registry and witness protection functions. In parallel, UNDP and the Department of Political Affairs (DPO) deployed justice and corrections experts to CAR. Their support contributed to the design of the new joint programme and strengthened national capacities, particularly in the management of high-profile detainees and the advancement of priority corrections reforms.

2 The UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

A combination of UNDP interventions – including criminal sessions, mobile hearings and targeted judicial support – proved effective in reducing pre-trial detention. Integrating socio-economic reintegration activities further enhanced results by addressing the root causes of vulnerability and recidivism. Decentralized approaches improved access to justice in remote areas, while strong partnerships with national institutions and local communities were essential for sustainability and national ownership. Adaptive programming, alongside the scaling up of proven interventions, further increased efficiency and impact in a fragile context.

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026, the Joint Justice and Corrections Programme will continue to scale up criminal sessions, mobile hearings and legal aid services to further reduce pre-trial detention. Reintegration activities will be expanded, with increased emphasis on sustainability and national ownership.

Strengthening institutional capacities and partnerships will remain central to consolidating rule of law gains, improving human rights protection and reinforcing public trust in justice institutions in the Central African Republic.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

KEY RESULTS:

- More than 2,500 magistrates, including 451 women, were trained on ethics, disciplinary procedures and professional standards, strengthening accountability across the justice and security sectors.
- In Tanganyika, detention reviews led to the release of at least 18 people held in irregular or unlawful detention. Legal aid also secured the release of at least 35 individuals in prolonged pre-trial detention for minor offences.
- Digital tools deployed in courts, prosecution offices and detention facilities strengthened real-time oversight and improved case tracking, traceability, detainee management and the transparency of judicial records, reducing delays and limiting corruption risks.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, access to justice was improved in a context marked by insecurity, fragile institutions and significant pressure on the justice system. Despite these challenges, sustained engagement by national authorities, supported by the Joint United Nations Programme to Support Justice Reform, delivered tangible results. Targeted support by UNDP's Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme) helped sustain justice services, strengthen accountability and maintain reform momentum, even as insecurity disrupted operations in parts of the country. Its flexibility allowed for rapid adaptation to changing conditions, ensuring the continuity of services and preventing setbacks in a highly fluid environment.

The joint justice programme was implemented in close partnership with the Ministry of Justice and the Superior Council of the Judiciary, with UNDP coordinating efforts across the UN entities.

Strengthening accountability and professionalism across the justice sector remained a central focus. More than 2,500 magistrates, including 451 women, received training on ethics, disciplinary procedures and professional standards, reinforcing integrity from the outset of their careers. At the same time, 53 police inspectors were trained to strengthen oversight, audits and internal investigations, contributing to more transparent and accountable policing. These efforts helped instil a stronger culture of responsibility across the justice and security sectors.

The programme also worked to improve the performance of courts and prosecution services, particularly in handling serious crimes, including conflict-related sexual violence. Inspections of courts and prosecution offices in Tanganyika province revealed systems operating under severe strain, with acute staff shortages, deteriorating infrastructure and limited resources affecting the quality and timeliness of justice. In some jurisdictions, courts had only one or two judges covering vast territories, leading to significant delays, prolonged pre-trial detention and in some cases the inability to hold criminal hearings. These findings informed targeted follow-up support, including on-site mentoring and practical measures to improve case management and judicial reasoning.

Despite these constraints, court inspections and case reviews led to concrete outcomes for individuals. In Tanganyika alone, at least 18 people, including women, were released from irregular or unlawful detention following the verification of detention records. More broadly, efforts to strengthen pre-trial detention management and coordination contributed to addressing severe prison overcrowding and reducing prolonged detention without trial. These actions directly upheld fundamental rights and demonstrated the impact of targeted interventions for those most affected by systemic weaknesses.

Access to justice was improved also through expanded legal aid and mobile courts, bringing services closer to communities. In Kasaï-Central, mobile court hearings enabled cases involving

serious crimes to be heard with full legal representation for both defendants and victims. A total of 232 civil parties (60 percent of them women and girls) received legal assistance in a single appeals case, while 52 victims participated in proceedings at first instance and were awarded reparations. Legal aid interventions also secured the release of at least 35 individuals held in prolonged pre-trial detention for minor offences. These efforts made justice more accessible, particularly for vulnerable groups, and helped restore trust in the system.

Work to strengthen coordination across the justice chain further improved efficiency and coherence. Revitalized platforms brought together justice institutions, police, prison authorities and civil society to jointly address challenges such as prison overcrowding and case backlogs. In North Kivu, coordinated action planning provided a shared framework for reducing detention levels and improving case processing, demonstrating the value of integrated approaches in complex settings.

A major achievement was the continued digitalization of the justice system, which marked a significant shift in how cases and institutions are managed. Digital tools were deployed across courts, prosecution offices and detention facilities, enabling better tracking of cases, improved management of detainees and more transparent handling of judicial records. By replacing paper-based processes with integrated digital tools, UNDP helped reduce delays, limit opportunities for corruption and strengthen real-time oversight.

Throughout implementation, national ownership and strong partnerships underpinned results. Justice institutions increasingly led the reform process, contributing to the sustainability of gains and ensuring alignment with national priorities. At the same time, collaboration across the UN and with civil society enabled a comprehensive approach that addressed both institutional capacity and access to services.

While justice reform efforts delivered meaningful, people-centred results, systemic challenges remain, particularly in under-resourced courts facing staff shortages and infrastructure constraints. Continued investment will be essential to build on progress, address these structural gaps and ensure that justice systems can meet the needs of all people.

Awareness-raising and capacity-building for magistrates on professional conduct, ethics and disciplinary procedures. | Photo: UNDP DRC

LOOKING FORWARD

Under the new Joint Justice Reform Programme (2025–2029), digitalization will remain the driver of transformation. The four information technology systems will be connected under a single platform, providing real-time data and analysis from courts, prosecution offices and prisons to enable informed decision-making.

The judicial map will be revised to bring justice closer to communities, ensure a more equitable distribution of courts and deploy personnel where needs are greatest, supported by adaptable infrastructure in conflict-affected areas. Efforts will also strengthen the fight against corruption by improving the legal framework and supporting the economic criminal court to address financial crimes effectively. At the same time, access to justice will expand through institutionalized legal aid and mobile courts, reaching women, detainees, and vulnerable populations.

Performance and accountability will be promoted across the entire penal chain to build a justice system that is more effective, fairer and trusted by the people it serves.

As the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) continues its drawdown, the joint programme will serve as a strategic vehicle to consolidate gains and ensure handover to national institutions to sustain progress.

GUINEA-BISSAU

KEY RESULTS:

- Between 2022 and 2025, the UNDP-supported Centres of Access to Justice provided legal aid to more than 10,000 people, nearly half of them women, significantly expanding access to justice in underserved communities.
- Mobile legal clinics operating across eight regions delivered free civil registration services to remote and island communities, issuing more than 1,300 birth certificates and enabling children to access fundamental rights.
- Community-based 'Djumbai' dialogues conducted in local languages offered legal counselling and conflict mediation in areas with no other legal services, functioning also as early-warning mechanisms for community tensions and gender-based violence.

Guinea-Bissau's rule of law environment over 2022-2025 was defined by political instability and institutional fragility. The dissolution of the National People's Assembly in May 2022, followed by legislative elections in June 2023 and a second dissolution in December 2023, as well as a succession of three justice ministers and two attorneys general within 2023-2024 alone severely disrupted the functioning of justice institutions. The 23 November 2025 general elections were interrupted by a military coup a few days later, the fifth one since the country's independence. These dynamics have further constrained the civic space and created conditions of legal uncertainty that disproportionately affected women, youth and rural communities.

The Gender Audit of the Judicial System (2024), funded by the Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme), the first of its kind in Guinea-Bissau, confirmed structural gender inequalities. Women remained underrepresented in judicial leadership and faced barriers to accessing justice: from discriminatory social norms to a lack of gender-sensitive procedures in courts and police stations.

Despite this constrained context, UNDP and partners delivered substantial results. The Human Rights Project funded by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and co-implemented by UNDP, the UN Human Rights Office and UNICEF produced Guinea-Bissau's first National Strategy for Human Rights and Citizenship and Action Plan (2022-2026) and supported the formal adoption of a revised statute of the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH).

The Centres of Access to Justice (CAJs), supported by the Global Programme, provided legal assistance to more than 10,000 people (nearly half of them women). Also with Global Programme support, the Office of Assigned Lawyers (GAO) was established to provide free legal aid, including to arbitrarily detained individuals. In 2025, GAO processed 58 cases and intervened in defence of 75 people detained during demonstrations, including pregnant women, medical personnel and students.

The project on Combating Drug Trafficking and Transnational Organized Crime (2020-2025) co-implemented by UNDP, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Organization on Migration (IOM) strengthened criminal justice responses to drug trafficking and organized crime. The first major judicial police recruitment in 14 years brought 96 new agents into service, including 32 women. A landmark 2.6 tonne cocaine seizure at Bissau Airport in September 2024 demonstrated improved inter-agency coordination. Infrastructure was extended to border areas historically beyond state reach.

Throughout 2025, UNDP's portfolio implemented with the support from the European Union (EU), PBF and Japan achieved tangible results.

Mobile legal clinics (Candonga da Justiça programme), operating in partnership with the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights (MJDH) and with the financial support of the European Union (EU) across eight regions, brought free civil registration services directly to remote communities, including the isolated islands of the Bijagós Archipelago, where vast stretches of sea separate communities from the nearest public services, and where a single trip to register a child can require days of travel and costs families cannot afford. Over 1,300 births (656 girls and 645 boys) were registered, many of whom would otherwise have remained legally invisible, without access to education, healthcare and other fundamental rights.

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026 and beyond, through the Joint UNDP-UNODC-IOM Rule of Law and Security Programme, UNDP in Guinea-Bissau will focus on strengthening resilient, people-centred institutions that restore public trust, combat organized crime and protect human rights. Priority actions include establishing a national training institute, strengthening financial intelligence and asset recovery, digitizing case management systems, expanding access to justice through mobile courts and community-based mechanisms, as well as enhancing border and maritime security to address transnational organized crime. This focus is critical to break cycles of impunity, reinforce the social contract, and contribute to sustainable peace and inclusive development under the Sustainable Development Goal 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

"[...] Many children did not attend school because they had no documents. With their birth certificates, they will be able to go back. [...] Many people here have never had an identity document. Some do not even know their exact age. Each registration is a door that opens," said Justani Soares, a civil registration officer who had left his home island of Bubaque to receive training in the capital and chose to return to serve his own community.

This programme also integrated 'Djumbai' community dialogues – legal counselling and conflict mediation conducted in local languages — the only form of legal guidance available to many in these remote areas. Notably, these dialogues served as early-warning mechanisms for conflict and gender-based violence.

To sustain this work, a Joint UNDP-UNODC-IOM Rule of Law and Security Programme (2026-2029) has been developed as a strategic framework for continued engagement on security and criminal justice reform. In parallel, building on the catalytic support from the Global Programme, the EU and UNDP launched a new Access to Justice Programme (2025-2028), consolidating and expanding gains in legal aid, access to justice and rights-based governance, ensuring complementary programmatic architecture for the new strategic cycle.

In Guinea-Bissau, mobile legal aid clinics bring civil registration services directly to remote communities.

Photo: UNDP Guinea-Bissau

LIBERIA

KEY RESULTS:

- Gbarnga Central Prison's magistrate sitting programme resulted in over 120 cases being reviewed and disposed of. This significantly decreased pre-trial detention and strengthened access to justice for indigent detainees.
- 679 inmates were released from three prisons operating beyond their official capacity, averting a humanitarian and security crisis at these facilities. Reintegration assistance further reduced risks of reoffending.
- A Judicial Case Management System was established, enabling real-time tracking, recording and reporting of court cases across Montserrado, and judicial clerks were trained to ensure sustainability. A complementary Crime Statistics Information Management System at the Liberia National Police enhanced crime data collection, analysis and reporting nationwide.

Liberia continues to grapple with deep-rooted social and economic challenges that affect its rule of law landscape. Police and other security actors are severely underrepresented nationwide. Immunity persists, including for crimes against humanity and war crimes committed during the country's 14 years of conflict.

The concentration of courts in cities, as well as inadequate numbers of judges and magistrates, limit access to justice, especially for indigent people in rural areas. Systemic docket congestion, case backlogs and high rates of pre-trial detention exacerbate prison overcrowding and augment the risk of human rights violations within detention facilities. As of 2025, all 16 penitentiary institutions in Liberia exceeded their official combined capacity by more than 50 percent[3], leading to poor sanitation and hygiene, disease outbreaks and inadequate food supplies.

In 2024, Liberia's new president signed an executive order to operationalize the Office of the War and Economic Crimes Court (OWECC) that would oversee the establishment of the National Anti-Corruption Court and the War and Economic Crimes Court, expected to be functional in 2026 and 2027, respectively. To stand with national partners in this historic move towards justice and accountability, UNDP provided technical support to OWECC, including through accelerated cooperation with the UN Human Rights Office.

In 2025, funding from UNDP's Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme) enabled continued support for the OWECC along with other actions to address the systemic justice challenges.

UNDP support contributed to the release of 679 inmates from the Gbarnga Central Prison in Bong County, Kakata Central Prison and Bondiway Central Prison in Margibi County. Without timely interventions, the prisons could have faced a humanitarian and security crisis. Those released received assistance to reunite with their families and reintegrate into communities, reducing the risk of reoffending.

A key driver of these results was the magistrate sitting programme introduced at Gbarnga Central Prison. The initiative fast-tracked case reviews and hearings for detainees under the jurisdiction of nine magisterial courts in Bong County. Through regular judicial sittings inside the prison, over 120 cases on court dockets were reviewed and disposed of, contributing to reducing pre-trial detention, easing prison congestion and strengthening access to justice.

Progress was also made in formalizing Liberia's alternative dispute resolution (ADR) framework to expand access to justice through mediation and arbitration. With UNDP's continued support, the

3 The official combined capacity of Liberian prison facilities is 1,350 inmates. By October 2025, the prison population had risen to 3,662, exceeding capacity by 2,312 inmates.

ADR Act was finalized awaiting enactment. Once adopted, the Act will provide a low-cost, accessible and efficient pathway for resolving disputes, addressing key barriers that discourage many people from using the formal court system, and contributing to reduced caseloads and pressure on the criminal justice system.

To build public understanding and support for the new ADR framework, UNDP and the civil society partner CLASS worked with the Ministry of Justice to sensitize communities in Ganta (Nimba County) and Greenville (Sinoe County). More than 100 people from 11 counties, including 43 women, participated in these sessions, which encouraged communities to use ADR and mobilized national support for passage of the Act.

Beyond these results achieved with the support of the Global Programme, UNDP's broader Rule of Law Programme[4] in Liberia leveraged innovation in justice and security institutions. UNDP supported the judiciary to establish a digital Judicial Case Management System that facilitates real-time recording, storage, analysis and the reporting of cases on the dockets of all types of courts in Montserrado. Judicial clerks have been trained in the operations and management of the system to promote ownership, efficiency and sustainability. Similarly, UNDP established a digital Crimes Statistics Information Management System to track, capture, store analyse and report on crimes in the country.

"Now, it takes minutes to find and retrieve a case in the system compared to several hours or days in the past when we used a manual case filing system," said a judicial clerk commenting on how these innovations facilitated operations within the judiciary, benefiting all justice users.

In parallel, UNDP strengthened protection and services for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence and other vulnerable groups. Support to women-led civil society organizations helped expand access to legal aid, psychosocial assistance and community-level prevention initiatives. UNDP also reinforced the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection by providing essential supplies to improve conditions at the safe home in Nimba County. Further assistance to the Liberia National Police enhanced the capacity of the Women and Children Protection Section, improving investigative and protection services for women and children.

The Sustainability of the Rule of Law Programme in Liberia is rooted in national ownership and partnerships that build on initiatives valued by communities and institutions, illustrated by the judiciary's leadership of the digital case management system. Through collaboration with the government and civil society, UNDP supports locally identified priorities and encourages their integration into routine, budgeted work. This approach has already produced lasting results, including the institutionalization of the magisterial sitting programme and the expansion of the digital case management system across all magisterial and circuit courts in Montserrado County.

LOOKING FORWARD

To support the operationalization of the War and Economic Crimes Court in Liberia, a feasibility study on the model and sustainability of the court will be finalized and presented in 2026. Further, UNDP will complete the development of the new phase of its Rule of Law Programme in Liberia, to be completed in 2026.

4 The Rule of Law Programme in Liberia is jointly implemented by UNDP, UN Women, UN Human Rights Office and UNICEF. Each project and agency contributes in line with its comparative advantage, ensuring complementary efforts that collectively support transformative change in society.

MALI

KEY RESULTS:

- Human rights protection was strengthened through the establishment of the National Human Rights Directorate, Mali's acceptance of 223 Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations, and inclusive dialogue platforms such as UPR follow-up workshops and the Human Rights Café initiative.
- More than 77,000 people, most of whom were women, received access to justice through legal services and awareness raising provided by legal clinics.
- Strengthened trust and cooperation between communities and security actors was achieved through participatory approaches, including community policing consultations and local security committees, which enhanced dialogue, inclusion and more collaborative security governance.

Since 2022, Mali has evolved in an environment marked by security challenges and an ambitious reform agenda. Terrorist and criminal threats along with large-scale displacement defined the security landscape.

Despite these challenges, the country advanced key reforms, including the adoption of a new Constitution, revised penal and criminal procedure codes, and strategic frameworks such as Vision Mali 2063 and the National Strategy for Emergence and Sustainable Development. The institutional framework for human rights protection was strengthened through the establishment of the National Human Rights Directorate in 2023 and Mali's acceptance of 223 recommendations under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. These efforts were reinforced through national dialogue platforms – such as the UPR follow-up workshops and the Human Rights Café initiative – while the National Human Rights Commission continued to monitor detention conditions and advocate for reform.

UNDP support, primarily through the Support Programme for the Stabilization of Mali through the Strengthening of the Rule of Law (PROMSED), played a catalytic role. The programme – jointly implemented by UNDP, UN Women and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) – operates within the framework of the UN Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law (GFP), which in turn facilitates the coordinated UN support to rule of law institutions in crisis-affected settings. Under the PROSMED programme, security and justice infrastructures were constructed and/or rehabilitated, while justice and security personnel received targeted training. In 2025, reform efforts accelerated with significant legal and institutional changes to improve the efficiency and functioning of the justice system. These included replacing assize courts with permanent criminal chambers, introducing a judicial mechanism overseeing detention facilities, establishing the role of a sentence enforcement judge and introducing electronic monitoring measures.

Further reforms strengthened access to justice through the creation of new judicial positions and the validation of a 10-year government justice programme. Digital transformation also advanced with the rollout of the e-justice system. Legal provisions criminalizing slavery and trafficking marked important progress. UNDP support in this context focused on strengthening procedural guarantees, advancing legal aid, supporting responses to gender-based violence and promoting digitalization of the judiciary.

Through PROSMED, engagement with justice and security institutions strengthened efforts to combat impunity and enhance service delivery, particularly in conflict-affected areas. More than 77,000 people, most of whom were women, benefited from legal services and awareness-raising sessions, provided also through legal clinics. The partnership with the Mali Bar Association enabled legal assistance for 210 pre-trial detainees, including 23 victims of gender-based violence.

In parallel, an integrated support mechanism for gender-based violence survivors was established, involving civil society organizations, specialized centres and judicial authorities. As a result, trust in justice and security institutions increased, leading to greater use of formal systems to resolve disputes. Communities in programme areas are now more likely to turn to courts and other formal mechanisms when addressing justice issues. The president of the Bla District Court stated that his knowledge and experience in the area of gender-based violence had improved significantly, enabling effective and survivor-centred adjudication.

At the policy level, the development of the second action plan for the Security Sector Reform Strategy reflected a stronger government commitment to shared governance in security and justice. In addition, UNDP supported the external validation process for the preliminary draft of Mali's Community Policing Strategic Framework and its 2025–2029 Action Plan, in consultation with civil society organizations (CSOs), and technical and financial partners. This participatory approach helped build trust between communities and security actors, while strengthening inter-institutional coordination. It also fostered the emergence of a more inclusive, collaborative and sustainable approach to security governance.

Furthermore, Consultation Security Committees (*Comité Consultatif de Sécurité*) have played a key role in improving coordination and dialogue between communities and security actors. At the community level, greater awareness and stronger local mechanisms have transformed engagement. Women, youth and religious leaders have become increasingly involved in stabilization and peacebuilding efforts. Despite ongoing challenges – including sociocultural barriers and the presence of armed terrorist groups – the committees have improved access to justice and security, contributing to stronger community resilience and greater trust in institutions.

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026 and beyond, UNDP's priorities in Mali will include strengthening court performance, expanding access to justice for vulnerable populations and improving the effectiveness of judicial and penitentiary services, particularly for survivors of gender-based violence.

In the context of limited resources for security sector engagement, high-impact interventions will be a priority. These include operationalizing judicial reforms, implementing new legal frameworks, advancing digital justice and expanding community-based justice services through civil society, legal clinics and One-Stop Centres. Continued support to the National Human Rights Directorate will remain essential to update the National Human Rights Policy and strengthen alignment with international standards.

NIGERIA

KEY RESULTS:

- In 2025, Nigeria's Human Rights Observatory recorded over 3 million complaints and expanded its monitoring coverage to displacement contexts, contributing to increased access to remedies and protection services for women, children and displaced populations.
- The effectiveness and accountability of policing systems was enhanced through strengthened training institutions, improved leadership capacities, and the integration of trauma-informed and gender-responsive approaches. Complementary initiatives, including the Police Duty Solicitor Scheme and structured police-community engagement processes, improved access to justice, reduced community tensions and promoted more professional service delivery.
- Nigeria's business and human rights agenda was strengthened through multi-stakeholder coordination and the operationalization of state-level working groups. Human rights due diligence practices and grievance mechanisms were promoted, contributing to more responsible business conduct and improved alignment between economic activities and human rights standards.

Between 2022 and 2025, Nigeria faced persistent and evolving rule of law, security and human rights challenges. Ongoing insecurity – including violence, displacement, kidnappings and insurgency – placed sustained pressure on state institutions and deepened public concern over access to justice and protection. These dynamics were particularly acute in the North-East, North-West and North-Central regions, where insecurity and socioeconomic stresses disproportionately affected women, children, displaced populations and vulnerable communities.

In 2024, these challenges intensified further. Data from the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Human Rights Observatory pointed to a marked increase in abductions, particularly targeting children and youth, alongside a substantial rise in reported human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence and broader gender-rights abuses. The volume and nature of complaints underscored a worsening protection environment and highlighted systemic gaps in prevention, response and access to justice.

Despite – and in direct response to – this deteriorating context, UNDP's Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme) intensified its support to the NHRC. Through sustained joint action, the Human Rights Observatory evolved into a more robust and credible national platform for monitoring, reporting and advancing accountability. This initiative represents a core component of Nigeria's emerging digital accountability infrastructure, serving as an institutional early warning and monitoring system. It provides data-driven human rights governance tools and mechanisms that strengthen evidence-based response and protection, marking a significant step towards the governance modernization of Nigeria's human rights institution.

From 2022 to 2025, the Global Programme served as a strategic accelerator, fostering institutional coherence, supporting national policy development, strengthening governance frameworks and embedding gender-responsive, human rights-based approaches. These contributions have laid the foundation for medium- to long-term system change, positioning Nigeria's justice and security institutions to deliver more inclusive, accountable and transparent services.

In 2025, the Human Rights Observatory recorded more than 3 million complaints, a figure that signifies increased public trust in reporting systems and the expanded institutional reach of the NHRC. This achievement in data collection, supported by new dashboards, thematic trackers and legal advisories, has enhanced the national monitoring capacity and

enabled institutions to identify patterns of violations and respond to emerging risks. The accountability gains are tangible. In August 2025 alone, NHRC completed 2,603 investigations, issued 53 summons and documented the rescue of 12 children from unlawful detention. ***"The dashboards have transformed how we understand and respond to human rights violations,"*** said Dr. Tony Ojukwu, NHRC Executive Secretary.

This transformation was bolstered by UNDP's TriPartite Partnership to Support National Human Rights Institutions (TPP), which strengthened national accountability mechanisms by expanding the Human Rights Observatory's reach. The documentation of over 53,000 displacement-related cases expanded the visibility of displaced populations, including refugees and returnees, bringing previously unrecorded violations into formal systems. This improved access remedies and protection pathways for affected individuals, and enhanced the ability of institutions to identify emerging human rights risks.

Since December 2021, UNDP has also supported the Nigeria Police Force and oversight institutions to advance police reform and accountability. In 2025, through the Supporting Police Accountability and Transformation (SPAAT) initiative, funded by the Government of Germany, UNDP contributed to the modernization of six major police training institutions, leadership development, trauma-informed policing, community policing and oversight systems. In addition, UNDP supported efforts towards financial accountability, stronger internal regulations and legal compliance within the Nigeria Police Force. Specifically, 2,160 police officers underwent training and new digital tools were introduced, such as an e-case management portal for sexual and gender-based violence cases and a digital platform for police personnel recruitment. These investments helped raise professional standards, support more gender-responsive practices and prepare institutions for the next phase of reform, including a large-scale recruitment exercise planned for 2026.

Furthermore, practical safeguards for people in contact with the justice system were strengthened. In Edo State, the Police Duty Solicitor Scheme supported over 630 detainees, securing bail for 340 of them. Police-community engagements in Borno, the Federal Capital Territory and Katsina supported dialogue that reduced tensions and improved how police handled cases, as reported by community representatives.

Support to women and the survivors of sexual and gender-based violence remained a priority. Through digitization of the information management system, gender desks and targeted training of trainers, 150 women officers were trained in survivor-centred reporting, safe interviewing and trauma-sensitive response. Gender Labs and six trauma counselling centres across the North-West and North-East enabled more consistent and dignified services for survivors.

"For the first time, the police listened, documented my case properly and treated me with dignity. It gave me courage to continue the process," said a sexual violence survivor in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State in Nigeria.

Additionally, the deployment of 10 mobile clinics at police training schools enhanced access to medical services for surrounding communities. Equipment support provided to 16 police stations at state headquarters further ensured a stable power supply and improved the efficiency of police legal departments.

In parallel, UNDP helped sustain Nigeria's active engagement in the business and human rights agenda. Following the 2025 National Dialogue, state working groups were operationalized, advancing implementation of the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights. These efforts brought civil society, government and private sector actors together around grievance mechanisms, human rights due diligence and responsible supply chain practices.

UNDP's Tripartite partnership with OHCHR and GANHRI facilitates coordination between the Nigerian Bar Association and the National Human Rights Commission.

Photo: Nigerian Bar Association

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026, UNDP will support national partners to expand Gender Labs and strengthen information management systems for sexual and gender-based violence cases. UNDP will also support the implementation of the National Policing Plan and the finalization of the National Police Strategic Plan.

In addition, efforts will focus on scaling the Police Duty Solicitor Scheme, further strengthening NHRC Human Rights Observatory dashboard reports on freedom of expression, displacement, child protection, and sexual and gender-based violence. At the same time, UNDP will accelerate the implementation of the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, including the development and use of human rights due diligence tools, and the establishment of business and human rights knowledge hubs in strategic states.

SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE

KEY RESULTS:

- The draft of the legal and policy framework for mediation and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanism called *Peace Courts* was completed, laying the foundation for the institutionalization of ADR services nationwide.
- A new national case management system for the *Peace Courts* was developed, enabling São Tomé and Príncipe to have real-time data on mediation trends, types of disputes and operational performance for the first time, which are critical for evidence-based policymaking.
- Mobile justice services were effectively operationalized through the deployment of justice teams (judge, prosecutor, clerk, police, lawyer and psychologist) combined with structured civil society participation, reaching remote and underserved areas where formal justice services were previously absent or inaccessible. Six community justice missions were delivered in 2025.

In 2025, São Tomé and Príncipe experienced relative political stability, despite the dismissal of the Prime Minister and the Government in January. The transition that followed was smooth and efficient, alongside persistent institutional fragility. Structural challenges – including insufficient judicial capacity and case backlogs – continued to undermine the effective administration of justice and public confidence in institutions. Human rights concerns continued to present important challenges, disproportionately affecting women and girls, and reinforcing the urgency of gender-responsive justice reforms. Poverty, growing migration and a lack of public services outside the capital have contributed to deepening inequalities.

Against this backdrop, UNDP's Rule of Law, Security and Human Rights portfolio prioritized inclusive, people-centred justice solutions to strengthen institutional resilience, expand access to justice and address inequalities. The Proximity Justice project, supported through the Justice Action Coalition (JAC), played a catalytic role. The intervention introduced mechanisms for mobile justice delivery, advanced the draft of the legal framework for alternative dispute resolution (ADR) and strengthened civil society engagement. Complementing this, the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) project (2024-2026) provided upstream support to strengthening justice and security sector reforms, gender equality and human rights. Preliminary observations suggest progress in areas such as trust in justice institutions, reporting on gender-based violence, multisectoral coordination, and national ownership of justice and human rights reforms.

ADR services are ready to be institutionalized with the development of comprehensive draft legislation, regulatory instruments and institutional governance mechanisms. New legal and policy framework for mediation and Peace Courts advanced the Government's justice reform priorities that will include decentralized justice services to decongested courts.

The development of a new national case management system for the Peace Courts has been completed. The system enabled structured digital data collection, case tracking and reporting – functions that were previously unavailable. For the first time, São Tomé and Príncipe will have access to real-time data on mediation trends, types of disputes and operational performance – critical inputs for evidence-based policymaking.

Historically, people living in remote communities, particularly women and vulnerable groups, were excluded from the formal justice system due to long distances, high costs, fear and harmful social norms. The mobile justice model has reversed this dynamic, as justice is delivered directly to the communities.

This became possible through the improved collaboration between state actors (judges, prosecutors, police, health and social services) and community-rooted civil society organizations (CSOs),

creating a unified, multidisciplinary response. This combination ensured the immediate and safe handling of cases related to gender-based violence and family conflict, locally accessible support for survivors and growing confidence in public institutions.

To deploy mobile justice units, the Justice Action Coalition supported six community missions in 2025, reaching remote and underserved areas where formal justice services were previously absent or inaccessible. Multidisciplinary teams of judges, prosecutors, police, lawyers and psychologists provided integrated services that encompassed legal awareness and counselling, registration and referral of gender-based violence and family cases, and community-level dialogue about prevention. Across the six campaigns carried out in 2025, a total of 341 people participated, including 224 women.

In addition, two core training programmes equipped frontline providers to respond more consistently and ethically to cases related to gender-based violence and family conflicts. An inter-institutional training brought together 30 representatives from the justice sector, police, legal, health and social services focusing on victim-centred response, case-handling and referral pathways, while training for six CSOs covered community sensitization and correct case-referral mechanisms. As a result of this capacity-building initiative, more than a dozen institutions aligned their procedures, enabling more coherent and survivor-sensitive justice pathways.

To expand civil society engagement and service delivery, partnership protocols were formalized with six CSOs, strengthening their role in justice delivery. Low value grants allowed these organizations to begin direct implementation of awareness campaigns and legal support services.

The Proximity Justice project provided a replicable, nationally owned model that can be institutionalized and scaled under broader justice reform efforts. It accelerated national justice reform by producing the legal blueprint for ADR, which will be used by the PBF to establish community-level Peace Courts. This demonstrates how the JAC funding channelled through UNDP's Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (Global Programme) unlocked upstream policy changes and additional financing for long-term institutional strengthening.

LOOKING FORWARD

UNDP will continue implementing the *Proximity Justice* project, including the delivery of 15 additional community justice missions planned for 2026. At the policy level, the legal and regulatory framework for ADR and *Peace Courts* was embedded within the Government's justice reform agenda and will be further advanced through the UNDP project supported by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), while efforts are being pursued to leverage complementary funding sources to support broader implementation. This will ensure continuity of reforms beyond the project cycle and positions ADR mechanisms as permanent components of the national justice architecture.

SIERRA LEONE

KEY RESULTS:

- Mobile legal clinics and Justice Hubs brought legal information and dispute resolution closer to remote communities. Clinics reached 2,117 people, including 68 persons with disabilities, across 45 communities. Justice Hubs established in three chiefdoms reached 1,200 residents, recorded 385 legal issues and facilitated the resolution of 30 cases.
- Prison court sittings strengthened due process for people deprived of liberty and helped reduce prolonged detention. Across ten judicial districts, courts reviewed 1,000 cases, resulting in 666 detainees discharged, 30 sentences reduced and 297 cases adjourned with orders to ensure speedy conclusion.
- Thirty sexual and gender-based violence survivors were enabled to access formal justice system and seek legal redress.

Sierra Leone continued to face access to justice challenges in 2025, particularly for women, girls, youth, persons with disabilities and people in remote communities. The country ranks low globally in human development and sustainable development, while access to civil and criminal justice continues to be limited. People in rural districts such as Falaba, Kailahun and Moyamba encounter multiple barriers to accessing justice, including geographic isolation, high transportation costs, weak mobile network coverage, limited legal awareness and insufficient access to legal representation. In some districts, a single paralegal may be responsible for serving more than 10,000 people, underscoring the strain on legal aid resources. Survivors of sexual and gender-based violence face additional challenges, such as persistent stigma, delays in police investigations and the cost of medical services.

With the support from the catalytic fund of the Justice Action Coalition delivered through the Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development, UNDP supported national partners to deliver practical, people-centred justice services where formal avenues were least accessible. Through the Legal Aid Board,[5] 15 mobile legal clinics brought rights information, legal advice and referral support directly to 45 communities. The clinics reached 2,117 people, including 68 persons with disabilities, and addressed 533 complaints, with 66 percent resolved through alternative dispute resolution (ADR). A legal empowerment workshop strengthened the capacity of 140 paralegals, community leaders, law enforcement officers and civil society representatives to address sexual and gender-based violence, as well as barriers women face in accessing property and inheritance rights.

Justice Hubs served as local entry points for legal assistance in hard-to-reach areas. Five hubs, facilitated by six trained paralegals, served 1,200 residents and recorded 385 legal cases. By resolving 30 of them and helping filter cases before they escalated into formal litigation, the hubs reduced barriers to justice, strengthened early dispute resolution, and improved trust between communities and justice institutions.

Efforts to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence were strengthened through the Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law. Community outreach raised awareness of laws and referral options among 1,830 people, including 113 persons with disabilities, while 420 community members and service providers were trained to better support survivors and guide them through available services.

As a result, 30 cases of sexual and gender-based violence were brought into the formal justice system. These cases highlight the continued vulnerability of children and adolescent girls, with most survivors aged between 11 and 16.

5 A public institution established in 2012 to provide accessible and affordable legal aid services to indigent persons.

In Falaba district, geographic isolation and stigma used to silence survivors. Zainab, 22, had been living in hiding after being raped. Through a radio programme, she learned about her rights and sought help. Paralegal support ensured she received medical care, emergency shelter and legal guidance. Her case is now before the magistrate's court, and her bravery has inspired other survivors to come forward. Local police have introduced a fast-track referral system for sexual and gender-based violence cases. More needs to be done to support women in remote communities who still lack access to justice.

Judicial sessions held within correctional facilities (prison court sittings) addressed another urgent justice gap: prolonged detention and overcrowding in places of deprivation of liberty. In partnership with the judiciary of Sierra Leone and the Legal Aid Board, UNDP supported prison court reviews across ten districts, reaching 1,000 inmates, including 30 persons with disabilities. As a result, 666 detainees were released, 30 sentences were reduced and 297 cases were adjourned with orders to ensure speedy conclusion. By bringing judicial authority into correctional centres, the initiative helped protect due process rights, reduce overcrowding and reinforce confidence in the fairness of the justice system.

At the systems level, UNDP supported the establishment of the Network of Justice and Security Actors, a permanent multi-stakeholder platform bringing together 13 justice and security institutions. Two advocacy sessions convened 90 participants to address key challenges, including delays in police case files, weak case tracking, frequent adjournments, prolonged pre-trial detention and barriers to justice in rural areas. A simplified guide to the justice system was also developed to help women, children, persons with disabilities and rural communities better understand how to access courts, legal aid and support services.

Community awareness on sexual and gender-based violence and women's inheritance rights in Falaba district, Sierra Leone | Photo: UNDP Sierra Leone

LOOKING FORWARD

UNDP will support national partners to consolidate and scale people-centred justice gains. Priorities include institutionalizing the Network of Justice and Security Actors as a coordination and accountability platform; expanding mobile legal clinics and Justice Hubs in underserved districts; supporting regular prison court sittings to reduce prolonged detention; strengthening referrals and survivor support in sexual and gender-based violence cases; and improving the inclusion of persons with disabilities through accessible venues, adapted materials and targeted outreach. These efforts will help sustain community-level legal empowerment while strengthening the justice system's capacity to deliver timely, inclusive and accountable services.

SOUTH SUDAN

KEY RESULTS:

- Significant progress was made towards establishing transitional justice architecture, including the development of key frameworks, inclusive consultation processes and the nomination of a gender-balanced Selection Committee to advance the Commission on Truth, Reconciliation and Healing.
- Mobile courts resolved a growing number of cases in underserved areas, including 129 gender-based violence cases involving women and children, while reducing case backlogs and protecting vulnerable detainees.
- Integrated support combining justice, psychosocial services and livelihood opportunities provided holistic assistance to communities, including displaced women and girls, strengthening local resilience and linking survivors to future transitional justice processes.

South Sudan continued to grapple with poverty and environmental disasters amid a volatile political and security environment. Armed conflict persisted across many regions, further weakening the rule of law. Conflict-related sexual violence remained a prevalent form of human rights violations, disproportionately affecting women and girls. Access to justice and legal services was hindered by power cuts and fuel shortages, which reduced court operating hours. Chronic salary delays for judicial staff and civil servants compounded these challenges.

In response to these systemic obstacles, UNDP advanced its support to national partners to strengthen justice and security through an integrated approach, aligning interventions across its rule of law, security and human rights portfolio. The flexibility in programme design and the rapid deployment of resources helped unlock bottlenecks within the executive and judiciary, enabling innovative solutions.

UNDP continued to support the construction of police stations and courthouses in the states, providing a foundation for justice and security. In the same locations, complementary programmes on transitional justice, community security and the protection of women were launched, ensuring holistic support for communities and contributing to more effective and accessible justice delivery. Mobile courts proved particularly effective, resolving a growing number of cases and extending justice services to underserved communities.

Advancing the peacebuilding process

The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) mandated the establishment of two key transitional justice bodies: the Commission on Truth, Reconciliation and Healing (CTRH) and the Compensation and Reparation Authority (CRA). According to the peace agreement, the Commission will have seven commissioners: four South Sudanese and three non-South Sudanese. Early joint advocacy by UNDP and UN Women under the Gender Justice Platform ensured that both the CTRH and CRA embed strong women's representation, address discrimination and prioritize reparations for women and girls, elements now firmly reflected in the design of these mechanisms.

In 2025, UNDP supported the development of all foundational documents needed for the establishment of the two bodies, including the Transitional Justice Roadmap, a validated framework for selecting the CTRH commissioners and ten operational documents covering key procedures such as public hearings, witness protection, evidence standards and victim participation.

Through catalytic funding from the Global Partnership for South Sudan, UNDP facilitated inclusive engagement across government officials, civil society groups, faith leaders and victims' and survivors' networks to build broad agreement on

the way forward. This led to a major milestone: the nomination and presidential endorsement of a Selection Committee made up of four women and five men that will choose the commissioners for the CTRH. UNDP also strengthened cooperation with the National Legislative Assembly, enabling two specialized committees to review and advance standard operating procedures (SOPs) for both the CTRH and CRA. Notably, the National Legislative Assembly was on long recess from December 2024 to July 2025, limiting progress on activities requiring parliamentary engagement.

Overall, UNDP's technical assistance, convening role and strategic investment brought South Sudan significantly closer to establishing its transitional justice institutions, an essential step towards truth-telling, healing and lasting peace.

Enabling access to justice, psychosocial support and rehabilitation for women and children

To expand access to justice for women and children affected by sexual and gender-based violence, UNDP supported the establishment of a mobile court in Juba. It was necessary as the stationary specialized Gender-Based Violence Court struggled to deliver services due to power interruptions.

Adjudicating cases of rape and other forms of gender-based violence cases, this mobile court finalized and disposed of 129 cases involving women and children, helping to reduce case backlogs and decongest juvenile detention facilities. The court also provided a crucial safeguard for young males who had been subject to indiscriminate arrests during security operations, ensuring prompt review of their cases and the release of those not guilty.

Engaging civil society partners, UNDP supported Victim Support Groups in the Mangateen camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs). At least 200 women and girls received psychosocial assistance, while up to 70 women learned how to produce soap and started small businesses. Women became more aware of reconciliation processes and survivor engagement with transitional justice bodies, once they are established.

An innovative feature of this intervention was the partnership with the University of Juba's School of Social Work, whose students provided free psychosocial services under the guidance of trained facilitators. This approach expanded access to much-needed psychosocial care in the context of acute shortages in professional mental health providers, while offering practical experience for emerging social work professionals. Confidentiality and 'do no harm' were the core principles in all interactions with survivors.

An integrated, partnership-driven approach was central to achieving tangible progress, with national actors leading the way. Government institutions guided legal and policy actions, while female-led civil society and faith-based organizations ensured that the voices of women and survivors shaped key decisions. Together, these coordinated efforts advanced progress on transitional justice, improving access to justice for women, children and other vulnerable groups.

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026, UNDP will consolidate gains made in strengthening justice, security and human rights in South Sudan by advancing a more integrated, inclusive and resilient approach. UNDP will further support the operationalization of the CTRH and the CRA, ensuring their responsiveness to the needs of survivors, particularly women and girls. Access to justice will be expanded by scaling up mobile courts and reinforcing the capacity of judicial and law enforcement institutions despite ongoing resource and infrastructure constraints. At the community level, UNDP will ensure broader support for psychosocial services, livelihoods and legal awareness, empowering vulnerable groups to engage meaningfully in justice and peacebuilding processes.

TANZANIA

KEY RESULTS:

- The Law School of Zanzibar's e-learning platform enabled legal officers across Pemba, Unguja, and smaller islands to access training modules, reading materials and practical exercises remotely, reducing travel costs and supporting continuous, flexible learning.
- More than 200 investigators, prosecutors and judicial officers – including 68 women – strengthened their skills in judgement writing, investigation techniques, prosecution of sexual and gender-based violence cases and witness protection, creating a pool of trained professionals who can serve as trainers and mentors within their institutions.
- Fifty prosecutors – including 18 women – improved their capacity to handle sexual and gender-based violence cases using survivor-centred approaches, strengthening coordination with police and social services, improving victim interviews and decision-making, and contributing to greater confidence among survivors to seek justice.

Zanzibar is a semi-autonomous part of the United Republic of Tanzania, with its own constitution, parliament and legal system rooted in Islamic law. It comprises the islands of Pemba and Unguja, with a combined population of about 1.8 million people, 54 percent of whom are women. The economy has grown steadily in recent years, but poverty and inequality remain widespread, alongside limited access to justice, especially among women, persons with disabilities and rural households.

Long distances to courts, the high costs of legal services and low legal awareness have been key barriers, compounded by limited capacities among justice officers to apply a human rights-based approach, and protect victims and witnesses. Deep-rooted traditions and cultural beliefs continued to promote inequality and discrimination, while the inadequate enforcement of laws made it harder for women to access justice, particularly in cases of gender-based violence.

