

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

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



2025 HIGHLIGHTS

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

Photo: UNDP Tunisia /
Ala Zemzmi



INTRODUCTION

2025 was a challenging year for people and the planet. Crises intensified and converged – conflict, economic fragility and climate shocks placed unprecedented pressure on governance systems and the rule of law. In many contexts, trust in institutions eroded just as people's needs grew more urgent.

Yet, amid these pressures, signals of hope emerged. Gen Z movements in Kenya, Madagascar and Nepal, efforts to safeguard democracy in Malawi and Senegal, as well as transitions in Bangladesh, Gabon, Guinea and Syria, underscored demands for accountability and justice, creating opportunities for people-centred reforms.

Over the past years, UNDP stood firmly in defense of universal values: human rights, security and justice for all, no matter the pressure. We innovated to respond to emerging trends, including the responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI), and advanced the business and human rights agenda – also in crisis settings – to elevate responsible business practices. With a strong focus on women and girls, in remote and hard-to-reach communities, we worked hand-in-hand with national partners, adapting to local realities and co-creating environments where people can feel safe, access services, exercise their rights and pursue justice with dignity.

This brochure provides a snapshot of the results UNDP achieved in

“Development cannot be separate from security. It IS security – the kind that lasts. The evidence comes from the hardest places: where conflict is recent, institutions are fragile, and trust is broken.”

Across more than 100 countries, UNDP works alongside governments, communities and partners, to demonstrate that the path to stable societies lies through justice, rights and accountable institutions, not around them.”

– **Alexander De Croo, UNDP Administrator.**



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

over 100 countries and territories in 2025. The Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (the Global Programme) is UNDP's main vehicle for rule of law and human rights programming. In 2025, phase IV of the Global Programme was completed. During this period

(2022-2025), sustained investments, global reach and people-centred approaches expanded access to justice and strengthened accountability and rights protection. Reaching millions and shaping policies and practices at scale, the Global Programme reinforced its role as a trusted platform for integrated justice, security and human rights solutions.

CRISIS RESPONSE

In 2025, the global landscape was marked by protracted conflict, fragility and political instability that continued to erode justice, security and human rights.

Persistent crises in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Myanmar, South Sudan, Sudan, Yemen. An acute and deepening crisis across the State of Palestine. Continued war in Ukraine. These are some of the active crises that drive high civilian casualties, displacement, insecurity and human rights violations.