To address these challenges and in response to a request from the President's Office on Constitutional, Legal Affairs, Public Service and Good Governance, UNDP launched a 'Legal Empowerment and Access to Justice Project (LEAP II)'. Funded by UNDP's Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme), the project supported the Law School of Zanzibar to implement a comprehensive training programme targeting judges, magistrates, prosecutors and police. This work is directly linked to Zanzibar's broader access to justice and rule of law priorities as outlined in the Legal Sector Reform Strategy II (2021-2026), contributing to building a justice system that is inclusive, fair and accessible to all.

Key achievements include the development of rehabilitation guidelines and curriculum to support recruitment, promotion and professional development across justice institutions; a standardized teaching manual for the Law School of Zanzibar to ensure consistent instruction and learning outcomes; reforms in correctional facilities; and the development of a dedicated policy and guidelines on victim and witness protection. The Legal Aid Policy (2017) was also reviewed to improve access to justice, and align with current reforms and international standards.

The curriculum of the Law School of Zanzibar was developed and updated with five courses for investigators, prosecutors and judicial officers. In addition, UNDP built the capacity of more than 200 investigators, prosecutors and judicial officers, including 68 women, creating a pool of skilled professionals who can serve as trainers and mentors within their institutions. Fifty prosecutors, including 18 women, strengthened their ability to handle sexual and gender-based violence cases in a more sensitive and respectful way, with a

stronger focus on survivor-centred approaches. This has contributed to stronger collaboration across justice actors and increased confidence among survivors to seek justice.

Further, 40 trainers of trainers, 52 percent of whom were women, acquired skills in learner-centred methodologies and are now applying more practical and engaging teaching approaches. Continuous student assessment, rather than reliance on written exams alone, is leading to better understanding and stronger practical skills. Collaboration with the judiciary has enabled moot court sessions to be held in real court settings, helping students build courtroom confidence, professionalism and proper legal etiquette. These changes have positioned the Law School of Zanzibar as a more dynamic and practice-oriented institution, producing graduates who are better prepared to serve in the justice system.

Further, an e-learning platform for the Law School of Zanzibar was developed and operationalized, allowing legal officers to access training modules, reading materials and practical exercises remotely. This makes training more accessible to rule of law officers across Pemba, Unguja, and smaller islands without the need for travel, while also enabling continuous learning beyond one-off training events.

By working closely with the Law School of Zanzibar, the judiciary, prosecution, police and other justice institutions, UNDP has ensured strong ownership of the new tools, skills and approaches introduced.

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026, the focus will shift to institutionalization and sustainable service delivery. UNDP will support justice institutions to formally adopt and integrate developed curricula, guidelines and e-learning tools into government systems, including training and budgeting frameworks to strengthen national ownership.

Efforts will expand the Law School of Zanzibar's e-learning platform with locally relevant content and promote its use across all islands. The established pool of trainers will scale up mentorship and training, ensuring continued knowledge transfer and broader access to justice services.

UNDP will also enhance outreach in underserved areas, particularly Pemba, by strengthening linkages between legal aid providers, paralegals and community-based mechanisms. Support will continue for finalizing and implementing the Legal Aid Policy, and operationalizing victim and witness protection frameworks, while reinforcing coordination across institutions to advance an inclusive, accessible and survivor-centred justice system.

ARAB STATES

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

In 2025, the Arab States region navigated persistent crises with cautious signs of political and institutional opening. The Gaza ceasefire reduced escalation risks and enabled limited humanitarian access, while political developments in Lebanon and the transition underway in Syria suggested potential pathways for institutional recovery and renewed governance dialogue. Yet, the situation in the State of Palestine remained critical: assistance continued to fall short of needs, and pathways towards stability remained uncertain.

Persistent crisis in Sudan drove further displacement and institutional collapse. The situation in Darfur was especially severe, with sustained violence against civilians, extreme humanitarian needs and paralyzed accountability mechanisms.

Overall, between 2022 and 2025, the Arab States region faced intensifying rule of law and governance pressures driven by conflict, economic fragility, climate shocks and institutional weaknesses. In Iraq, water scarcity, desertification and environmental stress created new governance and regulatory pressures. Protracted instability in Libya and entrenched state fragility in Somalia continued to erode the functioning and resilience of rule of law systems, while conflict and fragmentation in Yemen undermined state authority and justice delivery. Region-wide, public opinion surveys indicated low institutional trust and limited perceptions of responsiveness,[6] while global indicators continued to highlight corruption risks and uneven justice performance, reflecting symptoms of deeper, unresolved structural governance deficits.

Over its phase 4 (2022-2025), UNDP's Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme) provided direct technical and financial support to 17 countries and territories across the Arab States.[7] Its focus increasingly shifted towards fragile and crisis-affected contexts, with priority placed on accountability, gender justice, digital transformation and governance reforms consistent with national economic agendas.

Support to fragile and crisis-affected contexts

Preserving rule of law functions while strengthening institutional resilience and accountability was the central focus of the Global Programme's support.

In 2025, the Crisis Response Catalogue was published, equipping Country Offices with operational packages for rapid deployment in conflict and post-crisis settings. A Security Programming Toolkit and a regional Climate Security Framework are being developed to support more integrated responses that link governance, security provision and climate risks.

Human rights systems

Accountability and human rights systems remained central to UNDP's crisis engagement. Through partnerships with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and regional networks of national human rights institutions (NHRIs), UNDP strengthened NHRI capacity and supported evidence-based accountability processes, including justice-needs assessments in Iraq and Sudan. Thirteen NHRIs improved their abilities to respond to violations of digital and environmental rights, as well as to address human rights impacts related to business activities.

Driving progress on gender justice

Over the Global Programme's Phase IV, gender justice was consolidated as a structural dimension of rule of law reform. Regional analytical work, including behavioural insights research and the Gender Justice Framework, equipped Country Offices with tools to address discriminatory laws, institutional barriers and harmful social norms.

By 2025, these foundations had begun to translate into broader national reforms. In Algeria, support to judicial institutions helped expand women's leadership pathways through mentorship programmes and institutional training. In Lebanon, gender-responsive legal aid and survivor-centred policing approaches improved access

6 https://www.arabbarometer.org/
7 Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, State of Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen

to justice for women and gender-based violence survivors, combining frontline service delivery with institutional reform.

Advancing digital justice and accountable institutions

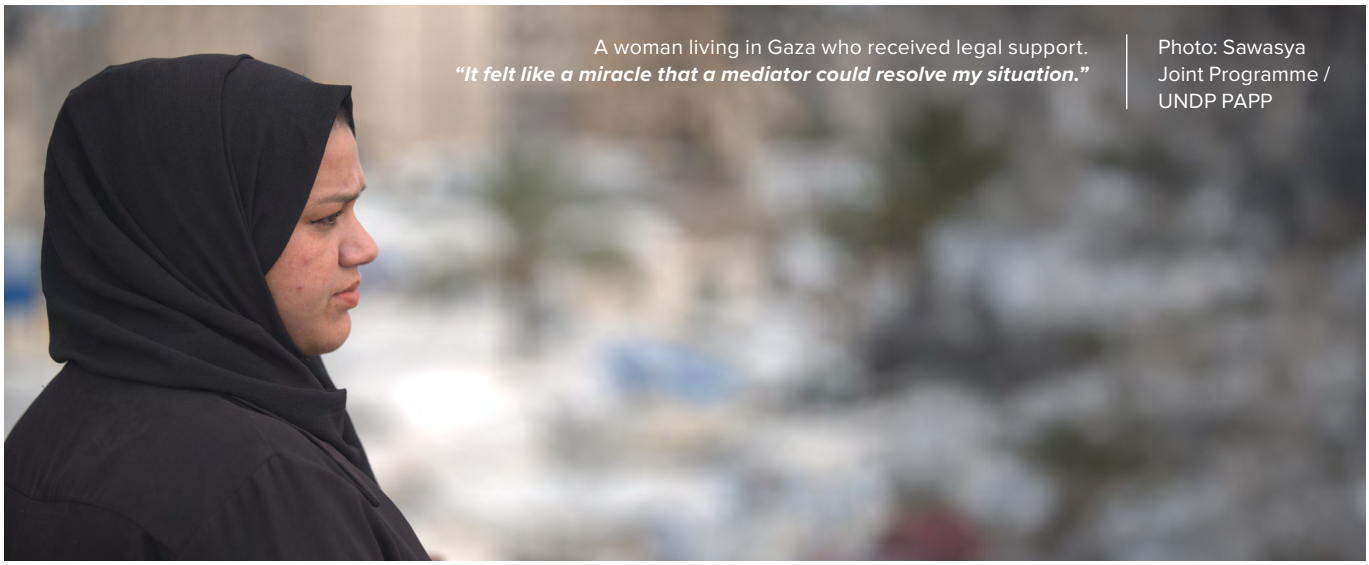
Regional initiatives promoted the responsible and rights-based digitalization of justice institutions, including support to court management systems, digital readiness assessments and South-South exchanges on e-justice solutions.

By 2025, this work advanced through the development of a Digital Transformation Maturity Assessment for rule of law institutions, enabling Country Offices to assess case management systems and tailor support. This contributed to improved case management and the piloting of technologies to strengthen procedural transparency in Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq and Libya.

Strengthening economic governance and business and human rights (BHR)

As governments prioritize economic recovery and investment-driven growth, UNDP expanded support to position the rule of law systems as enablers of sustainable economic development. Since 2022, a regional roadmap, policy dialogue platforms and targeted technical assistance supported governments and national institutions in operationalizing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

By 2025, this engagement produced results including baseline assessments, policy development processes and integration of BHR standards into local economic initiatives in eight countries.[8] Regional dialogues in 2024-2025 strengthened capacities to address corporate accountability, labour protections and grievance mechanisms.



A woman living in Gaza who received legal support.
"It felt like a miracle that a mediator could resolve my situation."

Photo: Sawasya Joint Programme / UNDP PAPP

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026, the Global Programme will continue to prioritize support to fragile and conflict-affected settings, while scaling up regional initiatives that respond to rising governance pressures and shifting national priorities towards stability and economic recovery.

Key priorities include advancing gender justice through legal reform, social-norms research and the launch of an Arab Women Judges Network; strengthening human rights systems, as well as transitional justice and BHR frameworks; and accelerating responsible digital transformation across rule of law institutions.

8 Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, State of Palestine and Tunisia.

IRAQ

KEY RESULTS:

- Iraq advanced its transition towards community-based, service-oriented policing, with national strategies embedding human rights, gender responsiveness and climate security. Model Police Stations, improved training and decentralized systems strengthened police professionalism, community trust and responsiveness to gender-based violence and reintegration needs.
- Climate security and environmental justice were integrated into Iraq's national security and security sector reform frameworks, strengthening coordination between justice, security and environmental institutions.
- UNDP contributed to system-level transformation by connecting policy reform, institutional coordination, digitalization and capacity development, helping shift Iraq's governance and security architecture towards more accountable, inclusive and service-oriented systems that enhance access to justice and institutional resilience.

Over 2022–2025, Iraq's rule of law, justice, security and human rights system progressed within a fragile but gradually stabilizing environment shaped by post conflict recovery, institutional reform efforts and growing transboundary risks, most notably climate change and environmental degradation. While overall security conditions improved compared to earlier periods, persistent structural challenges remained, including fragmented institutional mandates, uneven enforcement of laws, limited access to justice in emerging policy areas and heightened climate related security and human rights risks affecting vulnerable communities.

Against this backdrop, UNDP positioned its support around long term system level transformation aligned with national reform priorities and the UNDP Strategic Plan 2022–2025, particularly its focus on strengthening governance systems, accelerating structural transformation and advancing people-centred and rights-based development.

Security sector reform and people-centred policing

A central pillar of UNDP's engagement during this period was support to Iraq's transition from militarized and force-centric policing towards community-based and service-oriented policing under the national "Green to Blue" reform agenda. UNDP supported the Government of Iraq in developing and operationalizing the Security Sector Reform Strategy (2024-2032), the National Security Strategy (2024-2028) and the Ministry of Interior Strategy (2024-2026), ensuring stronger integration of human rights, accountability, gender responsiveness, access to justice for women and girls, as well as climate security considerations into national security governance frameworks.

The Ministry of Interior institutionalized community policing as a cross-cutting philosophy guiding police work nationwide. Through the introduction of Model Police Stations (MPS), UNDP contributed to strengthening police community relations, improving coordination with local justice actors and enhancing institutional responses to gender-based violence. In Ninewa Governorate, for example, reported cases of gender-based violence rose from 620 cases in 2022 to over 2,650 in 2024, reflecting both increased reporting and growing trust in police responsiveness. In 2025, implementation of the MPS model at Al-Saqr Police Station marked an important step towards institutionalizing community-oriented and reintegration sensitive policing in areas where displaced people returned to their communities. Training delivered to 229 police officers across new MPSs contributed to improved knowledge on community engagement, first response and investigative procedures, supporting more professional policing practices. Another important achievement was piloting the

role of police in reintegration through developing the curriculum and training 22 police officers from several governorates. Feedback from the training was used to enhance and contextualize the materials to the specific needs of returnees.

UNDP's support also contributed to more responsive and decentralized policing. The delegation of operational authority to regional police structures and expansion of digital connectivity across police stations – with more than 80 percent linked to central criminal records systems – laid the groundwork for integrated case management and more coordinated justice processes.

In parallel, UNDP promoted women's empowerment within the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defence. Capacity development on gender-responsive policing, budgeting and leadership benefited 292 officers from the two ministries, including 170 women. Nineteen women police officers received training of trainers to ensure sustainability. In addition, the support focused on integrating gender-responsive approaches into the curriculum of the Female Training Institute, enhancing institutional mechanisms for women's inclusion and promoting more representative and accountable security governance. These efforts contributed to gradual institutional shifts towards more inclusive security institutions and improved responsiveness to the needs of women and vulnerable groups.

Environmental justice and climate security

In parallel with security sector reform, UNDP advanced environmental justice as a core component of Iraq's rule of law and governance agenda. Through catalytic support from the Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme), UNDP piloted integrated approaches linking environmental governance, security and human rights. This flexible support enabled UNDP Iraq to address a critical institutional gap, and position environmental justice as a durable component of Iraq's medium- and long-term governance and security reform agenda.

Climate security considerations were integrated into key national frameworks, including the National Security Strategy and the Security Sector Reform Strategy. Previously operating in silos, institutions responsible for justice, security and environmental protection established formal coordination mechanisms that clarified mandates and strengthened enforcement capacity. This translated into concrete reforms, including the elevation of the environmental police within the Ministry of Interior, an increase in the number of environmental inspectors from 150 to 350 and progress towards amending the Environment Protection Law in line with international human rights standards.

These reforms strengthened the state's ability to respond to environmental violations affecting public health, livelihoods and living conditions, particularly for vulnerable communities. Improved investigative capacity among inspectors and police enhanced access to justice by enabling environmental complaints to be documented, investigated and addressed more effectively. At the same time, consultations with civil society and local communities helped ensure that local concerns informed national reforms, reinforcing trust and people-centred governance.

Across both police reform and environmental justice, UNDP's engagement emphasized long-term institutional transformation. By linking legal reform, institutional coordination, operational capacity development and community engagement, UNDP contributed to shifting governance systems towards more preventive, accountable and service-oriented approaches. These reforms strengthened institutional resilience, improved access to justice and reinforced more inclusive and responsive governance systems in Iraq.

Digital Transformation at the Al-Saydiya Model Police Station. | Photo: UNDP Iraq / Mahdi Al-Saadawi

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026 and beyond, UNDP will prioritize expanding the Model Police Station approach and strengthening gender-responsive policing, including enhancing the role of police in reintegration and addressing gender-based violence. Efforts will also focus on improving coordination and advancing criminal justice reform to strengthen accountability, protect human rights and enhance the effectiveness and integrity of institutions. In parallel, UNDP will support greater digital integration across justice and security institutions.

LEBANON

KEY RESULTS:

- Legal aid helpdesks expanded outreach through 26 awareness sessions that reached 429 internally displaced people in remote and crisis-affected areas. Over 1,650 individuals, including 1,322 women, received legal aid on gender-based violence and personal status issues, improving access to justice for marginalized groups.
- Safeguards for suspects' rights were strengthened through the retrofitting of six police stations to pilot the audiovisual recording of interrogations, and through enhanced legal aid systems within the Beirut and Tripoli Bar Associations. More than 290 individuals, including women and children, received support during preliminary investigations.
- Legal aid helpdesks were embedded within Bar Associations and legal aid mechanisms supported. These are expected to remain in place and contribute to a nationally owned legal aid framework and sustained rights protections.

In 2025, Lebanon continued to grapple with the compounded effects of mass displacement, political instability and deepening economic hardship. These pressures placed additional strain on justice and security institutions, which already faced long-standing challenges. Against this backdrop, UNDP's work to expand access to justice, strengthen rights protections and support institutional reform gained renewed importance. Support from UNDP's Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme) enabled the mobilization of additional resources from the European Union and Canada to safeguard human rights guarantees during preliminary investigations, expand legal aid services and enhance gender-responsive policing across the country.

Marginalized communities in remote and crisis-affected areas continued to face barriers to justice, including limited legal awareness, entrenched customary norms and a lack of trust in institutions. In response, UNDP-supported legal aid helpdesks increased outreach and delivered 26 awareness sessions reaching 429 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the South and North, covering Akkar, El Mina, Hasbaya, Nabatiyeh, Tripoli and Tyre. The sessions focused on documentation, property rights, domestic violence and the legal implications of displacement. Additionally, the South Helpdesk handled 12 cases, including protection orders, civil registration, replacement of lost identity documents, and the issuance of birth certificates.

Over 1,650 individuals, including 1,322 women, received legal aid services related to gender-based violence and personal status issues. Beneficiaries included Lebanese, Syrian, Palestinian persons, as well as stateless persons, reflecting the diverse needs of Lebanon's population.

Strengthening the implementation of Article 47[9] ensuring suspects' rights during preliminary investigations, remained a flagship area of work, in collaboration with the General Prosecutor's Office, Internal Security Forces (ISF) and Bar Associations in Tripoli and Beirut. A key milestone was the retrofitting of six police stations to pilot audio-visual recording of interrogations. Four stations in Beirut, one in Batroun and the Beirut Judicial Police facility were equipped with cameras, soundproofing and fibre-optic connectivity to judicial authorities to provide high-quality recordings for transparency and accountability during interrogations.

At the same time, the Beirut and Tripoli Bar Associations expanded their Article 47 committees and strengthened legal aid systems. Both established referral mechanisms and 24/7 hotlines, supported by circulars from ISF leadership instructing all stations to uphold legal assistance guarantees.

9 These guarantees were introduced in 2020 when a landmark law amending the Criminal Procedure Code was passed.

The Beirut and Tripoli Bar Associations assisted over 290 individuals, including women and children, providing legal representation where needed. These results reflect stronger cooperation between security institutions and the legal community, as well as improved access to justice.

UNDP facilitated training for 77 ISF personnel across 35 stations in eight governorates under Lebanon's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. Participant feedback confirmed the operational relevance of the training, with 93 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing that the information met their professional needs, while 90 percent of the participants indicated that the practical components helped them apply the new knowledge in practice.

Finally, standard operating procedures (SOPs) defining the roles of security personnel, prosecutors and lawyers during investigations were finalized and approved by the Public Prosecution Office, following sustained dialogue with security and justice stakeholders. As of 2025, efforts were underway to operationalize the SOPs by enabling courts to access audio and video recordings of interrogation sessions from the six police locations where this system is being piloted.

Strong partnerships supported coordinated action across the justice and security sectors. Through the Access to Justice Working Group, UNDP worked closely with the Ministry of Justice, both Bar Associations, the UN Refugee Agency and civil society. At the community level, collaboration with universities and municipalities ensured that awareness messages were adapted to local contexts.

The Global Programme's investments have laid the groundwork for long-term institutional change. Legal aid helpdesks were embedded within Bar Association systems, contributing to the gradual emergence of a national legal aid framework. Standard Operating Procedures, legal aid hotlines and Article 47 committees are expected to remain in place beyond the project's duration, reinforcing rights protections across the criminal justice chain.

LOOKING FORWARD

With a new wave of violence affecting Lebanon and a mass displacement crisis impacting over one million people, UNDP will prioritize flexible, needs-based programming to ensure uninterrupted access to legal aid services, particularly for women and other vulnerable groups. This approach draws on lessons learned from the 2024 crisis response. UNDP will also strengthen the capacities of security institutions and the National Human Rights Commission so they can better respond to protection risks, rights violations and rising vulnerabilities among displaced populations.

Building on the Access to Justice Working Group led by the Ministry of Justice and the Bar Associations, UNDP will continue to support the institutionalization of a sustainable legal aid system in Lebanon. This includes strengthening standardized service delivery models, improving referral pathways and reinforcing the operational capacities of legal aid helpdesks and mobile outreach modalities. A forthcoming study of the pilot legal aid desks, including a cost-benefit analysis of legal aid investments, will guide the next phase of system development and institutionalization.

Efforts will seek to strengthen the rule of law programming through a stabilization-oriented approach to advance the extension of state authority across Lebanese territory, in line with the UN Security Council Resolution 1701, and reinforce the contribution of security and justice institutions to restoring public trust.

LIBYA

KEY RESULTS:

- Comprehensive analysis and partnership-building unlocked additional resources and helped transition UNDP's work in Libya into a structured, nationally endorsed rule of law portfolio with system-level impact potential.
- Justice assessments in Benghazi and Gharyan generated the first localized evidence on how communities experience justice and security, leading to roadmaps that prioritize more accessible, responsive and people-centred services, including legal aid and improved complaint mechanisms.
- Engagement with key institutions, including the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior and the Attorney General's Office, strengthened collaboration and technical capacity, contributing to improved coordination among justice and security actors despite ongoing political fragmentation.

Between 2022 and 2025, Libya's rule of law, justice, security and human rights system remained constrained by persistent political division, weak institutional structures and a fragile security environment. Fragmentation across justice and security sectors continued to limit coordination, disrupt service delivery and impede efforts to advance accountability or respond consistently to people's justice needs. These conditions contributed to low public trust in institutions and slowed progress on the national reform agenda.

Within this context, UNDP sustained its investment in governance, democratization and the foundations of an inclusive social contract. A central achievement was the 2023 development and endorsement of the project on *Strengthening the Rule of Law and Justice in Libya*. Catalytic seed funding from UNDP's Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme) enabled early project design, context analysis and partnership-building that directly unlocked additional resources from Italy and the Netherlands, and reinforced UNDP's position as a trusted partner in the rule of law and justice sector.

Overall, UNDP in Libya has progressed from conceptual groundwork to a structured, nationally endorsed rule of law portfolio. This evolution laid the basis for medium- and long-term system-level change, including improved access to justice, stronger institutional coordination and a shift towards more coherent and people-centred justice services across the country. Stronger engagement with the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, the Attorney General's Office and the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) helped rebuild institutional relationships despite political volatility.

In 2025, amid continued political and security volatility, UNDP relied on adaptive programming with regular reflection and feedback loops, which allowed timely adjustments and helped maintain progress.

UNDP expanded operations outside Tripoli through city-level rule of law and justice assessments in Benghazi and Gharyan. These surveys and consultations generated the first localized evidence on how communities, including women and vulnerable groups, experience justice and security in their daily lives. The results informed the development of justice roadmaps for each city, with priority actions identified to address the most pressing gaps. These include improving complaint channels, reducing delays, increasing responsiveness and strengthening outreach to women and vulnerable groups. As one participant in Gharyan observed, ***"This is the first time our concerns have been collected in a way that can lead to real solutions."*** The process has also improved communication between communities and justice actors. Local authorities welcomed the roadmaps as a tool that reflects community expectations, guiding future reforms.

The evidence also informed UNDP's upcoming initiative to introduce legal aid services in Benghazi and Gharyan to support people in navigating legal procedures, access information and resolve disputes more effectively. This is particularly important for groups that reported feeling excluded or discouraged from seeking justice due to distance, cost or mistrust.

The portfolio also continued working with core justice and security institutions, including the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior and the Attorney General's Office. Engagement with these justice actors contributed to stronger technical capacities and laid the groundwork for improved coordination.

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026, UNDP will focus on expanding the rule of law assessment to Tripoli and its 13 municipalities, creating the first city-wide evidence base to inform national justice reform and guide equitable service delivery. Building on insights from Benghazi and Gharyan, UNDP will introduce legal aid services in selected pilot areas to help address the most urgent access barriers.

Strengthening coordination among the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior and the Attorney General's Office will remain central to improving the coherence and effectiveness of justice institutions. UNDP will also prioritize resource mobilization and gradually encourage government cost-sharing to strengthen long-term sustainability.

Continued collaboration with UNSMIL and international partners will ensure alignment of technical support and reinforce national efforts to advance justice and human rights.

SOMALIA

KEY RESULTS:

- Between 2022 and 2025, Somalia made progress towards more coherent and nationally owned rule of law, security and governance systems, supported by catalytic contributions from UNDP that strengthened institutional coordination, embedded people-centred approaches and laid the foundation for more inclusive and resilient justice and security services.
- Expanded legal aid services reached over 1,800 individuals – including women and marginalized communities – and strengthened community-based mediation mechanisms that resolved disputes, reduced tensions and enabled more accessible and trusted pathways to justice.
- Local Police Partnership Boards were established and strengthened as inclusive platforms for dialogue and joint problem-solving, improving trust between communities and law enforcement and enabling more participatory, accountable, and responsive approaches to community security.

Between 2022 and 2025, Somalia's rule of law, security and governance systems evolved within a context of political transition, persistent insecurity and shifting international engagement. This period saw consolidation of the federal political settlement, gradual institutional strengthening and increasing emphasis on nationally owned reforms, despite ongoing fragility and uneven access to justice and security.

UNDP's Rule of Law, Security and Governance portfolio supported this transition by shifting from crisis-driven assistance towards system-level consolidation. While early interventions focused on maintaining core governance, justice and security functions, the portfolio increasingly prioritized people-centred approaches, national ownership and institutional coherence across federal and state levels.

Key achievements included strengthening security governance through community-informed planning and inclusive engagement between people and authorities. State-level security strategies, informed by perception-based data, integrated gender equality and climate security considerations, contributing to more responsive and preventive security frameworks.

In the justice sector, support to nationwide coordination culminated in Somalia's first Justice Sector Strategy that provided a unified framework for reform across formal and informal systems. Expanded mediation and community-based dispute resolution mechanisms improved access to justice, helping resolve thousands of disputes and reducing local tensions, particularly for women and marginalized groups. UNDP also contributed to human rights advancement through legal reforms and strengthened the capacity of justice and security actors to apply rights-based and gender-responsive approaches.

The support from UNDP's Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme) – provided also under the UN Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law – played a catalytic role. It enabled the integration of people-centred methodologies, stronger coordination across institutions and the transition towards nationally led rule of law and governance systems. Collectively, these efforts laid the foundation for more inclusive, legitimate and resilient justice and security systems in Somalia.

In 2025, Somalia's rule of law, justice, security and governance landscape was shaped by increased institutional consolidation alongside persistent security challenges. Ongoing military operations and instability in newly recovered areas constrained access and implementation in some locations, underscoring the need for adaptive and prevention-oriented approaches.

UNDP adopted an integrated portfolio approach linking security sector governance, access to justice and prevention, with a strong emphasis on community engagement and institutional ownership. A key achievement was advancing people-centred security planning, with 22 community security assessments informing State Security Strategies across Federal Member States. These strategies

integrated climate risks and gender equality, supporting more locally informed and forward-looking frameworks.

At the community level, trust between communities and law enforcement was strengthened through Local Police Partnership Boards and community policing initiatives. More than 3,000 police and community representatives strengthened their capacities in human rights, leadership and gender-responsive policing. Access to justice and human rights protections improved, including expanded legal aid services reaching over 1,800 vulnerable individuals, with women and marginalized groups among them. In Jubbaland, the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Act was adopted, a landmark legal advancement to protect women and girls.

Broader prevention efforts reinforced this trajectory. Livelihood opportunities for more than 1,000 young people made them less vulnerable to violent extremism. Digital campaigns promoting tolerance and positive narratives reached three million people. More than 1,200 women leaders received training in mediation and conflict prevention. For an abandoned young mother in Beledweyne, community-based mediation helped reduce tensions and identify solutions for the woman's safety and the well-being of her children. ***"For the first time, someone listened to my pain without judging me. I felt seen as a mother, not as a problem,"*** she said.

At the strategic level, completion of Phase I of the United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNTMIS) roadmap and UNDP's leadership of key pillars – including youth, peace and security, prevention of violent extremism (PVE) and stabilization coordination – further reinforced its role in shaping integrated, nationally owned approaches to peace and security.

UNDP's support to people-centred security and justice has contributed to tangible improvements in how communities experience safety, resolve disputes and access services. Across Somalia, interventions have strengthened trust between communities and state institutions by creating inclusive platforms for dialogue, enhancing local capacities for conflict resolution and promoting more responsive and accountable service delivery.

In Jowhar, Hirshabelle mistrust and the exclusion of traditional leaders, women and youth from security decision-making resulted in fragmented and ineffective policing. Through the Joint Police Programme Phase II, the Ministry of Internal Security convened community consultations, bringing together 40 stakeholders, including 12 women: elders, youth, religious leaders, police and local authorities. The consultations introduced Local Police Partnership Boards (LPPBs) as inclusive platforms for dialogue, accountability and joint problem-solving. Participants identified community safety priorities, agreed on transparent governance structures, and ensured the representation of women and youth. This process marked a critical first step in rebuilding trust. As one participant noted, ***"We now have a space to speak and be heard."*** The Ministry is advancing plans to formalize and operationalize the LPPBs.

LOOKING FORWARD

UNDP's Transformative Governance portfolio will focus on consolidating gains and supporting nationally led transitions towards sustainable systems. Priorities include institutionalizing people-centred security and justice approaches, strengthening coordination across federal and state actors and ensuring continued access to justice for vulnerable groups.

As international engagements evolve, emphasis will be placed on national ownership, system coherence and prevention, enabling institutions and communities to sustain reform momentum. This will ensure that investments made during the current strategic period translate into durable improvements in security, justice and governance.

STATE OF PALESTINE

KEY RESULTS:

- The joint Sawasya Programme, co-led by UNDP, UN Women and UNICEF, expanded access to justice and protection services across Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, delivering legal aid, representation, mediation, alternative dispute resolution and psychosocial support to 34,161 people, and raising legal awareness among 60,681 people through activities that strengthened the understanding of rights and referral pathways.
- Digital justice advanced substantially with over 196,280 users accessing Mizan services, while the digitization of around 200,000 case files improved institutional efficiency and coordination.
- The business and human rights initiative in the State of Palestine, engaged 55 representatives from key institutions and civil society in a sensitization workshop, and commissioned two policy papers that identify gaps, propose reforms and provide the evidence base for a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights.

In 2025, the rule of law, justice, security and human rights in the State of Palestine were severely strained by the Gaza war and rising violence in the West Bank. Civilian casualties, mass displacement, widespread destruction and the collapse of essential services in Gaza curtailed access to justice, protection and legal aid, especially for women and children, persons with disabilities and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Restrictions on movement and institutional fragmentation further impacted service delivery. Power asymmetries stemming from the ongoing occupation, weak state institutions and limited business accountability exacerbate these grievances, leaving thousands without effective protection or redress.

Against this backdrop, UNDP, UN Women and UNICEF co-led the joint Sawasya Programme, supporting access to justice, strengthening institutions and embedding gender responsiveness during crisis. The programme combined policy support, digital justice and service delivery, including legal aid and psychosocial support.

In 2025, Sawasya expanded integrated justice and protection services across Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem through flexible delivery modalities adapted to a highly constrained environment. Legal aid, representation, mediation, alternative dispute resolution and psychosocial support reached 34,161 people, including 26,856 women and 5,262 children. Legal awareness activities reached 60,681 people, including 51,056 women and 3,335 children, improving the understanding of rights, services and referral pathways. In Gaza, community-based legal support, mediation and cash-for-protection assistance helped sustain access to justice where formal systems were disrupted, while in the West Bank, One-Stop Centres provided coordinated support to 1,154 women survivors of violence.

Progress in digital justice remained significant. The Mizan digital services were used by 196,280 individuals, including judges, prosecutors, lawyers and court staff. The digitization of around 200,000 case file documents through Mizan improved efficiency, transparency and coordination across justice institutions. In addition, several new features of the next Mizan Court Management System were introduced across courts during 2025 with full system implementation in 2026.

The programme also invested in the future capacity of the justice sector. More than 800 law students and young lawyers took part in clinical legal education, legal incubators and practical training. Academic partnerships and diploma programmes further strengthened national expertise in child protection, investigation and justice sector reform.

To invest in the longer-term governance reforms and to integrate business accountability within a rights-based framework, UNDP launched a project on Strengthening Business and Human Rights Frameworks in Palestine (SBHRP). This intervention

aims to reinforce accountability, advance gender equality and protect human rights in business operations. By prioritizing national ownership, it supports Palestinian strategies for justice reform, inclusive economic recovery and the protection of vulnerable groups. Emerging partnerships with the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and the Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR) will bring together business and human rights (BHR) actors, ensuring a balanced and inclusive approach to advancing the BHR agenda.

Building on this foundation, implementation began with a sensitization workshop that convened 55 representatives from ministries, justice institutions, civil society, the private sector and academia. Importantly, the workshop created space for women and civil society voices, reinforcing the project's people-centred approach.

Furthermore, specialized training was provided to 30 judges and prosecutors on BHR and Heightened Human Rights Due Diligence (hHRDD), with a focus on evidence collection, case assessment, and judicial decision-making through a human rights lens. Through practical case studies on child labour, environmental violations, women's labour rights, and the rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and persons with disabilities (PWDs), the training emphasized how prosecutors and judges can consider human rights risks, vulnerability, and corporate responsibility when evaluating evidence and issuing decisions. The sessions also highlighted expected legal challenges during the Gaza reconstruction phase, including subcontracting chains, unsafe working conditions, and discrimination in employment, and stressed the importance of ensuring access to remedy through effective judicial and non-judicial grievance mechanisms and compensation where violations occur.

To guide future policy development, UNDP commissioned two policy papers[10] as the evidence base for a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights. One analyses gaps in alignment with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and proposes reforms; the other maps legislation on business and environmental issues and identifies enforcement weaknesses.

A mediator providing legal support in Gaza. | Photo: Sawasya Joint Programme / UNDP PAPP

10 Corporate and Business Responsibility to Uphold Human Rights in the Palestinian National Authority and the Inception Study on Legislation and Environmental Issues Related to Business and Human Rights.

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026, the Sawasya Programme will continue to strengthen justice sector systems and improve the delivery of justice services across the State of Palestine. Technical assistance and skills development will support prosecutors, judges, inspectors and administrative staff in applying updated procedures and standards.

At the same time, UNDP and partners will support women-led and human rights organizations to provide legal aid, psychosocial support and community-based resilience initiatives. Priorities include strengthening women's leadership in mediation and alternative dispute resolution, expanding survivor-centred services through specialized courts and One-Stop Centres, and improving referral pathways. Child justice interventions will also be scaled up, with a focus on legal representation, legal awareness, rehabilitation, alternatives to detention and access to birth registration, particularly in Gaza.

In the area of business and human rights, UNDP will promote responsible business practices by advancing its support to awareness raising, policy dialogue and capacity development.

SUDAN

KEY RESULTS:

- One hundred police officers were trained to respond to sexual and gender-based violence and unit-level action plans were adopted, demonstrating national ownership and commitment to change. The strengthened response embedded a survivor-centred, trauma-informed approach and improved investigative practices, positioning police as a trusted entry point linking survivors to coordinated legal, psychosocial, health and protection services.
- A nationwide Mapping of Urgent Justice Needs and Existing and Future Accountability Mechanisms generated one of the most comprehensive evidence bases available in the current conflict context, capturing community-identified justice priorities, survivor needs and perceptions of accountability. The mapping provided critical insights to inform transitional justice, accountability and peace processes.
- New development financing enabled a joint UN initiative on conflict-related sexual violence, strengthening UN system collaboration, elevating justice and accountability within peacebuilding and humanitarian coordination, and positioning UNDP as a lead actor on justice sector recovery in Sudan.

Sudan is facing one of the world's largest humanitarian crises. Past and ongoing conflicts have compounded the burdens on already vulnerable communities, resulting in mass displacement, disrupted livelihoods, disease outbreaks and heightened protection risks. Coupled with entrenched societal divisions and scarce resources, these challenges have significantly undermined resilience and social cohesion, while exacerbating governance deficits. The war is increasingly taking on ethnic and tribal dimensions, further polarizing communities.

The conflict has led to a breakdown of the rule of law, the dysfunction of institutions meant to protect civilians and widespread human rights violations, including killings, torture, enforced disappearances, rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as grave violations of children's rights. In Darfur, large-scale ethnically motivated attacks and mass killings have been reported. The collapse of the formal justice system has entrenched a pervasive perception of impunity.

In this volatile environment, UNDP adjusted its inclusive governance and peacebuilding approach to better respond to the realities faced by conflict-affected communities. With support from the Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme), UNDP designed interventions to capture, respond to and elevate the justice needs of people affected by armed conflict, ensuring that local perspectives and lived experiences inform the piloting of accountability mechanisms and shape discussions on addressing impunity in future peace processes and transition negotiations. Central to this approach is the inclusion of survivors whose voices guide the design and implementation of justice mechanisms through a bottom-up process. Particular attention is given to the perspectives of women and girls survivors of conflict-related sexual violence and gender-based violence. As part of this work, UNDP strengthened police responses to sexual and gender-based violence, and completed the nationwide Mapping of Urgent Justice Needs and Existing and Future Accountability Mechanisms.

Across Al Jazirah and Khartoum States, 100 police officers improved their capacity to address sexual and gender-based violence, with improvements in trauma-informed interviewing, survivor-centred investigation practices and multi-sectoral coordination, as confirmed by pre- and post-training assessments.
As an immediate and tangible result of the training, police units adopted action plans, demonstrating national ownership and commitment to change.

These plans institutionalized lessons on ethical investigations, survivor-centred practice, community engagement and internal accountability, informing discussions with national counterparts on the potential establishment of specialized investigation units to respond to sexual and gender-based violence.

The strengthened police response was embedded within a holistic, survivor-centred approach linking justice actors with health, psychosocial, legal and economic support services. Police officers became better equipped to make timely referrals to mental health and psychosocial support providers, legal aid services and safe houses offering integrated assistance. This coordinated referral pathway addresses the fragmentation survivors often face, ensuring that reporting a crime becomes the first step towards protection, recovery and justice. By positioning the police as an effective and trusted entry point to this broader system of support, the initiative contributes to increased reporting, greater accountability and longer-term survivor recovery.

The nationwide Mapping of Urgent Justice Needs and Existing and Future Accountability Mechanisms marked a major milestone, generating an evidence base on community-identified justice priorities, the needs of survivors, perceptions of accountability and expectations for future transitional processes. Implemented across Khartoum, North and West Darfur, Red Sea states and South Kordofan, and among Sudanese refugees in Chad,

Egypt and South Sudan, the assessment engaged 1,200 survey respondents alongside focus groups and interviews, producing one of the most comprehensive datasets available in the current conflict context. Robust data collection methods, strong partnerships with civil society and a flexible adaptive approach enabled successful field deployments despite significant access and security constraints.

Findings reveal deep mistrust in formal and customary justice systems, limited safe reporting pathways for survivors and persistent harmful social norms discouraging the reporting of sexual and gender-based violence. By integrating evidence into national and international advocacy, the mapping is informing future programming and mobilizing support for transitional justice, community-based protection and justice sector reform.

Findings relevant to the policing and response to sexual and gender-based violence point to significant barriers affecting both access to justice and the quality of services. A majority of respondents (62 percent) reported a lack of access to essential justice information and services due to insecurity, institutional breakdown and geographic constraints. Almost half of the respondents (48 percent) identified poor quality or inconsistency in justice responses, including delays, insufficient documentation and perceived bias, although this does not suggest the absence of quality concerns among others, but rather that access barriers are often more immediate. These challenges are compounded by persistent barriers for women and internally displaced persons (IDPs), 37 percent of whom reported exclusion from justice decision-making processes.

The evidence generated through the mapping directly informed a new joint project of UNDP, UN Women, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict Secretariat: *Urgent and Lifesaving Support for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Survivors in Sudan: Supporting Women-Led Shelters, Protection Services, and Livelihood Recovery for Survivors*. Building on gaps identified by the justice needs assessment and police engagement, the project aims to expand multisectoral services, scale survivor-centred protection and strengthen women-led organizations across Al Jazirah, Gedaref, Khartoum and Red Sea states. Mobilizing this new development financing represents one of the most significant catalytic outcomes of the Global Programme's support to justice programming in Sudan.

Institutionally, the project reinforced UN system collaboration, with shared evidence driving joint prioritization across UNDP, UN Women and UNFPA, and strengthening inter-agency coordination under UN Action. This alignment laid the foundation for more strategic resource mobilization and increased political momentum around the 2025 Framework of Cooperation on conflict-related sexual violence.

Finally, the project elevated enhanced justice and accountability within peacebuilding and humanitarian coordination platforms, positioning UNDP as a lead actor on justice sector recovery in Sudan. In parallel, it catalysed new partnerships with women-led civil society organizations, legal aid providers, and mental health and psychosocial support actors – networks that will continue to drive impact beyond the project's duration.

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026, UNDP and partners will prioritize operationalizing nationally owned legal and institutional frameworks to strengthen transparent, accountable and gender-responsive justice and security systems. The focus will be to implement inclusive, victim-centred transitional justice processes to ensure accountability and redress for human rights violations, while expanding access to justice through the improved presence and effectiveness of courts, policing, prosecution and correctional services, particularly in underserved and conflict-affected areas. UNDP will also enhance institutional capacity, governance systems and professional standards across the justice sector, alongside civil society engagement to promote oversight, participation and trust between communities and institutions. Ultimately, these priorities aim to consolidate conditions for durable peace by reinforcing conflict-resolution mechanisms, advancing accountability and supporting a stable inclusive transition grounded in the rule of law.

TUNISIA

KEY RESULTS:

- The integration of community policing into Tunisia's National Strategy for the Reduction of Community Violence (2024–2035) enabled the scale-up of participatory, locally driven prevention mechanisms, while the institutionalization of Local Security Committees strengthened social cohesion and trust in state security services.
- Over 43,000 people gained access to legal aid services, while applications for legal aid at the Administrative Tribunal increased by more than 70 percent between 2021 and 2025, reflecting reduced barriers to reporting and improved responsiveness of the justice system.
- Responsible business practices were strengthened among more than 250 economic actors in Medenine, supporting the creation of a women-led cooperative and enabling companies to adopt worker protection measures aligned with international human rights standards.

Tunisia continued to navigate a complex political, economic and institutional transition. Since 2011, institutional reforms and transformations – further reshaped by the 2022 Constitution – have sought to enhance transparency, accountability and the effectiveness of public institutions, particularly in the justice and security sectors. However, these reforms remain uneven in implementation and are unfolding in a context of socio-economic fragility, persistent regional disparities and heightened public expectations for equitable access to rights and services. In this evolving landscape, reinforcing the rule of law, ensuring inclusive access to justice and promoting responsive, rights-based and people-centred security services have become critical priorities to rebuild trust between people and institutions, particularly among vulnerable groups.

Under the 'Governance as a lever of socio-economic development' portfolio, UNDP supported the operationalization of the code of conduct for the Internal Security Forces. Disciplinary procedures and operational standards were developed to clarify roles and responsibilities within the security sector and align practices with human rights norms, contributing to transparency and accountability.

A strong focus was on improving access to services, particularly through digitalization and proximity approaches. Thirteen digital processes have been launched. This includes the development of online systems for criminal records and complaints management, which will help to reduce delays, enhance transparency and limit opportunities for corruption. In parallel, innovative service delivery models, such as mobile administrative units, have brought security services closer to underserved and remote populations, directly addressing barriers to access and improving equity in public service delivery.

The portfolio has also contributed to strengthening community-based approaches to security, embedding community participation and trust at the core of service delivery. The integration of the community policing approach into the National Strategy for the Reduction of Community Violence (2024–2035) marked a major milestone, enabling the scale-up of participatory, locally driven prevention mechanisms. The institutionalization and scaling of Local Security Committees have reinforced social cohesion and contributed to building confidence in the state's ability to deliver fair and effective security services.

Significant progress has also been achieved in ensuring protection and access to justice for vulnerable groups, particularly women and children affected by violence. Capacity-building for security actors, combined with the establishment of specialized units and integrated service models, has strengthened survivor-centred responses and improved coordination across institutions. These efforts have enhanced access to protection mechanisms, reduced barriers to reporting and strengthened the overall responsiveness of the system.

Under the "Social Protection and Legal Aid (SPLA)" project, in partnership with the World Bank, UNDP continued to strengthen the integration between social protection systems and access to justice in Tunisia, with a focus on vulnerable populations. Implementation accelerated across all regions, supported by stronger institutional coordination and the engagement of over 2,800 professionals across social, legal and institutional sectors.

Access to legal aid was strengthened through a combination of awareness raising, capacity-building and infrastructure improvements. Outreach activities implemented with civil society partners reached over 43,000 people, while a broader set of sensitization efforts engaged tens of thousands more across regions. Capacity-building programmes led to the training of more than 1,700 professionals, including social workers and legal actors, contributing to improved service quality and more effective support for vulnerable groups.

Demand for legal aid has grown both quantitatively and qualitatively. At the Administrative Tribunal, applications for legal aid increased by over 70 percent between 2021 and 2025, with accepted applications nearly tripling. In 2025, the Tribunal received the first-ever applications from detained persons, signalling positive change in institutional practices. Investments in infrastructure and equipment benefited over 60 institutions and contributed to improved service accessibility. While challenges remain, particularly in system integration and digitalization, the project has established a strong foundation for scaling up integrated, people-centred services. To promote an enabling environment for sustainable and responsible economic activity, the Government of Tunisia partnered with UNDP to advance the business and human rights (BHR) agenda. This work, supported by UNDP's Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme), strengthened the human rights dimension of local economic development and built on earlier collaboration to design the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights.

The initiative was integrated into UNDP's portfolio on 'Governance as a lever of socio-economic development' – specifically its local and economic development pillar, allowing teams to mobilize existing partnerships and reinforce ongoing activities with a human rights lens. Most interventions took place in the Governorate of Medenine, where UNDP has a long-standing presence, ensuring strong engagement from local actors and effective implementation.

More than 250 economic actors in Medenine, including 126 women and 80 young people, enhanced their understanding of BHR principles. Participants included women artisans, young entrepreneurs, civil society representatives and private sector executives. Their participation translated principles into concrete action.

A group of 30 women artisans established an agricultural cooperative at the end of the training cycle. The cooperative now uses environmentally friendly local materials and strengthens women's economic autonomy. In parallel, five fish processing companies received tailored support to develop and adopt worker protection charters aligned with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. These companies initiated further improvements, such as a compensation system, and committed to applying these standards beyond the duration of the project. This engagement from the private sector, often difficult to achieve, resulted in concrete examples of responsible business practices that can inspire wider replication.

Strategic knowledge was generated to guide responsible economic development. The project mapped the local economic ecosystem and created a practical guide to help young Tunisians build responsible businesses. Complementing this, an assessment with 40 actors in the fishing and tourism sectors examined current practices and informed a joint action plan proposing concrete steps to strengthen human rights and environmental protection. The work also introduced new behaviour-sensitive indicators that will guide future UNDP programming.

In Tunisia, five fish processing companies adopted worker protection charters – setting a new benchmark and inspiring others to follow.

Photo: UNDP Tunisia/ Ala Zemzmi

LOOKING FORWARD

Looking ahead, the portfolio will continue to consolidate people-centred and rights-based approaches in the security and justice sectors, scaling up accessible, responsive and accountable services. Building on progress in digitalization and proximity service delivery, as well as the institutionalization of community-based approaches, efforts will aim to deepen trust between institutions and communities by improving the quality, transparency and inclusiveness of service provision, particularly for vulnerable groups. Continued attention will be given to strengthening coordination across actors and ensuring that reforms translate into tangible improvements in how people experience security and justice services. In parallel, the portfolio will reinforce efforts to support inclusive economic development at the local level by promoting improved working conditions and enabling more sustainable and resilient income opportunities. Greater emphasis will be placed on fostering enabling environments where businesses, local authorities and communities collectively contribute to economic systems that are more inclusive, equitable and environmentally responsible.

Finally, the portfolio will continue to strengthen the articulation between social protection and access to justice and services, building on efforts to connect legal aid, social services and institutional responses.

YEMEN

KEY RESULTS:

- UNDP established the foundation for a housing, land and property (HLP) initiative by setting up multistakeholder Joint Committees in Aden and Mukalla, identifying a pilot area covering around 3,800 households, and developing a participatory, gender-responsive and legally grounded approach aligned with international standards to strengthen tenure security and prevent disputes.
- Around 3,000 community disputes in Aden and Mukalla were addressed by 112 women paralegals under the Promoting Access to Gender Justice Project funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency, with nearly 60 percent of cases resolved and 70 percent of claimants being women, demonstrating significant progress towards inclusive, people-centred justice delivery.
- Support for women's leadership and participation in the rule of law sector expanded substantially, with more than 130 additional women trained as paralegals, lawyers and law students; 800 women professionals completing joint training; and 60 women in Mukalla receiving training of trainers, strengthening women's sustained role in justice services.

Yemen remains in one of the world's most complex and protracted crises, more than a decade into its multilayered conflict. The country's division has deepened political and military fault lines, intensifying competition over territory and state resources. UNDP's Promoting Access to Gender Justice Project operates in Aden and Mukalla – cities which have experienced economic collapse and political turmoil, compounded by power cuts, delayed public sector salaries and widespread service failures. These conditions have triggered frequent street protests and heightened public frustration.

Restoring housing, land and property rights

With support from the Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme), UNDP focused on housing, land and property (HLP) disputes, which accounts for 85 percent of court cases and may take over 10 years to resolve, leaving people to rely on informal and often violent means of dispute resolution. HLP-related violence is estimated to cause around 4,000 deaths each year, generating widespread local instability.[11] These dynamics disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, including women, making HLP rights protection a critical entry point for community resilience.

Given the sensitivity of the matter, UNDP introduced strong risk mitigation and participatory mechanisms. Multi-stakeholder Joint Committees were established in Aden and Mukalla. Despite initial political challenges in Aden, local partners showed strong resilience and maintained coordination. In Mukalla, the Joint Committee identified Hay Al Masaken neighbourhood in Fuwa sector with about 3,800 households as the pilot area.

To ensure quality and coherence, UNDP established technical coordination with UN-Habitat, adopting the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM) that promotes people-centred, pro-poor and gender-responsive approaches to HLP governance. The project also applies an 'ecosystem' approach by bringing together justice actors and land professionals to address the lack of reliable HLP rights documentation. Accurate and transparent information, grounded in technical evidence, reduces the likelihood of disputes, supports economic activity and builds public trust.

11 UN Habitat (2022) Land Problems and Disputes in Yemen: Causes, Challenges and Recommendations.

The design of this initiative is anchored in Yemen's endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure, a global standard for HLP governance. These guidelines recognize both formal and informal tenure arrangements, incorporate women as rights holders and accept diverse forms of legitimate evidence. UNDP also drew on avenues available under Yemeni law to strengthen women's HLP rights, including inheritance mechanisms, marital property rights and tenant protections, ensuring that interventions are both contextually appropriate and legally grounded. Implementation of this housing, land and property initiative is set to start in 2026.

Legal support for women

Under the Promoting Access to Gender Justice Project funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), around 3,000 community disputes in Aden and Mukalla were addressed by 112 women paralegals. Most cases – 70 percent – were raised by women seeking justice. Nearly 60 percent of all cases were resolved. In one case, a paralegal supported a divorced mother to secure her right to keep her home and receive a monthly allowance for her daughters.

To ensure sustainable legal support for women, UNDP facilitated training for more than 130 additional women to serve their communities: 72 women paralegals and lawyers in Aden, 40 in Mukalla and 25 law students in the two cities. A total of 800 women rule of law professionals – 500 in Aden and 300 in Mukalla, including police and prison officers, lawyers and judges – completed joint training. In Mukalla, 60 women also completed training of trainers.

UNDP's advocacy further strengthened women's leadership in the justice and rule of law sectors. Twenty-three women were promoted to senior positions, including police chiefs, brigadier generals and directors within the Ministry of Justice in Aden. Four women's professional networks were established, including the networks of women judges and police officers, with 160 members in Aden and 40 in Mukalla. Infrastructure supporting women's access to justice expanded as well, through the completion of two women police stations[12] and the solar-powered Women's Studies Center at the University of Aden.

The project also strengthened the horizontal link between justice and non-justice services, creating a holistic gender justice continuum. Through partnerships with social service providers, including the Yemen Women Union under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, women seeking justice can access shelter, psychosocial support, reproductive health services and vocational training. UNDP's support included the construction of one women's shelter in Mukalla and the rehabilitation of a girls' shelter in Aden. These combined socio-economic measures offer an essential empowerment pathway for legally vulnerable women and girls, including detainees and survivors of gender-based violence. The integrated approach also facilitates inter-agency collaboration between UNDP, UNICEF and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), demonstrating the operationalization of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus in advancing gender justice.

In a conflict-affected and institutionally fragmented context, sustainable progress depends on strong local partnerships and authentic local ownership. The project's area-based Joint Committees in Aden and Mukalla demonstrate that only through locally anchored coordination – bringing together community actors, civil society, local authorities, police, courts and social service institutions – can people-centred justice services be effectively delivered. When national systems are compromised, relying on locally grounded institutional cooperation becomes the only viable approach to ensure responsive and enduring service provision.

12 Women Police Stations are staffed by women police officers and provide accessible safe spaces for women seeking justice.

In Yemen, UNDP's advocacy strengthened women's leadership in the justice and rule of law sectors. | Photo: UNDP Yemen

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026, UNDP will build upon the foundation for people-centred justice, aiming at the prevention and resolution of land and property disputes together with women leaders in Yemen. The HLP initiative is set to provide preventive justice to approximately 3,800 households by improving tenure security and reducing HLP-related disputes through participatory, technically affordable and legally inclusive approaches supported by the Global Programme.

ASIA-PACIFIC

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

In 2025, continuing the pattern of the past four years, Asia and the Pacific experienced both deepening crises and important openings. The region continues to grapple with a complex landscape of protracted crises such as in Myanmar and Afghanistan, heightened regional tensions in South and Southeast Asia, as well as localized community-level violence in some contexts. As of 2025, the region hosted 16.9 million forcibly displaced and stateless people, including 6.4 million refugees and asylum-seekers. Compounding risks, including cost-of-living crises, geopolitical tensions and climate emergencies deepened rule of law gaps and placed additional strain on institutions and service delivery.

At the same time, social movements in Sri Lanka (2022), Bangladesh (2024) and Nepal (2025) revealed shared patterns of mobilization – particularly by young people – in response to concerns over corruption and demand for more accountability, inclusion and economic prospects.

These dynamics illustrated the need for fundamental institutional reforms to ensure more people-centred governance systems.

Across the region, gender-responsive justice initiatives gained traction, the number of National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights increased from two to eight, and regional cooperation on environmental rights and artificial intelligence (AI) governance emerged as new frontiers. The ASEAN Declaration on the Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment was adopted, aligning Southeast Asia with the global recognition of environmental rights[13] and creating new entry points for environmental justice programming.

However, gender disparities in accessing justice, the criminalization of environmental defenders and unregulated AI in criminal justice remain critical concerns, compounded by regression on SDG 13 and widening climate justice deficits.[14]

Over its Phase IV (2022-2025), the catalytic contributions from UNDP's Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme) translated into scaled national impact. This includes advancing judicial integrity and women's judicial leadership, stronger regional networks for peer learning on justice and human rights and enhanced human rights due diligence capacity development reaching 11,000 corporate professionals across 17 countries. Technical support on justice reform and institutional continuity was instrumental during transitions in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. In Bangladesh, UNDP supported landmark reforms as the government followed through with its judicial independence agenda.

Advancing people-centred justice

Seventeen countries have developed active access to justice programming or initiatives to scale legal aid and empowerment. Building on catalytic funding allocated by the Global Programme, Bhutan opened its first regional Legal Aid Centre in 2024 with support from UNDP and the EU, a significant step towards expanding legal aid services beyond the capital, Thimphu.

In Sri Lanka, the EU-funded JURE project, implemented by UNDP and UNICEF, advanced foundational legal reforms aimed at addressing fundamental drivers of the 2022 economic crisis. Along with reforms prohibiting corporal punishment and a new Mediation Bill, the JURE project supported the digital legal literacy campaign "Know Your Neethi" which reached 1.6 million online views, while legal aid clinics provided direct assistance to 480 individuals. In addition, in partnership with the World Intellectual Property Organization, UNDP completed an Intellectual Property Benchbook and a Gender Mainstreaming manual for the justice sector institutions, trained 2,669 justice sector personnel and launched digital transformation initiatives spanning case management and e-learning systems across key justice institutions.

In Pakistan, digital justice solutions expanded significantly, with over 116,000 hearings conducted in 2025 through 72 virtual courts and 75 virtual points in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, alongside the

13 OHCHR, UN experts welcome landmark ASEAN Declaration on right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment October 2025. Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/10/un-experts-welcome-landmark-asean-declaration-right-safe-clean-healthy-and.

14 ESCAP SDG Progress Report 2026. Available at: https://www.unescap.org/kp/2026/asia-and-pacific-sdg-progress-report-2026

expansion of virtual court infrastructure in the flood-prone districts of Gilgit-Baltistan, improving access to justice for 940,766 people (including 446,989 women) in remote areas. Alternative dispute resolution mechanisms demonstrated strong performance, with Dispute Resolution Councils in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa achieving a 75 percent case resolution rate, 69 percent of cases resolved within one month, and 85 percent user satisfaction, while Court-Annexed Mediation Centres in Balochistan resolved 612 of 871 cases (70 percent).

As part of the regional UNDP Judicial Integrity Network in ASEAN (JIN-ASEAN), a regional assessment of judicial independence across six countries in Southeast Asia was completed which identified shared challenges and recommended context-specific reforms including anti-corruption measures and judicial excellence frameworks.

In a separate exercise in India, a people-centred justice needs assessment captured 2,500 experiences with the judicial system, establishing the baseline for future access to justice programming. UNDP in India also developed a responsible framework for integrating AI into the judiciary, analysing institutional readiness, risks, accountability mechanisms and safeguards aligned with constitutional rights, such as equality and fair trial to mitigate algorithmic bias.

At the regional level, UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub positioned itself as a convener on responsible AI in justice systems. In November 2025, UNDP and UNESCO co-hosted regional training on AI and the Rule of Law with the Thailand Institute of Justice, bringing together 27 judges from 13 Asia-Pacific countries to examine AI governance, algorithmic bias and judicial independence safeguards. A regional study mapping AI and rule of law trends was developed and is expected to be published in 2026.

Promoting gender justice and women leadership in the judiciary

Catalytic funding from the Gender Justice Platform co-led by UNDP and UN Women enabled judicial leadership colloquiums in Bangladesh, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic (LAO PDR) and Thailand, where 127 women judges strengthened leadership, strategic communication and institutional navigation skills, addressing structural barriers to women's progression to senior judicial roles. Following the regional convening in October 2025, UNDP was successful in leveraging initial Global Programme's investment into a three-year partnership with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to scale the initiative regionally.

Strengthening national human rights institutions (NHRIs)

In Bangladesh, critical support was provided to support reforms to strengthen the National Human Rights Commission during the political transition, contributing to efforts to enhance its independence, oversight role and institutional capacity. In Pakistan, UNDP's support enabled the National Commission on Human Rights (NCHR) to secure 'A-status', which is the highest level of accreditation granted to NHRIs by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI). Further, the NCHR strengthened its federal-provincial coordination and engagement with international human rights mechanisms. In particular, 'shadow' reports were submitted to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Committee against Torture. In addition, NCHR is digitizing its complaint system to improve access to remedy and a National Prison Reform Action Plan through Provincial Justice Committees.

Through the Tripartite Partnership with the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), the Asia Pacific Forum and the UN Human Rights Office, UNDP strengthened the institutional capacities of NHRIs in the Maldives and Timor-Leste, including on environmental rights, good governance and the rights of persons with disabilities. In the Maldives, where climate vulnerability threatens livelihoods and land rights, NHRIs became better equipped to address accountability and human rights issues linked to environmental change that define communities' survival. In Timor-Leste, enhanced NHRI engagement on disability rights supported the inclusion of persons with disabilities in justice processes from which they were historically excluded.

A forum that brought together representatives of the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives and civil society. | Photo: UNDP Maldives

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026, UNDP will prioritize continued crisis response and resilience support in Myanmar, post-election and transition-linked reforms in Bangladesh and Nepal, as well as new programming in India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, the Philippines and Samoa. At the regional level, it will continue to support policy and programming on emerging issues in the region. This includes launching the regional study on "AI and Rule of Law" and strengthening partnership on responsible AI in justice systems. The regional environmental justice study covering Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, the Maldives and Thailand will also be completed with the aim of spurring additional programming in this area, including to foster collaboration between environment and justice actors and support collaboration on the Nature Pledge. The development of the Judicial Integrity Network framework will help to define programmatic priorities for strengthening judicial independence in the region. On business and human rights, UNDP will support the strengthening of regulatory drivers while embedding human rights safeguards into trade frameworks and simultaneously creating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement, to strengthen both business respect for human rights and access to remedy.

BANGLADESH

KEY RESULTS:

- Judicial independence was reinforced through strengthened capacity to ensure a merit-based appointment system and greater institutional autonomy of the judiciary with increased public debate around judicial independence.
- Justice delivery improved with digital legal aid services piloted in eight districts, the digitization of Supreme Court and family court benches, and the adoption of the Commercial Court Ordinance enabling the creation of specialized commercial courts for the timely resolution of economic disputes.
- Human rights oversight strengthened as Bangladesh ratified major international treaties, while UNDP supported reforms to align the National Human Rights Commission with the Paris Principles.

Following the July 2024 government transition and amid strong public demand for justice and rule of law reforms, Bangladesh's justice sector entered a period of reform and institutional adjustment. UNDP supported nationally led efforts to enhance institutional independence, strengthening accountability and modernizing services. Despite persistent challenges, including a backlog of more than four million cases, limited digital integration and a shortage of judges and resources, the country made notable progress in advancing reforms aimed at strengthening judicial independence.

Four major reforms were advanced with UNDP support. First, the establishment of an independent Judicial Appointment Commission introduced a more transparent, merit-based process for appointing judges to the Appellate and High Court Divisions, strengthening the transparency and credibility of judicial appointments. Second, authority over judicial administration, budgeting and management of lower-court judges was transferred from the executive branch to the Chief Justice, strengthening judicial autonomy. In the lead-up to this landmark reform, UNDP convened nationwide dialogues engaging 1,000 judicial and legal officials, fostering consensus and technical guidance for the transition.

"[...] The judiciary will govern its own house, administer its own service, and maintain integrity through self-regulation. These are not cosmetic changes; they directly address backlog, delay, and inefficiency in the justice system," said Chief Justice Dr. Syed Refaat Ahmed during the final seminar on Judicial Independence and Efficiency organized by UNDP.

Third, opportunities for economic growth were strengthened through the development of the Commercial Court Ordinance, prepared with UNDP's technical assistance and extensive consultations with judges, lawyers and the business stakeholders, aimed at providing a more predictable and efficient dispute resolution mechanism that strengthens the legal framework for domestic and foreign investment. The legislation paved the way for the creation of specialized commercial courts mandated to resolve economic disputes within a defined timeframe. ***"Establishing commercial courts will greatly benefit both domestic and international investors by ensuring speedy and effective legal remedies,"*** said Mokhlesur Rahman, an Executive Member from Bangladesh Investment Development Authority. The first three commercial courts are designated to be set up in Dhaka, Chattogram and Jashore, with nationwide expansion planned to establish 75 specialized courts capable of resolving more than 20 categories of business disputes.

Finally, digitally enabled legal services were piloted in eight districts to improve access to justice in most marginalized communities. Digital legal desks were established, reducing the need for travel and marking a shift from paper-based, fragmented legal aid processes to a more structured and technology-

enabled service delivery model. For the judiciary, UNDP conducted three assessments on digitalization. As part of broader modernisation, one Supreme Court bench and two family courts were fully digitized, and UNDP supported the establishment of a Supreme Court Helpline Centre to strengthen transparency and public access to information.

Beyond legislative and institutional reforms, the judiciary embraced greater transparency, strengthening engagement with the media and civil society, and adopting a more inclusive approach to reform. A historic milestone was reached with the appointment of 12 women judges to the Supreme Court, the highest number in its history.

The interim government took steps to advance human rights commitments by ratifying key international instruments, including the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT). UNDP facilitated nationwide consultations to reform the law on the National Human Rights Commission, aligning it with the Paris Principles and Bangladesh's obligations under OPCAT. These consultations resulted in draft legislation which is expected to be adopted in 2026. Together, these measures reinforced judicial independence, inclusivity and accountability, embedding international human rights standards more firmly into the country's governance framework.

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026 and beyond, UNDP will continue to support implementation of the reforms through capacity development, technical assistance and institutional strengthening, in partnership with national counterparts. A key focus will be to support the advancement of judicial independence through institutional capacity development, staffing support and the digitalization of administrative systems as well as support to the Judicial Service Commission and the Judicial Training Center for a merit-based career system. UNDP Bangladesh will also assist in establishing specialized Commercial Courts, initially in Dhaka, Chattogram and Jashore to accelerate timely resolution of business disputes. Promoting gender-responsive justice will remain central, including initiatives to strengthen women's leadership.

In partnership with the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) and the Asia Pacific Forum (APF), UNDP will continue to foster a dialogue among civil society, legislative and executive stakeholders on the alignment of the National Human Rights Commission Act with international standards. Once the 2026 Human Rights Commission Act is adopted, UNDP will support capacity building for the NHRI. Youth engagement will expand through the second cohort of the Attorney General's Office Internship Programme, contributing to a pipeline of skilled legal professionals committed to public service. The programme will continue to extend digitally-enabled legal aid services to additional districts, improving access for underserved communities. Furthermore, UNDP will support efforts to strengthen institutions' preparedness to implement international human rights obligations, enhance independent oversight and reinforce compliance with international human rights standards. In addition, UNDP will seek entry points for police reforms.

INDIA

KEY RESULTS:

- UNDP strengthened access to justice by building the practical capacities of over 500 paralegal volunteers across two states, enabling them to more effectively identify rights violations, support survivors of violence and connect marginalized women and communities to formal legal aid systems through gender- and equity-sensitive service delivery.
- A national people-centred justice assessment generated one of the most comprehensive evidence bases in India on how marginalized groups experience the justice system, directly influencing high-level policy dialogue and positioning lived experience, gender disparities and digital exclusion at the core of future justice reform and programming.
- A first-of-its-kind framework for the responsible adoption of artificial intelligence in the judiciary was developed to address emerging risks of bias, opacity and exclusion, providing practical safeguards to ensure digital innovation in courts advances fairness, constitutional rights and people-centred justice outcomes.

India's justice landscape continued to reflect the interplay between strong constitutional guarantees and rapid economic growth, alongside long-standing social and gender-based inequalities that affect effective access to justice for large segments of the population. Historically marginalized and underserved communities, including scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, religious minorities, transgender persons and women, continue to face structural barriers, including limited legal awareness, uneven institutional responsiveness and varying levels of trust in formal justice mechanisms. These challenges remain particularly acute for women, who face rising levels of gender-based violence, limited access to information about legal remedies and underrepresentation within justice institutions.

Despite a robust legal framework, the gap between law and lived experience is widened by procedural delays, under-resourced legal aid systems and uneven implementation of protections. Following the 2024 general elections, the formation of a coalition government created opportunities for renewed dialogue on democratic reform and justice, while also requiring alignment across multiple policy priorities. This context influenced the pace and modalities of engagement at the national level, prompting a strategic shift towards deeper UNDP's engagement with subnational justice institutions and academic partners. Against this backdrop, UNDP sought to support the strengthening of people-centred justice pathways by: (1) building frontline legal aid capacity, (2) generating rigorous evidence on justice needs from the perspective of marginalized communities and (3) proactively addressing emerging risks associated with the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the judiciary.

A central strand of the initiative supported by UNDP's Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme) focused on strengthening the capacity of paralegal volunteers, who serve as a critical bridge between historically marginalized communities and formal justice institutions. Working in partnership with State Legal Services Authorities and leading national law universities, UNDP delivered practice-oriented training programmes in West Bengal and Odisha that reached a total of 551 paralegal volunteers across all districts of the two states. Training content covered gender justice, criminal law, child protection, cybercrime, victim compensation, tribal and forest rights and alternative dispute resolution, and was adapted to local contexts, including translation into tribal languages where necessary. Qualitative feedback and post-training assessments indicated increased confidence among participants, particularly in handling cases involving women's rights and child

protection. By anchoring these trainings within the mandates and operational frameworks of state legal services institutions, UNDP strengthened last-mile legal aid delivery while reinforcing institutional ownership and accountability.

Complementing these capacity-building efforts, UNDP completed a people-centred justice assessment that provides one of the most comprehensive evidence bases in India on how marginalized communities experience the justice system. Using a rigorous mixed-methods approach, the assessment captured data from 2,500 respondents across six states through structured interviews, focus group discussions and key informant consultations. The assessment focused explicitly on the perspectives of those most affected by justice gaps, including persons belonging to the scheduled castes, religious minorities, women, survivors of gender-based violence, transgender persons, persons with disabilities, migrant workers and Indigenous communities, generating insights that are rarely captured in conventional justice sector analyses.

Rather than releasing the assessment as a standalone publication, UNDP adopted a strategic dissemination approach, using the evidence to build trust and engagement with government institutions. The findings informed high-level dialogue with justice sector authorities and culminated in a national roundtable that convened senior representatives from the judiciary, legal aid institutions, human rights bodies and technology governance entities. These engagements helped align priorities, surface practical reform recommendations and position people-centred evidence as a foundation for policy and programmatic decision-making. The assessment serves as the baseline for future access to justice programming in India and as a replicable model for conducting human-centric justice diagnostics in other contexts.

The third substantive pillar of the project addressed the emerging integration of AI into India's judicial system, an area characterized by rapid innovation within an evolving policy and governance landscape. Through in-depth research and multi-stakeholder consultations with judges, court administrators, legal practitioners, technologists and civil society actors, UNDP deliberately shifted towards the development of a comprehensive framework for the responsible adoption of AI in the judiciary. This framework provides practical tools for courts to assess whether AI is appropriate for specific functions, categorize risk levels, define success metrics aligned with justice outcomes and ensure periodic independent review. Grounded in constitutional principles and international norms on human rights and ethics, the framework seeks to ensure that technology strengthens equality, fairness and public trust in justice institutions. By engaging senior judicial actors early and aligning with global standards, UNDP positioned itself as a first mover in shaping ethical discourse on digital justice in India.

Taken together, the project's catalytic impact lies in its ability to translate targeted interventions into system-level momentum. The training of paralegal volunteers strengthened frontline justice delivery while demonstrating a scalable model rooted in existing legal aid structures. The people-centred justice assessment helped bring lived experience and evidence into policy reform discussions, creating a shared reference point for future programming and policy engagement. The work on AI established early safeguards in a rapidly evolving domain, opening space for rights-based governance. These foundations are now informing the development of a longer-term rule of law portfolio with the Government of India, creating pathways for scale, resource mobilization and sustained impact well beyond the life of the current project.

A national roundtable on access to justice convened senior representatives from the judiciary, legal aid institutions, human rights bodies and tech industry.

Photo: UNDP India

LOOKING FORWARD

UNDP will deepen engagement across institutional and community-level justice systems. A national diagnostic study on the Ease of Justice in India will serve as a strategic follow-up to the people-centred justice needs assessment. Developed with the Department of Justice and a National Law University, it will assess justice institution performance across six interconnected pillars, generating evidence-based reform recommendations and proof-of-concept interventions.

In addition, UNDP will advance responsible AI adoption in Indian courts by engaging the AI Committees of the Supreme Court and High Courts, embedding ethical risk assessment tools and governance safeguards into judicial processes.

At the community level, UNDP will strengthen first-mile justice access by building capacities of paralegal volunteers, with a particular focus on women, and leveraging digital platforms to deliver standardized legal awareness content to underserved communities.

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

KEY RESULTS:

- Through leadership colloquia, peer exchanges, and national workshops, over 70 women judges strengthened leadership skills, built professional networks, and shaped institutionally grounded solutions to advance women's representation in senior judicial roles.
- UNDP supported the institutionalization of gender equality by initiating a gender justice training package for the Judicial Training Institute, while linking regional knowledge and national dialogue to address structural barriers and promote more inclusive, gender-responsive justice systems.
- The development of a Gender Action Plan (2026–2030) for the People's Supreme Court was initiated, aiming to integrate gender equality priorities into judicial reform and institutional planning processes.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic (LAO PDR) has made progress in increasing women's representation in the judiciary. Women account for approximately 30 percent of judges nationwide and hold 38 percent of positions at the People's Supreme Court. Despite these gains, women remain underrepresented in senior decision-making roles. Structural barriers, such as limited leadership development opportunities, institutional and gender norms, and few pathways for mentoring and networking, continue to affect women judges' advancement into leadership positions. These challenges also have implications for institutional delivery and inclusion, as women's leadership contributes to broadening perspectives for more inclusive decision-making, strengthens gender-responsive adjudication, and helps justice institutions better reflect the diversity of the populations they serve.

In this context, UNDP's rule of law and access *to justice* programming supports national institutions in embedding gender equality and leadership pathways into systems, plans and training mechanisms. In September 2025, a project *Advancing Women's Leadership in the Judiciary in Lao PDR* was launched, supported through the Gender Justice Platform, a partnership framework between UNDP and UN Women. The initiative builds on findings from the 2024 Gender Audit of the People's Supreme Court, which identified areas for further strengthening gender equality within the judiciary.

To identify priority actions for advancing gender equality within the judiciary, UNDP initiated preparations for the development of a Gender Action Plan (2026-2030), supporting the implementation of the Fifth Five-Year Development Plan of the Lao People's Supreme Court, which will integrate gender equality priorities into broader judicial reform processes.

The Judicial Leadership Colloquium for Women Judges engaged participants from different levels of the judiciary to strengthen leadership skills and reflect on institutional challenges affecting women's representation in senior judicial roles. In parallel, peer exchanges on women's leadership in the judiciary created valuable opportunities for learning and mutual support. More than 70 women judges participated, shaping discussions and identifying priorities. This approach has helped ensure that the institutional response will be grounded in the lived experiences and professional realities of judges, while also strengthening peer networks and encouraging informal mentorship. Following these exchanges, a national reflection and dissemination workshop was organized and led by senior women judges, reinforcing shared learning and collective engagement across the judiciary.

Another important element has been the linkage between regional knowledge and national institutional dialogue. Insights from regional exchanges and research on women's leadership in the judiciary have been translated into discussions within the People's Supreme Court, helping to situate Lao PDR's experience within broader regional trends while identifying context-specific solutions.

Lastly, UNDP initiated the development of a gender justice training package for the judiciary that will be integrated into the curriculum of the People's Supreme Court Judicial Training Institute. The training package aims to institutionalize knowledge and strengthen the judiciary's internal capacity to address gender-related issues in judicial practice, ensuring sustainability and long-term impact.

LOOKING FORWARD

Priorities for 2026 focus on institutionalizing gender-responsive reforms and strengthening women's leadership within the judiciary. Preparations are underway for the development of a Gender Action Plan to support the implementation of the Fifth Five-Year Development Plan of the Lao People's Court System and embed gender equality priorities within judicial reforms. Capacity development efforts are being expanded, including English language and digital literacy training, to strengthen women judges' access to knowledge and leadership opportunities. A Gender justice training package is also being developed using a training-of-trainers approach, which will be integrated into the Judicial Training Institute curriculum, thereby supporting sustainable development of gender-responsive leadership and adjudication skills. Through the Women Judges Network, greater emphasis is being placed on strengthening advocacy, peer learning and women's leadership by organizing policy dialogues and exchanges to amplify women's voices and influence within judicial reform processes.

MYANMAR

KEY RESULTS:

- In conflict- and earthquake-affected areas, 100,000 people, 64 percent of whom were women, were reached through legal aid services on housing, land and property rights, labour rights and gender-based violence
- Over 4,100 mediators across 30 communities received training and effectively resolved 79 disputes, benefiting 1,148 people.
- Thirteen civil society organizations strengthened their operational resilience through digital security, risk mitigation and organizational development support, enabling safer operations and improved engagement with donors.

In recent years, access to justice in Myanmar has come under significant strain amid prolonged armed conflict and a deepening humanitarian crisis. In this context, civil society organizations (CSOs) and paralegals have continued to provide important community-level support, while operating under significant protection, operational and resource constraints.

Despite these challenges, UNDP continued to support community-level justice solutions as part of its Community First approach. In this environment, UNDP's Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme) played a key role in mobilizing technical expertise, facilitating the exchange of good international practices and supporting resource mobilization.

UNDP's contributions helped strengthen community-level capacities, particularly through collaborative dispute resolution (CDR) and digital empowerment. Legal aid services reached 100,000 people (64 percent of whom were women) in conflict- and earthquake-affected areas, covering housing, land and property (HLP) rights, labour rights and gender-based violence cases.

Through the Global Programme, UNDP also delivered tailored capacity-building and organizational development support to CSOs, including training in proposal writing, financial management, gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation. UNDP also facilitated dialogue between donors and local CSOs to ensure that support remained responsive to local context and community priorities.

UNDP equipped communities with CDR knowledge and tools to support the effective and inclusive resolution of local conflicts, especially in areas where access to formal mechanisms remained limited. Evidence indicates that CDR has provided an accessible and cost-effective pathway to addressing disputes, reducing the burdens associated with formal processes. A total of 4,110 mediators (58 percent women) across 30 communities in eight townships in Kachin, Shan, Mandalay and Yangon received CDR training. As a result, 79 HLP- and labour-related disputes were successfully resolved, benefiting 1,148 individuals, including 519 women. An important component of this work was the provision of specialized CDR training for women mediators at the community level, supporting their leadership and participation in community-level decision-making.

LOOKING FORWARD

UNDP will continue working closely with local actors to expand justice services at community level, with a focus on marginalized groups, including internally displaced persons, refugees and persons with disabilities.

NEPAL

KEY RESULTS:

- Access to justice and legal aid services expanded significantly, reaching over 43,000 people—more than half of them women—while the introduction of a national digital reporting system strengthened transparency, real-time data collection and accountability across 74 districts.
- Community-based legal empowerment and awareness initiatives brought justice closer to marginalized groups, reaching hundreds of thousands of people through outreach, media and partnerships with universities and young legal professionals, while also providing direct legal support and strengthening legal literacy.
- Justice and accountability systems at the subnational level were reinforced through improved legal frameworks, increased local budget allocations, and more effective grievance handling mechanisms, alongside strengthened collaboration and advocacy for gender-responsive and victim-centred justice.

In 2025, Nepal continued to face persistent rule of law and human rights challenges. These included uneven access to justice, governance and institutional capacity constraints, and continued efforts to advance the implementation of the recommendations issued by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), and barriers affecting women, Dalits, Indigenous Peoples, conflict-affected survivors and other marginalized groups. Gender-based violence remained a major concern, with Nepal Police reporting almost 21,000 gender-based violence cases in 2023-2024. At the same time, Gen Z movements continued to shape public discourse and reform efforts. In this context, UNDP worked with national and subnational partners to strengthen people-centred justice, legal aid, local dispute resolution and accountability systems. The evolving political context, including electoral processes, contributed to certain implementation delays.

Under the Enhancing Access to Justice through Institutional Reform project (September 2024 - September 2025), UNDP supported the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs and justice sector institutions to expand access to legal aid, improve digital reporting and bring services closer to communities. By August 2025, legal aid and justice services had reached more than 43,000 people, including 25,000 women. The Central Legal Aid Committee under the federal government of Nepal adopted the Integrated Legal Aid Reporting Software and Mobile Application, creating a more transparent and efficient system to document and monitor legal aid services. By August 2025, 74 District Legal Aid Committee lawyers were using the system, having entered more than 1,800 service records, helping address data gaps and strengthen accountability across districts.

UNDP also supported legal empowerment initiatives that enabled communities to better understand their rights and navigate justice processes. More than 45,300 community members, including women, Dalits, Indigenous Peoples, Muslims and Madheshi communities, were reached through legal awareness activities such as oratory, drama, song competitions and Nyaya Kachahari[15] justice dialogues. In addition, over half a million people, including women, youth and children were reached through radio, television and social media. These efforts made legal information more accessible and supported civil society organizations in further strengthening victim-centred approaches grounded in confidentiality, dignity, safety and non-discrimination.

15 A structured dialogue on justice matters that brings together formal and informal justice actors.

Partnerships with universities and young legal professionals further expanded outreach to underserved communities. Through Community Legal Education, 282 law students, including 159 women, reached more than 13,500 community members, including more than 7,300 women, on issues such as sexual and gender-based violence, caste-based discrimination, child marriage, polygamy, cybercrime and drug abuse. Law students also provided remedial legal services to 235 people, including 164 women, through legal aid camps in Koshi and Far Western Province. In parallel, 45 young lawyers – mostly women – provided legal support to 712 people, including 354 women, and assisted Judicial Committees in resolving disputes. These efforts strengthened both community legal literacy and the practical skills of future justice providers.

At the subnational level, UNDP supported provincial and local governments in strengthening justice, accountability and public service systems. Legislative drafting and review contributed to 229 normative frameworks, while 172 local governments across four provinces allocated approximately US$1.36 million for law and justice initiatives. Grievance handling mechanisms, including Hello Chief Minister and Namaste Mayor platforms, continued to operate with UNDP technical support. In 2025, 237 grievances were registered, and the average success rate of supported systems in Karnali and Sudurpaschim improved from 61 percent to 87.76 percent, contributing to stronger responsiveness and greater transparency in service delivery.

UNDP also advanced gender-responsive and inclusive justice reform. The Second Conference of Women Judges, convened in partnership with the Judges' Society, resulted in a pledge to promote gender-sensitive workplaces, prevent sexual violence and harassment, and improve support systems such as childcare, lactation facilities and professional development for women judges and court staff. In parallel, dialogues with constitutional commissions, the NHRC and transitional justice stakeholders brought together a wide range of actors, including provincial and local authorities and conflict-affected communities. These engagements strengthened collaboration, elevated the voice of women survivors of violence and supported dialogue and engagement on a victim-centred transitional justice process aligned with the National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820.

Together, these efforts strengthened access to justice for women and marginalized communities, improved the transparency of legal aid services, deepened local ownership of justice financing and expanded community-based pathways for rights awareness, legal support and accountability.

Law students are delivering services to communities in Khalla Masetti, Baramdev, Kanchanpur District, Nepal. | Photo: UNDP Nepal

LOOKING FORWARD

UNDP will continue supporting Nepal's transition towards more people-centred, gender-responsive and digitally enabled justice systems. Priorities include sustaining the Integrated Legal Aid Reporting Software and Mobile Application, strengthening the capacity of District Legal Aid Committees and Judicial Committees, expanding grievance redress systems, and deepening partnerships with civil society, universities and provincial and local governments. UNDP will also continue supporting victim-centred transitional justice, the implementation of NHRC recommendations, and the use of digital tools, legal aid and community-based legal empowerment to improve access to justice for women, conflict-affected survivors, Dalits, Indigenous Peoples and other marginalized communities.

SAMOA

KEY RESULTS:

- A comprehensive review and situational analysis of Samoa's legal aid system engaged 366 stakeholders, including women, young people and persons with disabilities, generating a strong evidence base to inform more inclusive and responsive legal aid reform.
- The development, validation, and translation of Samoa's first National Legal Aid Policy established a coherent national framework that clarifies mandates, eligibility, and service standards, while expanding access to support for both defendants and victims, including survivors of domestic and gender-based violence.
- National capacity to implement the policy was strengthened through targeted training, knowledge-sharing, and improved data and analysis systems, enabling justice institutions to better identify needs, address service gaps, and prepare for a more coordinated and sustainable legal aid system.

In Samoa, a small island developing state, barriers to legal information, representation and support persist for people with limited income, those living in remote areas, women and children affected by violence, young people, persons with disabilities, and others facing social, geographic and economic exclusion. This remains the case despite the Government's commitment to strengthening the rule of law and improving access to legal services.

While Samoa's Constitution guarantees the right to a fair trial and legal assistance, further efforts have been needed to ensure that legal aid services are fully inclusive in practice. Many defendants in District Court and Supreme Court proceedings remained self-represented, and the provision of legal aid was limited to some civil and family matters, including divorce, maintenance, child custody and protection order applications.

To address this gap, UNDP worked with the Ministry of Justice and Courts Administration (MJCA), the broader justice sector, the Samoa Law Society, civil society and community representatives to develop a more coherent and gender-responsive legal aid system. This included a comprehensive review of Samoa's legal aid framework, operations and gender-based violence case management, drawing on national data, institutional inputs, comparative practices from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, and Vanuatu, and extensive consultations. In total, 366 people, including 189 women and ten persons with disabilities, participated in the review and validation process, ensuring the reform was informed by those facing the greatest barriers t o justice.

The findings informed the development of Samoa's first National Legal Aid Policy 2026 to 2031, which set a clear strategic direction for reform. It clarified institutional mandates, defined eligibility criteria for applicants and service providers, and established minimum standards for quality, access and coordination. Importantly, the policy also broadened the basis for more equitable support to both defendants and victims, including women survivors of domestic and gender-based violence seeking protection orders. Translating the policy into Samoan and validating it with national stakeholders strengthened national ownership and ensured it could be effectively understood and applied by institutions and communities alike.

UNDP support also strengthened the systems and capacities needed to move from policy to implementation. The project delivered ten knowledge and learning activities, including workshops linked to the review, validation and stakeholder endorsement, as well as targeted capacity-building for the Ministry of Justice and Courts Administration. Twenty ministry personnel, including eleven women, were trained to support implementation of the Legal Aid Policy.

The process also improved data and analytical capacities across key institutions, enabling national partners to better identify legal aid needs, service gaps and implementation priorities.