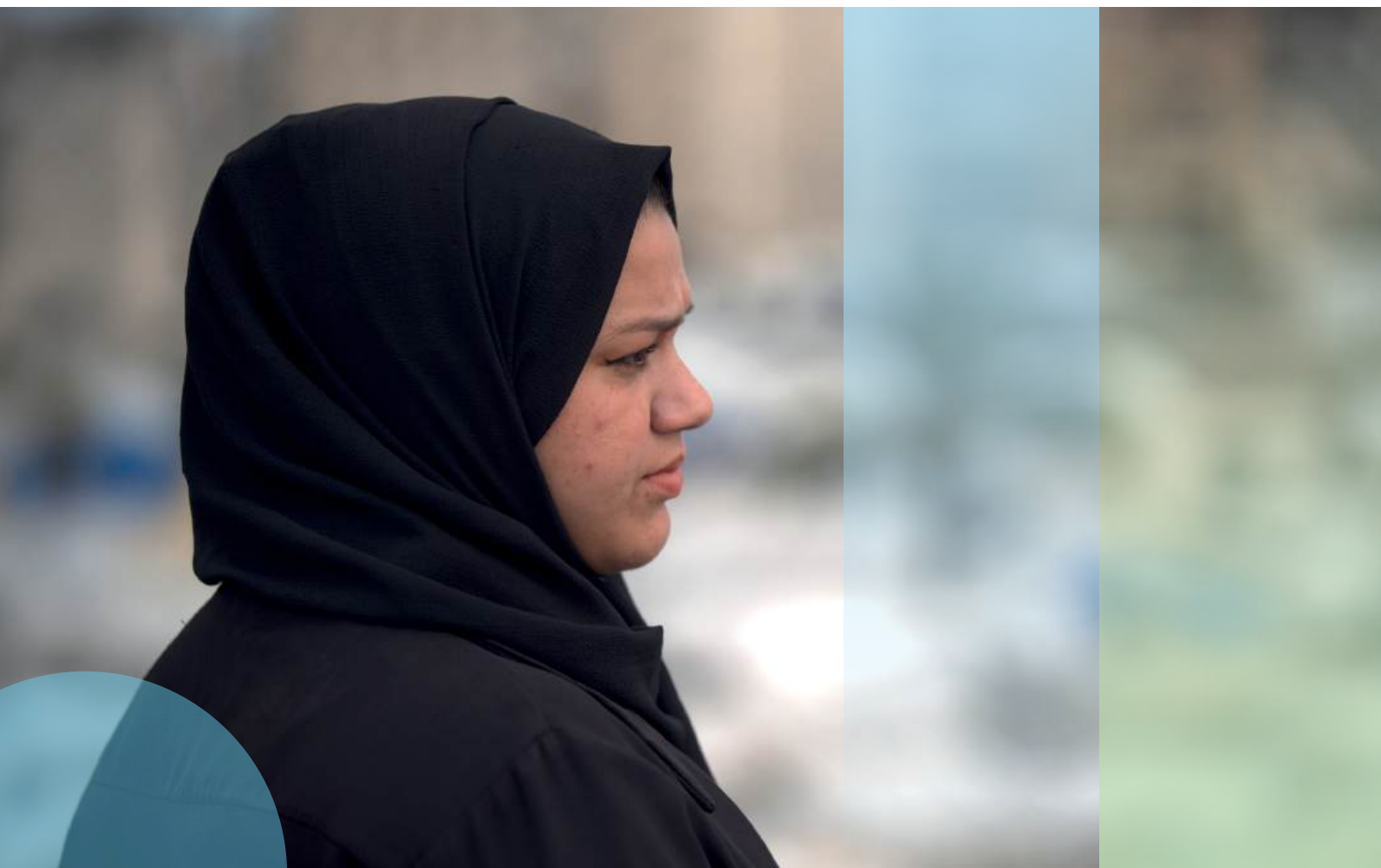
“For UNDP, investing in the rule of law, rights protection and justice is an essential part of the immediate crisis response. Crisis strips people of safety and security. Services disappear just when they are most needed, and protection needs multiply. Identity documents are lost. People flee their homes, leaving behind land and property. Families are separated, and violence escalates. These realities cannot wait. Restoring rights, rebuilding safety and opening pathways to justice are fundamental to helping people survive crisis with dignity and begin to recover.”

– Shoko Noda, Director, UNDP Crisis Bureau.



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

Photo: UNDP PAPP /
Sawasya Joint Programme



HAITI

Youth in Haiti found their voice and became active agents for peacebuilding and social cohesion. Through leadership forums, local consultations and violence prevention activities, young people – including those in areas affected by violence – could share their views and connect with public authorities.

“For the first time, I felt that my ideas mattered and that young people can help shape Haiti’s future.”

– Participant in the National Youth Leadership Forum, Haiti

UKRAINE

The Ombudsperson’s Office (Ukraine’s national human rights institution) expanded its operations across all regions, using mobile offices and hotlines to reach the communities most affected by the war. Broader regional monitoring enabled more precise responses to human rights violations. The levels of public engagement with the Office have increased as it received 152,500 complaints in 2025, compared to 95,000 complaints in 2023.

“We are facing massive violations of human rights. And we have the capacity to respond. We have expanded our presence across the country, and we understand the real needs – thanks to UNDP’s support that is built on data.”

– Dmytro Lubinets, Ukraine’s Ombudsman.