Once approved by Cabinet, the policy is expected to provide a foundation for a more coordinated, accessible and sustainable legal aid system, while also informing future legislation. It creates a basis for increased government investment, including dedicated budget allocations and the establishment of a legal aid unit within the Ministry of Justice and Courts Administration.

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026 and beyond, UNDP will continue supporting national partners to launch and operationalize the National Legal Aid Policy. Additional funding secured through the Justice Action Coalition will support its implementation through 2026, with an emphasis on governance oversight, institutional arrangements, capacity development and sector-wide coordination. This next phase will help the Ministry of Justice and Courts Administration translate the policy into practical services, strengthen the dedicated legal aid unit, expand awareness of available support, and lay the groundwork for future legislation that can entrench legal aid as a permanent part of Samoa's justice system.

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

Between 2022 and 2025, Europe and Central Asia (ECA) faced overlapping and compounding pressures. The war in Ukraine, which triggered one of the largest mass displacements on record[16] and a sharp security realignment, most visibly reflected in defence spending increases across the region[17] – remained the dominant fault line in regional stability. Alongside it, democratic backsliding accelerated, as reflected in the international indices and assessments: civic space contracted,[18] the rule of law systems weakened[19] and, in several contexts, political interference raised concerns regarding both the independence of the judiciary and the pace of anti-corruption reforms. Displaced persons, minorities, women and people with disabilities faced persistent barriers to justice – compounded by corruption and socio-economic stress – as they sought accountability for environmental degradation and climate impacts.

Against this backdrop, the European Union (EU) accession dynamics created the most significant external lever for rule of law reforms, specifically in the EU enlargement region, with outcomes shaped by each country's distinct political, institutional and socio-economic circumstances.[20] In parallel, rapid digitalization, green growth policies and evolving EU sustainability regulations reshaped governance landscapes, introducing new risks and opportunities for rights protection.

From 2022 to 2025, UNDP's Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme) provided technical and financial support to 18 countries and territories in Europe and Central Asia to strengthen the rule of law, human rights, and access to justice.

Access to justice and civic space

UNDP significantly expanded people-centred access to justice across the region, responding to large-scale displacement, conflict and entrenched exclusion. Through the Global Programme and country-level partnerships, UNDP supported national legal aid systems, mobile legal services and digital justice tools to reach refugees, internally displaced persons, women, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups in over ten countries and territories. Core interventions combined free legal aid, outreach through civil society organizations and justice innovation (hotlines, mobile teams, chatbots), while strengthening state legal aid institutions to ensure sustainability.

As civic space shrank, UNDP's Istanbul Regional Hub co-developed an analytical framework for restrictive settings and led inter-agency dialogue to coordinate UN support for civil society and human rights defenders, following the Brussels Regional Dialogue (April 2025).

UNDP also advanced environmental justice — strengthening accountability for environmental harms and community access to legal remedies. A fact sheet summarized key trends and practical guidance for governments, civil society and the private sector.

Support for national human rights institutions (NHRIs)

Over the past four years, UNDP reinforced independent, resilient NHRIs as core accountability actors amid regional crisis and democratic backsliding. Working with the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR), as well as with European and Asia Pacific NHRI networks, UNDP supported institutional alignment with the Paris Principles, arranged regional peer exchanges (notably for NHRIs in Central Asia)

16 UNCHR operational data portal: https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine

17 Military expenditure as a share of GDP across ECA nearly doubled between 2022 and 2024, rising from around 2 percent to close to 5 percent. Military expenditure by country as percentage of government spending, SIPRI https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex

18 For more information see the CIVICUS website:https://monitor.civicus.org/globalfindings_2025/europeandcentralasia/.

19 For further insights on the rule of law developments in the region, see the WJP Rule of Law Index 2025. Available at https://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/global/2025/.

20 2025 EU Enlargement progress report. Available at: https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/2025-enlargement-package-shows-progress-towards-eu-membership-key-enlargement-partners-2025-11-04_en

and held joint capacity assessments in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine. These assessments informed concrete action plans to strengthen NHRI independence and outreach.

In 2025, the support focused on NHRIs' thematic capacities in handling cases related to pollution, access to water, and climate impacts on vulnerable groups in Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, and North Macedonia. In Ukraine, bolstering the NHRI proved vital — with joint support, Ukraine's Ombudsperson maintained operations across all regions despite the war, using mobile offices and hotlines to reach the communities most affected.

Enhancing economic governance with robust corporate accountability

UNDP scaled up a region-wide corporate accountability ecosystem between 2022 and 2025, supporting regional analysis and four UN Regional Forums on Business and Human Rights. Policy development advanced through National Baseline Assessments (NBA) and National Action Plans on business and human rights (NAP), including the adoption of the NAP in Kyrgyzstan in 2025, the first of its kind in Central Asia, and NBA/NAP processes in Kazakhstan, Serbia, Türkiye, and other countries. Over 1,500 government, business, and civil society actors were trained through practical guidance tools and multi-stakeholder dialogues. In 2025, new projects supporting corporate human rights due diligence were launched in Türkiye and Uzbekistan.

Digital rights and artificial intelligence (AI) governance

To help governments and institutions navigate the human rights risks emerging from rapid digitalization, UNDP developed the Human Rights Impact Assessment toolkit for AI, with a user-friendly digital interface that guides users step-by-step through assessing automated decision-making systems. As digital technologies increasingly influence decisions about access to public services, social benefits, justice and employment, unchecked AI systems can amplify discrimination, undermine transparency and erode public trust. Piloted in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia, the toolkit enables public and private actors to systematically identify, assess and prevent human rights risks before deployment.

Transitional justice and security

UNDP's EU Support to Confidence-Building in the Western Balkans project, operating in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo,[21] Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, strengthened transitional justice mechanisms and advanced reconciliation efforts. Institutional capacities to address war crimes and missing-persons cases were reinforced alongside sustained cross-jurisdictional cooperation among judicial and law-enforcement authorities. More than 500 conflict survivors — including victims of conflict-related sexual violence — were directly supported. Training, policy development and cooperation mechanisms were embedded within national and regional institutions, supporting a shift towards more systemic and sustainable accountability. More than 50 civil society and grassroots initiatives were engaged to expand public dialogue, reconciliation and trust-building.

UNDP's SEESAC project continued to support jurisdictions in Southeast and Eastern Europe in building effective, accountable and inclusive security sectors — through regional cooperation at strategic and operational levels, and targeted local assistance. In 2025, UNDP supported the destruction of over 3,400 small arms and light weapons (SALW), trained over 500 police officers, prosecutors and civil society actors, engaged 18 women's organizations on gender-responsive arms control and provided more than US$2 million in detection equipment — collectively advancing the prevention of armed violence and the rule of law across Southeast and Eastern Europe.[22] These efforts were complemented by interregional knowledge sharing with Cambodia and Honduras, contributing to the development of regional SALW control approaches and roadmap initiatives in Central America, the Dominican Republic, and the Andean Community.

21 References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).
22 Available at: https://feature.seesac.org/2025inpictures/

The Tbilisi Workshop on Human Rights Impact Assessment of AI, exploring how AI intersects with human rights.

Photo: UNDP Georgia / Nino Zedginidze

LOOKING FORWARD

UNDP will continue to support governments, institutions and civil society to strengthen justice, protect rights and build social cohesion across Europe and Central Asia — focusing on practical solutions that can be scaled even as development financing tightens. Priorities include advancing the Joint UN Regional Initiative to strengthen civic space; promoting responsible business practices and human rights due diligence; and expanding the next generation of access to justice, including for environmental cases and for the displaced under the framework of Tbilisi Declaration on Access to Justice for Displaced Persons, adopted by relevant justice and human rights institutions in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. UNDP will also deploy practical guidance for applying human rights impact assessment to AI and digital justice and will continue to support security sector reforms and EU accession priorities.

ARMENIA

KEY RESULTS:

- Collaboration between UNDP, the Ministry of Justice and the Bar Association enabled more than 1,600 refugees and vulnerable people to access free legal aid and mediation services, while nearly 1,000 legal defenders, mediators and service providers strengthened their professional skills through targeted training.
- The effectiveness and outreach of the Human Rights Defender's Office (Armenia's national human rights institution) were strengthened through enhanced monitoring functions, digitalization efforts and expanded regional presence.
- Armenia advanced the modernization of its legal framework with the adoption of new Criminal and Criminal Procedure Codes and legislative amendments that align hate speech provisions with international standards, supported by UNDP expertise.

The 2022–2025 period in Armenia saw significant reforms in the rule of law, justice, security and human rights sectors, implemented amid ongoing regional instability. The Government maintained strong commitment to democratic governance, and continued to advance ambitious institutional reforms despite the 2023 influx of more than 115,000 displaced persons from Nagorno-Karabakh.

To address the displacement crisis, between January and October 2024, UNDP expanded access to justice and supported human rights defenders by strengthening the capacities of 430 legal defenders, 291 mediators and 60 representatives of the Human Rights Defender's Office (HRDO) to better assist refugees and vulnerable groups. Through the Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme), UNDP mobilized resources to broaden legal aid, strengthen referrals and support national institutions assisting displaced populations and host communities.

Between 2022 and 2025, UNDP's collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and the Bar Association enabled more than 1,600 refugees and vulnerable individuals to access free legal aid. In 2025, additional interventions including capacity-building for over 200 legal aid providers, media outreach and the operationalization of a new HRDO office in Berd improved the provision of legal services in border regions and contributed to sustainable nationally owned improvements in justice and human rights protection.

UNDP reinforced the national human rights protection system through sustained support to the HRDO, enhancing its monitoring functions, digitalization efforts and regional presence. In the end of 2025, an online platform for submitting complaints was launched, streamlining the reporting of rights violations. Expanding access to HRDO services beyond the capital marked a major advancement, improving protections for communities in remote areas. The regional office in Lori received 571 complaints in 2025, achieving positive outcomes in 106 cases where the facts were substantiated and the complaints fell within the HRDO mandate.

Key systemic developments over the past four years included the entry into force of the new Criminal and Criminal Procedure Codes in 2022, modernizing the justice framework and strengthening due process guarantees. The Legal and Judicial Reform Strategy and Action Plan 2022–2026 provided a roadmap for enhancing judicial independence, accountability and access to justice. The launch of constitutional reform further signalled intentions to align national governance with international standards. The reforms advanced in 2025, with amendments in progress for the Criminal Code, the Code of Administrative Offences and the Law on Audiovisual Media to align hate speech provisions with international standards. In addition, UNDP supported the Ministry of Justice in developing a three-year Anti-Discrimination Strategy. A public campaign countering hate speech and promoting tolerance reached around 850,000 people, more than half of whom were women.

Security sector reform advanced with the creation of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA) in 2023 and the nationwide rollout of the Patrol Police Service. UNDP supported this shift toward service-oriented policing by training more than 2,300 patrol officers in human rights-based policing, de-escalation and gender-sensitive approaches. This transformation has gradually built public trust reinforcing the role of law enforcement as a partner in rights protection and community support.

Introduction of the virtual reality training tool on crime scene investigation for the police. | Photo: UNDP Armenia

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026 and beyond, UNDP will continue to support Armenia in advancing justice and governance reforms grounded in international human rights standards. Key priorities will include strengthening legal protection mechanisms for vulnerable and marginalized groups, and promoting digital, accessible and inclusive pathways to justice.

UNDP will further assist national counterparts in advancing personal data protection reforms aligned with the European Union visa liberalization process. Support will also continue to reinforce the institutional capacity of the Human Rights Defender's Office and to enhance rights-based, service-oriented approaches within law enforcement and emergency response services. Collectively, these efforts will contribute to more accountable and responsive institutions, broaden equitable access to justice and human rights protection, and deepen public trust in democratic governance systems.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

KEY RESULTS:

- UNDP advanced environmental justice through legal analysis, policy dialogue and capacity-building, including training more than 50 judges and prosecutors and producing a landmark study on environmental crime that is informing stronger prosecution and adjudication practices.
- Social cohesion and transitional justice were strengthened by empowering youth, women and civil society, supporting services for over 1,000 war victims, engaging more than 1,400 people in dialogue and confidence-building, and reaching over 250,000 people through awareness campaigns.
- Security and resilience improved through enhanced cyber security frameworks, stronger regional cooperation on small arms control, the destruction of over 1,500 weapons and the promotion of gender-responsive policing and cross-border collaboration among law enforcement actors.

Over 2022-2025, Bosnia and Herzegovina continued to face structural challenges across the rule of law, justice, security and human rights sectors, shaped by its complex governance framework and rising political tensions. The granting of the European Union (EU) candidate status in December 2022 underscored the need to align national legal and institutional systems with the EU acquis communautaire. At the same time, political instability persisted, intensifying from 2021 and culminating in a constitutional crisis in 2025.

In 2024, Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted its fourth Universal Periodic Review on the Human Rights Situation to the UN Human Rights Council. In its contribution, the UN Country Team noted discrimination, shrinking civic space, impunity for hate crimes, concerns about judicial independence and limited access to free legal aid. Environmental governance also remained fragmented across multiple levels of authority, creating inconsistencies in implementation and oversight.

Against this backdrop, UNDP supported national authorities in aligning domestic legislation with the EU acquis, particularly in environmental justice and cyber security. UNDP also strengthened institutional capacities to combat environmental crime, address cyber security threats and ensure the safe management of ammunition stockpiles.

In parallel, UNDP advanced youth engagement and women's leadership to promote social cohesion and support dialogue and reconciliation under the transitional justice framework. Following the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council's receipt of the Silver Gender Equality Seal, UNDP supported the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina in pursuing the same certification process, with plans to extend the initiative to two local governments in 2026. In late 2025, UNDP also launched the first round of a national Social Cohesion and Resilience (SCORE) Index survey, which will generate insights into societal resilience to ethnic and religious tensions, political violence and civic apathy and help inform future policy and programming.

In 2025, UNDP continued working under the Green Transition Portfolio, building on the Eco-Justice Project supported by the Netherlands. The portfolio integrates legal analysis, capacity-building and policy dialogue with key justice-sector partners. A landmark analysis "Criminal Offences against the Environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Legal Framework and Case Law" highlighted systemic challenges in prosecution and adjudication of environmental harm. UNDP also delivered training on the EU environmental law and relevant European Court of Human Rights case law for more than 50 judges and prosecutors, with judicial training centres now set to scale up these programmes.

UNDP strengthened cyber-security readiness in Bosnia and Herzegovina by supporting alignment of the legal framework with the EU cyber-security directives, establishing Computer Emergency Response Teams, and piloting a master's programme on cyber security at the University of Sarajevo. Importantly, in 2025 UNDP initiated a policy dialogue on human rights implications of emerging technologies, with specific focus on a human rights-based approach to digital and artificial intelligence (AI) transition. Following the high level workshop and training organized, UNDP has developed a concept note for advancing responsible AI use in public institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

To support transitional justice, social cohesion and human rights, UNDP supported nine civil society organizations (CSOs) providing psychological counselling, legal aid and other services to more than 1,000 war victims. Their initiatives engaged youth, women and communities in education, advocacy and dialogue, involving over 1,410 people in confidence-building activities. CSOs also facilitated intergenerational exchanges between war victims and youth and conducted awareness campaigns reaching more than 250,000 people, strengthening public understanding of human rights and transitional justice. Regional cooperation in war-crimes cases was enhanced through peer-to-peer judicial platforms, enabling case transfers and advancing 24 trials of previously at-large suspects.

In 2025, a cross-border exercise brought together prosecutors, police and customs officers from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia to enhance cooperation against the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW). UNDP advanced gender-sensitive approaches across the security sector by supporting joint capacity-building for women police associations from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. Guidelines on SALW investigative techniques were delivered to three police training institutions. Awareness-raising activities included the award-winning youth film The Game, screened to 17,000 students, and the theatre play Echo of Silence, reaching nearly 3,000 people. More than 1,500 small arms and light weapons were destroyed, reducing public-safety risks.

A multi-partner conference on the impact of digital technologies, including AI, on human rights.

Photo: UNDP Bosnia and Herzegovina

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026 and beyond, UNDP will advance environmental justice in Bosnia and Herzegovina by strengthening the skills of judges, prosecutors and police, promoting guidance on environmental crimes, and raising awareness of environmental rights, while reinforcing coordination across institutions.

Working with UNESCO and UN Women, UNDP will counter hate speech and divisive narratives, and through the Gender Accelerator Programme with UN Women, UNICEF and UNFPA, UNDP will support law enforcement in addressing gender-based violence. The Gender Equality Seal process for the Ministry of Security will be completed, with pilots at the local level.

UNDP will continue supporting transitional justice. A joint Peacebuilding Fund programme will be developed in collaboration with civil society and the UN Human Rights Office to foster inclusive dialogue and rebuild trust.

GEORGIA

KEY RESULTS:

- UNDP expanded access to justice by supporting both state and non-state legal aid providers and advancing mediation, contributing to a more than 140 percent increase in registered mediation cases nationwide between 2022 and 2025, while strengthening community-based dispute resolution, including for women and ethnic minorities.
- Through environmental justice training, UNDP equipped 75 lawyers with the skills to pursue effective remedies, demonstrating tangible impact in concrete cases where legal action restores livelihoods and promotes more equitable, rights-based solutions.
- Support to Ukrainian refugees strengthened their access to legal and socio-economic services, with Ukrainian Houses in Batumi and Tbilisi reaching 6,331 individuals, facilitating legal assistance, consular services and community support, while helping refugee-led businesses build resilience and integration.

While Georgia remained the region's top performer according to the 2025 Rule of Law Index of the World Justice Project, its trajectory has declined since 2021. The European Union (EU) integration reforms – once the main driver for the rule of law and human rights progress in Georgia – have been limited and, in some areas, regressive since 2023. Between 2023 and 2025, Georgia adopted legislation that restricted civic space and weakened freedom of expression, association and assembly. Civil society, media and the political opposition have come under pressure, alongside challenges to the independence of national rule of law institutions.

The protracted war in Ukraine led to an influx of refugees, further increasing Georgia's vulnerability. Approximately 245,000 Ukrainians crossed into Georgia, with around 30,000 refugees remaining in the country as of 2025.

With support from the Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme), UNDP in Georgia mobilized resources to protect access to justice for the most vulnerable. Funded by Germany, the *Rule of Law and Access to Justice* project supported both state and non-state legal aid providers, enabling individuals to receive legal representation and consultations, including through a new mobile legal clinic, and support from civil society organizations (CSOs). In 2025 alone, CSO lawyers provided legal representation in 437 cases, along with 1,454 legal consultations, supporting women, persons with disabilities and other groups facing barriers to justice.

UNDP advanced mediation, contributing to a significant rise (approximately by 140 percent)23 in registered mediation cases nationwide between 2023 and 2025 compared to the previous three-year period, and supported the certification of the first cohort of 14 ethnic minority mediators. In 2025, UNDP strengthened the capacities of 20 prospective mediators in the regions of Georgia, enabling them to advance to the next stages of the national mediation certification process.

In addition, the State Legal Aid Service strengthened its capacities in international human rights litigation and jury trial representation.

Furthermore, UNDP laid the foundation for the delivery of environmental justice in Georgia by building legal expertise and raising public awareness. Under the framework of UNDP's partnership with the Georgian Bar Association, a specialized environmental justice online module was integrated into the Bar Association's curriculum. The first legal training on environmental justice enabled 75 lawyers to pursue more effective remedies for

23 Since the start of the relevant UNDP support in 2023, there had been 1,196 mediation cases referred during 2023-2025 as opposed to 498 cases during the comparable period of 2020-2022.

people affected by infrastructure projects. In one case, a livestock farmer's land had been fragmented by a highway project financed by the European Investment Bank. Drawing on the knowledge and mechanisms introduced through the training, a lawyer filed a complaint to the bank's accountability mechanism, triggering an independent mediation process with site visits and negotiations. While the final decision was still pending at the time of reporting, the case had already prompted authorities to consider constructing an underpass, allowing the farmer to move livestock between separated plots, restoring the land's usability and protecting the farmer's livelihood.

In parallel, Ukrainian refugee community hubs continued to provide legal and socio-economic services while refugee-led businesses received comprehensive support to strengthen the economic resilience of Ukrainian refugees across Georgia.

The establishment of Ukrainian Houses in Batumi and Tbilisi had a multi-dimensional impact, providing safe community spaces while also facilitating access to essential legal services. UNDP facilitated regular visits by the State Legal Aid Service, ensuring that refugees could receive free legal consultations on residence status, documentation and labour rights. Additionally, Ukrainian authorities used the Ukrainian House in Batumi for consular services. In 2025, the Ukrainian Houses provided social, cultural and legal services to 6,331 individuals, addressed 378 referrals and hosted 646 community events. ***"The space itself is important. A place where people [...] can reconnect with their cultural roots and traditions, while also having access to legal information and services in an environment that is familiar, safe and comfortable,"*** said Katarina Dvuhrosheva, manager of the Ukrainian House in Batumi.

Mobile legal aid clinics improved access to justice for women and vulnerable communities. | Photo: UNDP Georgia

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026 and the coming years, UNDP will continue to support civil society organizations and independent professional associations that provide legal aid and community-based legal services, strengthening their institutional capacity to ensure sustained access to justice for vulnerable and underserved groups. Engagement with businesses will be a new area where the project will explore partnership opportunities, particularly on environmental justice and governance, promoting responsible business practices and integrating environmental considerations into corporate decision-making.

The project will also prioritize knowledge creation and regional policy dialogue. This includes advancing the regional Tbilisi Declaration on Access to State-Guaranteed Legal Aid for Forcibly Displaced Populations and identifying further actions based on a baseline assessment of the implementation of the Tbilisi Declaration. This effort will strengthen regional cooperation on access to justice.

KAZAKHSTAN

KEY RESULTS:

- Kazakhstan's first National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights proposed the introduction of mandatory human rights due diligence alongside strengthened labour, health, gender equality and environmental justice standards.
- Two practical guidance tools supported civil society and businesses in preventing and monitoring human rights and environmental abuses. One tool was applied in diagnostics across nine major enterprises, advancing corporate accountability and gender equality with potential impact on over 250,000 employees.
- UNDP strengthened the capacities of regional judges on international standards of environmental justice to facilitate fair judicial practices. Civil society was equipped with knowledge and tools to monitor and report on business-related human rights and environmental abuses, reinforcing their role in accountability and responsible business practices.

During 2024-2025 Kazakhstan continued implementing its national-level second Action Plan on Rule of Law and Human Rights, further strengthening its human rights mechanisms. Several government working groups were formed to improve legislation, including the criminalization of gender-based violence, and laws on non-discrimination, public safety, and business and human rights (BHR).

At the same time, certain challenges in the protection of human rights remained an area of ongoing focus. Civil society representatives pointed to areas for further progress in enabling civic space, particularly regarding the implementation of guidelines for peaceful assembly, while findings from the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) emphasized the importance of continuing to strengthen safeguards and oversight to prevent ill-treatment within closed institutions and detention facilities. Additionally, there is a recognized need to encourage more sustainable business practices to address environmental challenges, particularly regarding air and water quality management in the Caspian and West Kazakhstan regions. In parallel, strengthening occupational health and safety standards in the mining sector remains a critical priority to ensure workers' welfare and prevent industrial incidents.

Developing a unified framework for assessing environmental damages and determining compensation remained essential. The absence of such a methodology within the new Environmental Code (2021) continued to present challenges for administrative and civil courts in reaching consistent judicial decisions.

To respond to these challenges, UNDP provided support to strengthen the capacities of regional offices of the Human Rights Commissioner and the NPM to ensure more effective responses to human rights violations. The main focus of the past year was the promotion of environmental justice and responsible business practices.

An inter-agency working group was established under the Prime Minister's Office and tasked with developing proposals for human rights protection in business, in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). UNDP-facilitated consultations and training enabled the working group to finalize specific recommendations for government agencies on improving labour, health and gender equality policies through a combination of mandatory and voluntary measures. In line with emerging trends in Asia and Europe, a recommendation was made for a new requirement on business to conduct human rights due diligence. UNDP's recommendations on improving environmental justice legislation were integrated into this package. The Ministry of National Economy (MNE) shared the final proposed set of measures with the Prime Minister's Office and sectoral ministries for further implementation.

The government-adopted new Environmental Code envisaged comprehensive environmental permits and the installation of emissions monitoring systems at industrial enterprises. Kazakhstan's reference to the development of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Business and Human Rights in its fourth Universal Periodic Review (UPR) cycle confirmed the Government's commitment to implementing UNGPs at the national level.

Enhancing the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) was another priority. Over 60 people representing civil society, private sector and trade unions from across the country strengthened their monitoring capacities and knowledge on responsible business practices. UNDP worked with civil society to develop a methodological assessment tool for monitoring and reporting on business-related human rights and environmental abuses.

A complementary tool for business was also developed with practical guidance on preventing and mitigating human rights risks and impacts. This tool was used to support a national holding company with diagnostics on gender equality and human rights due diligence across nine major enterprises, potentially affecting more than 250,000 employees across their value chains. This process marked one of the first systematic efforts in Kazakhstan to assess corporate policies and practices related to gender equality and human rights. Both tools are expected to be published in 2026, to support civil society and businesses in implementing the working group's recommendations towards ensuring human rights in business.

UNDP further supported partners in elevating environmental justice on the national agenda, with a focus on securing justice for communities affected by environmental harm. An assessment was conducted to evaluate the alignment of national law enforcement and judicial practices with international environmental standards. Based on its findings, guidance was provided to the Supreme Court and the General Prosecutor's Office to support implementation. The process culminated in a national roundtable, where stakeholders discussed the results and identified priorities for regulatory reform and capacity-building for prosecutors and judges.

In parallel, UNDP convened members of the judiciary, law enforcement and civil society from across Central Asia at the Central Asian Criminal Justice Forum. The forum focused on legal responses to the triple planetary crisis of climate change, air pollution and biodiversity loss. Lessons from international experience highlighted the need to strengthen knowledge sharing and invest in the environmental expertise of judges and police across the region.

In Kazakhstan, UNDP empowers civil society to champion environmental justice. | Photo: UNDP Kazakhstan / Iris Mambur

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026, UNDP will focus on the rollout and adoption of the two practical tools developed for civil society and businesses. UNDP will work with national counterparts to implement the recommendations issued by the inter-agency working group to the relevant state agencies, exploring legislative, policy and practical amendments to promote responsible business practice in Kazakhstan, including the adoption of mandatory human rights due diligence for business.

TAJIKISTAN

KEY RESULTS:

- A cohort of 19 trained women lawyers, supported by 14 mentors across public and non-state institutions, delivered quality legal aid services and strengthened their professional capacity within the justice system.
- 307 clients, primarily women in vulnerable situations, received legal assistance across key areas including family law, housing and property rights, and criminal cases, improving access to justice.
- Evidence generated through legal aid delivery, including case documentation and analytical case notes, informed policy dialogue processes and enabled fellows to contribute to discussions on gender-responsive legal reform

Tajikistan's justice sector continued to face structural challenges affecting women's access to justice and participation in legal professions, shaped by entrenched social norms, limited career opportunities and gaps in practical legal training. Women remained underrepresented across the legal sector despite demonstrating high levels of need for legal services. In 2024, over 60 percent of legal aid clients nationwide were women.

Through its Gender Justice Platform, a partnership with UN Women, UNDP strengthened women's participation as justice providers while expanding access to quality, gender-responsive legal aid. These efforts gained particular relevance considering reduced external support for gender equality programming in early 2025, underscoring the importance of sustaining progress through locally driven and innovative approaches.

At the core of UNDP's support was the establishment of the country's first fellowship programme for young women lawyers (aged 26–30), implemented by a leading civil society organization, the Human Rights Center. Nineteen women fellows were selected through a nationwide call and paired with fourteen experienced mentors from law offices, civil society organizations and state legal aid centres. Endorsed by the Ministry of Justice, the initiative reflected strong national ownership and government support, reinforcing institutional commitment to advancing gender-responsive justice.

The fellowship began with a training led by national experts, focusing on priority areas of legal aid for vulnerable women. In addition to core topics, the programme introduced training on customary Islamic law, addressing an increasingly relevant area, as many women find themselves in customary Islamic marriages with limited to no knowledge of their rights. Additionally, very few lawyers have expertise in this field, but regularly have clients in unregistered marriages seeking financial or physical protection.

UNDP consulted closely with UN Women and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in designing the activities, ensuring alignment with existing expertise and needs on the ground. This comprehensive capacity development approach equipped participants with both technical expertise and practical tools aligned with the needs of women seeking access to justice.

The fellows provided free legal aid services to more than 300 clients, primarily women in vulnerable situations. The support covered a range of issues, including family law, housing, land and property rights, and criminal defence. The practical experience enabled the fellows to build confidence and professional competence, while also deepening their understanding of systemic barriers faced by women. Specialization aligned with mentors' expertise further enhanced the quality and effectiveness of service delivery, particularly in areas where women legal professionals and services remain limited.

In addition, the initiative generated knowledge and evidence to improve gender responsiveness of the justice system. Policy briefs were developed on systemic gaps in the social housing system and the

use of protective orders as a preventive measure against domestic violence.

The initiative adopted a people-centred approach, ensuring that programme design and implementation responded to the realities faced by women professionals. Social barriers remain a key obstacle to women's participation in the justice sector, particularly family obligations that limit mobility and availability for professional development. To address this, the project introduced flexible measures to support fellows' participation, including accommodation for accompanying family members and additional transportation for those required to commute daily. These measures enabled inclusive participation while recognizing and responding to the immediate needs of beneficiaries, alongside longer-term objectives.

UNDP's intervention through the Gender Justice Platform strengthened women's role as justice providers, improved access to legal services for vulnerable populations, and created pathways for evidence-based policy engagement. It contributed to more inclusive, transparent and accountable governance that protects human rights, empowers women and reduces violence and discrimination in line with Tajikistan's international commitments.

Tajikistan established its first fellowship programme for young women lawyers. | Photo: UNDP Tajikistan

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026, the fellowship programme will expand to a second cohort of 15 fellows. New partnerships will be established to better use fellows' expertise, update the training programme and strengthen mentorship through engagement of alumni. In particular, the programme will partner with Women's Resource Centers (WRCs), a group of CSOs which provides legal and psychosocial services to women. Fellows will be placed in WRCs in remote regions, reinforcing support to underserved communities. At the same time, practical, client-focused legal training will be expanded to include WRC staff. The updated curriculum will place greater emphasis on technology-facilitated gender-based violence and evidence gathering in gender-based violence cases. The training will be delivered for fellows from both cohorts alongside WRC lawyers, state legal aid providers, and the officials from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, fostering stronger collaboration across the system.

UKRAINE

KEY RESULTS:

- The Free Legal Aid System expanded its reach and strengthened its capacity, providing people-centred legal support to over 316,000 individuals, ensuring timely and quality assistance for persons with disabilities, veterans, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and war-affected families.
- The Ombudsperson's Office increased its regional presence and analytical capabilities, leading to higher public engagement and over 152,500 complaints submitted in 2025. Enhanced regional monitoring enabled more accurate identification of local human rights issues and stronger advocacy.
- National accountability mechanisms for war-related international crimes were strengthened through capacity development for more than 400 investigators, prosecutors and other justice actors.

Since 2022, Ukraine has faced large-scale human rights violations caused by the Russian full-scale invasion. Ongoing hostilities have placed extraordinary pressure on justice systems, increased demand for legal assistance and required rapid adaptation of state institutions. In 2025, the country experienced the continued destruction of infrastructure, mine contamination, large-scale displacement and deepening socio-economic vulnerabilities. According to the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, more than 15,000 civilians have been killed since the beginning of the hostilities. Around 3.7 million people have been internally displaced.

Despite these challenges, Ukraine's core rule of law institutions remained operational and key reforms have advanced. In particular, the Cabinet of Ministers approved roadmaps on the rule of law, public administration reform and democratic institutions, in line with the country's European integration agenda.

UNDP scaled up its support for Ukraine driving targeted actions to reinforce the country's justice system and protect the rights of people most affected by the war. The Free Legal Aid System (FLAS) was expanded and its capacities enhanced to deliver people-centred legal services. In 2025, a total of 644,000 claims (more than 50 percent from women) were addressed by the Free Legal Aid system, with 90 percent of claimants reporting positive feedback.[24] Out of these, over 316,000 individuals (56 percent women) – including persons with disabilities, veterans, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and war-affected families – received legal assistance through written consultations and hotlines.

The Ombudsperson's Office (Ukraine's national human rights institution) has also strengthened its regional presence through all the oblasts and enhanced its analytical capacity, resulting in increased public awareness and a significant rise in the number of people seeking protection of their rights. In 2025, the Ombudsperson's Office received over 152,500 complaints, reflecting both the scale of human rights challenges and the growing demand for rights-based assistance.[25] With UNDP support, the Ombudsperson's Office expanded regional monitoring, enabling more precise identification of local human rights challenges and more effective advocacy for systemic change.

Ukrainian authorities continued to document large-scale international crimes committed during the war, with the Office of the Prosecutor General reporting over 220,000 registered war-related cases as of March 2026. To enable the justice system to respond to this unprecedented caseload, UNDP strengthened national accountability mechanisms for this type of crime. More than 400 stakeholders, including investigators and prosecutors, enhanced their capacities in areas such as survivor-centred approaches, evidence handling and coordinated investigation practices across the justice chain.

24 Available at: https://legalaid.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/zvit-systemy-nadannya-bpd-za-2025-rik.pdf
25 As compared to 123,221 complaints received in 2024, and 95,796 complaints received in 2023.

Furthermore, UNDP contributed to reinforcing integrity and transparency within public administration through practical anti-corruption tools and capacity development for local self-government bodies, enabling communities to drive more accountable and transparent governance.

At the community level, new approaches to access to justice were introduced in four communities in Kherson and Mykolaiv oblasts. The training of 40 community paralegals in these frontline areas created additional entry points for people seeking legal support and ensured that individuals in remote or war-affected areas can receive timely guidance and support even when access to formal justice institutions is limited. The paralegals provided support to 255 local residents.

A training session for justice professionals in Ukraine. | Photo: UNDP Ukraine / Anna Putylina

LOOKING FORWARD

UNDP will continue supporting Ukraine in strengthening rule of law institutions and advancing reforms aligned with recovery and European Union (EU) integration. Priority efforts will focus on expanding access to justice and enhancing human rights protection, particularly for war-affected populations and vulnerable groups. This includes continued support for the institutional development of the Ombudsperson's Office and the Free Legal Aid system to ensure accessible and people-centred services nationwide.

UNDP will also contribute to the implementation of the updated National Human Rights Strategy, ensuring that future reforms are grounded in reliable data, aligned with international standards and consistent with Ukraine's EU integration commitments.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

Latin America and the Caribbean continued to stand out as the most democratic developing region. However, growing pressures on development were increasingly testing democratic institutions and the rule of law. Structural inequalities, high levels of violence, weak institutional capacity and escalating climate impacts continued to constrain progress. In the Caribbean, Small Island Developing States faced additional vulnerabilities. As highlighted in the Regional Human Development Report, these overlapping pressures weakened social cohesion and eroded public trust in institutions, with fewer than one in three people expressing confidence in the judiciary.

In response to these challenges, UNDP championed strategic partnerships linking the rule of law, security and development. In the Caribbean, UNDP consolidated the alliance with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) through the CARICOM Action Plan on Security, with a strong focus on conflict prevention and public health approaches. In Latin America, UNDP supported the Ibero-American Alliance for Access to Justice, the Conference of Ministers of Justice of the Ibero-American Countries (COMJIB) and the Justice Action Coalition to consolidate the Ibero-American Agreement on Access to Justice and advance a regional framework on gender and justice.

At the country level, UNDP strengthened the rule of law, justice, security and human rights, leveraging support from the Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme).

People-centred justice: Advancing digital tools through country support and regional cooperation

The Solutions Radar was developed; this online platform maps more than 600 verified initiatives and experiences in strengthening security, expanding access to justice and improving social inclusion. This unique database is for development partners, justice and security practitioners, civil society and other stakeholders interested in scaling up their programming based on regional best practices and lessons learned. Inside the Solutions Radar, an artificial intelligence-enabled assistant 'Justin' (or 'Justina' in Spanish) helps users in navigating the platform to identify the most relevant experience available in the database.

Through the Global Programme, UNDP promoted the Justice 4.0 exchange, supporting a South-South initiative led by the Brazilian judiciary. The exchange connected Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mozambique, Paraguay and Uruguay to consolidate best practices in implementing rights-based digitalization. As a result, Paraguay completed its strategic planning with innovations inspired by Brazil; Uruguay advanced the creation of a new Ministry of Justice and Ecuador mobilized Canadian funding to scale e-justice in partnership with UNDP and the judiciary, marking a key step in institutionalizing this transformative vision. Complementing these efforts, Ecuador continued the enhancement of the security sector. Collaborative spaces were opened, enabling communities and security actors to jointly shape public security policies. In addition, women in highly vulnerable contexts benefited from livelihoods training and targeted support.

Six countries in the region implemented initiatives supported through the Justice Action Coalition: Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Panama and St. Kitts and Nevis. These innovative projects laid the foundation for inclusive reforms to address family, land and small-claims disputes that disproportionately affect women, youth and marginalized groups. In St. Kitts and Nevis, for example, 124 justice, police and penitentiary officials (50 percent were women) improved their capacity in restorative and juvenile justice, investigation techniques, artificial intelligence (AI) and digital transformation. In parallel, the use of criminal mediation was tested as a mechanism for alternative disputes resolution to decrease the burden on the formal justice system.

Improving security to address organized crime

In Costa Rica, Ecuador and Uruguay, UNDP supported the development of national security strategies, placing an emphasis on evidence-based public policy. In six Caribbean countries, evidence-based crime prevention policies were put in place. In Honduras, under the SALIENT project, UNDP and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) strengthened institutional coordination and capacities to prevent armed violence. Community engagement focused on women and youth, while public policies started to actively rely on data to reduce risks associated with small arms. In parallel, UNDP consolidated a new guide on Youth, Peace and Security, strengthening local prevention and violence-reduction approaches for youth empowerment,

Human rights promotion

UNDP continues to support strengthening national human rights systems including national human rights institutions. In Belize, for example, UNDP is working to support the establishment of a national human rights institution (NHRI). In addition, through the TriPartite Partnership to Support National Human Rights Institutions (TPP), NHRIs in Costa Rica, Ecuador and Peru implemented digital information systems. In Costa Rica and Peru, the TPP funding had a catalytic effect as additional resources were secured to scale up these systems at the national level and expand their functionality. As a result, NHRIs improved case management, reduced processing times and strengthened data generation, enhancing evidence-based decisions, transparency and access to justice.

Business and human rights

To advance the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and position the private sector as a strategic development partner, UNDP scaled up its virtual business and human rights course, which has reached over 3,000 entrepreneurs across the region. In Peru, UNDP supported initiatives to address gender inequalities in the workplace, promoting inclusive corporate practices and accountability frameworks.

Environmental justice and the right to a healthy environment

UNDP developed a programming guide to address environmental crimes, drawing on examples from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and the Dominican Republic. The guide provides actionable recommendations for designing integrated, people-centred interventions that link the rule of law, environmental protection and sustainable development.

In Colombia, Guatemala and Honduras, UNDP addressed the links between environmental degradation, conflict dynamics and social exclusion, strengthening institutional responses to climate-related risks and environmental conflicts as part of broader efforts to promote peace, justice and sustainable development.

Justice for women and youth

UNDP deepened its work at the intersection of gender equality and justice, supporting countries to address structural barriers faced by women and girls across justice systems. In 2025, the support ranged from strengthening gender-responsive legal frameworks and public policies in the Dominican Republic, and promoting women's leadership in justice in Mexico, to enhancing protection for gender-based violence survivors in Guatemala and improving the ways in which violence against women is documented and addressed in Venezuela.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the Global Programme supported UNDP's Youth Forum for Gender, Justice and Security, engaging 43 young leaders in capacity-building, dialogue and advocacy initiatives. The Forum convened over 100 actors from national institutions and culminated in a National Dialogue on Youth and Inclusion, marking a shift from youth participation to meaningful contribution within the governance ecosystem. Further, a nationwide mapping of youth organizations provided an evidence base for partnerships and the next phase of youth-led interventions.

The rollout of national and local preparations for the Agrarian and Rural Jurisdiction in Colombia. | Photo: UNDP Colombia

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026, UNDP will scale up the Solutions Radar and Justin as global public goods. The Solutions Radar is expected to evolve into a dynamic ecosystem that will connect global knowledge, comparative evidence and country learning, enabling governments to identify and adapt proven justice, security and governance innovations. Justin, UNDP's AI-enabled justice assistant, will further translate complex legal and policy information into accessible insights to strengthen evidence-informed decision-making.

UNDP will also support national partners in advancing the Ibero-American Convention on Access to Justice, adopted in 2025 and expected to be signed in 2026, helping align national frameworks and promote reforms that build more accessible, inclusive justice systems. In parallel, the Regional Strategic Framework on Gender and Justice will guide priorities, foster intersectoral solutions and strengthen partnerships.

In the Caribbean, UNDP will continue working with CARICOM to promote a public health approach to justice and reduce crime and violence.

BARBADOS, UNDP MULTI-COUNTRY OFFICE FOR BARBADOS AND EASTERN CARIBBEAN

KEY RESULTS:

- A catalytic initiative piloted in Belize and Saint Lucia demonstrated the value and feasibility of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), contributing to increased acceptance of restorative justice approaches among initially resistant justice sector actors.
- A regional Victim-Offender Mediation Toolkit was developed through a participatory process and will be mainstreamed across the nine jurisdictions of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court.
- In Belize and Saint Lucia, 42 cases were referred for victim-offender mediation. Twenty-two cases were mediated, with settlement agreement achieved in over 50 percent of cases in Saint Lucia and in over 90 percent of cases in Belize.

The people of the Caribbean continue to face multiple, interconnected challenges related to citizen security and access to justice. Violent crime, including high murder rates, remains a pressing issue, fuelled by weapons and narcotics trafficking. Justice systems across the region are overwhelmed by growing caseloads, generating severe backlogs and deficits in justice administration, leading to overcrowded detention facilities and prolonged pre-trial detention.

Against this backdrop, UNDP worked closely with partners to catalyse restorative justice through diversion and mediation. The Victim-Offender Mediation project – piloted in Saint Lucia and Belize – formed a critical part of this response.

Different stages of criminal mediation practice in the two countries enabled comparative learning experience. Saint Lucia brought an established community-anchored model rooted in its social service infrastructure, while Belize offered greenfield conditions in which a judiciary-led, procedurally robust model was developed. In both settings, a draft Victim-Offender Mediation Toolkit was co-developed with stakeholders drawn from courts, prosecutors' offices, prison and probation services. The toolkit was revised iteratively, incorporating feedback at each stage, and a comparative assessment was documented with recommendations developed for regional level replication. Critically, the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court has committed to mainstreaming the toolkit across all nine jurisdictions it serves, a landmark step toward regional institutionalization of restorative justice.

Of the 42 cases referred during the pilot period (May 2024 - May 2025), 22 were eventually facilitated through mediation. Formal settlement agreements were reached in 50 percent of mediated cases in Saint Lucia and in more than 90 percent of cases in Belize. Participants generally rated the process as fair, and judicial counterparts in both countries acknowledged that alternative dispute resolution mechanisms could expand access to justice without undermining the rights of parties.

Additionally, initial data from both pilots pointed to reduced fiscal burden associated with mediated cases when compared to those following the traditional pathway through the courts. In both jurisdictions, once the initial infrastructure was established, mediation processes were shorter and required fewer direct and indirect resources, suggesting that they may have a lower impact on government's budget balance. This is particularly important in fiscally-constrained small island developing states (SIDS) that are seeking ways of reducing primary deficits and redirecting resources toward crime and violence prevention interventions.

The collaboration between Saint Lucia and Belize offered a robust exchange of experiences and a thorough assessment of the infrastructure needed to support criminal mediation across different legal contexts.

Acknowledging that traditional adversarial processes often disadvantage low-income individuals, youth and those with limited legal literacy, the victim-offender mediation was designed to leave no-one behind. By offering a more accessible, participatory alternative to formal justice mechanisms, UNDP expanded access to justice for communities that had been historically marginalized. Victims were given a platform to express their grievances and shape justice outcomes. Offenders, many from underrepresented and underserved communities, were afforded the opportunity to take responsibility, repair harm and avoid further marginalization through severe punitive sentences.

Culturally relevant practices were embedded throughout implementation, and local stakeholders, including probation officers and social workers, were engaged across the justice chain to ensure mediation processes reflected community realities and did not service to intimidate the parties. The project's gender-responsive approach ensured meaningful participation by women stakeholders across the justice sector, and the toolkit included specific recommendations on gender-sensitive implementation, including safeguards for cases involving gender-based violence.

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026, UNDP will focus on consolidating and scaling the gains achieved through the victim-offender mediation pilot. The finalized toolkit will be formally published and disseminated, with efforts focused on integrating it into official training curricula. In Belize, national stakeholders are exploring dedicated budget lines for mediation capacity-building, reflecting growing institutional ownership and sustainability.

UNDP will also work to address gaps identified during the pilot, including through expanding the toolkit with modules on trauma-informed, gender-sensitive and juvenile-focused mediation. Legislative anchoring will be a priority, with efforts to support the development of statutory instruments or practice directions that provide legal clarity and procedural safeguards for victim-offender mediation across the region. Further work will also be done to determine the net financial impact of the mediation pathway vis-à-vis traditional court case progression and to establish an economic case for mainstreaming victim-offender mediation as part of wider adaptive fiscal strategy. The momentum generated by the pilot positions the Caribbean for a meaningful shift toward restorative justice as a pillar of sustainable, people-centred justice reform.

COLOMBIA

KEY RESULTS:

- National and local preparations for the Agrarian and Rural Jurisdiction were rolled out with UNDP's support through coordinated dialogues, technical collaboration and alignment with peacebuilding and rural development priorities.
- Communities in Montes de María strengthened their understanding of land rights and access to justice through in-person training, the WhatsApp course and the Raíces de Justicia radio series, reaching 275 people, including 169 rural women, 105 men and one person with diverse gender identity.
- UNDP enhanced institutional readiness by training urban and rural inspectors, improving their capacities to address agrarian conflicts, and supporting coherence between agrarian justice, land-use planning, and national policy frameworks.

Colombia advanced in justice modernization and digital security in 2025. However, challenges to the rule of law, persistent gender gaps, human rights violations[26] linked to armed conflict and limited state presence undermined stability, affecting particularly rural and ethnic communities.

Against this backdrop, UNDP Colombia launched initiatives to narrow gaps between diverse populations and the justice system through a people-centred approach. A key effort focused on supporting the early preparation of the Agrarian and Rural Jurisdiction (JAR, for its acronym in Spanish), mandated by the 2016 Peace Agreement to provide timely and effective access to justice for rural populations, particularly women. The JAR was incorporated into the Constitution in 2023, with the aim of establishing a specialized judicial system to resolve agrarian and rural disputes, strengthen legal certainty in rural areas and help address structural land-related conflicts linked to rural development, in line with the commitments of the Peace Agreement.

Over the past year, Colombian authorities worked on a draft law defining procedures, competencies and principles for implementation, which requires two further debates before June 2026. UNDP contributed to this process by convening key stakeholders, developing outreach materials linking the JAR to peacebuilding and strengthening local capacities to support early implementation. These interventions were carried out in Montes de María, in the municipalities of El Carmen de Bolívar, San Juan de Nepomuceno and Zambrano, funded by the Justice Action Coalition and the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Sustaining Peace (MPTF), implemented under the leadership of the Ministry of Justice and Law by UNDP and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Implementation, however, faced significant challenges. Between 2024 and 2025, violence escalated in Bolívar department, leading to large-scale displacement, killings and other serious human rights violations, restricting access and limiting field activities. Additionally, many people in Montes de María suffered from floods and crop losses. At the same time, rotation in government senior positions implied institutional and administrative adjustments that contributed to delays.

UNDP's key achievement was strengthening communities' understanding of their land rights by improving access to legal information and establishing clear referral pathways, with a particular focus on women, and people with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. This was crucial in a context where armed conflict, historical inequalities and prevailing gender stereotypes have resulted in largely informal and male-dominated land tenure and use.

26 World Report 2026: Colombia | Human Rights Watch

Capacity-building was delivered through in-person training and the WhatsApp 15×15 course on the JAR. This online module included 15-minute sessions to be followed over 15 days using real-time messages and interactive exercises.

"This format worked very well for us. I was able to share this course with other farmers who do not have stable access to the internet or the news. They would not be able to access this course if it were not on messenger," said Ruth Romero, a farmer from the municipality of Zambrano, Bolívar.

UNDP also introduced the radio soap opera Raíces de Justicia (Roots of Justice) which brings to life real stories from rural Colombia and promotes empowerment, participation, rural development, peace and reconciliation. The series was integrated into training sessions and disseminated through a streaming platform and community radio stations in three municipalities. A total of 275 people (169 women, 105 men and one person of another gender identity) followed the series on a streaming platform, with broader outreach achieved through local radio partnerships.

Although legislative uncertainty has delayed the full implementation of the JAR beyond 2026, communities gained practical tools to navigate the justice system, contributing to a cultural shift that began to narrow gender and other gaps in access to justice.

"I have worked as a peasant all my life. The land for me is not only food, it's life. It's our culture, strength, roots and love to our ancestors. But we have never had land to our name. A neighbour would give us a piece of land to farm on. Or we would sow in the fields or on a riverbank that belonged to nobody. Sometimes, we did not manage to harvest because the river came. Now we have hope to legally own our land. This process of agrarian jurisdiction gives me and all of us in the community a sense of security and hope. As Afrocolombians, as Indigenous peoples, we have been fighting for it," said Ruth Romero.

All outreach initiatives were co-created with the Ministry of Justice and Law, and with local experts on land and agrarian law issues, ensuring technical rigour and alignment with national policy priorities. UNDP strengthened national ownership by building lasting capacities among government officials, community leaders, civil society groups and Agrarian Reform Committees, enabling them to apply and replicate these skills within existing institutional and peacebuilding frameworks. This catalytic approach empowers local actors and grassroots organizations to expand the results through their own advocacy, monitoring and leadership.

While strengthening the capacities of rural communities who will rely on the Agrarian Jurisdiction is essential, it is equally important to equip the justice actors who will deal with land-related disputes. UNDP convened a workshop for the Government of Bolívar and the Vice-Ministry for the Promotion of Justice. Twenty-nine urban and rural inspectors, including eight women, strengthened their understanding of Colombia's agrarian legal framework, the main types of rural conflicts and the practical tools inspectors need to address them, including guidance on the rights of peasants and ethnic peoples. Finally, UNDP worked closely with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to ensure that these efforts aligned with national policies on agriculture, rural development and food security, and supported greater coherence between agrarian justice and land-use planning.

Ruth Romero, a farmer from the municipality of Zambrano, Bolívar, Columbia. | Photo: UNDP Colombia

LOOKING FORWARD

Looking ahead to 2026, UNDP will support Colombia's efforts to consolidate people-centred justice and strengthen the protection of human rights as foundations for sustainable peace. Priorities will focus on scaling the prevention of and response to gender-based violence; strengthening community and informal justice mechanisms, particularly in rural and conflict-affected areas addressing agrarian and land-related disputes; and advancing peaceful coexistence initiatives. Protecting human rights defenders and communities at risk will remain a core pillar, alongside support to transitional justice processes that promote victims' meaningful participation and legal representation, accelerate the search for missing persons, and expand restorative justice and reconciliation between victims and former combatants. Through these integrated interventions, UNDP aims to address structural inequalities, reinforce social trust, and contribute to an inclusive justice ecosystem aligned with national priorities and international human rights standards.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

KEY RESULTS:

- A national people-centred justice indicator framework was established, enabling the judiciary to systematically track reform progress, strengthen accountability and better identify and address gaps in access, quality and inclusion.
- UNDP trained 161 judges and judicial staff, including 134 women, through seven workshops focused on dignified treatment, inclusive communication, disability, migration, sexual diversity, intersectionality and the treatment of victims of violence, and prepared 25 trainers with a full pedagogical package to ensure sustained institutional capacity.
- Digital and practical tools for inclusive justice were advanced, including guidance on accessible digital services, virtual hearings and assistive technologies, alongside an accessibility assessment that provides a clear roadmap for improving both infrastructure and service delivery.

In 2025, the Dominican Republic continued to advance judicial modernization in a context of persistent inequalities and access-to-justice barriers affecting women survivors of violence, persons with disabilities, migrants and other groups in vulnerable situations. The country also recorded progress under the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index, with improvements in independent checks on government powers, public integrity, regulatory transparency, civil justice and aspects of the criminal justice system.

Against this backdrop, UNDP supported the judiciary to strengthen evidence-based, people-centred justice, translating the judiciary's plan Justicia del Futuro 2034 into practical tools for monitoring access, quality and inclusion. Collaborating with the World Justice Project, UNDP supported the development of a national people-centred justice indicator framework. For its ten-year plan, the judiciary of the Dominican Republic identified 34 indicators available under the World Justice Project, covering efficient justice, accessible justice and transparent justice. An expanded matrix of 140 additional indicators broadened the framework to capture gender, disability, violence, migration, diversity, citizen perception and user experience. In total, 174 indicators were designed and 49 tested using real-life judiciary data. These efforts laid a solid, forward-looking foundation for tracking reform progress, strengthening accountability and systematically uncovering the data gaps that must be addressed to deliver more inclusive and effective justice over time. They also contributed to shifting the focus from measuring judicial processes alone towards understanding how people experience justice services, reinforcing a people-centred approach to justice reform.

UNDP also supported justice actors, including the National School of the Judiciary (ENJ), to transform these tools into practical institutional changes. A national cycle of seven workshops reached 161 judges and judicial staff, including 134 women. The training focused on dignified treatment, inclusive communication, disability, migration, sexual diversity, intersectionality and the treatment of victims of violence. Twenty-five participants were trained as trainers and received a complete pedagogical package, including content, methodologies, activities and materials, enabling ENJ to continue rolling out the training within the judiciary.

The project also generated evidence to improve the accessibility of justice services. In Santo Domingo Este (SDE), the country's largest judicial district, UNDP, in partnership with the civil society organization ProBien Foundation, facilitated a comprehensive accessibility assessment. This assessment identified physical, sensory, communication, technological and organizational barriers affecting persons with disabilities and other groups. It also produced practical, actionable recommendations – including improvements to ramps, visual and tactile signage, accessible restrooms, safe circulation, adapted service areas

and digital platforms – providing the judiciary with a clear roadmap to enhance both infrastructure and service delivery.

To support the judiciary's transition toward more inclusive digital justice, UNDP supported a workshop on inclusive digitalization linked to the Protocol and Guide for Dignified Treatment. The workshop addressed the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), assistive tools for people with visual and hearing impairment, the accessibility of virtual hearings, plain language and verifiable good practices. Together, the indicator framework, accessibility assessment, training materials and inclusive digitalization tools produced five knowledge products and strengthened justice institutions with capacities that can be sustained beyond the project cycle.

LOOKING FORWARD

UNDP will continue supporting national partners to consolidate the people-centred justice agenda by helping the judiciary use and update the indicator framework within the Plan Justicia del Futuro 2034; strengthen data collection and disaggregation on gender, disability, violence and user experience; replicate dignified treatment and inclusive digitalization training through the 25 trainers prepared by ENJ; and use the Santo Domingo Este accessibility assessment as a model for improving other judicial facilities. Continued partnerships with the World Justice Project, ProBien and the judiciary technical directorates will help sustain reforms, deepen institutional ownership and expand practical improvements in access to justice for groups facing the greatest barriers.

HAITI

KEY RESULTS:

- UNDP's Rule of Law and Governance portfolio helped sustain institutional functionality and advance system-level reforms in an exceptionally constrained environment. Catalytic support strengthened coherence, mobilized resources and embedded human rights and gender perspectives within broader stabilization and peacebuilding efforts.
- Access to justice for women and girls improved through strengthened police and judicial capacities, specialized gender-based violence mechanisms and integrated legal and psychosocial services, enabling more than 300 women and girls to receive coordinated, dignified and rights-based support.
- Youth engagement in peacebuilding and civic participation expanded significantly, with forums, consultations and prevention initiatives enabling more than 5,000 young people to engage with public authorities, contribute to solutions and strengthen social cohesion and trust in institutions.

Between 2022 and 2025, Haiti experienced a profound deterioration of its rule of law, justice, security and human rights environment, marked by escalating gang violence, institutional fragility and political instability. The repeated postponement of elections, frequent changes in government leadership, territorial fragmentation, widespread internal displacement, severe constraints on access to justice, prison overcrowding, impunity and a surge in gender-based violence have significantly compromised state legitimacy and protection systems. In 2024, the establishment of transitional governance arrangements and the deployment of the Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission created opportunities for institutional recovery.

In this complex environment, UNDP's 'Rule of law and governance' portfolio played a critical role in preserving core functions governance. Through integrated interventions across justice, security, anti-corruption, democratic governance and social cohesion, UNDP strengthened operational capacities of key institutions including the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP), Haitian National Police (PNH) in line with human rights standards, Superior Council of the Judiciary (CSPJ), Ministry of Justice and Public Security, anti-corruption institutions and local governance actors.

Over the past years, progress has been made across several areas, contributing to medium- and long-term system-level changes. This includes support to the full rollout probity vetting of judges and prosecutors; the preparation of updated penal frameworks; strengthening police operational capacities, their Human Rights oversight mechanisms, and specialized units addressing sexual and gender-based violence; and the rehabilitation of justice and security infrastructure.

In parallel, efforts have contributed to the promotion of anti-corruption platforms and accountability mechanisms, as well as the expanded participation of youth, women and civil society in governance and peacebuilding processes. UNDP also sustained electoral preparedness and supported transitional authorities to preserve pathways towards constitutional order.

UNDP's Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme) played a catalytic role by providing technical expertise, facilitating knowledge exchange and innovation, and mobilizing resources. Its support helped strengthen programme coherence, integrate human rights and gender perspectives, and position Haiti's rule of law portfolio within broader stabilization, violence prevention and peacebuilding efforts.

While progress remained uneven, 2025 demonstrated continued institutional resilience and gradual movement towards stronger governance and accountability systems, despite an exceptionally constrained environment.

In 2025, UNDP contributed to tangible improvements, particularly for women and youth affected by violence and exclusion. Support to specialized police units, legal aid mechanisms, psychosocial services and the operationalization of a dedicated gender-based violence jurisdiction in Cap-Haïtien, enabled improved access to justice and referral pathways. Over 300 women and girls received psychosocial support along with legal assistance and representation – services that were previously inaccessible or fragmented. By strengthening the capacities of police officers, magistrates and justice actors to manage sensitive cases, UNDP contributed to more dignified, rights-based responses and increased confidence in public institutions.

As one beneficiary shared: ***"Before, women stayed silent because they believed nothing would happen. Today, we know there are people and institutions ready to listen and help us seek justice."***

Strengthening youth engagement in peacebuilding and civic participation emerged as another key result. Youth leadership forums, local consultations and violence prevention initiatives enabled over 5,000 young people – including those in violence-affected communities – to voice concerns, contribute solutions and engage directly with public authorities. These efforts strengthened social cohesion, reduced feelings of exclusion and fostered a sense of agency among youth.

As one participant in the National Youth Leadership Forum said: ***"For the first time, I felt that my ideas mattered and that young people can help shape Haiti's future."***

UNDP's work in Haiti highlighted the importance of adaptive and conflict-sensitive programming in highly volatile environments. Amid fragmentation and insecurity, UNDP shifted from traditional implementation models towards more flexible approaches, including decentralized partnerships with local actors, hybrid delivery modalities and continuous risk-informed planning. Combining institutional support with community-based engagement proved essential to maintain trust, promote local ownership and preserve institutional functionality during crises.

A talent contest in Jérémie was held as part of the initiative to promote peace and social cohesion among young people in Haiti.

Photo: UNDP Haiti / Ruvens Ely Boyer

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026 and beyond, UNDP will focus on unlocking democratic governance, strengthening institutional resilience and addressing the root causes of violence and fragility. Priorities will include continued support to electoral processes, justice and police reform, anti-corruption mechanisms and integrated violence prevention approaches.

Special attention will be given to strengthening the participation of youth and women in governance and peacebuilding, while expanding access to justice and protection services for vulnerable populations and reinforcing institutional accountability and human rights safeguards.

These priorities are essential to preserving institutional continuity, rebuilding public trust, reducing violence and impunity, and creating the conditions for democratic legitimacy, sustainable peace and long-term development in Haiti.

PANAMA

KEY RESULTS:

- The first ever comprehensive national analysis of social cohesion in Panama was undertaken. More than 1,200 people were engaged and 37 in-depth interviews conducted, with a focus on ensuring gender equality throughout the process.
- As a result of the research initiative, a Social Cohesion Notebook was published to examine the drivers impacting social cohesion and to guide public policy and collective action.
- Gender-related evidence arising from the initiative led to the development of a complementary digital employment tool with a specific focus on supporting women's labour market inclusion.

Between 2022 and 2024, Panama experienced increasing social tensions, declining trust in institutions and recurring episodes of large-scale social conflict. These dynamics revealed deeper structural challenges, including persistent inequalities affecting women, youth, Indigenous peoples and other vulnerable groups, as well as growing concerns regarding governance and social cohesion.

In response, UNDP integrated social cohesion as a central pillar of its portfolio approach and, within the framework of the National Human Development Report, developed a dedicated Social Cohesion Notebook[27] using the Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios Project (PAPEP) methodology. The initiative supported through UNDP's Global Programme ---- was the first ever comprehensive national analysis of social cohesion undertaken in Panama. It aimed to provide evidence-based analysis and future scenarios to inform decision-making during a critical political transition following the May 2024 general elections.

The project combined quantitative and qualitative methodologies, including a nationally representative survey of more than 1,200 people and 37 in-depth interviews with stakeholders from government, civil society, academia, the private sector, labour unions, youth organizations, Indigenous and ethnic groups, media and women's organizations. A strong participatory approach ensured that diverse perspectives were incorporated into the analysis and recommendations.

Gender equality was mainstreamed throughout the process. Survey instruments included specific questions on perceptions of gender inequality, while women's participation was promoted in consultations and leadership dialogues. As a result, the project generated important gender-related evidence. Findings confirmed that women continue to face significant inequalities in employment opportunities and income levels. Nearly half of the respondents perceived that gender inequality had increased in recent years, while women – particularly young women – identified employment as one of their most pressing concerns. These insights informed UNDP programming and led to the development of a complementary digital employment tool with a specific focus on supporting women's labour market inclusion.

The project adopted a human rights-based approach, prioritizing the voices of historically marginalized populations and promoting inclusive participation in national reflection processes, while presenting four medium-term prospective scenarios to guide public policy and collective action. It also incorporated social cohesion priorities into the Government Strategic Plan 2025–2029, particularly regarding employment generation, territorial equity and rebuilding trust in institutions. Beyond the analytical products, the project fostered collective reflection and dialogue among national stakeholders, strengthening the foundations for more inclusive governance, conflict prevention and human rights-based development.

27 Available at: https://www.undp.org/es/panama/publicaciones/restaurar-la-confianza-para-garantizar-la-cohesion-social/.

LOOKING FORWARD

UNDP will build on the findings of the Social Cohesion Notebook by supporting the implementation of the new Country Programme 2026–2030 and contributing to national efforts aimed at strengthening social cohesion, inclusive governance and equitable development. Priority actions will address the structural drivers of social fragmentation, particularly inequality, territorial disparities, limited access to quality services and declining trust in institutions. Ongoing multi-stakeholder dialogue will ensure the meaningful participation of women, Indigenous peoples, youth and other marginalized groups, consistent with the Leave No One Behind principle.

A key priority will be supporting initiatives and innovative tools that expand economic opportunities and decent employment, especially for women and young people, in line with the Government Strategic Plan 2025–2029. Through these efforts, the project's results will continue to serve as a catalyst for strengthening democratic governance, preventing conflict, advancing gender equality, and fostering a more cohesive, resilient and inclusive Panama.

THEMATIC SECTIONS

I. JUSTICE FUTURES COLAB

OVERVIEW

In 2025, global access to justice continued to face mounting strain amid democratic backsliding, protracted conflicts, governance shocks and widening social inequalities. Despite incremental institutional reforms in some contexts, the global justice gap remains deep and persistent, with billions of people unable to resolve everyday legal problems or obtain remedies that meaningfully protect their rights.

The World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law Index 2025 showed that the rule of law declined in 68 percent of countries, marking a renewed global recession after a brief period of stabilization. Declines were especially pronounced in civil justice and criminal justice, with affordability, delays, discrimination and lack of legal aid continuing to prevent people – particularly poor, displaced and marginalized groups – from using formal justice systems.

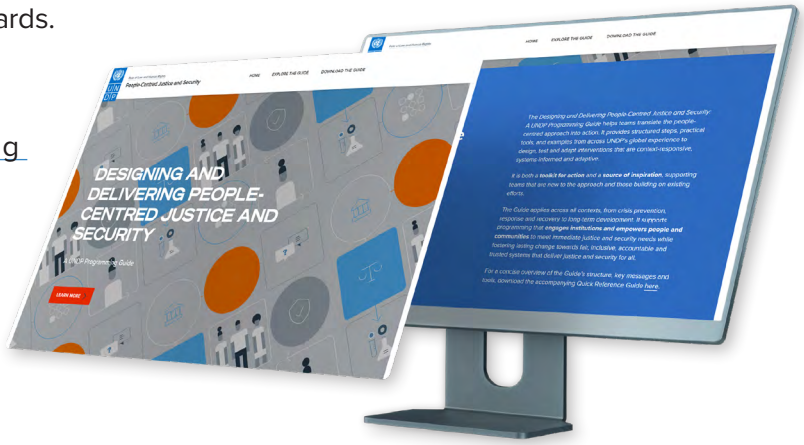
Regionally, progress on access to justice remained uneven. Countries in many OECD contexts generally report stronger justice outcomes on aggregate indicators, while several regions including parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, South Asia, and the Middle East and North Africa continue to face more persistent challenges related to the accessibility and affordability of civil justice, availability of legal aid, and public confidence in justice institutions. These patterns largely reflect differences in institutional capacity, levels of inequality, exposure to conflict and violence, as well as broader governance constraints

Against this backdrop, UNDP's access to justice work in 2025 focused on closing the justice gap through a people-centred, rights-based and conflict-sensitive approach. Across regions, UNDP's justice programming emphasized legitimacy, trust and real-world problem-solving, recognizing that justice is ultimately measured not by institutional performance alone, but by whether people especially women, displaced persons and those living in crisis can resolve their disputes, claim their rights and experience the rule of law in their daily lives.

PEOPLE-CENTRED JUSTICE

In 2025, UNDP consolidated and scaled its people-centred justice programming. This work was anchored in the UNDP People-Centred Justice and Security Policy Framework, which reaffirmed the organization's institutional commitment to justice and security systems that respond to people's lived experiences, rights and priority needs particularly in crisis-affected and fragile settings. The people-centred approach represents a paradigm shift: redefining justice and security not by institutional processes alone, but by the outcomes people experience, including accessibility, fairness, trust and accountability based on human rights standards.

In 2025, UNDP strengthened the enabling environment for people-centred justice by developing and launching the Programming Guidance on People-Centred Justice and Security, providing country offices with practical tools to translate policy commitments into measurable impactful results.



UNDP deepened its global leadership on people-centred justice through sustained engagement in key international partnerships. As Co-Secretariat of the Justice Action Coalition, UNDP translated political commitments into action by leading implementation-focused workstreams and supporting countries to pilot and scale people-centred justice solutions. Through the OECD Justice Roundtable and Justice Leaders' Dialogue, UNDP elevated country-level evidence into global policy debates, positioning justice as a public service that must deliver trust and tangible outcomes for people. At the World Justice Forum, UNDP advanced people-centred justice as a catalyst for peace, governance and sustainable development, showcasing practical innovations from diverse country contexts. UNDP's engagement with the Open Government Partnership strengthened the integration of justice into open governance reforms, reinforcing transparency, participation and accountability as enablers of access to justice. In collaboration with the World Bank through Justice and Law Development Week, UNDP reinforced the rile of environmental justice as a core development investment, aligning people-centred justice with energy just transitions.

In 2025, the JAC Catalytic Fund on People-Centred Justice moved firmly into implementation, supporting locally led and inclusive initiatives designed to reach populations furthest from justice. Building on foundations established in previous years, JAC supported programming in eight countries demonstrating how people-centred approaches can be operationalized in practice linking legal empowerment, accessible dispute resolution mechanisms, digital innovation and community-based services to expand access to justice.

Looking forward

2026 is a pivotal year where UNDP will strengthen the roll out of the people-centred justice and security programming guidance, providing regional and country teams with technical support for programme implementation.

In 2026, UNDP will strengthen its work with the partners under the Justice Action Coalition by continuing the implementation of its people-centred catalytic pilots and highlighting the lessons through a learning compendium that can foster their replication and/or scaling-up to answer to justice challenges.

In addition, UNDP is setting up frameworks for structural change in 18 priority countries as part of its partnership and implementation of Phase 5 of the Global Programme on Rule of Law, Human Rights and Justice for Peace, Security and Development. The four-year country frameworks will provide a coordinated plan for long-term integrated interventions on the rule of law, justice, security, human rights, peacebuilding and local action. These interventions will strengthen national and local justice systems, institutions and frameworks to ensure they deliver accessible, fair and responsive justice services that resolve grievances, reduce drivers of violence, ensure accountability and strengthen trust.

UNDP-led session at the World Justice Forum. Warsaw, 2025 | Photo: UNDP

CUSTOMARY AND INFORMAL JUSTICE

In 2025, UNDP advanced its work on customary and informal justice (CIJ) as a core pillar of people-centred justice systems, recognizing most of the world's population – especially in rural, fragile and conflict-affected contexts – access justice primarily through community-based, customary and informal mechanisms. Rather than treating these systems as peripheral or transitional, UNDP's approach positioned CIJ as an integral part of justice ecosystems, focusing on legitimacy, inclusion, human rights alignment and coherence with formal institutions.

Through extensive country and regional consultations, UNDP commenced the process of the development of a dedicated programming guidance on customary and informal justice developed under a people-centred justice approach.

At the global level, UNDP worked with Justice Action Coalition partners to elevate customary and informal pathways in major forums, including a dedicated convening on strengthening CIJ pathways during the World Justice Forum in Poland explicitly positioning evidence and practice on non-formal justice as central to progress on people-centred justice.

Based on a new strategic partnership, UNDP co-led the conceptualization and holding of a session on customary and informal justice on the margins of the 85th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, contributing to regional dialogue on people-centred justice grounded in African legal pluralism. The engagement helped reinforce collaboration with continental partners and positioned CIJ within ongoing ACHPR policy and partnership processes.

Country examples

In ***Sierra Leone***, people-centred justice investments demonstrated how community-level mechanisms can reduce conflict escalation and expand access where formal services are distant. Mobile legal clinics reached more than 2,100 people across rural communities, with 66 percent of recorded complaints resolved through rights-based alternative dispute resolution. It showed how informal resolution, when supported and connected to justice actors, can deliver timely outcomes and reduce grievance build-up.

UNDP's partnership model in ***Yemen*** demonstrated how inclusive community mechanisms can be institutionalized as part of a broader justice ecosystem. The approach formalized participation quotas for women, youth, persons with disabilities and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in community platforms and supported the embedding of 160 community justice workers (55 percent women) within police stations and local courts, strengthening the interface between informal pathways and formal institutions and reinforcing more coherent referral and service delivery.

Women mediators and paralegals are providing legal ais for women. | Photo: UNDP Yemen

Liberia finalized its Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Act, creating a more affordable and efficient pathway for mediation and arbitration. Community sensitization and training of traditional and formal justice actors across 11 counties increased public understanding of ADR and mobilized national support for the Act's passage.

Looking forward

In 2026, UNDP will consolidate its investment in customary and informal justice by completing dedicated programme guidance to support country offices in designing and implementing people-centred, context-responsive engagement with CIJ systems and mechanisms. Building on this foundation, UNDP will work with Justice Action Coalition partners to advance regional and global convening on CIJ in Sierra Leone, strengthening shared learning, policy coherence, and partnerships. UNDP will also expand the implementation at country level. Under the JAC Catalytic Fund in Ethiopia, UNDP will support community justice systems as part of broader efforts to improve access to justice, trust and social cohesion in fragile and transition settings.

DIGITAL JUSTICE

In 2025, UNDP's work on digital justice evolved towards shaping systemic, people-centred transformation, with particular attention to the responsible and rights-based use of artificial intelligence (AI) in justice systems. Across regions, UNDP observed a rapid expansion of digital tools and AI adoption in courts, prosecution services and legal aid often driven by case backlogs and demand for efficiency. At the same time, uneven digital readiness, weak governance frameworks and rising risks related to bias, opacity and exclusion highlighted that technology alone does not deliver justice. These dynamics reinforced the need for sequencing, safeguards and institutional capacity as central elements of digital justice reform.

Responding to this context, UNDP focused on three strategic priorities. First, UNDP consolidated its e-justice programming foundations, supporting country offices with technical assistance, peer learning and tools to move from fragmented digital solutions towards coherent justice ecosystems.

Second, UNDP significantly scaled its work on rights-based and responsible deployment of AI. As AI tools increasingly entered court administration, legal research document management and decision-support processes, UNDP commenced the development of a draft guidance for country offices, convening internal and regional learning spaces. Justice Futures CoLab sessions on AI governance protocols assessed country needs while providing practical entry points to assess digital readiness, identify risks and define clear boundaries for AI use consistent with judicial independence, transparency, accountability and due process.

Third, UNDP invested in partnerships on access to justice and AI. In partnership with UNICRI's Centre for AI and Robotics, support was provided for a multi-session judicial training programme for Qatari judges focused on AI and the rule of law, responding to growing demand from judicial institutions for guidance on the responsible use of AI in justice systems. Similarly, partnering with UNESCO, UNDP held regional judicial workshop in Asia-Pacific, focused on strengthening capacity on AI governance, accountability and human-rights safeguards as AI adoption accelerates in courts.

Country examples

In ***Brazil,*** UNDP supported the Justice 4.0 initiative, demonstrating how digital platforms and data-driven tools can reduce procedural delays while enabling South-South learning on judicial digitalization across regions. More broadly, in Latin America and the Caribbean, UNDP presented *Justina* (or *Justin* in English), an AI-enabled assistant within the Solutions Radar, a unique database of more than 600 verified justice and security initiatives. *Justina* helps users identify the most relevant experiences to scale up their interventions based on regional best practices.

Read how innovation in Brazil's judiciary brings families together through adoption.

Photo: Erika DePauxis / UNDP Brazil

In ***Bangladesh***, UNDP engagement around AI-enabled translation and digital legal information tools focused on improving accessibility for court users while flagging governance and inclusion considerations early in the digitalization process, aligning technological deployment with people-centred justice objectives.

In ***Liberia,*** UNDP assisted the judiciary in establishing a Judicial Case Management System enabling real-time tracking, recording and reporting of court cases across Montserrado, and trained judicial clerks to ensure sustainability. A complementary Crime Statistics Information Management System at the Liberia National Police now enhances crime data collection, analysis and reporting nationwide.

Looking forward

In 2026, UNDP will further consolidate its digital justice leadership by finalizing Guidance on Artificial Intelligence and Justice, responding to growing demand from national justice institutions for practical, people-centred approaches to emerging technologies. UNDP will also continue to strengthen partnerships with UN agencies and JAC partners to align normative standards, avoid duplication and amplify collective impact on AI governance in justice systems. Through the Justice Futures CoLab, UNDP will initiate the internal rollout of the guidance note.

GENDER JUSTICE

Justice systems continue to reflect and reinforce structural gender inequalities. Women worldwide can access only 64 percent of the legal rights available to men, and more than half of countries still lack consent-based legal definitions of rape, severely limiting pathways to accountability for survivors of gender-based violence. Conflict and crisis further intensify the justice gender gap. In 2024, an estimated 676 million women and girls lived within 50 km of an active conflict, the highest level recorded since the 1990s, with conflict-related sexual violence violations increasing by 87 percent. Progress toward equal rights and justice for women and girls is under growing pressure, as democratic backsliding, institutional fragility and backlash against gender equality are reversing hard-won gains in accountability, representation and legal protection. Structural barriers continue to limit women's access to justice and leadership within justice systems, while regressive narratives undermine trust in public institutions. When justice systems fail to respond to women's needs and realities, exclusion deepens and trust in public institutions weakens. Making justice work for women and girls is therefore essential to preventing instability and building resilient societies.

In response, UNDP works to strengthen gender-responsive, people-centred justice systems that both empower women to claim their rights and ensure institutions deliver fairly and effectively. Through coordinated action at global, regional and country levels, UNDP translates global commitments into regional frameworks and country-level reform. A central vehicle for this work is the Gender Justice Platform, co-led with UN Women. In 2025, the Platform operated in 45 countries and territories to expand women's access to justice, strengthen survivor-centred services, promote judicial leadership and remove structural barriers.

In ***Guatemala***, UNDP facilitated intercultural dialogue between Maya traditional justice leaders and formal justice actors, improving cooperation and case referrals between them. By helping bridge gaps between the formal and informal justice systems, the initiative expanded access to survivor-centred services for Indigenous women and girls, contributing to more responsive justice delivery in Indigenous communities where trust in formal institutions has historically been limited.

These country-level efforts are reinforced by broader regional initiatives that drive reform across countries through shared frameworks and peer networks.

In ***Latin America and the Caribbean***, UNDP commenced the development of a Regional Framework and a Regional Strategy for Justice and Gender. Both tools will guide the support to access to justice and broader reform across countries. As a strategic partner of the Ibero-American Alliance for Access to Justice, UNDP co-developed a key report on women's access to justice in Latin America, identifying structural barriers to gender justice and providing evidence-based analysis to inform these reforms and strengthen survivor-centred justice responses. UNDP also expanded the Gender Equality Seal for Public Institutions: through the Judicial Council in ***Colombia*** and through the Judicial Branch in ***Dominican Republic***. Together, these initiatives provide regional direction, evidence and institutional tools to strengthen how justice systems serve women. During 2025, UNDP also consolidated a regional portfolio on masculinities for gender equality, which will become a strategic pillar of the upcoming Regional Strategy on Gender Justice.

Women judges' leadership builds trust and contributes to lasting peace and sustainable development.

Photo: Aisha Shujune Muhammad

In ***Southeast Asia***, UNDP supported women's judicial leadership to address the persistent underrepresentation of women in senior judicial roles, which can limit inclusive decision-making within courts. The initiative combined research, regional peer networks and judicial leadership forums while supporting courts to integrate gender-responsive reforms into their internal practices. More than 120 women judges from Indonesia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Bangladesh participated in peer exchanges to support leadership development and mentorship, strengthening pathways to senior roles and contributing to more inclusive and responsive justice institutions.

Looking forward

The strategic partnership between UNDP and UN Women under the Gender Justice Platform has been renewed for an additional four-year phase, reinforcing a shared commitment to advancing gender-responsive justice systems, at a time when gains in women's rights and access to justice remain uneven and contested. The next phase will expand the Platform's partnership base, while deepening country-level support to accelerate institutional reform and expand women's access to justice.

Women's leadership in the judiciary will remain a core priority. Through the Gender Justice Platform, UNDP will strengthen data and accountability mechanisms and provide direct support to women judges' networks to advance their leadership, expand their representation in decision-making, and strengthen the credibility and inclusiveness of justice systems.

TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

In 2025, UNDP reinforced its role as a key development actor in transitional justice, advancing people-centred, nationally owned processes that link accountability for past violations to broader peacebuilding, institutional reform and sustainable development outcomes. UNDP's work in transitional justice continued to emphasize the delivery of reforms supporting countries as they operationalize truth, reparations and accountability mechanisms for gross human rights violations while embedding transitional justice within wider rule of law, access to justice and community security efforts.

At the global level, UNDP remained an active member of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Transitional Justice, contributing to system-wide dialogue on the implementation of the Secretary-General's Guidance Note on Transitional Justice, including exchanges on operationalization, country support and emerging priorities. Through this platform, UNDP helped shape global thinking on people-centred and development-anchored approaches to transitional justice and strengthened coherence across UN actors. This engagement was complemented by UNDP's participation in a high-level global transitional justice conference and strategic exchange held in Geneva in December 2025, where UNDP contributed to expert discussions alongside the UN Human Rights Office and other partners, reinforcing its role as a leading development actor in advancing global transitional justice policy and practice.

UNDP strengthened its regional leadership on transitional justice in Africa through sustained engagement with the African Union and direct support to country-level processes, notably in the ***Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)*** and the ***Central African Republic***. UNDP collaborated with the African Union (AU) Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security on advancing the AU Transitional Justice Policy, including support to continental platforms and regional coordination. This engagement translated into concrete country-level impact through UNDP's strategic contribution to the 9th African Transitional Justice Forum in Kinshasa. The Forum provided a critical space to position UNDP as a trusted partner on transitional justice and to reinforce learning exchanges between continental institutions and national stakeholders. Together, these efforts strengthened coherence between regional policy frameworks and country-level implementation of people-centred transitional justice approaches across Africa.

In the DRC, UNDP, in partnership with MONUSCO and the UN Human Rights Office, supported prosecution support cells within the military justice system. This joint approach enhanced national capacity to investigate and prosecute grave crimes, directly linking transitional justice to accountability, deterrence, and confidence-building in state institutions in conflict-affected settings.

Following the Inter-Agency Task Force on Transitional Justice Mission to ***Bangladesh*** in 2024, UNDP supported the development of a Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) project on transitional justice. UNDP engagement was anchored in its work in justice, police and governance reforms in Bangladesh.

In March 2025, a joint mission of the Assistant Secretaries-General, Ms. Shoko Noda (Crisis Bureau, UNDP) and Mr. Alexandre Zouev (DPO/ Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI)) to the ***Central African Republic*** provided high-level political backing for nationally owned transitional justice efforts, with a particular focus on safeguarding the operational continuity and credibility of the Special Criminal Court (SCC). The mission reinforced UN system coherence under the Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law, aligning UNDP, MINUSCA and DPO support around accountability as a cornerstone for peace, stabilization and institutional trust. Follow-up engagements and targeted advocacy with Member States contributed to framing the SCC as a strategic transition mechanism critical to CAR's peace and security architecture.

A session in progress at the Special Criminal Court, CAR. | Photo: UNDP CAR

Looking forward

In 2026, UNDP's transitional justice work will concentrate on supporting implementation in various contexts. This includes continuation of support in countries such as DRC, CAR, Colombia, Gambia, Liberia where transitional justice processes are already underway. In addition, UNDP will work in partnership with other UN Agencies and international partners to support emerging transitional justice issues in contexts such as the Middle East. UNDP will also engage with the Team Europe Democracy as part of the 15th Anniversary of the EU policy on transitional justice and seek partnerships to support initiatives in various contexts.

II. HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEMS

OVERVIEW

In 2025, UNDP advanced human rights as a core dimension of inclusive, sustainable and crisis-responsive development. Through its policy, programming and partnerships, UNDP supported governments, national human rights institutions (NHRIs), civil society and other actors to strengthen implementation of international human rights commitments in practical, nationally owned ways connected to broader governance and development processes. This included support to national human rights systems and NHRIs, including human rights defenders, rights-based digital transformation, stronger human rights mainstreaming through the Human Rights-Based Approach to Development Programming Toolkit and the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy, and targeted work on emerging issues such as the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and the implementation of Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations.

Across these areas, UNDP focused on translating human rights standards into action through stronger institutions, practical tools, digital systems and broad partnerships, helping countries advance prevention, accountability, inclusion and more resilient development outcomes.

SUPPORT TO NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEMS

Strengthening national human rights institutions

In 2025, UNDP continued to strengthen national human rights systems through targeted support to 48 NHRIs, which play a critical role in monitoring human rights, promoting accountability, and advancing inclusive development. Support focused on strengthening institutional governance, enhancing monitoring and investigative capacities, modernizing digital systems, and expanding engagement with governments, civil society, and communities. These efforts reinforced national accountability mechanisms and the role of NHRIs in advancing SDG 16 on peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

Through the TriPartite Partnership (TPP) with the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) and the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), UNDP provided coordinated support to NHRIs across regions, including in-country support to 15 NHRIs and engagement with more than 40 through reference groups, tool development and international fora. Through the TPP, UNDP also developed practical tools to help NHRIs

Detention monitoring by the Malawi Human Rights Commission. | Photo: UNDP Malawi

respond to emerging human rights challenges. The Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment (R2HE) Monitoring Tool helps NHRIs bridge legal, policy and practice gaps by strengthening their ability to monitor environmental harms and their impacts on people. The Digital Readiness Toolkit for National Human Rights Institutions supports NHRIs in assessing digital maturity, identifying readiness gaps, and planning the safe and effective adoption of digital systems. Together, these tools provide adaptable guidance to strengthen NHRI effectiveness in addressing environmental and digital human rights challenges.