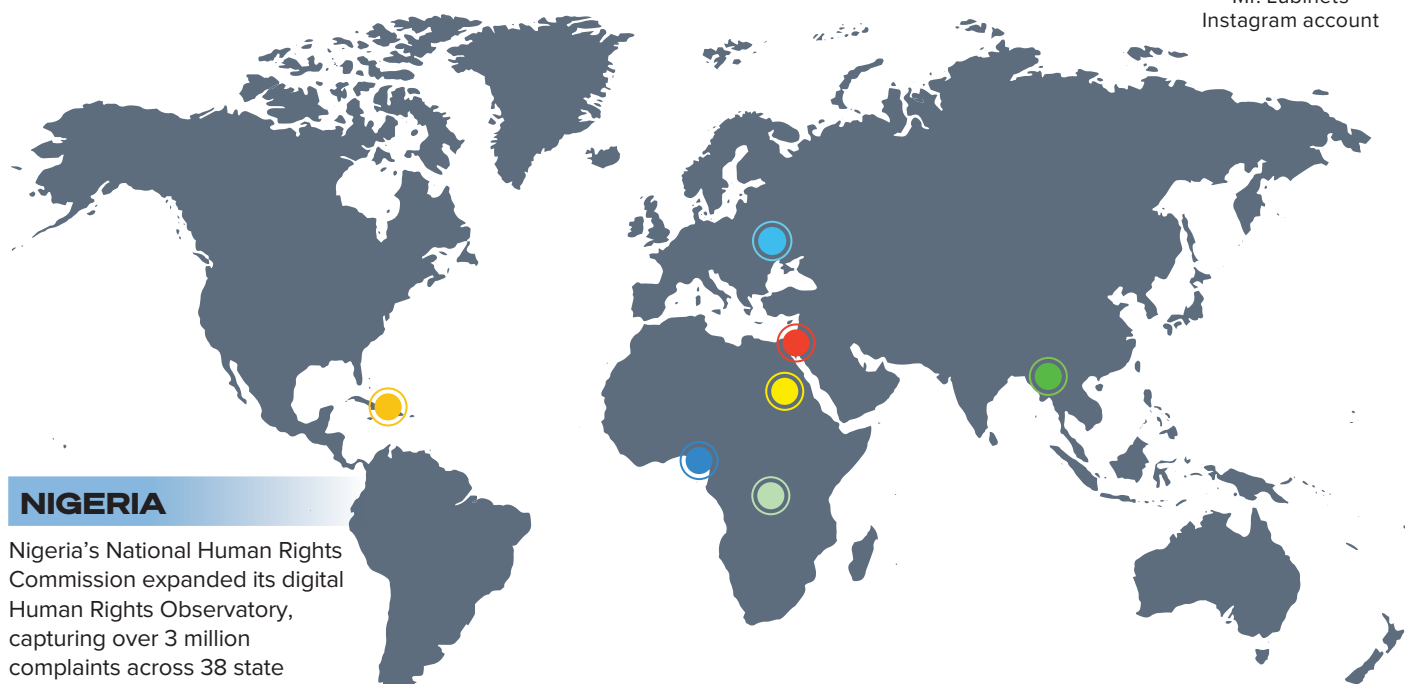
MYANMAR

100,000 people (64% women) received legal aid on housing, land and property rights, labour rights and gender-based violence. Almost 80 land and labour disputes were resolved through community-based mechanisms, benefitting more than 1,140 people, including 519 women.

Photo from Mr. Lubinets Instagram account



Photo from Mr. Lubinets Instagram account



NIGERIA

Nigeria’s National Human Rights Commission expanded its digital Human Rights Observatory, capturing over 3 million complaints across 38 state offices – strengthening real-time monitoring, informing targeted advocacy and remedy pathways.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Access to justice progressed despite intensified conflict and restricted access. National partners identified the most urgent needs and drove the response. Digital tools deployed across courts, prosecution offices and detention facilities increased transparency and improved case tracking and detainee management. Mobile courts delivered justice for more than 320 people. All of them had access to a lawyer and many were awarded financial reparation. Nationally-led inspections of prisons and first-instance courts were reactivated to tackle severe understaffing and mounting backlogs.

STATE OF PALESTINE

Across Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, more than 34,000 people – mostly women and children – benefitted from legal aid, representation, mediation, alternative dispute resolution and psychosocial support.

Thirty judges and prosecutors strengthened their capacity to assess evidence, evaluate cases and adjudicate corporate responsibility for human rights harms. Business and Human Rights training addressed legal issues anticipated in Gaza’s reconstruction, focusing on access to remedy through judicial and non-judicial mechanisms.

SUDAN

The police strengthened its frontline responses to sexual and gender-based violence. In 2025, UNDP facilitated training for 100 officers, improving survivor-centred, trauma informed investigations and coordination. Police unit level action plans were developed, demonstrating national ownership and commitment to rebuild community trust.

SECURITY UNLOCKS DEVELOPMENT. RULE OF LAW MAKES IT LAST.



Conflict drains the global economy by trillions of dollars every year. Yet far more is spent on responding to crises than on preventing them, even though prevention is proven to be more effective and less costly over time.

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

Photo: UNDP
Guinea-Bissau

Creating safe and stable environments starts with protecting rights and strengthening the rule of law. Fair and accountable policing, transparent institutions, access to justice and services help people feel secure and heard. This trust reduces tensions and enables communities to manage challenges peacefully.



In Yemen, UNDP's advocacy strengthened women's leadership.

Photo: UNDP
Yemen

Strengthening the link between development and security is key to managing today's risks and building a more stable future.

From the Balkans to Bangladesh to Iraq, UNDP stands with national partners to drive transformative change through security sector reform, community policing, legal improvements, and small arms control.