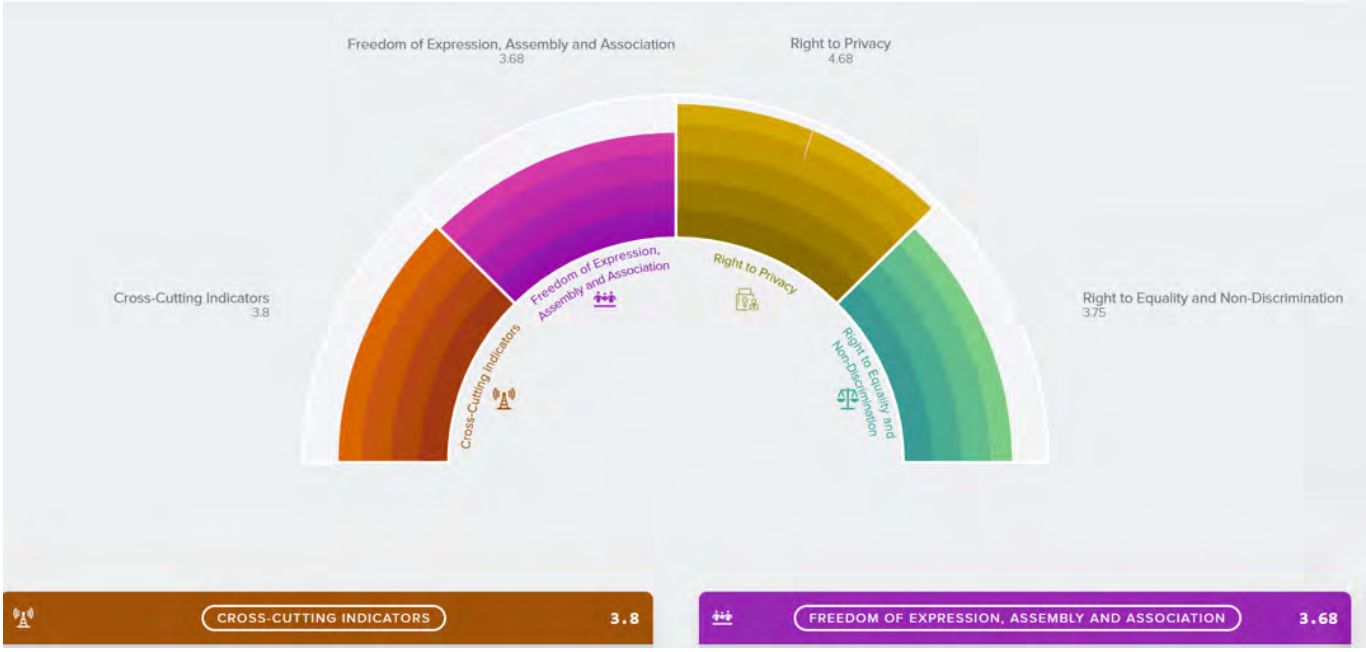
Thematic priorities

Right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment

In 2025, UNDP strengthened capacities on the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment (R2HE) through trainings and knowledge exchanges with judges, lawyers and national human rights institutions. UNDP also initiated an assessment of more than 70 countries to examine how human rights are reflected in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The findings will inform forthcoming guidance to help strengthen the integration of human rights in future NDCs.

Rights-based digital transformation

In 2025, UNDP advanced rights-based digital transformation through the development and launch of the Digital Rights Dashboard (DRD), a new tool that provides a structured framework for understanding digital rights in 147 countries. Aligned with UNDP's wider digital diagnostics, the DRD helps assess how digital transformation is affecting rights including privacy; freedom of expression, assembly and association; equality and non-discrimination; and meaningful access to digital technologies. It responds to growing concern that artificial intelligence (AI) and data-driven systems are creating new risks of bias, exclusion, surveillance, opacity and inadequate accountability, especially for people already at risk of being left behind.



UNDP's Digital Rights Dashboard: A conversation starter on human rights in the digital age.

HUMAN RIGHTS MAINSTREAMING

Human rights-based approach to development programming

In 2025, UNDP strengthened the integration of human rights across development programming through the launch and rollout of the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) to Development Programming Toolkit. As a problem-solving tool for contemporary development challenges, the Toolkit provides practical guidance on applying human rights analysis, identifying and engaging rights holders and duty bearers, and designing programmes that address structural inequalities and barriers to rights realization. It supports programming that is anchored in international human rights standards and the SDGs, grounded in participation, accountability, non-discrimination and transparency, and provides a guide on how to develop more sustainable and effective programming that anticipates risks, prevents crises, and promotes peace. Through training, advisory support and knowledge sharing, UNDP strengthened staff and partner capacity to apply HRBA in programme design, implementation, and monitoring.

Human Rights Due Diligence Policy

In 2025, UNDP applied the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) to all projects engaging with the non-UN security sector and carried out HRDDP assessments in five higher-risk countries and territories, helping ensure that support remained aligned with international human rights standards. Through this work, UNDP strengthened rights-based risk management, monitoring and mitigation in security sector engagement.

STRENGTHENING ENGAGEMENT WITH HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

UPR+

In 2025, UNDP advanced its UPR+ approach as a practical framework for moving beyond the review phase of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and supporting implementation, monitoring and follow-up at the country level. UPR+ helps translate human rights recommendations into concrete governance, policy, institutional and development actions by linking UPR commitments with national planning processes, SDG implementation, and broader human rights and rule of law reforms. Across regions, UNDP supported governments, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations and other stakeholders to strengthen coordination mechanisms, improve data and tracking systems, promote inclusive consultations, and use UPR recommendations as entry points for broader reforms on equality, business and human rights, environmental justice and the protection of marginalized groups. Country experiences also demonstrated the value of connecting UPR follow-up with national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up (NMIRFs); digital monitoring systems; and public accountability processes.

Engagement at the Human Rights Council

In 2025, UNDP engaged at the Human Rights Council to provide evidence-based development perspectives to policy debates and strengthen partnerships for sustainable development. UNDP's strategic engagement contributed practically at 17 thematic and technical discussions at the Human Rights Council to further technical cooperation, including on just transition, business and human rights, climate change, HIV infection, the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle and transitional justice.

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Across regions, targeted support delivered measurable results for national human rights systems:

- ***Nigeria:*** UNDP supported the National Human Rights Commission to expand its digital Human Rights Observatory, enabling the real-time tracking of violations and strengthening evidence-based advocacy on gender-based violence, freedom of expression, law enforcement accountability and child rights. The system produced 12 monthly dashboard reports and 10 thematic analytical briefs, processed complaints from all 36 states, contributed to the resolution of 210 human rights cases, reached over 63,000 people with rights awareness across six states and supported a system through which the Commission recorded more than 3.38 million complaints in 2025.

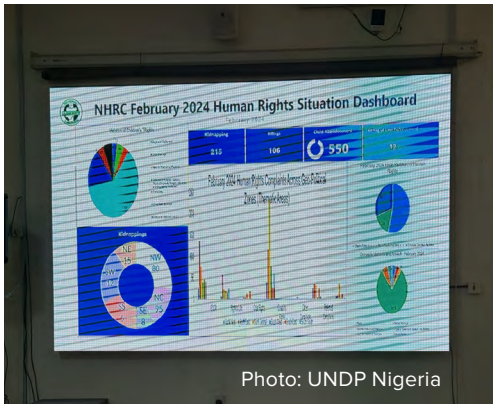


Photo: UNDP Nigeria

- ***Georgia:*** The Public Defender Council strengthened monitoring of the right to water through a dedicated methodology and field monitoring across 35 villages in 15 municipalities, producing a special report with 10 recommendations for Parliament, central government and local authorities to guide a more strategic policy response on water access and quality, and the needs of vulnerable groups.
- ***Timor-Leste:*** The Provedoria dos Direitos Humanos e Justiça delivered nationwide training to 520 civil servants on human rights, anti-corruption and public administration standards, enabling more consistent application of good-governance principles across the public service, and reinforcing the institution's role in prevention and accountability. It also monitored implementation of the National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities across 11 institutions, generating evidence to support reform on discrimination, disability data and inclusive public policy.
- ***Georgia, Malawi, Paraguay*** and ***Samoa:*** A pilot application of the Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment (R2HE) Monitoring Tool strengthened NHRI capacity to monitor environmental harms and connect them to human rights impacts, generating evidence for follow-up action in contexts ranging from safe water to mining-related pollution and plastic pollution.
- ***Nigeria, Pakistan*** and the ***State of Palestine:*** Pilot use of the Digital Readiness Toolkit helped NHRIs assess digital maturity, identify readiness gaps, and define priorities for governance, data protection and digital transformation, strengthening the Toolkit's practical relevance across diverse institutional contexts.
- ***Colombia, Lebanon, Mauritania, North Macedonia*** and ***Samoa:*** Pilot use of the Digital Rights Dashboard generated country-specific feedback that helped refine the methodology, including clearer indicators, stronger alignment with national data sources, and improved guidance for interpreting findings in different development and crisis contexts. The process also resulted in five Country Insight documents, demonstrating how the Dashboard can be applied and interpreted in practice.
- ***Arab States, Bosnia and Herzegovina, India*** and ***Viet Nam:*** UNDP worked with country offices and national partners to strengthen the understanding and application of the Human Rights-Based Approach to Development Programming Toolkit, reinforcing a more coordinated approach to mainstreaming human rights across development policies and programmes.
- ***Armenia:*** Through UPR+, UNDP supported efforts to align the Human Rights Action Plan with UPR recommendations and broader international commitments, while also contributing to the establishment of a national mechanism for UPR implementation to strengthen coordination among parliament, government, judiciary, civil society and the Human Rights Defender Office.

PARTNERSHIPS

UNDP's support to national human rights systems in 2025 was grounded in partnerships across the UN system and with regional and national actors. Through the TriPartite Partnership (TPP) with the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) and the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), UNDP provided coordinated support to NHRIs across regions, including in-country support to 15 NHRIs and engagement with more than 40 through reference groups, tool development and international fora. The R2HE Monitoring Tool was developed in partnership with OHCHR, GANHRI and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), while both the R2HE tool and the Digital Readiness Toolkit drew on reference groups of NHRIs and technical experts to ensure that they are practical, adaptable and responsive to diverse institutional realities. These partnerships helped strengthen NHRI monitoring, policy engagement, public outreach and data analysis, while creating space for institutions to shape global policy and programming on emerging human rights issues.

The Digital Rights Dashboard was developed through a consultative process involving UNDP Country Offices, academic partners and digital rights experts, with methodology peer-reviewed by OHCHR and the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR), and launched with DIHR and the Geneva Human Rights Platform. UNDP's UPR+ work was advanced in partnership with governments, OHCHR, UPR Info, NHRIs and civil society. Partnerships and knowledge exchange also helped expand the application of the Human Rights-Based Approach across climate action, digital governance and crisis prevention, including through collaboration with the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), DIHR, OHCHR, Norway and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

Looking forward

In 2026, UNDP will continue strengthening national human rights systems through targeted institutional support, digital innovation and partnerships. Priorities include scaling up digital tools for human rights monitoring, reporting and follow-up, deepening NHRI support especially in crisis and fragile contexts, supporting practical follow-up to engagement with international mechanisms such as the Universal Periodic Review process, and supporting responses to emerging challenges including climate change, digital governance and crisis and how these impact human rights defenders. A key focus will be the launch and rollout of flagship tools developed through the TPP, including the Digital Readiness Toolkit and the Right to a Healthy Environment Monitoring Tool.

UNDP will also expand implementation of the Digital Rights Dashboard in additional countries, building on the 2025 Pilot Country Insights to generate practical analytical products, strengthen institutional capacity, and provide disaggregated evidence for rights-based digital policy and practice. UNDP will also scale up UPR+ to help translate human rights recommendations into nationally owned development and governance action, including through stronger support for implementation and follow-up, expanded use of digital tracking systems, closer alignment between UPR, treaty body, and SDG reporting, and more effective NMIRFs and national coordination structures. At the same time, UNDP will continue rolling out its human rights mainstreaming tools across the organization, including through training, targeted capacity support and localized case studies, while launching the Human Rights Marker in UNDP's internal enterprise resource planning system to strengthen planning, implementation, accountability and the analysis of human rights results across the portfolio.

III. BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

OVERVIEW

In 2025, the UNDP Global Business and Human Rights (B+HR) Initiative expanded to 51 countries and territories in Africa, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean with support from the European Union (EU), Iceland, Japan, Liechtenstein,[28] the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Through the initiative, UNDP assisted governments, businesses, civil society organizations, labour organizations, national human rights institutions (NHRIs), human rights defenders, media and others in advancing responsible business practices.

BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS: GLOBAL COVERAGE

In 2025, UNDP expanded its work on business and human rights (BHR) in the Arab States and Central Asia, launching new projects in Jordan, Kazakhstan, Libya, the State of Palestine and Uzbekistan, while bolstering efforts in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

As part of its new Business Case for Human Rights project, UNDP examined how businesses' human rights performance impacts their financial performance. Based on a five-year analysis of 235 large businesses, the flagship study 'Human Rights vs. Competitiveness: A False Dilemma?' presented first-of-its-kind empirical evidence demonstrating that corporate investments in human rights generate subsequent financial benefit. Within the first three months following its publication, the study was downloaded over 2,430 times.

In 2025, UNDP sustained its thought leadership and continued setting practice for business in the 'peace' and 'sustainable finance' thematic areas, publishing the 'Training Facilitation Guide on Heightened Human Rights Due Diligence' and the 'Guide for Investors on Meaningful Engagement with Survivors of Modern Slavery'. The latter was informed by consultations with 40 adults and children with lived experience of modern slavery, including 19 individuals who had been abused in the extractives sector in the *Democratic Republic of Congo*.

UNDP continued to play an instrumental role in the Global Community of Practice on Business and Conflict by co-hosting it with the TASC Platform and Geneva Trade Platform, serving on its Advisory Board and facilitating practitioners' meetings. The annual meeting of the community of practice, organized in partnership with the UN Global Compact and the Principles for Responsible Investment, convened 150 stakeholders, including 25 businesses and 25 investors.

To accelerate South–South exchanges, peer learning and collaboration on BHR, UNDP and its partners convened annual regional forums and dialogues in Africa and Asia-Pacific as well as the first cross-regional dialogue between Africa and the Arab States. Together, the three events delivered 142 sessions to more than 2,000 stakeholders participating in person.

28 Including the Government, LGT Group, and Tarom Foundation.

UNDP's technical assistance to governments in strengthening regulatory environments for BHR yielded significant results. National Action Plans (NAPs) on BHR were adopted in ***Ghana*** and ***Malaysia***, and are being developed in ***Brazil, Ethiopia, Jordan, Libya, Malawi, the State of Palestine, Uzbekistan*** and ***Zambia***. In ***Madagascar***, UNDP convened a multi-stakeholder dialogue on corporate respect for human rights in the mining sector and supported the Ministry of Mines in conducting a sector-specific diagnostic study to inform the upcoming NAP on BHR. In ***Rwanda***, the Commission for Human Rights led the preparations to design the NAP, including through a National Baseline Assessment of relevant laws and policies. In addition, the practices of 390 companies were screened to assess working conditions, child labour prevention, non-discrimination and gender equality. This video illustrates UNDP's BHR progress in Rwanda.

With UNDP's support, the Governments of ***Thailand*** and ***Indonesia*** initiated the drafting of mandatory human rights due diligence legislation – the first of its kind in developing countries.

In 2025, UNDP enhanced its capacity-strengthening support to the business sector, delivering training to 5,840 businesses globally. For example, 472 businesses in ***Mongolia*** and 382 businesses in ***Pakistan*** benefited from UNDP's training on human rights due diligence and grievance mechanisms. In ***Libya***, 178 businesses, including state-owned enterprises from the energy sector, and 30 small- and medium- enterprises (SMEs) in ***Ukraine*** were trained on heightened human rights due diligence in conflict-affected contexts. In the financial sector, UNDP strengthened the human rights capacities of 40 banks in ***Bangladesh***, as well as 30 banks and insurance businesses in ***Thailand***.

Additionally, UNDP was contracted by Tata Sons Private Pvt. Ltd. in India to deliver tailored human rights due diligence training to 15 businesses within the group, adapted to their sector, operational context, ownership and structure.

To further strengthen business accountability, UNDP promoted international BHR standards among the judiciary, law enforcement agencies, legal aid providers and NHRIs. Thirteen NHRIs[29] in the Arab States became better equipped to monitor corporate human rights performance, investigate business-related complaints and facilitate access to remedy. In ***the State of Palestine***, 30 judges and prosecutors received training on access to remedy for rights-holders adversely affected by businesses, supported by practical case scenarios related to potential human rights abuses in the Gaza Strip during reconstruction efforts.

Strengthening human rights due diligence across Japanese companies and their supply chain partners. | Photo: UNDP India

29 From Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, the State of Palestine, and Sudan.

Looking forward

In 2026, UNDP will continue advancing responsible business practices globally, building on existing workstreams. This will include launching a practical tool for investors on heightened human rights due diligence and conducting the second empirical study under the "Business Case for Human Rights" project, focusing on SMEs.

UNDP will also explore new programming on BHR and artificial intelligence (AI), human-rights-aligned public procurement and corporate taxation, while scaling its work on NAPs, (mandatory) human rights due diligence, public accountability mechanisms and finance to combat modern slavery.

SUPPORTING RESPONSIBLE SUPPLY CHAINS WITH SUPPORT FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN

The four years of partnership on BHR between UNDP and the Government of Japan has made a clear and lasting contribution to global efforts on responsible supply chains. The cooperation supported policy development end to end – from initial design to adoption – with the NAPs on BHR in ***Ghana***, ***Kyrgyzstan*** and ***Nepal*** standing out as notable examples. Further, Japan-UNDP cooperation advanced BHR policies in 17 additional countries, leading to the adoption of responsible business frameworks in Indonesia, and the initiation of NAPs processes in ***Brazil***, ***Cambodia***, ***Mexico***, ***Tunisia*** and others. Since 2022, more than 5,000 companies across 20 countries have received direct support to carry out human rights due diligence, including in conflict-affected contexts.

The year 2025 spanned two phases of the UNDP-Japan project on responsible supply chains. January to March marked the final stage of Phase III, with activities implemented *in* ***Brazil***, ***Cambodia***, ***India***, ***Indonesia***, ***Japan***, ***Kyrgyzstan*** *and* ***Nepal***. From April to December, Phase IV expanded to include ***Viet Nam*** and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), alongside continued engagement in ***Brazil***, ***Cambodia***, ***India***, ***Indonesia*** and ***Japan***.

Through the established methodology of the B+HR Academy, the project continued strengthening the capacities of Japanese businesses and their supply chain partners on international BHR standards. In 2025, UNDP delivered a total of 18 training sessions and 17 in-depth guiding sessions across four countries, reaching more than 1,180 professionals from 660 businesses.

In ***Brazil***, for example, UNDP collaborated with the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) and local chambers of industry to deliver cross-sectoral training on human rights due diligence. In India, the project organized industry-specific seminars for the automotive, apparel, electronics and information and communications technology (ICT) sectors. In ***Viet Nam***, consultations with the private sector and C-suite roundtables focused on human rights impact assessments. In Japan, in addition to training activities, UNDP and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs co-hosted the Annual BHR Dialogue, with a focus on human rights due diligence and SMEs.

The project also continued enhancing national regulatory environments on BHR. In ***Brazil***, UNDP played an instrumental role in finalizing the NAP, which is expected to be adopted in 2026. In ***Cambodia***, it supported the Government in assessing the national business landscape from a trade perspective. UNDP also issued the policy brief 'Advancing Responsible Business Practices in Cambodia' to discuss the importance of corporate respect for human rights in maintaining trade competitiveness, following the country's graduation from the status of a least developed country (LDC).

In ***Indonesia***, the project established the National Strategy on BHR platform to facilitate the exchange of good practices and implementation challenges related to the adopted NAP among national stakeholders. It also supported the Ministry of Human Rights in initiating the development of mandatory human rights due diligence legislation. In ***Kyrgyzstan***, following the adoption of the NAP on BHR, UNDP partnered with the Ministry of Economy and Commerce to raise awareness among state authorities.

At the regional level, UNDP partnered with ASEAN to facilitate peer learning and networking, raise awareness and provide guidance on international BHR standards, as well as relevant Japanese laws and policies applicable to Japanese businesses and their suppliers across ASEAN Member States.

As part of the seventh UN Responsible BHR Forum in Asia-Pacific, UNDP hosted a session on responsible business practices in ASEAN, in cooperation with the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, the Institute of Developing Economies of JETRO, the Global Compact Network Japan and the Permanent Mission of Japan to ASEAN.

Looking forward

In 2026, following the conclusion of Phase IV of the project, a new phase will be launched in April, focusing on aligning responsible business and trade policies between Japan and six emerging economies: *Brazil, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia* and *Mexico*.

The success of the 2025 engagement between Japanese and ASEAN businesses will be carried forward through the establishment of the *ASEAN-Japan Responsible Business Collective*. This network, comprising business associations from all the ASEAN countries as well as Japan, will provide a platform to discuss and develop joint recommendations aimed at fostering a policy and practice environment conducive to both responsible business conduct and increased trade. Contributions from the Collective will feed into ongoing regulatory processes such as NAPs on BHR and legislation on mandatory human rights due diligence.

IV. COMMUNITY SECURITY

OVERVIEW

In 2025, the global security and development landscape remained under severe strain as protracted conflicts, geopolitical fragmentation and transnational threats continued to erode development gains and social cohesion. In recent years, violent conflicts imposed an estimated US$19.1 trillion cost on the global economy – equivalent to 13.5 percent of global GDP – with military and internal security expenditures accounting for the largest share of these expenses (Institute for Economics & Peace, *Global Peace Index 2024*). Armed conflict reached historic levels, with the highest number of state-based conflicts recorded since 1946, particularly in the Sahel, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and parts of Latin America and the Caribbean (Uppsala Conflict Data Program; PRIO Conflict Trends 2024).

Insecurity increasingly extended beyond battlefields. Weak governance and limited accountability in the security and justice sectors continued to enable corruption, organized crime and armed violence. In 2025, 122 of 182 countries scored below 50 on the Corruption Perceptions Index, underscoring persistent institutional fragility (Transparency International, CPI 2025). Gender-based violence remained pervasive, with nearly one in three women globally experiencing physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, and conflict-affected contexts facing the highest prevalence (UN Women). Digital insecurity also intensified, with 2025 projections of global cybercrime costs reaching over US$10 trillion annually, undermining public trust and economic resilience (World Economic Forum).

Against this backdrop, UNDP reinforced a people-centred, preventive and governance-driven approach to security, positioning security and justice institutions as enablers of sustainable development. Through support to accountable security sector governance, community-oriented policing, access to justice and inclusive participation, UNDP addressed the root causes of insecurity – exclusion, weak institutions and fractured state-society relations – while aligning security sector support with development planning, SDG 16 and national prevention priorities.

GLOBAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERSHIP: PROMOTING PEOPLE-CENTRED SECURITY

Through innovative partnerships UNDP drove transformative change, paving the way for more resilient, inclusive and secure societies.

Shaping a vision on *hybrid security governance* and engagement with non-state, hybrid and de facto authorities in fragile and conflict-affected settings remained a priority. Through its regional hub in Amman and in partnership with the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), UNDP supported two regional workshops for the Arab States to identify risks, opportunities and coherent approaches to engagement with hybrid governance structures. A policy paper, based on UNDP country offices' experiences in several geographical contexts, on such engagement is being developed.

Complementing this policy work, UNDP and the Gender Section of the Peacebuilding, Peace Support Office (PBSO) launched the development of a *people-centred security and justice perception survey tool*. This standardized and scalable digital instrument will generate evidence on how communities as well as security and justice personnel perceive access, quality, accountability, inclusivity and trust in formal and informal institutions, with a strong focus on gender equality. This evidence will be critical to shape policy reform and programme design, respond to early warning signals to prevent conflict and enable continuous monitoring.

Policy design and rights-based responses to emerging technologies stood out as another priority in 2025. With Qatar's National Human Rights Institution, UNDP co-hosted a conference on artificial intelligence (AI) and human rights. A dedicated session on AI, the security sector and the military facilitated dialogue among

governments, civil society, academia and international organizations on managing risks while leveraging technology in ways that are consistent with human rights, the rule of law and democratic governance.

Finally, UNDP enhanced its support to recovery and peacebuilding through practical policy solutions and regional dialogue. A key deliverable was the *Early Recovery Community Security Package*, linking security and justice to stabilization and early recovery. The package offers ready-to-deploy guidance, including step-by-step implementation tools, project initiation plans, templates and country examples, to enable rapid programmatic action as crisis unfolds.

On a global policy level, UNDP engaged with the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI) of the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO) and the Peacebuilding Commission as part of the 2025 UN Peacebuilding Architecture Review. At the regional level, UNDP supported the review and strengthened implementation of the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in the Great Lakes Region and Horn of Africa in partnership with the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons (RECSA).

Looking forward

The Governance, Rule of Law and Peacebuilding (GRP) Hub fosters deeper integration across the portfolios. This creates a stronger platform to synergize community security initiatives with complementary thematic areas, including peacebuilding, conflict prevention and local governance. Early advancements include UNDP's engagement with non-state and hybrid actors delivering essential services, including in the security sector.

Moving forward, UNDP will use its new tools and expand partnerships to make security a reality for all, especially in conflict-affected and fragile contexts. It will further respond to challenges stemming from digitalization and the use of AI in the security sector.

Security programming will remain adaptive, inclusive and responsive to evolving global challenges.

With Qatar's NHRI, UNDP co-hosted a conference on AI and human rights. | Photo: UNDP

POLICE AS A SERVICE FOR PEOPLE

In 2025, UNDP continued to deliver a coherent, people-centred approach to security and the rule of law, combining institutional reform with community-level engagement.

In many fragile, crisis or post-crisis contexts, UNDP provided consistent multi-year support to the police reform. This included catalytic funding, expert and advisory services, capacity-building, and construction works. In Iraq, the police completed systemic transformation based on human rights and inclusion. More women joined the ranks. Notably, a national security framework integrated the need to address climate challenges. This provision improved coordination among public institutions and led to strengthened capacities to enforce environmental security.

In ***Somalia***, UNDP strengthened accountable policing at federal and state levels, including through the Joint Police Programme with the UN Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNTMIS). Over the past years, in certain areas – for example, in Galmudug state – policing services were rolled out for the first time, improving safety and security for the communities.

Through legislative reform, governance training and inclusive political dialogue, security was strengthened in The Gambia. Building on UNDP's catalytic engagement since 2017, a new US$3 million four-year project was launched in 2025 funded by the Peacebuilding Fund to further implement the National Security Sector Reform Strategy.

In ***Armenia***, the establishment of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the nationwide rollout of a Patrol Police Service marked system transformation towards service-oriented, accountable policing.

Furthermore, UNDP supported police institutions amid acute crisis and sensitive political transitions by strengthening their capacity to deliver rights-based security services under pressure. In ***Bangladesh***, nationwide consultations with communities, youth, civil society and police leadership informed an inclusive dialogue on accountability, legislative reform and digital transformation. In ***Sudan***, the police strengthened their frontline responses to sexual and gender-based violence. In 2025, UNDP facilitated targeted trainings for 100 officers, improving survivor-centred, trauma-informed investigations and coordination. Police unit-level action plans were developed to institutionalize improved practices and rebuild community trust.

Community policing remained a key pillar of UNDP's support. By strengthening trust and accountability between police and communities, it enhanced legitimacy and social cohesion, while engagement with local leaders and civil society helped police better identify and respond to priority security concerns, improving prevention, early warning mechanisms and locally driven solutions.

In ***Tunisia***, UNDP has adapted community policing to the context of the country, focusing on prevention. Nineteen local security committees were established nationwide, each guided by local security diagnostics conducted with the Ministry of Interior. In one locality, these efforts led businesses to commit to employing young people who had dropped out of school, helping to reduce youth involvement in crime.

In Tunisia, UNDP supports the Ministry of Interior in providing people-centred security services. In the South, the National Guard has engaged persons who are deaf or hard of hearing to ensure that services reflect their real needs.

Photo: UNDP Tunisia / Ala Zemzmi

In ***Burkina Faso***, where long distances and limited public transportation hinder access to security services, UNDP supported the construction of police stations in remote areas and equipped patrol units with transportation to improve mobility and response times. Complemented by capacity-building for police officers and local leaders involved in community policing, these efforts have expanded access to security services, as reported by the Ministry of Security. Trust in law enforcement has also increased, and in some areas newly constructed police stations have doubled as service hubs. For example, in the town of Boromo, residents can access potable water at police facilities, strengthening the link between security provision and essential services.

Looking forward

In 2026 and beyond, UNDP will further scale community-based approaches, strengthen the meaningful participation of women in security institutions and reinforce oversight and accountability mechanisms. It will continue to leverage innovation and emerging technologies, while deepening international partnerships to support more effective, inclusive and accountable security sector reforms that advance sustainable peace and development.

INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIP TO COMBAT TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Building on the success of Phase I (2024–2025), UNDP and the Korean National Police Agency (KNPA) launched Phase II (2025–2027) of the global project "Police Support for Effective Prevention and Response to Cybercrimes and Gender-based Violence and Harassment." This phase expands critical support to 12 new partner countries across Africa, the Arab States, Asia-Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

In 2025, UNDP and KNPA supported seven partner countries (***Indonesia, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic (LAO PDR), Mexico, North Macedonia, Sierra Leone and Thailand***) in bolstering law enforcement and judicial accountability and enhancing civil society's capacity for awareness raising, data collection and analysis. By employing a people-centred approach and a 'whole-of-society' mandate, UNDP reinforced the rule of law and established victim/survivor-centered ecosystems in partner countries.

To exchange good practices and explore strategies for cross-sector collaboration, UNDP and KNPA convened a Global Policy Dialogue on technology-facilitated gender-based violence and cybersecurity. Over 100 participants from 12 countries, including government agencies, civil society and the private sector, focused on strengthening legal frameworks and ensuring victim/survivor-centred protection in the digital era.

These efforts translated into concrete results at the country level, where partnerships with national institutions strengthened capacities, systems and responses to technology-facilitated gender-based violence.

- ***Indonesia:*** The e-learning module on technology-facilitated gender-based violence was integrated into the curriculum of the Police Education and Training Institute to ensure sustained capacity-building, with plans underway to incorporate the course into the Police Women's Academy curriculum.
- ***Kenya:*** Collaboration with the National Police Leadership Academy (NPLA) has advanced the integration of technology-facilitated gender-based violence components and digital investigative skills into core police training programmes.
- ***Lao PDR:*** A comprehensive Capacity Needs Assessment was completed, identifying systemic gaps in digital forensics and survivor-centred practices within law enforcement.

- ***North Macedonia:*** In partnership with the Ministry of Interior, a public awareness campaign using Forum Theatre was launched, alongside the development of a multidisciplinary training module for service providers and the mapping of civil society organizations to strengthen national referral pathways.
- ***Thailand:*** A national forum convened with parliamentarians contributed to strengthening the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act and Domestic Violence Protection Bill. Stakeholders agreed on six priority actions, including clarifying the definition of gender-based violence national legislation and advancing digital safety measures.
- ***Mexico:*** In partnership with the Ministry of Women, a national roadmap to address gender-based violence was designed; the eMonitor+ platform operationalized and regional South-South knowledge exchanges facilitated to strengthen digital monitoring capacities.
- ***Sierra Leone:*** UNDP coordinated a technical working group on police reform and mapped the risks of technology-facilitated gender-based violence across universities. A national symposium involving over 350 students helped establish reporting networks across universities.

At the Global Policy Dialogue in Bangkok, UNDP and the Korean National Police Agency recommitted to global action to stop technology-facilitated gender-based violence.

Photo: UNDP

Looking forward

Looking ahead, UNDP will scale hands-on learning and technical exchanges to strengthen institutional capacities, while developing standardized tools for digital forensics and survivor-centred investigations. It will also deepen joint thought leadership with partners and expand the use of digital systems and survivor-focused approaches across programming, positioning digital safety as a core priority within national policy agendas.

Additionally, UNDP will continue to deepen its focus on operationalizing the security-development nexus by supporting countries in integrating development consideration into security sector strategies, while also recognizing security as an enabler of sustainable development within national development plans. In this regard, UNDP will further engage in global platforms to showcase evidence-based and people-centred approaches demonstrating how inclusive and accountable security governance can reinforce development outcomes and contribute to sustainable peace, while offering an alternative to increasingly securitized global narratives.

SALIENT: SAVING LIVES ENTITY

The Saving Lives Entity (SALIENT)[30] is a global joint programme of UNDP and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) that supports people-centred security, armed violence reduction and strengthened small arms and light weapons (SALW) control in selected countries. SALIENT contributes to peacebuilding outcomes by addressing the root causes, risks and impacts of armed violence through governance reform, prevention-oriented approaches and inclusive national ownership.

Since its inception in 2021, SALIENT has supported ten countries across Africa, Central Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, focusing on conflict and post-conflict settings as well as contexts with high levels of violence. Tailored to national priorities, interventions combine policy support, capacity-building, community-level prevention and evidence-based programming. Country-level impact is complemented by comparative learning and cross-regional exchange, strengthening coherence, effectiveness and scalability.

In 2025, SALIENT operated in eight countries, reflecting a combination of multi-year engagements and catalytic, time-bound interventions aligned with emerging political opportunities.

Strengthening small arms control and conflict prevention through systemic change, inclusion and national ownership

In 2025, SALIENT supported a shift from fragmented responses towards nationally coordinated SALW governance frameworks anchored in state institutions. SALW control was increasingly accepted as a core function of security governance and peacebuilding, rather than a standalone technical intervention. Gender-responsive and youth-inclusive programming matured from participation targets to structural changes in policy, practice and evidence generation. Prevention efforts resulted in community violence reduction and voluntary disarmament, showing the strongest impact where governance reform, community engagement and socio-economic alternatives have converged.

- ***Mali*** finalized and validated its National Action Plan on SALW 2026-2030, alongside complementary strategies and technical tools, embedding SALW control within broader peacebuilding and governance reforms. Women were actively engaged in SALIENT action, constituting over 50 percent of all participants. Women, Peace and Security (WPS) as well as Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agendas were embedded within national SALW frameworks.
- ***Kyrgyzstan*** institutionalized an inter-agency coordination mechanism under the Security Council Secretariat and operationalized a digital weapons registry, strengthening compliance with international instruments. National partners produced the first sex-disaggregated dataset on the impact of small arms and light weapons, and integrated gender-based violence screening and women's representation into legislative reform processes.
- ***Papua New Guinea*** advanced a nationally owned SALW National Action Plan, informed by the first comprehensive small arms survey in two decades. Qualitative evidence emerged showing shifts in youth attitudes toward weapons through participatory and norm-changing interventions.
- Building on SALIENT pilot engagement in 2021-2023, ***South Sudan*** demonstrated catalytic progress in firearms registration, voluntary civilian disarmament and stockpile management, despite extreme fragility. Measurable reductions in armed violence were documented in states where voluntary civilian disarmament was paired with livelihoods and community sensitization. In addition, South Sudan institutionalized the networks of women police officers, linking SALW control to the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence.

30 For more information, see: https://www.undp.org/rolhr/community-security/salient and https://disarmament.unoda.org/en/conventional-arms-initiatives/salient-savings-lives-entity

- ***Lebanon*** initiated SALIENT support in a politically sensitive, post-conflict context, focusing on strategic assessment and stockpile management capacities in support of the State's monopoly on the use of force and implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1701.
- ***Ghana*** recorded zero gun-related incidents in SALIENT-supported constituencies during the 2024–2025 electoral cycle.
- In ***Honduras, Jamaica*** and ***Panama***, SALIENT continued to scale school- and community-based prevention approaches addressing early exposure to armed violence. Panama generated evidence linking firearms, schools and gendered vulnerability, shaping revised protection protocols.

Global learning, knowledge exchange and collective reflection

In 2025, SALIENT significantly strengthened its convening function. The "Global learning event: Lessons learned from SALW control and armed violence reduction programming" brought together all beneficiary countries and SALIENT donors. This programme-wide forum enabled structured South–South and cross-regional exchange, candid reflection on results and challenges, as well as dialogue between countries, donors and partners on prevention-centred, gender-responsive and people-centred approaches to SALW control and armed violence reduction.

Building on the discussions and thematic sessions, a SALIENT Lessons Learned Report was produced, synthesizing cross-cutting insights on governance reform, prevention, gender and youth inclusion, data and evidence, innovation and sustainability.

SALIENT global learning event brought together all beneficiary countries and SALIENT donors. | Photo: UNDP

Transition towards SALIENT 2.0

In the second half of 2025, SALIENT entered a new strategic phase with the launch of SALIENT 2.0, building on accumulated evidence, lessons learned and country-level results from the initial phase.

SALIENT 2.0 aims to:

- Consolidate and scale nationally owned SALW governance reforms;
- Deepen prevention-oriented, gender-responsive and youth-inclusive approaches;
- Strengthen linkages between SALW control, human security, justice and development; and
- Expand cross-regional learning and South–South cooperation.

Concurrently, resource mobilization efforts for SALIENT 2.0 were initiated, engaging existing and prospective donors to ensure continuity, scalability and longer-term impact beyond pilot and catalytic interventions.

Looking forward

By the end of 2025, SALIENT was firmly positioned as a globally coherent, prevention-focused and learning-driven programme. Based on the evaluation of SALIENT's first phase, SALIENT 2.0 has introduced a revised management and administrative structure that enhances efficiency and coordination.

In 2026 and over the next three years, SALIENT will roll out country-level and global activities to mobilize catalytic support for enhanced SALW control and armed violence reduction at national, local and cross-border levels. These efforts will be organized around three mutually reinforcing outcomes: (1) strengthened national systems and structures that create an enabling environment from a development perspective; (2) the delivery of gender-responsive SALW control and armed violence reduction that have a positive impact on human security and development; and (3) evidence-based global policy engagement that informs high-quality programming. The number of countries and the scope of activities will depend on resource mobilization.

SEESAC: SMALL ARMS CONTROL FOR A SAFER SOUTH EAST AND EAST EUROPE

The continued circulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons (SALW) pose persistent risks to public safety, undermine the rule of law and affect stability across Southeast and East Europe. Established by UNDP and the Regional Cooperation Council, Southeastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC), serves as a key initiative supporting authorities in responding to these challenges.

Throughout 2025, SEESAC continued reinforcing the capacities of authorities to strengthen accountable and inclusive security sector institutions by providing targeted expertise, facilitating regional cooperation, and delivering practical support, and contributed to a growing global recognition of the Western Balkans Roadmap as a model for arms control.

Regional cooperation at the policy and operational level advanced through two principal platforms – Regional SALW Commissions Process and the South East Europe Firearms Experts Network (SEEFEN), which continued to convene regular meetings and facilitate ongoing exchange among representatives from the ***Western Balkans, the Republic of Moldova*** and ***Ukraine***.

Legislative harmonization with the EU acquis advanced through targeted gap assessments, expert assistance and a dedicated regional workshop in Brussels for representatives of ***Western Balkans***,

Republic of Moldova and ***Ukraine***. Additionally, ***Bosnia and Herzegovina***, ***Montenegro***, and ***North Macedonia*** were supported in strengthening their SALW and explosives legislation. In parallel, several jurisdictions made tangible progress in adopting new SALW strategies, including in ***Albania***, ***Bosnia and Herzegovina***, ***Moldova*** and ***Serbia***.

Institutional capacities to counter arms trafficking and investigate firearm-related crimes were improved through SALW-related Standard Operating Procedures and training for customs administration across the Western Balkans, coupled with specialized trainings and regular regional exchanges for criminal police. Strengthening of analytical capacities for firearm related investigation was supported through the operationalization of Firearms Focal Points. As part of this process, equipment was provided, training, and annual workshop organized. Support was also provided to Crime Scene Investigation units, with their forensic and investigative capacities upgraded with EU-aligned training and equipment.

Efforts to improve physical security and stockpile management contributed to the destruction of 2,177 SALW pieces in the ***Republic of Moldova***, 842 in ***Bosnia and Herzegovina***, and 381 in ***Kosovo***[31]. Furthermore, activities aimed at security upgrades of the six evidence rooms' locations of the General Police Inspectorate in the Republic of Moldova were ongoing, directly reducing the risk of diversion and misuse.

Gender mainstreaming reached an important milestone: police officers trained through SEESAC's Training of Trainers programme delivered jurisdiction-level trainings on gender-responsive firearms licensing and risk assessment use of firearms in domestic violence to 133 colleagues across five jurisdictions, striving toward nationally owned and sustainable delivery. Regional cooperation and information sharing among civil society organisations were further strengthened through a dedicated regional workshop with specific focus on Gender and SALW, gathering 18 organisations from across the Western Balkans. Two regional analysis on institutional response to firearms misuse in domestic violence and women's participation in SALW control further enriched the evidence base.

Law enforcement authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina destroyed 1,958 weapons and 1,981 weapon parts.

Photo: UNDP Bosnia and Herzegovina

31 References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

Institutional awareness-raising capacities were strengthened by supporting regional cooperation, developing practical guidelines, and delivering targeted trainings. Institutions improved their ability to communicate risks related to firearm misuse, including in crisis situations, and to design more effective prevention campaigns.

Internationally acknowledged as a transformative regional framework for sustainable arms control, the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap, continued to be highlighted in major regional and global forums for steering progress toward compliance by the region with EU and international security standards.

In 2025, SEESAC continued to facilitate coordination, monitor and evaluate the progress, and foster regional cooperation to achieve the Roadmap's goals in close cooperation with the EU, Germany and France.

The Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap inspired similar regional approaches globally, with Central America and the Dominican Republic adopting a Roadmap in February 2025, and the Andean Community initiating the development in 2026. The Roadmap's impact was recognized at the highest political level, with its relevance for regional cooperation and European security acknowledged at the Western Balkans Berlin Process Summit in London in October 2025.

Serving as Secretariat of the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap Multi-Partner Trust Fund, SEESAC coordinated and monitored activities of nine projects with a value of $15.4 million, while supporting the Steering Committee's decision-making. In 2025, the Fund received $1.86 million in new contributions, increasing its overall value to $31 million. The Fund's duration was extended until 31 December 2028.

Interregional cooperation was further promoted in 2025 by facilitating peer learning and the transfer of SALW control practices, including a technical mission to the Republic of Honduras, a study visit of the institutional representatives from Honduras to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and expert support to the development of strategic SALW approaches in the ASEAN region.

Additionally, SEESAC supported the authorities in ***Ukraine*** in strengthening SALW control frameworks, institutional capacities and inter-agency cooperation, including through assistance in developing their first SALW control strategy and action plan and delivering targeted trainings to enhance investigative capacities of more than 30 representatives from various agencies involved in firearms-related investigations.

Looking forward

In 2026, SEESAC will remain committed to supporting the implementation, coordination and monitoring of the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap 2025–2030, continuing a new phase of comprehensive arms control activities further strengthening institutional capacities, reinforcing regional cooperation and advancing sustainable progress, while positioning the Western Balkans experience as a reference model for arms control globally.

At the same time, SEESAC will continue its engagement in the ***Republic of Moldova*** and ***Ukraine***, supporting authorities in strengthening SALW control frameworks, enhancing institutional and operational capacities, and facilitating the transfer of relevant regional expertise and good practices.

V. GLOBAL FOCAL POINT FOR THE RULE OF LAW

OVERVIEW

In 2025, the Global Focal Point for the Rule of law (GFP) delivered coherent, coordinated rule of law support across crisis, post-conflict and transition settings by combining targeted deployments, catalytic financing, high-level political engagement and strengthened system-wide coordination. Building on multi-year investments in the ***Central African Republic (CAR), Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia*** and other contexts, the year marked a period of consolidation, with major joint programmes finalized or launched, critical accountability mechanisms sustained despite funding volatility, and new reforms piloted with political support. A defining feature of the GFP's work was its role as a system-wide coordination platform: monthly partner meetings, thematic deep dives and country-specific sessions brought together UNDP, the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO), the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR), UN Women, UNICEF, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and others to align analysis, share expertise and ensure coherent responses across justice, corrections, policing and transitional justice. These convenings helped the UN anticipate emerging risks, navigate mission transitions and strengthen integrated programmatic solutions.

GFP SYSTEM-WIDE IMPACT: COLLECTIVE UN ACTION FOR JUSTICE AND SECURITY IN CRISIS CONTEXTS

In 2025, GFP demonstrated strong policy leadership through substantive contributions to the Peacebuilding Architecture Review (PBAR), ensuring that people-centred justice and security along with accountability remained prominent across system-wide and intergovernmental discussions. The GFP co-chairs – UNDP and the DPO worked closely to articulate the essential role of rule of law institutions in conflict prevention and sustainable peace, including through consultations led by Member States and in bilateral discussions. A dedicated GFP position paper gave Member States a clear framework for understanding how robust rule of law systems support long-term stability. While not all proposed language was reflected in the final PBAR resolution, the GFP sustained advocacy maintained momentum behind justice-centred peacebuilding and positioned the mechanism for deeper policy engagement in 2026.

These policy-level engagements come to life through the GFP support in crisis-affected settings, where coordinated UN expertise is mobilized to address justice and security challenges on the ground. In ***CAR***, GFP focused on advancing the new Joint Justice and Corrections Programme and safeguarding the Special Criminal Court (SCC) operations despite a severe funding crisis. GFP's catalytic funding maintained the SCC's core prosecutorial, registry and witness protection functions. This technical support was reinforced by a high-level mission led by the Assistant Secretaries-General Shoko Noda (Director of UNDP's Crisis Bureau) and Alexandre Zouev (DPO/Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI) to bolster UNDP–MINUSCA[32] collaboration and mobilize renewed political and financial backing

ASG Shoko Noda and ASG Alexander Zouev mission to CAR. | Photo: UNDP

32 The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

from Member States. In addition, UNDP and DPO deployed justice and corrections experts to CAR to help scope and draft the new joint programme and strengthened national capacities in the administration of high-profile detainees and advanced priority corrections reforms.

In ***DRC***, remote advisory support from the Justice and Corrections Standing Capacity enabled the completion of the Joint Justice and Corrections Programme. This showed how hybrid technical assistance modalities enable the UN to sustain programme development despite limited access and the pressure of mission transition. Further, throughout the year, GFP convened coordination meetings among MONUSCO[33], UNDP, OHCHR, UN Women, UNICEF, UNHCR and civil society organizations to address the security crisis in the east, anticipate risks related to MONUSCO's transition and shape joint priorities for 2026.

In ***Comoros***, a coordination group for the security sector reform (SSR) chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator mapped governance, oversight, maritime security and public trust challenges, identifying entry points for the UN support. Based on this shared analysis, GFP provided catalytic funding to launch a year-long people-centered SSR pilot aimed at strengthening trust between communities and internal security institutions. During its first phase, the initiative was establishing foundations for future reform. This pilot showed that participatory consultations, initial oversight mechanisms and clear sequencing are critical to shaping politically feasible reform pathways.

In ***Liberia***, GFP support contributed to designing accountability mechanisms for past crimes. According to the national agenda, a War and Economic Crimes Court should be established in 2026. GFP supported the inception phase of a feasibility study for this court, outlining legal, institutional and security requirements for its operationalization. The joint study was conducted by UNDP, the European Union, OHCHR and the UN Country team.

Looking forward

In 2026, the GFP will continue to position itself as a responsive and forward-looking platform, bringing together partners around priority country contexts while retaining flexibility to engage on emerging needs. Country-specific meetings will be convened on ***DRC, Haiti, Sudan, Syria*** and the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei, creating space for strategic coordination and collective problem-solving.

At the operational level, the GFP will maintain its ability to respond rapidly through targeted deployments, assessments and catalytic funding, while placing greater emphasis on anticipatory analysis to inform earlier preventive engagement. Looking inward, a headquarters-level workshop will be convened to align the 2026 GFP workplan with the UN80 process, ensuring coherence with evolving UN system-wide priorities and reinforcing the GFP contribution to broader rule of law efforts.

33 The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

LESSONS LEARNED

This section presents key lessons arising from the Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development's (the Global Programme) support of national, local, regional and global actors to strengthen the rule of law, justice, security and human rights in 2025. The lessons are organized thematically and have been extracted by analysing and synthesizing the data and evidence collected by the Global Programme. The lessons are illustrated with examples from Global Programme-supported countries, territories and regions.

RULE OF LAW, JUSTICE AND SECURITY

LESSON 1: People-centred justice is not only to expand access, but also to ensure that institutions can respond effectively, fairly and at scale, as demand rises and evolves.

Bringing justice closer to people often exposes structural weaknesses previously masked by exclusion. Exclusion can make justice systems appear manageable because unmet needs remain invisible. People-centred justice reform changes that equation by enabling more people to seek remedies and engage institutions, thereby exposing where systems are under-resourced, fragmented, insufficiently responsive, or unequipped for new technical challenges. Rising demand is therefore a diagnostic signal, revealing where systems are insufficiently accessible, responsive, or accountable, and where institutional cultures, incentives, and coordination mechanisms require reform.

When barriers such as distance, cost, low legal literacy, procedural complexity, stigma or weak trust are reduced, more people seek help, more disputes enter formal and informal channels, and expectations of institutions rise. If access reforms are not matched by cultural and systems shifts, stronger capacities, resource investment, and adaptive management, progress can generate new delays and frustrations.

Decentralized services are highly effective, but they must be accompanied by sustained investment in referral pathways, frontline personnel and institutional follow-through if gains in access are to remain credible and durable. In ***Sierra Leone***, mobile legal clinics expanded to remote and vulnerable communities where demand for legal assistance has been high. This outreach was embedded within the broader reform agenda where local level action and institutional changes go hand in hand to ensure meaningful changes in the context of people's everyday justice needs. In ***São Tomé and Príncipe***, mobile justice services were paired with work on legislation on Alternative Dispute Resolution, civil society partnerships and the digitalization of mediation systems. The experience demonstrated that community outreach alone is insufficient if legal frameworks, capacities, and systems are not adapted to absorb increased engagement.

At the same time, growing demand is increasingly shaped by more complex areas of dispute, including arising from contextual changes such as digitalization, artificial intelligence (AI), climate change and biodiversity loss, requiring institutions and mechanisms to adapt in new ways. Innovation works best when embedded in justice service ecosystems rather than standalone solutions. In ***Kenya***, support on digitalization of the Small Claims Courts helped simplify procedures, reduce costs, and increase the uptake of justice services, contributing to major growth in case filings. The most effective responses were hybrid approaches that combined digital platforms with assisted filing, judicial training and stronger coordination among justice actors.

On environmental justice, UNDP in ***Georgia*** built on an assessment of barriers to environmental justice to develop an online training module for lawyer networks to take legal action in protecting the right to a healthy environment. In ***Bangladesh, Kazakhstan*** and ***Malawi***, UNDP delivered technical capacity support to the judiciary to meet growing demands to address environmental disputes, including in relation to deforestation and mining. Under the Environmental Justice Working Group, in partnership

with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank, UNDP published legal analysis to support countries in upholding legal obligations when taking climate action, transitioning away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy, and making such transition just, equitable and grounded in international legal obligations.

LESSON 2: Advancing the rule of law in fragile settings requires programming models that adapt to political realities, operational constraints and uneven institutional capacity, rather than relying on standardized approaches.

In settings shaped by instability, limited state capacity, donor volatility or shifting political conditions, reform rarely follows a linear path. Standardized programme design may appear efficient but lacks flexibility in responding to changes in the programming context. Fragile environments require support models that combine technical quality with operational adaptability. Progress often depends on whether support can respond to changing realities while maintaining core rule of law functions. Support in fragile and transition contexts is most effective when designed as an adaptive process that allows institutions and partners to respond to disruption while continuing to build legitimacy and capacity over time. In such contexts, delivery models need to remain operational, credible and politically feasible as conditions evolve, and sustain momentum and create space for longer-term institutional development.

In the ***Central African Republic (CAR)***, the financial challenges faced by the Special Criminal Court demonstrated the importance of targeted and flexible funding to safeguard essential accountability functions during periods of donor uncertainty. Institutions operating in fragile contexts may require contingency support and adaptive financing tools if hard-won gains are to remain credible and operational over time. The Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law mechanism facilitated a strategic pivot in resource mobilization and keeping the strategic purpose of the court at the forefront of donor and partner engagements.

In the ***Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)***, remote advisory support highlighted the value of hybrid technical assistance modalities. By combining remote expertise with context-based engagement, the UN was able to sustain programme development despite limited access and wider mission transition pressures. This demonstrates that blended models of technical deployment can help maintain continuity where physical presence is constrained.

In ***Comoros***, the security sector reform pilot illustrated that foundational measures such as participatory consultations, initial oversight mechanisms and clear sequencing helped shape a more politically feasible pathway for reform. The experience suggested that in sensitive governance sectors, early attention to inclusion, ownership and reform sequencing is often a precondition for later institutional change, rather than an optional add-on.

LESSON 3: Hybrid security systems work best when support reflects real political conditions, builds local legitimacy and includes safeguards. Often in conflict-affected contexts, security is rarely exercised by the state alone; effective programming must therefore recognize hybrid security arrangements where state, community, customary and non-state actors simultaneously shape security services.

Hybrid security systems are not an exception, but a common operational reality. In many settings, security provision is shaped by overlapping forms of authority in which state institutions, community actors, traditional structures, informal mechanisms and, in some cases, non-state armed actors coexist and influence governance outcomes. In such contexts, where authority is plural and territorially uneven, standardized state-centric approaches often fail. The challenge is therefore to design programming that can operate credibly and effectively within plural governance environments while upholding human rights standards and supporting longer-term state legitimacy.

Advancing security thus requires programming that recognizes hybrid security systems as enduring governance realities, rather than operating on the assumption of a state monopoly. It requires recognizing hybridity as a structural feature of governance, working through legitimate intermediaries and local partners where appropriate, and adopting area-based and people-centred approaches that reflect territorial differences in how authority is exercised. Engagement with non-state actors should be strategic and long term rather than ad hoc, with the objective, where feasible, of progressively aligning such actors with accountable and inclusive state frameworks. Adaptive programming can help bridge this gap by engaging legitimate local actors, managing risk, and strengthening pathways towards accountable governance over time.

In ***Libya***, fragmented authority between state institutions, armed groups and local security actors shapes security provision. UNDP works through institutional support to the Ministry of Interior and municipalities while indirectly engaging hybrid dynamics through community security and stabilization programming, avoiding direct interaction with armed groups.

In ***Colombia***, post-peace agreement areas reflect institutionalized hybridity, where state presence coexists with ex-combatants and non-state armed groups. UNDP supports reintegration, local justice and community security initiatives that strengthen state legitimacy while navigating parallel power structures.

In ***Nigeria***, particularly in the Northeast, security provision involves state forces, Civilian Joint Task Forces and community actors. UNDP supports stabilization and community security approaches that integrate informal actors into accountable local governance arrangements while reinforcing state oversight.

In ***Yemen***, conflict-driven hybridity has produced de facto authorities that control territory and service delivery. UNDP maintains principled engagement through development and resilience programming, working through local institutions and communities while ensuring compliance with UN safeguards, including Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP).

LESSON 4: Addressing technology-facilitated gender-based violence requires a shift from fragmented and reactive responses towards integrated security and justice ecosystems that match the realities of violence in the digital age.

Despite a growing number of legislative frameworks seeking to address digital harms, the 2025 Global Policy Dialogue on Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) highlighted a persistent accountability deficit and institutional fragmentation that often leave survivors in a legal vacuum. Many law enforcement agencies possess the formal mandate to act, but lack specialized digital investigation units, clear referral pathways or the technical ability to preserve and analyse evidence such as deepfakes, encrypted harassment or rapidly deleted online content. Standard approaches that separate policing, technology governance and victim services are unlikely to meet the speed and complexity of online abuse.

Effective policing of TFGBV requires a model in which all relevant actors can act on digital evidence quickly while ensuring survivors can report safely and access support without delays. This includes specialized cyber investigation units and coordination with service providers to remove harmful content, combine legal frameworks, technical investigative capacity, rapid procedures, survivor support and sustained coordination across institutions.

In ***Bosnia and Herzegovina***, the establishment of a dedicated Sector for Combatting Terrorism and Computer Crime helped drive meaningful structural reform within the Federation Police. This move successfully centralized technical expertise that was previously scattered across different departments, allowing for a much more coordinated and proficient response to online harms. Beyond these organizational changes, the collaboration with the UNDP Seoul Policy Centre was instrumental in providing the specialized investigative hardware needed to make the new Sector fully operational. This case effectively demonstrates that institutional reorganization yields the best results when it is directly paired with the technical tools and mentorship required to turn a policy mandate into actual policing capacity.

In ***Indonesia***, the National Police integrated six specialized TFGBV training modules into the regular police curriculum, organized around core competencies such as digital evidence collection and investigative examination. UNDP supported refinement of the modules to align international TFGBV concepts with national legislation, including the use of the statutory term Electronic-Based Sexual Violence (KSBE) for case handling. Focus Group Discussions with civil society organizations and relevant ministries helped ensure technical quality, survivor-centred approaches and stronger institutional ownership.

In short, effective response to TFGBV requires coordinated institutional practice that turns legal rights into real protection. This entails that policing, justice, survivor support services, regulators and technology actors operate as an integrated response system.

LESSON 5: The credibility of transitional justice hinges not on institutional design alone, but on the ability to operationalize commitments through functional case and evidence systems, survivor services and sustained trust-building engagement with communities.

Across transitional justice engagements, a consistent strategic dynamic emerged: the political window for accountability and reconciliation can open quickly, but public confidence collapses just as quickly if implementation cannot keep pace with expectations. Peace agreements alone do not automatically result in transitional justice. Without early investment in delivery capacities, transitional justice risks becoming symbolic, delayed or disconnected from people's lived expectations, eroding trust over time rather than consolidating it.

In practice, the biggest risks are not only the absence of transitional justice frameworks or institutions but the gap between nationally endorsed commitments and operational delivery such as secure gender-sensitive case and evidence handling, survivor referrals and psychosocial support, strategic communication that manages expectations and reduces mis/dis-information, and practical coordination across institutions. Where these enabling systems lag, delays and bottlenecks can convert legitimate justice demand into frustration, polarization and declining trust undermining both accountability outcomes and social cohesion.

In ***The Gambia***, under the completed Post-TRRC (Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission) project (closed 1 October 2025), UNDP supported the establishment and operationalization of the Post-TRRC Unit, developed monitoring, coordination and reporting tools for implementation tracking, supported legal/policy reviews linked to the White Paper Action Plan (including preparatory work for the Special Accountability Mechanism), and strengthened survivor-centred mechanisms including psychosocial support, referrals and victim-informed consultations.

Nepal's experience illustrates how early political settlement without sustained operational follow-through can stall transitional justice outcomes. While the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) created political consensus and normative commitments, the absence of sustained operational systems (credible case management, evidence handling, survivor outreach and institutional coordination) delayed the realization of truth and accountability mechanisms for years. UNDP's earlier engagement focused on helping implement CPA commitments, supporting reintegration efforts, promoting social cohesion, and addressing exclusion and marginalization. All of these aspects were essential pre-conditions for future transitional justice processes, even though commissions were not operationalized until much later.

Therefore, for transitional justice to be not just announced but delivered, increased emphasis needs to be placed on: (1) operational tools for documentation/archiving and political economy analysis to avoid superficial processes; (2) survivor-centred approaches (including reparations pathways and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)); and (3) realistic sequencing and resourcing.

LESSON 6: To ensure women's access to justice, legal reforms need to be matched by the institutional capacity to enforce them, the community knowledge to claim them and the political will to sustain them.

For too many women, especially in conflict-affected settings, justice remains out of reach not because laws don't exist, but because they don't work in practice. More than 60 percent of women in conflict-affected contexts report unmet legal needs.[34] The gap between what the law says and what women actually experience comes less from weak provisions than from ineffective enforcement. Laws that are not enforced, not understood or not trusted by those they are meant to protect will not improve women's access to justice.

Through the **Gender Justice Platform**, UNDP and UN Women conducted an analysis of legislative reform efforts across 22 conflict-affected countries. The analysis has identified five factors that determine whether legal reform translates into real change: (1) sustained civil society mobilization; (2) international support that reinforces locally driven processes; (3) women's leadership in reconstruction and governance; (4) approaches that engage rather than bypass cultural norms; and (5) attention to intersecting forms of discrimination. What these factors share is that none of them is primarily about the content of the law itself; instead, they are about the conditions that allow laws to take root and function. In this sense, the passage of legislation is better understood as an entry point than an endpoint. Three examples from the Gender Justice Platform illustrate what this looks like in practice:

In ***Tanzania***, a legal aid campaign reached 903,740 people (56 percent women) across all 31 regions of the country. The campaign's impact was reinforced by a parallel investment in judicial capacity. Twenty-nine judges and magistrates were trained using a Gender Bench Book, with court exercises and case-based learning ensuring that the women who accessed legal aid would find a judiciary equipped to deliver survivor-centred decisions. The increased uptake of legal aid services recorded across the country suggests that when outreach and institutional capacity are built together, women are more likely to seek and trust the justice system.

In ***Colombia***, the DIME Mujer digital platform was developed to ensure women can navigate their rights and access protections in practice. The platform explains women's legal rights, referral pathways and available protections in accessible language. In addition, over 40 gender liaisons – local officials whose role is to respond to women's rights concerns at the community level – were trained. By equipping these liaisons with concrete tools and knowledge, women gained access to officials who could explain their rights, direct them to services and advocate on their behalf. This helped turn complex national legal frameworks into something tangible at the local level.

In ***Syria***, where new institutions are being built following years of conflict, the Gender Justice Platform worked with the National Commission for Transitional Justice to train newly elected women Members of Parliament (MPs) and male parliamentarians on equal citizenship rights and reform pathways. This was paired with a public event where women from across ***Syria*** testified about how legal discrimination affects their daily lives and access to basic rights. This work is particularly important in a transitional context like ***Syria***, where the laws and institutions established in the aftermath of conflict tend to set the terms for decades to come. By ensuring that women's experiences inform both the legislative reforms and the reparations planning process from the outset, the work is helping lay a foundation that addresses rather than perpetuates the gendered harms of the past.

Taken together, these examples illustrate that women's access to justice improves when legal reforms constitute accessible tools, capable institutions, and processes that centre the voices of women themselves.

34 High-level Group on Justice for Women, Justice for Women: High-level Group Report, UN Women, IDLO, World Bank and Pathfinders Task Force on Justice, 2019. Also referenced by UN Women during CSW 2026, see here: https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/news/2026/03/advancing-justice-in-every-context-csw70

HUMAN RIGHTS

LESSON 7: Human rights commitments yield stronger results and are more durable for implementation when embedded in national systems.

Human rights commitments are more likely to produce sustained change when they are built into national institutions, coordination mechanisms and development processes, rather than treated as isolated reporting, advocacy, or compliance exercises. Stronger results emerge where recommendations and standards are linked to institutional mandates, national action plans, monitoring frameworks and broader governance reforms. This helps move human rights from the margins of policy dialogue into the core of how institutions plan, coordinate, implement and follow-up.

In ***Ukraine***, support from the TriPartite Partnership (TPP) to Support National Human Rights Institutions in 2025 strengthened the Ombudsperson's internal analytical capacity, results-based management and complaint-processing methodologies in a context of full-scale war. This helped embed human rights follow-up more firmly in the institution's operational planning and decision-making, with 83 percent of strategic recommendations from the national human rights institution (NHRI) capacity assessment integrated into the 2025–2027 Operational Plan and related instruments, and new methodologies adopted to connect complaints handling more directly to analysis, restoration of rights and advocacy.

In ***Malawi***, support to the Human Rights Commission facilitated 26 detention monitoring visits and documented 12,915 inmates held at nearly double official capacity (6,535). These findings, along with evidence of chronic underfunding, overcrowding and non-adherence to the Nelson Mandela Rules, generated an evidence base that contributed directly to the enactment of the Malawi Prisons Act, replacing outdated legislation with a human rights-based framework that includes early release provisions, parole mechanisms, and a renewed focus on rehabilitation and reintegration.

UNDP's **Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) Toolkit** provides staff and partners with concrete guidance on applying human rights analysis, identifying and engaging rights holders and duty bearers, and designing programmes that address structural inequalities and barriers to rights realization. By equipping teams to integrate participation, accountability, non-discrimination and transparency more systematically into programme design and delivery, the Toolkit helps embed human rights in the systems, processes and decisions that shape development action, making implementation more consistent, accountable and durable over time.

These experiences demonstrate that implementation becomes more durable when human rights are institutionalized in the systems that shape public decision-making and accountability over time. Institutional anchoring helps turn recommendations into ongoing public action, making follow-up less dependent on ad hoc initiatives and more likely to influence long-term governance practice.

Lesson 8: Co-created tools, digital systems and applied monitoring frameworks help translate broad human rights commitments into evidence, early warning and concrete response.

Human rights standards are most effective when institutions have practical tools to monitor, interpret and act on them. This is especially important in fragile, crisis-affected and access-constrained settings, where institutions need ways to identify patterns of harm, track risks and maintain continuity of protection functions. Tools are most useful when they are designed with users, tested in practice, and adapted to differing institutional capacities and realities.

In ***Costa Rica***, progress in 2025 on the National Human Rights Observatory moved beyond design into implementation through the launch of its first public dashboard, and specialized staff training on evidence-based reporting tools and human rights analysis. This strengthened the NHRI's ability to integrate case data, public indicators and policy frameworks into a practical evidence base for monitoring state

obligations, improving cross-unit collaboration and positioning the Observatory as a concrete tool for transparent, data-driven oversight.

Piloting the Digital Rights Dashboard in a crisis context showcased that crises, including armed conflict or environmental catastrophe, have significant impact on digital rights and connectivity within a country. To build resilience, countries need strong digital rights structures and processes to be able to respond and recover in crisis settings. In ***Lebanon***, the Digital Rights Dashboard pilot highlighted how political and economic crisis can intensify digital rights risks, underscoring the value of rights-based digital analysis for risk anticipation. The country has had to deal with poor internet connectivity and cyber-attacks from third-party actors during armed conflict. This poses unique challenges to digital rights and needs to be accounted for when understanding a country's approach to rights-based digital development.

Similarly, pilots of the Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment (R2HE) Monitoring Tool in ***Georgia, Malawi, Paraguay*** and ***Samoa*** showed how practical monitoring frameworks can help institutions identify patterns of environmental harm, connect those harms to rights impacts, and generate evidence for advocacy, accountability and follow-up action in very different institutional and environmental contexts.

Taken together, these experiences show that practical tools do more than improve monitoring: they help institutions detect emerging risks earlier, sustain action in complex settings, and connect human rights evidence more directly to prevention, accountability and response.

Lesson 9: Effective responses to emerging human rights challenges depend on coalitions that can bridge institutions, sectors and lived realities, making human rights action both more grounded and more responsive.

The recent years have seen an important shift in the human rights landscape: emerging risks increasingly sit at the intersection of governance, technology, the environment and conflict, and they cannot be addressed through siloed approaches. Effectively addressing emerging human rights challenges depends on partnerships that bring together normative expertise, technical knowledge and grounded community perspectives.

Human rights work is more credible, inclusive and effective when it is built through broad partnerships that combine traditional human rights actors with sector-specific actors in emerging areas such as digital rights, environmental justice and crisis response. Stronger results are achieved where collaboration extends beyond governments, NHRIs, the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) and civil society to include technical experts, academic institutions, justice actors, environmental stakeholders, traditional leaders and affected communities.

In the R2HE work, collaboration with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), technical experts and pilot NHRIs helped ensure that the emerging environmental justice agenda was grounded not only in human rights standards but also in environmental realities on the ground. This made the tool more practical, more credible across sectors, and better suited to supporting evidence-based monitoring and follow-up.

BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Lesson 10: Corporate respect for human rights is a strategic investment in business resilience that has long-term value.

Through a five-year quantitative analysis of 235 large businesses, UNDP found compelling evidence that stronger corporate human rights performance enhances competitiveness. The research revealed not only the absence of any financial trade-off, but also clear evidence of tangible financial benefits for companies that carry out human rights due diligence. These gains are linked to improved operational efficiency – such as more resilient supply chains and a more productive workforce – which can meet or exceed the initial costs of implementing stronger human rights due diligence processes over time. Additionally, the research found that strong corporate human rights performance does not reduce market valuations, undermining the argument that investors penalize companies for 'wasteful' social spending.

The UNDP evidence strengthens both the business case for human rights due diligence and the policy case for *mandatory* due diligence frameworks. UNDP's B+HR Academies engaged 5,840 businesses globally in 2025 to strengthen their capacity to carry out human rights due diligence, promoting business practices that are both responsible and competitive. In several countries, UNDP has also supported governments to initiate discussions and develop legally binding due diligence frameworks.

In 2026, UNDP will undertake a further empirical study focusing on the financial implications of human rights performance among small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The findings from this quantitative analysis will be leveraged to engage more companies in the B+HR Academies and to support more governments in legislative development.

Lesson 11: National Action Plans on business and human rights are a key stepping stone towards mandatory human rights due diligence.

National Action Plans (NAPs) on business and human rights have proven effective in building political will and advancing government-led action towards legally binding regulations that enforce corporate respect for human rights. Over the past years, UNDP has sustained its investment in supporting countries to develop and implement NAPs. This effort has resulted in the adoption of 10 new NAPs in the Africa and Asia-Pacific regions. In several countries, the NAP processes have encouraged governments to move further – from voluntary policy strategies to *mandatory* human rights due diligence legislation.

For instance, in Asia-Pacific, in 2025, the Governments of ***Indonesia*** and ***Thailand*** requested UNDP's assistance in drafting mandatory human rights due diligence legislation – the first of its kind in developing countries. Both countries had previously received UNDP's support in developing and implementing their NAPs. The Government of ***Malaysia*** has also expressed interest in exploring a 'hard law' pathway.

As many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have adopted or are currently developing their NAPs three to five years after their counterparts in the Asia-Pacific, in 2026, UNDP will expand its support to NAP processes across the Africa region. Building on the demonstrated progress and results in ***Indonesia***, ***Malaysia*** and ***Thailand***, this effort aims to lay a solid foundation for the future adoption of mandatory due diligence frameworks.

Lesson 12: In conflict contexts, promoting responsible business is key to conflict prevention, stabilization and recovery.

Before conflicts arise, responsible business can help prevent instability by addressing root causes – such as inequality and ineffectual rule of law – strengthening trust in institutions and social cohesion, and ensuring that companies do not exacerbate tensions or grievances. During conflicts, it can support

the rebound of local companies and the stabilization of national economies, while ensuring business-led emergency responses – such as jobs, essential services and access to finance – reach affected populations and leave no one behind. After conflicts, responsible business can contribute to the creation of decent work, the restoration of trust in institutions, and inclusive reconstruction and long-term resilience – helping communities return to sustainable development and reducing the risk of renewed conflict.

In 2025, UNDP promoted corporate respect for human rights across a range of conflict-affected contexts, including the ***Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Madagascar,*** the ***State of Palestine*** and ***Ukraine***. In Ukraine, for example, UNDP – together with the Ministry of Economy and other national stakeholders – convened the international conference Responsible Business for Ukraine's Recovery. The event helped identify pathways for integrating international and European Union (EU) business and human rights standards into the country's socio-economic solutions and broader recovery process. It culminated in the adoption of the , as well as a political commitment to develop a NAP by the end of 2026.

In addition to launching an e-course on *heightened* human rights due diligence for businesses in conflict-affected contexts, in 2026, UNDP will focus on strengthening the de-risking capacities of investors engaging with clients and investees in such environments. While sustaining and expanding its existing 'business, human rights and peace' programming in the existing programmatic contexts, UNDP also aims to introduce activities under this nexus in ***Colombia*** and ***Papua New Guinea***.

RESULTS FRAMEWORK

The Global Programme concluded Phase IV (2022-2025) amidst a period of intensifying conflict, democratic backsliding, shrinking civic space, climate-related insecurity and growing pressure on multilateral institutions and human rights systems globally. Against this complex environment, the GP continued to stand out as UNDP's principal platform for integrated rule of law, justice, security and human rights programming, supporting country, regional and global-level interventions through technical assistance, evidence-based policy leadership, catalytic funding, operational deployments, knowledge generation and strategic partnerships. In line with the GP's Theory of Change and the broader ambition of SDG 16, the programme maintained a strong focus on strengthening inclusive, trustworthy and accountable institutions, advancing people-centred justice and security approaches, reinforcing human rights systems and supporting evidence-informed policy and learning. The results achieved throughout Phase IV therefore demonstrate the continued relevance of integrated approaches that link rule of law, human rights, justice and security with development. The GP's approach of reinforcing relationships between people, institutions and duty bearers that sustainable peace and prevention depend upon are reflected in the trends in the results framework presented here—they are the cumulative contribution of interconnected interventions that support accountability, the legitimacy of institutions and more inclusive social contracts.

At the outcome level, the GP contributed to strengthening inclusive, people-centred systems that provide quality justice and security services while upholding and protecting human rights. During phase IV, GP-supported contexts maintained relatively stable governance and rule of law trajectories despite widespread deterioration in global governance indicators, decline of the rule of law, and increasing fragility in many operating environments. Average World Justice Project Rule of Law Index scores across GP-supported contexts remained broadly stable at approximately 0.49–0.50 throughout the past four years; while governance scores in African programme contexts reflected gradual recovery following declines associated with instability, insecurity and governance pressures in several regions, holding strong with scores between 46 and 48. Although these indicators indicate persistent structural challenges globally, the relative stability observed across GP-supported contexts is notable given its focus on contexts that are fragile, conflict-affected and politically sensitive.

This outcome-level progress was supported by a combination of interventions under Outputs 1 to 4—outputs which collectively focused on strengthening accountability, participation, institutional responsiveness and people-centred service delivery. In Outputs 1 and 2 in particular, GP interventions increasingly reinforced human rights-based governance approaches grounded in empowerment, accountability and participation. The trend throughout the past four years is one of sustained support to national human rights systems, civil society engagement, accountability mechanisms and rights-based policy processes. The number of GP-supported contexts with National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) that hold "A" status increased substantially during Phase IV, rising from 16 contexts at baseline to 42 contexts by 2025. An expansion like this reflects sustained GP investments in strengthening institutional capacities, independence and effectiveness of NHRIs and wider human rights protection systems in line with the Paris Principles. In an environment characterized by shrinking civic space and mounting pressures on accountability institutions, these trends indicate sustained progress toward strengthening national human rights infrastructures and reinforcing institutional mechanisms for oversight, monitoring and remedy.

Results in outputs 1 and 2 also demonstrated the GP's emphasis on participation, empowerment and inclusive governance processes as foundational for prevention and social cohesion. In phase IV, the programme supported legal empowerment initiatives, community-based justice engagement, establishment of civil society networks and transitional justice mechanisms. Indicators on partnerships and institutional engagement signal increasingly multi-stakeholder approaches to rule of law and human rights programming, as seen in the substantial increase in partnerships forged with governments, civil society organizations, UN

entities and private sector actors. Business and human rights emerged as a more prominent dimension of GP programming during Phase IV, too, particularly under Output 2. Growing engagement with private sector actors and support to implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights signal widening recognition of the role of responsible business conduct and how it advances sustainable development and mitigates governance and human rights risks. Furthermore, GP-supported initiatives in this area throughout the past four years increasingly framed business and human rights in broader discussions on digital governance, environmental justice and conflict-sensitive development.

The GP also contributed to strengthening people-centred justice and security systems through Outputs 3 and 4, which together focused on institutional effectiveness, service delivery, violence reduction and community safety. Across these outputs in Phase IV, results illustrate continued investments in improving the accessibility and responsiveness of justice and security institutions and demonstrated the sustained support to justice delivery systems, legal aid and empowerment initiatives, institutional reform processes and locally accessible justice mechanisms. Additionally, GP invested in strengthening institutional capacities and improving the quality of justice and security services. Activities included support to gender-responsive reforms, people-centred justice strategies, digital justice initiatives, community-based approaches, mechanisms to strengthen institutional responsiveness and accountability, and innovative solutions to improve access and reach. Output-level trends also illustrate sustained attention to inclusion and representation, including support to women's participation and leadership in these institutions.

Under Output 4 specifically, the GP broadened its engagement on community security, violence reduction and security sector governance. The programme supported integrated approaches that linked security sector governance, arms control, prevention of sexual and gender-based violence, community engagement and local resilience-building. These interventions contributed to broader trends observed in terms of strengthening trust between communities and security institutions and reinforcing civilian oversight and accountability mechanisms. Global violence indicators continued to reflect significant challenges throughout Phase IV; however, reductions in intentional homicide rates globally during the reporting period may suggest gradual improvements in community safety outcomes despite projections that volatility and global violence at all levels may increase in the coming years. The GP's focus on prevention-oriented, community-based and rights-centred security approaches continues to be particularly relevant in contexts affected by conflict, displacement and institutional fragility.

The second outcome area of the GP focused on strengthening evidence-based regional and global policy on rule of law, justice, security and human rights and ensuring that programming is informed by learning and evidence. Outputs 5 and 6 demonstrated that there was increasing integration between policy influence, knowledge generation, monitoring and evaluation, and organizational learning across the programme architecture to produce results. Over the past four years, the GP strengthened its role as a global policy actor and knowledge platform by increasing its investments in research, learning systems, evidence generation and dissemination of good practices. Trends across Outputs 5 and 6 reflected growing attention to adaptive programming, impact measurement and learning-informed policy engagement. The programme supported the development of tools, methodologies, learning products and policy guidance related to people-centred justice, human rights systems integration, security governance, business and human rights, digital justice and prevention-oriented programming. At the same time, the GP facilitated even more cross-regional exchanges, South-South cooperation and integration of country-level learning into regional and global policy discussions. The programme also strengthened its monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) architecture throughout Phase IV. Increased investments in learning systems, experimentation and research contributed to stronger programme quality and strategic coherence across GP-supported contexts. Sustained programme quality scores and improved integration of learning in programme design indicate progress toward embedding adaptive and evidence-based approaches more systematically in GP's implementation.

In terms of operations, GP demonstrated strong responsiveness and delivery capacity throughout the reporting period. Deployments through the Global Policy Network (GPN), Express Roster and Global Focal

Point (GFP) mechanisms enabled rapid provision of technical expertise to crisis-affected contexts, particularly in relation to justice, corrections, policing, security sector governance and transitional processes. Deployment volumes and expenditures increased significantly in 2025, reflecting heightened demand for integrated rule of law and human rights expertise in contexts affected by conflict, political instability and humanitarian crises. The predominance of female personnel across deployment modalities also demonstrates the programme's continued emphasis on gender-responsive programming and inclusive leadership.

Overall, the results achieved during Phase IV demonstrate the GP's continued role in advancing integrated rule of law, justice, security and human rights approaches within UNDP and across the wider UN system. Trends across outputs and outcomes in the results framework point to sustained investments in institutional strengthening, accountability systems, people-centred services, evidence-informed programming and partnerships despite challenging global conditions. The programme's integrated portfolio approach enabled stronger connections between local implementation, institutional reform and global policy engagement. At a time when there is growing polarization, insecurity and distrust in institutions, the GP continued to position rule of law, justice, security and human rights not only as normative commitments, but as foundational enablers of sustainable development and inclusive social contracts. The programme's achievements across Phase IV therefore reinforce the importance of integrated, adaptive and people-centred approaches that advance the ambition of the 2030 Agenda and ensuring that no one is left behind.

OUTCOME RESULTS							
Outcome Indicator	**Baseline & Year**	**Results Year 1 (2022)**	**Results Year 2 (2023)**	**Results Year 3 (2024)**	**Results Year 4 (2025)**	**Data Source**	**Reporting Notes**
Programme Outcome 1: Inclusive, people-centred systems that provide quality justice and security services and uphold and protect human rights are trusted and accessible, especially in contexts affected by crisis, conflict or fragility							
1.1 Global Programme (GP) supported contexts' average World Justice Project, Rule of Law Index score; and **1.1.1.** Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) (for African countries only)	0.49 (2022) 46.99 (2021)	0.49 46.99 (2021, latest data)	0.50 48.76 (2021, latest data)	0.49 46.03 (2023, latest data)	0.49 47.01 (2023, latest data)	World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2025, Ibrahim Index on African Governance 2023, GP reporting	GP support and GP-supported refer to the provision of tailored, context specific assistance provided through the Global Programme and may include, but is not limited to, pipeline or non-pipeline funding, technical and strategic expertise and advice provided by ROLSHR staff or consultants, or the mobilisation of agile capacities. Of 77 GP-supported contexts, 59 have a 2025 Rule of Law Index score; 28 GP-supported contexts are in the 2023 IIAG (most recent data available).
1.2 Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age	5.7 (2019)	5.6 (2020)	5.8 (2021, latest data) Male: 9.3 Female: 2.2	5.6 (2022, latest data)	5.2 (2023, latest data)	Corporate data, IRRF Development Outcome 3, Outcome Indicator 5	Disaggregation by sex is stated, where applicable or available. The data sources for SDG 16.1.1 are Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General A/80/81-E/2025/62 and the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025.
1.3 Number of strategic partnerships for advancing programming and policy objectives with: i. UN entities ii. International Financial Institutions iii. private sector iv. civil society organizations v. multistakeholders or intergovernmental organizations vi. government agencies or public institutions vii. academia and think tanks viii. other	52 (2021) i. 19 ii. 1 iii. 1 iv. 11 v. 19	73 i. 29 ii. 1 iii. 3 iv. 8 v. 23 vi. 5 vii. 4	85 i. 30 ii. 1 iii. 3 iv. 11 v. 28 vi. 9 vii. 3	148 i. 35 ii. 1 iii. 26 iv. 16 v. 25 vi. 31 vii. 4 viii. 10	90 i. 26 ii. 1 iii. 6 iv. 7 v. 22 vi. 26 vii. 1 viii. 1	GP reporting	Strategic partnerships are any formal agreement for cooperation entered into by the Global Programme with another entity. This could include, for example, an MOU, a partnership agreement, or email exchange detailing the arrangements for partnering on a specific project or thematic area of work. Multi-stakeholder partnership refers to a partnership that brings together a range of different actors such as civil society, governments, international bodies, media, and academic or research institutions. Civil society organizations may include, but are not limited to, faith-based organizations, regional and international non-government organizations, academia, think tanks and research institutions, professional associations.[1]

OUTCOME RESULTS							
Outcome Indicator	**Baseline & Year**	**Results Year 1 (2022)**	**Results Year 2 (2023)**	**Results Year 3 (2024)**	**Results Year 4 (2025)**	**Data Source**	**Reporting Notes**
1.4 GP-supported contexts' average NHRI accreditation status	Out of 38 contexts (2022): A: 16 B: 10; Lapsed: 1 N.A: 11	GP-supported contexts (as per output indicator 1.2): out of 38 contexts: A: 16 B: 10; Lapsed: 1 N.A: 11 Globally: A: 84 B: 33	Of 34 GP-supported contexts: A: 18 B: 7 Lapsed: 1 N.A.: 8 Globally: A: 88 B: 32	Of 48 GP-supported contexts, the accreditation status is as follows: A: 28 B: 10 N.A.: 10 Globally A: 91 B: 27	Of 64 GP-supported contexts, the accreditation status is as follows: A: 42 B: 11 N.A.: 11 Globally A: 92 B: 27	GANHRI, Chart of the Status of National Institutions Accredited by the Global Alliance of NHRIs as at 24 December 2025	The accreditation status of GP-supported contexts is as follows (per output indicator 1.2). A: Colombia, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritania, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, State of Palestine, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Uganda, Ukraine, Uruguay, Zambia. B: Algeria, Bahrain, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, The Maldives, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Oman, Tunisia, Uzbekistan. N.A.: Belize, Brazil, Cambodia, Comoros, Djibouti, Guinea-Bissau, Japan, Lebanon, Sudan, Syria, Viet Nam.
1.5 Number of people supported, who have access to justice	44,741,459 (2024)	50,839,978	55,224,779	58,770,514	62,900,398	Corporate data, UNDP overall reporting	The baseline is based on UNDP IRRF 2018-2021 data, indicator 2.2.3.2.A.2. 2025 results were calculated from UNDP IRRF 2025 data at indicator 2.2.3a, b, c. This indicator is cumulative (i.e., the result includes the baseline from 2021). Note that the baseline result was recalculated in 2024 due to a revision in the corporate dataset; results for all years were subsequently recalculated.
Programme Outcome 2: Regional and global level policy on rule of law, justice, security & human rights is evidence-based, affirms a development perspective and informs high-quality programming							
2.1 Average score of Programme Quality Index for GP-funded contexts	Highly satisfactory, GP3 (2019) Highly satisfactory, SALIENT (2020)	Exemplary, GP4 (2022)	3.83 (High)	3.53 (High)	3.73 (High)	UNDP Quality Assurance Portal	The methodology applied in 2022 and at baseline years was for the overall GP. In 2023, the QA score was calculated as an average of the total number of GP-funded contextsfor that year; this method was applied for all future reporting.

OUTCOME RESULTS							
Outcome Indicator	Baseline & Year	Results Year 1 (2022)	Results Year 2 (2023)	Results Year 3 (2024)	Results Year 4 (2025)	Data Source	Reporting Notes
2.2 GP-supported GPN/Express One Roster deployments: a) Number of: i. UNDP staff ii. Consultants iii. UNVs iv. Stand by Partner experts (all by gender); b) Volume of deployments (in USD) c) Expert deployments conducted under the GFP framework, including deployments by DPO Standing Justice and Corrections and Standing Police Capacity (expenses are covered by DPO, thus, amount not available in UNDP)	a) i. 1 (IPSA, female) ii. 22 (12 female, 10 male) iii. 0 iv. 2 (1 female, 1 male) b) US$ 746,000 c) 24 (including remote deployment during COVID-19)	a) i. 3 (IPSA, 3 female) ii. 23 (15 female, 8 male) iii. 0 iv. 1 b) US$ 864,509 c) 12	a) i. 1 (IPSA, female) ii. 15 (9 female, 6 male) iii. 2 (2 female) iv. 2 (2 female) b) US$ 469,034 c) 10	a) i. 3 (2 IPSA, all female) ii. 39 (27 female, 12 male) iii. 2 (2 female) iv. 1 (female) b) US$ 1,615,982 c) 8	a) i. UNDP staff = 4 women of 5 IPSAs ii. Consultants = 31 women of 48 iii. UNVs = 0 iv. Stand by Partner experts = 0 b) US$ 1,979,889.05 c) 6 (GFP)	GP reporting, GFP reporting	Disaggregation by sex is stated, where applicable or available. This is a proxy indicator for the Global Programme's agile capacities and responsiveness to requests for the rapid provision of high-quality technical and strategic expertise, particularly in contexts experiencing conflict, crisis and/or fragility. Deployments may be cross-cutting, supporting several outputs within the results framework. Deployments may include UNDP staff missions (both virtual and in-person) and detailed assignments, including to HQ for the purposes of supporting Phase IV delivery. a) i) One was an IPSA 8 post for two months from January to February and only 50% funding; another was an IPSA 10. c) All 6 deployments were in the Central African Republic.
2.3 Number of GP-supported impact, country programme, thematic and outcome reviews, assessments and evaluations	2 (2022)	2	2	6	6	GP reporting	Results include: the GP4 Final Evaluation (completed); country case studies of Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan (both completed); country case studies of Mali and Somalia (both ongoing); and a catalytic effect study (ongoing).
2.4 Number of people using digital technologies and services in ways that improves their lives, in GP-supported contexts	2,575,766 in 19 contexts (2022)	19 of 104 contexts have IRRF data, totalling 2,575,766, including: Female: 827,524 Male: 1,608,763 Sex-disaggregated data unavailable: 139,479	32,903,451 Female: 8,317,837 Male: 11,050,380 Sex-disaggregated data unavailable: 13,535,234	19,160,923 Female: 1,628,680 Male: 2,356,913 Sex-disaggregated data unavailable: 15,175,330	78,741,158 Female: 32,236,928 Male: 33,046,474 Sex-disaggregated data unavailable: 13,457,756	Corporate data, GP reporting	Disaggregation by sex is stated, where applicable and available. Of 77 GP-supported contexts, 20 had 2025 IRRF data available (see IRRF Enabler E.1, Indicator E1.3).