Since 2008, the Global Programme has been the UN's primary mechanism for advancing inclusive people-centred justice, security and human rights, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected settings. With the launch of phase V in 2026, the Global Programme integrates peacebuilding and local action portfolios, alongside rule of law, justice, security, human rights and business and human rights.

“Our approach is holistic and multidisciplinary, grounded in the understanding that justice reforms, human rights progress and security interventions cannot succeed in isolation. To achieve transformative change, the Global Programme brings these interdependent pillars together under a single framework, supporting countries in advancing peaceful, just and inclusive societies.”

– **Sarah Rattray, Co-Director, Governance, Rule of Law and Peacebuilding Hub, a.i.**



Digital justice

AI: navigating human rights risks

Rapid digitalisation has expanded access to public services and introduced AI-based systems but often outpaced the development of legal and institutional safeguards. This has heightened risks to privacy, non-discrimination, freedom of expression and due process, especially for vulnerable or digitally excluded populations. UNDP stepped in.

In Europe and Central Asia, a [Human Rights Impact Assessment toolkit for AI](#) guides users step-by-step through assessing automated decision-making systems. In Asia-Pacific, UNDP [convened partners](#) to examine AI governance, algorithmic bias and judicial independence safeguards. UNDP also launched the [Digital Rights Dashboard](#), a new tool covering 147 countries that provides evidence-based insights and is a conversation starter to guide rights-based digital transformation.

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.



Liberia:

from days to minutes in judicial case management

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.

Pakistan:

improved access to justice for 1M people

Virtual courts held over 116,000 hearings in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, alongside the expansion of virtual court infrastructure in flood-prone districts of Gilgit-Baltistan, improving access to justice for almost 1 million people in remote areas, almost half of whom were women.

Advocate Zareena Baig used to travel for days to attend hearings in Gilgit-Baltistan. Today, virtual courts make justice more accessible.

Photo: UNDP Pakistan / Muhammad Aadil Rafiq



Environmental justice

Since the launch of [UNDP's Environmental justice strategy](#) in 2022, a total of 25 countries and territories delivered dedicated environmental justice programming. Eight countries launched or scaled up their initiatives in 2025. The enhanced capacity of justice actors in resolving environmental disputes stands out as a major result across all contexts, including Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Malawi and

Thailand. Under the [Environmental Justice Working Group](#), in partnership with the World Bank, UNDP published a [legal analysis](#) to support actions in holding states accountable for their international legal obligations when transitioning away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy, making such transitions just, equitable and grounded in international law.

In Kazakhstan, UNDP empowers civil society to champion environmental justice.

Photo: UNDP Kazakhstan / Iris Mambur



Customary and informal justice

Burkina Faso:

preventing community violence

Observatories in seven regions use locally accepted methods for community conflict resolution, including reconciliation, mediation and, in some cases, humour-based approaches common among certain ethnic groups. In 2025, the number of reported community conflicts increased, alongside an improvement in resolution rates: from 25 percent in 2024 to 31 percent in 2025. Most community tensions stem from disputes over land and water, as well as religious or ethnic issues.

Yemen:

women supporting women

Over 100 women paralegals addressed 3,000 community disputes in Aden and Mukalla. Nearly 60 percent of cases were resolved, and women accounted for 70 percent of claimants, reflecting progress towards inclusive, people-centred justice delivery.

“Local mediators work alongside civil servants to ensure the best outcome and prevent violence. Since 2020, we have trained over 8,000 experts in community conflict resolution.”



Photo: UNDP
Burkina Faso

– **Da Bèbè, Head of the Monitoring Unit, Permanent Secretariat of the National Observatory for the Prevention and Management of Community Conflicts, Burkina Faso.**

Photo: UNDP
Yemen



Human rights systems

UNDP launched a [Human Rights-Based Approach to Development Programming Toolkit](#) on using human rights as a problem-solving tool for development to guide all UNDP programming.

UNDP rolled out the **UPR+** initiative to help countries translate the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) into tangible change on the ground. In Burkina Faso, national commitment to implementing UPR recommendations led to a legal reform equalizing the minimum age of marriage for women and men.

In 48 countries, national human rights institutions (NHRIs) strengthened their capacities in monitoring, investigation, digital systems and public outreach. In Samoa, UNDP is supporting inclusive data governance and cybersecurity programming,

helping integrate human rights protections into digital transformation, including the rights to equality and non-discrimination.

UNDP also launched the **Rights-Dev Colab**,

a collaborative learning platform that connects practitioners, supports peer exchange and co-creates practical solutions to pressing human rights and development challenges.