OUTPUT RESULTS								
Output Indicator	Baseline & Year	Results Year 1 (2022)	Results Year 2 (2023)	Results Year 3 (2024)	Target Year 4 (2025)	Results Year 4 (2025)	Data Source	Reporting Notes
Output 1: Legal frameworks and underlying norms and practice are more inclusive and non-discriminatory and people have greater agency and opportunities to know and claim their rights, solve disputes and seek redress for rights violations								
1.1 Number of contexts where GP support strengthened legal and/or policy strategies or frameworks to expand civic space	4 (2022)	4	15	23	5	30	GP reporting	The contexts are: Brazil, Burundi, Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Ghana, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Malaysia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, State of Palestine, Peru, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam and Zambia.
1.2 Number of contexts where GP-supported human rights institutions, systems or stakeholders strengthened capacities to support the fulfilment of nationally and internationally ratified human rights obligations[3, 4, 5]	38 (2022)	38	50	67	48	87	Corporate data, GP reporting	This indicator is cumulative. The contexts are: Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador Eswatini, Ethiopia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Malaysia, The Maldives, Mauritania, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Oman, Pakistan, State of Palestine, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, Samoa, São Tomé and Príncipe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Suriname, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe. Of 87 contexts, 40 have 2025 IRRF data available. According to the IRRF rating scale for this indicator, 23 contexts have reported the capacity as high or very high (see IRRF indicator 2.2.1b).

OUTPUT RESULTS								
Output Indicator	Baseline & Year	Results Year 1 (2022)	Results Year 2 (2023)	Results Year 3 (2024)	Target Year 4 (2025)	Results Year 4 (2025)	Data Source	Reporting Notes
1.3 Number of contexts in which GP support provided to constitution making processes by introducing or supporting at least one mechanism for civic engagement[3, 6]	6 (2022)	6	2	3	4	1	Corporate data, GP reporting	The context is: Angola. UNDP provides a wide range of constitutional assistance around the globe consisting of support in designing and conducting constitutional reform process, including support in civic engagement as crucial to inclusive and participatory constitution making. The results indicate only those countries where GP support centred around civic engagement in such processes. This 1 context has 2025 IRRF data available. According to the IRRF rating scale for this indicator, Angola has reported the work as started (see IRRF indicator 2.4.1a).
1.4 Number of contexts with GP-funded access to justice programmes or projects introduced or supported	24 (2020)	17	23	48	24	28	GP reporting	The contexts are: Central African Republic, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Gabon, Kenya, India, Lebanon, Liberia, The Maldives, Malawi, Mozambique, State of Palestine, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, St. Kitts & Nevis, Tanzania (and Zanzibar), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Kosovo*.
1.5 Number of contexts where GP support has contributed to the establishment and/or strengthening of justice and security mechanisms, processes and frameworks to prevent, respond to, and address sexual and gender based violence/conflict-related sexual violence	17 (2022)	17	17	26	20	19	GP reporting	The contexts are: Brazil, Central African Republic, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, Kenya, Mexico, Nepal, Peru, Somalia, South Sudan (2 projects), Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine, Uruguay and Kosovo*.

OUTPUT RESULTS								
Output Indicator	Baseline & Year	Results Year 1 (2022)	Results Year 2 (2023)	Results Year 3 (2024)	Target Year 4 (2025)	Results Year 4 (2025)	Data Source	Reporting Notes
Output 2: Mechanisms to hold duty bearers and power holders to account in order to ensure the rule of law and promotion and protection of human rights are in place and actively used								
2.1 Number of contexts in which GP support has contributed to:[2] a) implementation of UPR recommendations b) closer integration between human rights and SDG systems[4]	a) 5 (2022) b) 7 (2020)	a) 5 b) 13	a) 8 b) 19	a)14 b) 24	a) >14 b) >24	a) 29 b) 47	GP reporting	This indicator is cumulative. a) The contexts are: Bahrain, Botswana, Chad, Comoros, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Eswatini, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Georgia, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Malawi, The Maldives, Mauritius, Moldova, Montenegro, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Peru, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Ukraine, Uruguay and Zambia. b) The contexts are: Bahrain, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Botswana, Chad, Colombia, Denmark, Djibouti, El Salvador, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Georgia, Germany, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Malawi, The Maldives, Mauritius, Moldova, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, North Macedonia, Pakistan, State of Palestine, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Rwanda, Samoa, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Turkmenistan, Tunisia, Uruguay, Uzbekistan and Zambia.

OUTPUT RESULTS								
Output Indicator	Baseline & Year	Results Year 1 (2022)	Results Year 2 (2023)	Results Year 3 (2024)	Target Year 4 (2025)	Results Year 4 (2025)	Data Source	Reporting Notes
2.2 Number of contexts where GP-supported private sector institutions, systems, or stakeholders (including publicly owned companies) have strengthened capacities to support fulfilment of nationally and internationally ratified human rights obligations[3, 4]	25 (2022)	25	31	67	30	68	Corporate data, GP reporting	This indicator is cumulative. The contexts are: Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Aruba, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Cambodia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Liberia, Madagascar, Malaysia, The Maldives, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, State of Palestine, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Tanzania (and Zanzibar), Thailand, Trinidad & Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam and Zambia. Of 68 contexts, 17 have 2025 IRRF data available. According to the IRRF rating scale for this indicator, 4 contexts have reported the capacity as very high (see IRRF indicator 2.2.1c).
2.3 Number of contexts where GP support has improved capacities of justice and security institutions for oversight and accountability[4]	11 (2022)	11	16	49	15	52	GP reporting	This indicator is cumulative. The contexts are: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Burundi, Central African Republic, Colombia, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Eswatini, Fiji, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nigeria, Paraguay, Philippines, Senegal, Somalia, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, State of Palestine, Sudan, Tanzania, Thailand, Trinidad & Tobago, Ukraine, Viet Nam, Yemen and Kosovo*.

OUTPUT RESULTS								
Output Indicator	Baseline & Year	Results Year 1 (2022)	Results Year 2 (2023)	Results Year 3 (2024)	Target Year 4 (2025)	Results Year 4 (2025)	Data Source	Reporting Notes
2.4 Number of contexts with GP-introduced or strengthened people-centred and gender-sensitive, transitional justice solutions	9 (2022)	9	11	22	11	14	GP reporting	The contexts are: Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kenya, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, State of Palestine, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Kosovo*.
Output 3 Justice and security systems are service-oriented and better able to protect human rights and respond to people's justice and security needs through high-quality performance								
3.1 Number of contexts where GP-support to rule of law and justice institutions, systems, or stakeholders has strengthened capacities to support fulfilment of nationally and internationally ratified human rights obligations[3, 4**]	22 (2022)	22	37	63	26	73	Corporate data, GP reporting	This indicator is cumulative. The contexts are: Albania, Algeria, Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Bhutan, Brazil, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Paraguay, Peru, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, State of Palestine, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Trinidad & Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uruguay, Yemen, Zambia and Kosovo*. Of 73 contexts, 29 have 2025 IRRF data available. According to the IRRF rating scale for this indicator, 14 contexts have reported the capacity as high or very high (see IRRF indicator 2.2.1a).

OUTPUT RESULTS								
Output Indicator	Baseline & Year	Results Year 1 (2022)	Results Year 2 (2023)	Results Year 3 (2024)	Target Year 4 (2025)	Results Year 4 (2025)	Data Source	Reporting Notes
3.2 Number of new or strengthened people-centred justice policies, services or innovative digital solutions developed with GP support	45 (2022)	45	42	109	54	191	GP reporting	Policies, services and digital solutions were developed at the global level; at the regional level in Asia-Pacific; and at country level in the following contexts: Algeria, Bangladesh, Barbados, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Georgia, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Montenegro, Nepal, Palestine, Rwanda, Samoa, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, Somaliland (through Somalia), South Sudan, St. Kitts & Nevis, Sudan, Tanzania (and Zanzibar), Tunisia and Viet Nam.
3.3 Number of new or strengthened people-centred security policies, services or innovative digital solutions developed with GP support	13 (2022)	13	17	39	19	26	GP reporting	Policies, services and digital solutions were developed at the global level; at the regional level in Latin America and the Caribbean; and at country level in the following contexts: Ecuador, Iraq, Lebanon, Sierra Leone, Somalia (and Somaliland).
3.4 Number of justice and security institutions with enhanced capacity to provide people-centred services, in line with human rights/gender/LNOB principles, through GP-supported interventions	94 (2022)	94	42	153	100	134	GP reporting	The results include 124 institutions at the national level and 10 at the sub-national level. Institutions were supported at the regional level in Asia-Pacific; and in the following contexts: Barbados, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, India, Iraq, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Montenegro, Morocco, Nepal, State of Palestine, Samoa, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, Somaliland (through Somalia), South Sudan, St. Kitts & Nevis, Tanzania (and Zanzibar), Tunisia and Kosovo*.

OUTPUT RESULTS								
Output Indicator	**Baseline & Year**	**Results Year 1 (2022)**	**Results Year 2 (2023)**	**Results Year 3 (2024)**	**Target Year 4 (2025)**	**Results Year 4 (2025)**	**Data Source**	**Reporting Notes**
3.5 Number of justice and security personnel with enhanced capacity to provide people-centred services, in line with human rights/gender/LNOB principles, through GP-supported interventions	3,025 (2022)	3,025	7,321	5,165	3,479	5,096	GP reporting	Personnel were supported at the regional level in Asia-Pacific; and in the following contexts: Barbados, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Montenegro, Palestine, Samoa, São Tomé and Príncipe, South Sudan, St. Kitts & Nevis, Sudan, Tanzania (and Zanzibar), Thailand, Tunisia and Kosovo*.
Output 4: Community security, safety and resilience strengthened through people-centred strategies, processes and mechanisms								
4.1 Number of contexts in which GP-supported local government, justice and security providers respond in a more holistic & people-centred way to community safety and security needs and grievances[2]	4 (2022)	4	7	21	>21	7	GP reporting	The contexts are: Burkina Faso, Comoros, Ecuador, Kenya, Malawi, Mali and Somalia (and Somaliland).
4.2 Number of contexts where GP support introduced or strengthened gender-sensitive and people-centred evidence-based security strategies for reducing armed violence and/or controlling small arms at the community level[2]	3 (2022)	3	8	6	>6	8	GP reporting	The contexts are: Ghana, Honduras, Jamaica, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mali, Panama and Papua New Guinea.
4.3 Number of GP-funded integrated programmes/ projects in stabilization and/ or triple nexus contexts that support people centred community security and social cohesion and: a) financial volume of support; b) number of joint programmes/ projects	12 (6 GP3 funded, 6 GP4 funded) (2022) a) US$ 3,353,534 ($1,603,534 GP3; $1,750,000 GP4) (2022) b) 5 (2022)	12 (6 GP3 funded, 6 GP4 funded) (2022) a) US$ 3,353,534 ($1,603,534 GP3; $1,750,000 GP4) (2022) b) 5 (2022)	Total 15 (13 GP4 funded; 2 GP3 funded) a) Total US$ 3,713,540 (GP4 funds: US$ 3,013,540; GP3 funds: US$ 700,000) b) 7	Total 11 a) US$ 2,463,420 b) 7	12 a) $3M b) 5	11 a) US $3,539,158 b) 3	GP reporting	a) The contexts are: Burkina Faso ($200,000), Central African Republic ($350,000), Iraq ($200,000), Lebanon ($250,000), Madagascar ($100,000), State of Palestine ($500,000), Somaliland (through Somalia, $250,000), South Sudan ($100,000), Sudan ($250,000) and Yemen ($200,000). b) Joint programmes were implemented in: Democratic Republic of the Congo, State of Palestine and Somalia.

OUTPUT RESULTS								
Output Indicator	Baseline & Year	Results Year 1 (2022)	Results Year 2 (2023)	Results Year 3 (2024)	Target Year 4 (2025)	Results Year 4 (2025)	Data Source	Reporting Notes
Output 5: Strengthened Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) systems support project/ programme design and implementation								
5.1 Number of new methods (including tools, frameworks and processes) for GP-related monitoring, evaluation and learning adopted at:[2] i. global ii. regional and iii. country level	0 (2021)	i. 0 ii. 2 iii. 15	i. 3 ii. 7 iii. 48	i. 9 ii. 9 iii. 104	i. >9 ii. >9 iii. >104	i. 4 ii. 25 iii. 63	GP reporting	ii. Methods were developed in all UNDP regions. iii. Methods were developed in the following contexts: Barbados, Brazil, Burundi, Chad, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Montenegro, Mozambique, Nepal, State of Palestine, Samoa, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania (and Zanzibar), Thailand, Tunisia, Trinidad & Tobago, Türkiye, Ukraine and Zambia.
5.2 Number of key UNDP global knowledge and learning products produced and disseminated by GP; in a) English; and/or b) other languages	a) 5 (2020) b) 0 (2020)	a) 14 b) 1	a) 3 in English b) 2 in other languages	a) 5 in English (8 total) b) 1 in other languages (3 total)	a) 3 (total 12) b) 3 (total 10)	a) 3 (total 15) b) 0	GP reporting	Products produced in English: Human Rights vs. Competitiveness: A False Dilemma?, Rule of Law, Security and Human Rights Crisis Response Catalogue, and UNDP Digital Rights Dashboard Pilot Country Insights. There were no products published in different languages.
5.3 Number of GP-led or GP-supported knowledge and learning-focused mechanisms (e.g. workshops, trainings, COPs, theory of change reflection sessions etc.) at:[2] i. global ii. regional and iii. country level	i. 33 (2022) ii. 15 (2022) iii. 5 (2022)	i. 33 ii. 15 iii. 5	i. 43 ii. 36 iii. 7	i) 29 ii) 25 iii) 41	i. >29 ii. >25 iii. >41	i. 18 ii. 13 iii. 41	GP reporting	Results reflect knowledge and learning-focused mechanisms at the global level; at the regional level in Africa, Arab States and Asia-Pacific regions; and at country level in the following contexts: Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kenya, Lao PDR, Montenegro, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria, Paraguay, Samoa, São Tomé and Príncipe, South Sudan, Trinidad & Tobago, Tunisia, Uruguay and Kosovo*.

OUTPUT RESULTS								
Output Indicator	Baseline & Year	Results Year 1 (2022)	Results Year 2 (2023)	Results Year 3 (2024)	Target Year 4 (2025)	Results Year 4 (2025)	Data Source	Reporting Notes
Output 6: Sustained high-quality, evidence-informed analytics and learning contribute to shaping global and regional level policy discourse on rule of law, justice, security and human rights								
6.1 Number of key UN global learning and/or policy documents published referencing GP-specific evidence-based findings/ knowledge/results	11 (2022)	11	11	15	12	8	GP reporting	Contributions to key UN global learning/policy documents were in the areas of business and human rights, gender justice, and human rights. Contributions were published in statements from the Human Rights Council Sessions; various Secretary General reports; and global reports produced through GP partnerships with other UN agencies.
6.2 Stakeholders' general perception of GP analytics and policy work in terms of[2] a) quantity / frequency; b) quality of outputs; c) level of impact on global rule of law, justice, security and human rights policy landscape	a) Appropriate: 71% (2022) b) Excellent: 29%; Good: 71% (2022) c) High level: 57%; Average level: 43% (2022)	a) Appropriate: 71% b) Excellent: 29%; Good: 71% c) High level: 57%; Average level: 43%	a) Appropriate: 75% b) Excellent: 25% c) High level: 50%; Average level: 50%	a) Appropriate 57% b) Excellent 14% c) High level: 71% Average level: 29%	a) >Appropriate: 57% b) >Excellent: 14% c) >High level: 71%	a) Appropriate: 50% b) Excellent: 50% c) High: 50%	GP reporting	According to the stakeholder survey results (2 responses): a) 50% of respondents agree that the quantity/ frequency is at an appropriate level; the remaining 50% neither agree nor disagree. b) 50% of the respondents agree that the quality of the outputs is excellent, while 50% found the quality to be fair. c) 50% of the respondents found the GP knowledge and policy work are having a high impact on the global policy landscape. The remaining 50% rated the level of impact as low.
6.3 Number of rule of law, justice, security and human rights related policy discussions/events (UN and non-UN): a) that are convened by GP b) to which GP is invited to contribute (e.g. staff representation or expertise, data); c) to which the GP contributes: at the: i. global ii. regional and iii. country level	a) 28 (2022) b) 41 (2022) c) i. 27 (2022) ii. 10 (2022) iii. 4 (2022)	a) 28 b) 41 c) i. 27 ii. 10 iii. 4	a) 27 b) 31 c) i. 15 ii. 7 iii. 9	a) 45 b) 30 c) i. 48 ii. 23 iii. 22	a) 25 b) 40 c) i. 25 ii. 10 iii. 5	a) 102 b) 37 c) i) 16 ii) 13 iii) 36	GP reporting	Results reflect rule of law, justice, security and human rights-related policy discussions/events at global, regional and country levels, which are convened by GP (a), or with GP contribution (b + c = 102).
6.4 Number of downloads of key GP-produced policy documents and knowledge products	2,174 (2022)	2.174	514	2.522	2.888	5.478	GP reporting, Google Analytics	Total downloads: 5,478 Total page views: 10,833 Note that Google Analytics does not provide an exact number of downloads, as it applies some thresholds and does not count the number of downloads from the servers where the assets are cached (CDN - Content Delivery Network).

OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS RESULTS								
Indicator	Baseline & Year	Results Year 1 (2022)	Results Year 2 (2023)	Results Year 3 (2024)	Target Year 4 (2025)	Results Year 4 (2025)	Data Source	Reporting Notes
OE1 Number of country-level GP-funded projects/ programmes that integrate a human rights-based approach	34 (2020)	64 funded by GP4, plus 37 funded by GP3 but operational in 2022	73 funded by GP4, and 2 funded by GP3 but operational in 2023	92	37	77	GP reporting	GP4 countries = 38: Algeria, Barbados, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Colombia, Comoros, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Gabon, India, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, The Maldives, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, State of Palestine, Panama, Somalia (and Somaliland), South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania (and Zanzibar), Trinidad & Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Zambia. Gender Justice Platform countries = 20: Bangladesh, Colombia, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kenya, Lao PDR, Mali, Montenegro, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, State of Palestine, Somalia, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Tunisia, Kosovo*. Justice Action Coalition Fund countries = 9: Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Samoa, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, St. Kitts & Nevis. SALIENT countries = 8: Ghana, Honduras, Jamaica, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mali, Panama, Papua New Guinea. TPP countries = 15: Comoros, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Georgia, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, The Maldives, Moldova, Montenegro, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Peru, Timor-Leste, Ukraine. BHR countries = 19: Brazil, Cambodia, Ecuador, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, State of Palestine, Rwanda, Tanzania, Tunisia, Viet Nam, Zambia. KNPA countries = 12: Bolivia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Côte d'Ivoire, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Lao PDR, Mexico, North Macedonia, Sierra Leone, Thailand, Uruguay.
OE2 Number of contexts where the respective GP portfolio of projects/ programmes meets the set 15% budget quota for gender investments[2]	18 (2022)	18 (Gender Justice Platform)	34	46	>46	27	GP reporting	All GP-funded projects are GEN2, making a significant contribution to gender equality and/or the empowerment of women and girls. Gender Justice Platform is a GEN3 project. The contexts supported include SALIENT countries: Ghana, Honduras, Jamaica, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mali, Panama and Papua New Guinea; and Gender Justice Platform countries: Bangladesh, Colombia, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kenya, Lao PDR, Mali, Montenegro, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, State of Palestine, Somalia, Syria,Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Tunisia, Kosovo*.

OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS RESULTS								
Indicator	Baseline & Year	Results Year 1 (2022)	Results Year 2 (2023)	Results Year 3 (2024)	Target Year 4 (2025)	Results Year 4 (2025)	Data Source	Reporting Notes
OE3 Total number and proportion of full-time female staff among ROLSHR team contract holders: i. international professional staff ii. general service staff and iii. other contract categories (incl. interns, seconded staff, UNVs, consultants etc.)	i. 32 total, 69% female (2022) ii. 3 total, 67% female (2022) iii. 48 total, 54 female (2022)	i. 32 total, 69% female (2022) ii. 3 total, 67%female (2022) iii. 48 total, 54% female (2022)	i. 34 total, 71% ii. 6 total, 67% women iii. 16 total, 81% women	i. 38 total, 63% women ii. 5 total, 80% women iii. 42 total, 71% women	i. 50% ii. 50% iii. 50%	i. 65% ii. 100% iii. 42%	GP reporting	i. International professional staff Of 37 international professional staff, 24 were women = 65%. Categories as follows: -17 women of 25 P staff -7 women of 12 IPSA staff ii. General service staff 1 female G staff = 100%. iii. Other contract categories (interns, UNVs, secondees, consultants) Of 12 personnel in other categories, 5 were women = 42%. Categories as follows: -1 woman in 3 JPOs -1 female UNV -1 secondee -1 female intern -2 women of 6 fellows
OE4 Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law (GFP) partnerships:[2] (a) Total number of GFP-funded joint programmes/ projects (b) Total budget amount of GFP-funded joint programmes (c) Number of contexts where GFP-supported joint rule of law assessments, strategies, programmes and/ or frameworks developed (complementing a UN political strategy or reinforcing implementation of a UNSC mission mandate)	a) 3 (2022) b) US$ 800,000 (2022) c) 5 (2022)	a) 3 (GP4 2022), plus 3 (GP3) b) US$ 800,000 (GP4), plus $795,534 (GP3) c) 5	a) 5 (GP4 funded) and 1 (GP3 funded) b) GP4 funds: US$ 1,050,000; GP3 funds: US$ 200,000 c) 2	a) 1 (GP4 funded) b) US$ 300,000 (GP4 funds) c) 6	a) >1 b) > US$ 300,000 c) >6	a) 2 b) US$ 250,000 c) 1	GP reporting	a) and b) GP4 = 2 funding allocations for projects in: Central African Republic (US$ 100,000) and Comoros (US$ 150,000). c) The context is: Central African Republic.

NOTES FOR THE RESULTS FRAMEWORK

1 List of Partnerships

i. UN entities: Chief Digital Office of UNDP; Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law (GFP); Inter-Agency Task Force on Transitional Justice (IATF-TJ); Inter-Agency Transitional Justice Task Force; International Organisation for Migration (IOM); Issue Based Coalition at Regional Level (LAC Region); Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean (RCP LAC); UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPO) via Global Focal Point; UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA); UN Environment Programme (UNEP); UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); UN Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict (ToE); UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights; UNDP-OHCHR-Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI): Tri-Partite Partnership to Support National Human Rights Institutions; UNDP-UN Women: Gender Justice Platform Partnership; UNDP-UNHCR: Global Partnership on Rule of Law and Governance; UNDP-UNODA partnership: SALIENT, Saving Lives Entity, including UNODA Regional Centres; United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED); United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR); United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI); United Nations Peacebuilding and Peace Support Office (PBPSO) via the Global Focal Point; United Nations Police – UNPOL.

ii. International Financial Institutions: World Bank.

iii. Private sector: Chamber of Commerce and Industry Japan-Brazil; Confederation of Indian Textile Industry; Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI); Investor Alliance for Human Rights; Japan Business Federation; Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry in India (JCCII).

iv. Civil Society Organisations: Business and Human Rights Resource Centre; Due Process of Law Foundation (DPLF); The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law (HiiL); International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ); Rafto Foundation; Trial International; UpRights.

v. Multi-stakeholders or intergovernmental organisations: African Union (African Commission on Human and People's Rights, African Court on Human and People's Rights, African Union Commission); Asia Pacific Forum; Banco de Desarrollo de América Latina y el Caribe (CAF); Conference of Constitutional Jurisdictions in Africa (CCJA); Conference of Ministers of Justice of Ibero-American Countries (COMJIB); European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI); European Union (EU); Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI); International Development Law Organisation (IDLO); International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA); International Labour Organisation (ILO); International Network for Open Justice (RIJA); International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT); Justice Action Coalition; League of Arab States; Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI); Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies; Red de Instituciones Nacionales de Derechos Humanos del Continente Americano (RINDHCA); Working Group on Customary and Informal Justice; Working Group on Transitional Justice and SDG16+.

vi. Government agencies or public institutions: Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions; ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights; Danish Institute for Human Rights; Folke Bernadotte Academy; Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO); Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA); Korean National Police Agency (KNPA); Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India; Ministry of Commerce, Cambodia; Ministry of Economy, Kyrgyz Republic; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan; Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship of Brazil; Ministry of Justice, Kyrgyz Republic; Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MoLESS), Nepal; Ministry of Law and Human Rights, Indonesia; Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs (MoLJPA), Nepal; National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Nepal; National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Qatar; Norway Grants; Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD); Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Office of Prime Minister and Council of Ministers (OPMCM), Nepal; The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ); The Institute of Developing Economies (IDE-JETRO); The Securities and Exchange Commission of Thailand; United States International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Section (INL).

vii. Academia and think tanks: University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City.

viii. Other: PILNET.

2 The targets for these indicators were set as >2023 during target setting exercises that year. The targets as indicated here for 2024 are therefore interpreted and set as greater than the 2023 target.

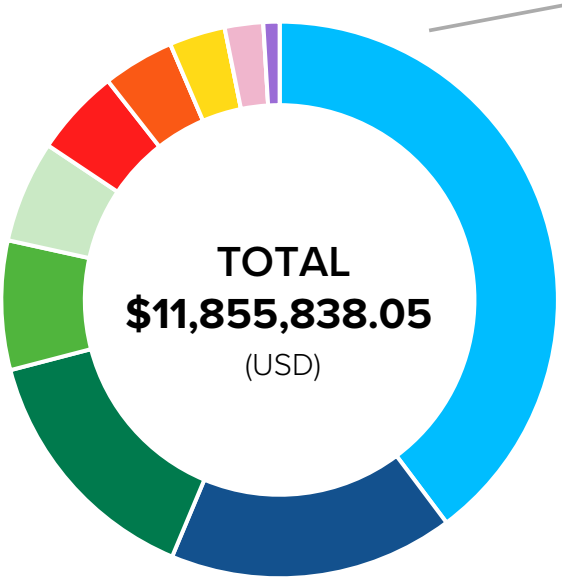
3 The following indicators were modified from 2023 and future reporting to track the number of contexts based on GP reporting, instead of proportion of contexts based on UNDP IRRF data: Output Indicators 1.2, 1.3, 2.2 and 3.1.

4 The following indicators are cumulative, as indicated in the reporting notes: Outcome Indicator 1.5, Output Indicators 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 3.1.

5 The IRRF rating scale for this indicator at country level is as follows: 0 = Not in place, 1 = Capacity low, 2 = Capacity neither low nor high, 3 = Capacity high, 4 = Capacity very high.

6 The IRRF rating scale for this indicator at country level is as follows: 0 = Not in place, 1 = Work started, 2 = Work in progress, 3 = Work almost complete, 4 = In place.

2025 Received Contributions



Unearmarked Contributions
$6,843,583.75

- UNDP Core/TRAC Funds: **$4,720,510.75**
- Flagships Funding through UNDP Funding Windows (FW): **$1,736,791.00**
- Iceland: **$386,282.00**

Earmarked Contributions
$5,012,254.30

- Germany*: **$1,736,791.00**
- Republic of Korea*: **$1,736,791.00**
- UN Action MPTF (Team of Experts CRSV)***: **$703,163.56**
- Japan**: **$599,517.00**
- SALIENT: **$493,331.02**
- United Kingdom FCDO: **$248,743.72**
- FAST: **$111,356.00**

In-Kind Contributions

Sweden: loaned staff (1 post from MSB)

* Received contribution in late 2024 for programming in 2025.
** Includes 1% levy amount
*** Includes late 2025 contribution for new phase of TOE MPTF beginning in 2026
**** Please note that the contribution for 2025 programming by The Netherlands and Norway was received in late 2024 and was previously reported as received on the 2024 annual report.
**** The data sources from PTD and PRO for global projects 129875/120787/125780 in 2025.

LIFETIME CONTRIBUTIONS 2008-2025

Total Mobilized Resources 2008-2025: $545,601,067

- United States*: **$227,147,227**
- Netherlands: **$126,413,504**
- CPR-TTF: **$36,004,440**
- UNDP CORE/ TRAC Funds: **$32,686,347**
- Sweden: **$20,767,702**
- Japan: **$19,815,747**
- Germany: **$15,831,163**
- Canada: **$13,145,391**
- Switzerland: **$8,549,560**
- Norway: **$6,631,377**
- SALIENT: **$6,575,125**
- United Kingdom: **$6,206,833**
- UN Action MPTF (Team of Experts CRSV): **$6,523,088**
- Australia: **$4,443,307**
- Denmark: **$3,739,940**
- Republic of Korea: **$2,937,977**
- Belgium: **$2,529,780**
- UNDP Funding Windows Flagships: **$1,736,791**
- MDTF - Human Rights Mainstreaming/DCO: **$749,000**
- Iceland: **$742,332**
- France: **$554,800**
- Luxembourg: **$538,206**
- Qatar: **$508,680**
- Ireland: **$393,288**
- UNHCR: **$246,407**
  FAST: **$129,856**
  Austria: **$33,702**
  EOSG: **$18,496**
  Private contribution: **$1,000**

*Does not include 2016-2020 United States/INL contribution for the various CBARD: Community Based Agricultural Rural Development projects in Afghanistan (total = $88,397,290.00 USD).

2025 RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS GLOBAL PROGRAMME MOBILIZED EARMARKED FUNDS

Country	Project	Donor	Mobilized Total (USD)
Georgia	Improving the Rule of Law and Access to Justice for All in Georgia	Germany	1.034.126,16
		TOTAL	**1.034.126,16**

2025 PIPELINE/PROJECT BOARD ALLOCATED FUNDS - PHASE IV

Context	Project	Allocated Budget (USD)	Donor Funding Allocated
Africa Regional Hub	Rule of Law and Human Rights in Africa	200.000,00	The Netherlands
Africa Regional Hub	Rule of Law and Human Rights in Africa	100.000,00	Flagship Funding through UNDP FW
Africa Regional Hub	Governance, Rule of Law and Peacebuilding for Sustainable Development in Africa	185.294,00	Flagship Funding through UNDP FW
Arab States Regional Hub	Rule of Law and Human Rights in the Arab States	300.000,00	The Netherlands
Arab States Regional Hub	Rule of Law and Human Rights in the Arab States	100.000,00	Flagship Funding through UNDP FW
Arab States Regional Hub	Gender Justice in the Arab States	150.000,00	The Netherlands
Arab States Regional Hub	Governance, Rule of Law and Peacebuilding for Sustainable Development in the Arab States	185.294,00	Flagship Funding through UNDP FW
Asia Pacific Regional Hub	Rule of Law and Human Rights in Asia and the Pacific	50.000,00	Iceland
Asia Pacific Regional Hub	Rule of Law and Human Rights in Asia and the Pacific	100.590,00	Flagship Funding through UNDP FW
Asia Pacific Regional Hub	Rule of Law and Human Rights in Asia and the Pacific	80.000,00	The Netherlands
Asia Pacific Regional Hub	Governance, Rule of Law and Peacebuilding for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific	185.294,00	Flagship Funding through UNDP FW
Asia Pacific Regional Hub for ASEAN	Business and Human Rights	32.400,00	Japan
Brazil	Business and Human Rights	54.000,00	Japan
Cambodia	Business and Human Rights	54.000,00	Japan
Central African Republic	Support to Reduce Pre-Trial Detention and Improve Prison Conditions in CAR	250.000,00	The Netherlands
Central African Republic	Support to the Special Criminal Court (SCC) in the Central African Republic	100.000,00	The Netherlands
Comoros	TPP Support for National Human Rights Institutions	35.000,00	Norway
Comoros	Support to Security Sector Reform and Strengthening Citizens' Trust in Internal Security Institutions in the Comoros	150.000,00	The Netherlands

Context	Project	Allocated Budget (USD)	Donor Funding Allocated
Congo	Support to the Prisons Project in Congo	25.000,00	The Netherlands
Costa Rica	TPP Support for National Human Rights Institutions	50.000,00	Norway
Eastern European and Central Asia Regional Hub	Rule of Law and Human Rights in Eastern Europe and Central Asia	50.000,00	Iceland
Eastern European and Central Asia Regional Hub	Rule of Law and Human Rights in Eastern Europe and Central Asia	80.000,00	The Netherlands
Eastern European and Central Asia Regional Hub	Governance, Rule of Law and Peacebuilding for Sustainable Development in Eastern Europe and Central Asia	61.765,00	Flagship Funding through UNDP FW
Ecuador	Strengthening inclusive, people-centered and strategic responses to the security crisis in Ecuador	110.000,00	Sweden
Ecuador	Gender Justice in Ecuador	30.000,00	Germany
Eritrea	Reforming the Legal Framework for Sustainable Development in Eritrea	200.000,00	The Netherlands
Ethiopia	Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace & Development, Justice Action Coalition Catalytic Fund in Ethiopia	200.000,00	The Netherlands
Gabon	Enhancing Access to Fair Trial and Legal Aid for Pretrial Detainees to Strengthen People-Centered Justice Services in Libreville	108.000,00	The Netherlands
Ghana	SALIENT	350.000,00	SALIENT
Honduras	SALIENT	350.000,00	SALIENT
India	Business and Human Rights	86.400,00	Japan
Indonesia	Police Capacity Building Support Programme for Combatting GBV in the Digital Sphere	75.600,00	Republic of Korea
Indonesia	Business and Human Rights	54.000,00	Japan
Iraq	The Journey Toward People-Centered Policing in Iraq	200.000,00	The Netherlands
Jordan	TPP Support for National Human Rights Institutions	35.000,00	Norway
Jordan	Creating an Enabling Environment for Business and Human Rights in Jordan	100.000,00	The Netherlands
Kenya	Police Capacity Building Support Programme for Combatting GBV in the Digital Sphere	75.600,00	Republic of Korea
Kosovo	Voices of Justice	75.000,00	The Netherlands
Kyrgyzstan	TPP Support for National Human Rights Institutions	17.990,00	Norway
Lao PDR	Police Capacity Building Support Programme for Combatting GBV in the Digital Sphere	75.600,00	Republic of Korea
Laos PDR	Gender Justice in Laos PDR	100.000,00	Germany
Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Hub	Rule of Law and Human Rights in Latin America and the Caribbean	50.000,00	Iceland
Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Hub	Rule of Law and Human Rights in Latin America and the Caribbean	80.000,00	The Netherlands
Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Hub	Governance, Rule of Law and Peacebuilding for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean	61.765,00	Flagship Funding through UNDP FW
Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Hub	SALIENT	165.000,00	SALIENT
Lebanon	Enhancing access of crisis affected populations to inclusive, accountable and human-rights compliant security services	200.000,00	The Netherlands
Lebanon	SALIENT	150.000,00	SALIENT
Malawi	TPP Support for National Human Rights Institutions	50.000,00	Norway

Context	Project	Allocated Budget (USD)	Donor Funding Allocated
Malawi	Bridging the Justice Gap: Strengthening Legal Access for Marginalized Communities in Malawi, Justice Action Coalition Catalytic Fund in Malawi	150.000,00	The Netherlands
Maldives	TPP Support for National Human Rights Institutions	10.000,00	Norway
Maldives	Advancing Environmental and Climate Justice in the Maldives	90.000,00	Sweden
Mali	SALIENT	260.000,00	SALIENT
Mexico	Police Capacity Building Support Programme for Combatting GBV in the Digital Sphere	45.360,00	Republic of Korea
Montenegro	TPP Support for National Human Rights Institutions	45.000,00	Norway
Morocco	Support the criminal justice policy reform to Align with Morocco's International Human Rights Commitments	100.000,00	The Netherlands
Mozambique	Capacity for Change: Strengthening Justice Systems and Empowering Civil Society Organization's for Environmental Advocacy	160.834,00	The Netherlands
Nigeria	TPP Support for National Human Rights Institutions	50.000,00	Norway
North Macedonia	TPP Support for National Human Rights Institutions	35.000,00	Norway
North Macedonia	Police Capacity Building Support Programme for Combatting GBV in the Digital Sphere	75.600,00	Republic of Korea
Palestine	Supporting Post-Conflict Justice Sector Recovery in Palestine, with focus on affected areas of the West Bank and post-war Gaza Strip	498.960,00	The Netherlands
Papua New Guinea	SALIENT	350.000,00	SALIENT
Peru	TPP Support for National Human Rights Institutions	83.333,00	Norway
Sierra Leone	Police Capacity Building Support Programme for Combatting GBV in the Digital Sphere	45.360,00	Republic of Korea
Somalia	Building Accountable and Sustainable Security in Somalia – Phase II (BASIS II)	200.000,00	The Netherlands
Somalia	Joint Rule of Law Programme in Somaliland – Phase II	250.000,00	The Netherlands
South Sudan	Leveraging gains from Peacebuilding, transitional justice and the delivery of formal justice for South Sudan	100.008,00	The Netherlands
St. Kitts & Nevis	Piloting Community-Based Restorative Justice Pathways in Saint Kitts and Nevis, Justice Action Coalition Catalytic Fund in St. Kitts & Nevis	150.000,00	Germany
Sudan	Reviving Community Protection and Reconciliation Pathways in Darfur	250.000,00	The Netherlands
Thailand	Police Capacity Building Support Programme for Combatting GBV in the Digital Sphere	75.600,00	Republic of Korea
The Maldives	TPP Support for National Human Rights Institutions	45.000,00	Norway
Timor-Leste	TPP Support for National Human Rights Institutions	25.000,00	Norway
Timor-Leste	TPP Support for National Human Rights Institutions	10.000,00	Norway
Trinidad and Tobago	Youth Forum on Justice, Gender and Security: From Discontent to Positive Change	100.000,00	Sweden
Ukraine	TPP Support for National Human Rights Institutions	55.000,00	Norway
Uzbekistan	Business and Human Rights: Promoting responsible business in Uzbekistan	115.000,00	Iceland
Viet Nam	Business and Human Rights	54.000,00	Japan
Yemen	Improving Inclusive Access to Gender Justice in Yemen	200.000,00	The Netherlands
Zambia	Strengthening Stakeholder Capacities in Business and Human Rights: Ensuring Accountability and Access to Remedy	100.000,00	The Netherlands
	TOTAL	**9.307.647,00**	

2025 PIPELINE AND EARMARKED CONSOLIDATED AMOUNTS

Context	Pipeline Allocation Amount	Earmarked Mobilised Amount	TOTAL
Africa Regional Hub	485.295,00	-	485.295,00
Arab States Regional Hub	735.295,00	-	735.295,00
Asia Pacific Regional Hub	415.885,00	-	415.885,00
Asia Pacific Regional Hub for ASEAN	32.400,00	-	32.400,00
Brazil	54.000,00	-	54.000,00
Cambodia	54.000,00	-	54.000,00
Central African Republic	350.000,00	-	350.000,00
Comoros	185.000,00	-	185.000,00
Congo	25.000,00	-	25.000,00
Costa Rica	50.000,00	-	50.000,00
Eastern European and Central Asia Regional Hub	191.765,00	-	191.765,00
Ecuador	140.000,00	-	140.000,00
Eritrea	200.000,00	-	200.000,00
Ethiopia	200.000,00	-	200.000,00
Gabon	108.000,00	-	108.000,00
Georgia	-	1.034.126,16	1.034.126,16
Ghana	350.000,00	-	350.000,00
Honduras	350.000,00	-	350.000,00
India	86.400,00	-	86.400,00
Indonesia	129.600,00	-	129.600,00
Iraq	200.000,00	-	200.000,00
Jordan	135.000,00	-	135.000,00
Kenya	75.600,00	-	75.600,00
Kosovo	75.000,00	-	75.000,00
Kyrgyzstan	17.990,00	-	17.990,00
Laos PDR	175.600,00	-	175.600,00
Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Hub	356.765,00	-	356.765,00

Context	Pipeline Allocation Amount	Earmarked Mobilised Amount	TOTAL
Lebanon	350.000,00	-	350.000,00
Malawi	200.000,00	-	200.000,00
Maldives	100.000,00	-	100.000,00
Mali	260.000,00	-	260.000,00
Mexico	45.360,00	-	45.360,00
Montenegro	45.000,00	-	45.000,00
Morocco	100.000,00	-	100.000,00
Mozambique	160.834,00	-	160.834,00
Nigeria	50.000,00	-	50.000,00
North Macedonia	110.600,00	-	110.600,00
Palestine	498.960,00	-	498.960,00
Papua New Guinea	350.000,00	-	350.000,00
Peru	83.333,00	-	83.333,00
Sierra Leone	45.360,00	-	45.360,00
Somalia	450.000,00	-	450.000,00
South Sudan	100.008,00	-	100.008,00
St. Kitts & Nevis	150.000,00	-	150.000,00
Sudan	250.000,00	-	250.000,00
Thailand	75.600,00	-	75.600,00
The Maldives	45.000,00	-	45.000,00
Timor-Leste	35.000,00	-	35.000,00
Trinidad and Tobago	100.000,00	-	100.000,00
Ukraine	55.000,00	-	55.000,00
Uzbekistan	115.000,00	-	115.000,00
Viet Nam	54.000,00	-	54.000,00
Yemen	200.000,00	-	200.000,00
Zambia	100.000,00	-	100.000,00
TOTAL	**9.307.650,00**	**1.034.126,16**	**10.341.776,16**

ROL/HR GLOBAL PROGRAMME FUNDING TO CO (NON-PIPELINE) EXPENDITURES 2025

Context	Project Name/Activity	Expenditure
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Programme Support	720,00
Colombia	Policy Development (Justice)	4.059,00
Ethiopia	Policy Development	949,00
Ethiopia	Policy Development (BHR)	10.880,00
Democratic Republic of Congo	Policy Development (BHR)	2.150,00
Ghana	Policy Development (BHR)	4.244,00
The Gambia	Policy Development (Justice)	2.784,00
Indonesia	Policy Development (BHR)	3.146,00
Kenya	Policy Development	9.431,00
Nepal	Policy Development (Justice)	2.620,00
Palestine	Technical Capacity	9.616,00
Sierra Leone	Policy Development (Justice)	20.829,00
Zambia	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	20.000,00
	Support Costs (GMS 8%)	**7.314,24**
	TOTAL	**98.742,24**

2025 OVERALL SUPPORT

Total **$11.348.362 (USD)**

- Technical Capacity: **$6.675.213**
- Policy Development: **$1.042.475**
- Monitoring and Evaluation and Learning: **$798.253**
- Knowledge Management and Communications: **$392.125**
- Global Capacity Building Grants (UNITAR, UN Women): **$1.230.469**
- Programme Support: **$460.353**
- Support Costs (GMS 8%): **$749.474**

OVERALL EXPENDITURE AND DELIVERY

Delivery Rate for All 2025 RoL/HR GP funds

Opening 2025 Budget: **$21,924,041**

HQ/RH total: **$11.348.362**

Policy and Programming Support to Country Offices/Contexts total: **$98.742**

Pipeline/Allocations to Country/Regional Offices total: **$9.307.650**

Combined TOTAL for RoL/HR GP: **$20.754.755**

DELIVERY RATE FOR 2025

95%

United Nations Development Programme
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New York, NY 10017

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