Business and human rights

Ghana:

inclusive consultations inform first national business and human rights framework

In 2025, Ghana adopted its first National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, creating a national framework to help prevent and address business-related harms and strengthen access to remedy. Inclusive consultations across all the regions brought in the diverse perspectives of women, children, persons with disabilities and trade unions.

“Building a responsible supply chain is not a one-time compliance exercise. It requires sustained investment in supplier capability, stronger systems and responsible practices across every tier.”

– **Senior executive, Indian subsidiary of a Japanese automotive company**

India:

strengthening human rights due diligence across Japanese companies and their supply chain partners

Nearly 300 middle management officials from 67 Japanese companies and their Indian suppliers across Delhi National Capital Region and Andhra Pradesh received training on human rights due diligence, establishing remediation mechanisms and strengthening responsible business practices across supply chains, helping companies better identify and address risks affecting workers and communities.

Photo: UNDP India



GLOBAL RESULTS IN NUMBERS

130+

justice and security institutions became better equipped to provide people-centred services

Human rights institutions, systems or stakeholders supported in

64
contexts

Transitional justice solutions introduced or strengthened in

12
contexts

217

people-centred justice or security services, policies or innovative digital solutions developed or implemented

Over

5,000

businesses strengthened their capacity to apply human rights and responsible business practices

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

Photo: UNDP Maldives



The Global Programme is a platform for partnerships and a UN-system integrator.

Justice Action Coalition (JAC) a multi-stakeholder alliance

In 9 countries, the JAC Catalytic Fund unlocked rapid gains in access to justice. Governments and civil society partners tested innovative people-centred approaches and scaled what worked best.

Colombia advanced preparations for the Agrarian and Rural Jurisdiction to address land conflicts and protect rights, especially for women. Work in mountain regions improved access to land rights information and strengthened local capacity to resolve disputes and align agrarian justice with national policies.

Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law (GFP) co-chaired by UNDP and the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA)

In crisis settings, the GFP mobilized coordinated UN expertise to address justice and security challenges. In the Central African Republic, the GFP advanced the new Joint Justice and Corrections Programme and safeguarded the operations of the Special Criminal Court, the country's unique mechanism for transitional justice and accountability for crimes against humanity and war crimes.



Photo: UNDP Colombia

"I have worked as a peasant all my life. The land [...] is our culture, strength, roots and love for our ancestors. But we have never had land to our name. [...] This process of the 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."

– Ruth Romero, a farmer from the municipality of Zambrano, Bolívar, Colombia.

Gender Justice Platform co-led by UNDP and UN Women

- Over 900,000 people (over half of them women) received legal aid amid conflict and fragility.
- 23 new laws and policies were adopted to combat gender-based violence and discrimination against women. Nepal amended its legislation on sexual violence and Montenegro initiated the process to criminalize femicide.

Tripartite Partnership to Support National Human Rights Institutions (TPP) co-led by UNDP, the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR), and the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI)

NHRIs are one of the key actors for accountability, prevention and inclusive governance. In 2025, the TPP supported 15 NHRIs at country level and engaged more than 40 through shared tools and international fora. In Malawi, detention monitoring contributed to the enactment of a new human rights-based Prisons Act. In Timor-Leste, nationwide training on human rights, anti-corruption and public administration standards reached 520 civil servants. In Georgia, a right-to-water report generated 10 policy recommendations for Parliament and local authorities, while in Peru regional dialogues led by the Ombudsperson's Offices produced 74 state commitments to improve protections for human rights defenders.



Detention monitoring by the Malawi Human Rights Commission.

Photo: UNDP Malawi

SALIENT co-chaired by UNDP and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)

Across 10 countries, SALIENT contributed to reduced community violence, increased voluntary disarmament and stronger recognition of small arms control as a core part of security and peacebuilding.

Ghana saw zero gun-related incidents in SALIENT-supported constituencies during the 2024-2025 elections, while community-led initiatives in Papua New Guinea changed youth attitudes toward weapons.



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

Global Action Against Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence. UNDP partnership with the Korean National Police Agency (KNPA)

More than 38 percent of women have experienced online violence. Solutions introduced through this partnership ranged from legal reforms in Thailand, a theatre-based public awareness campaign in North Macedonia and digital investigative skills integrated into core police training in Kenya and Indonesia.

Twelve new partner countries globally bolstered law enforcement and judicial accountability and enhanced civil society's capacity for awareness-raising, data collection and analysis.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

The business model review and the final evaluation of the Global Programme phase IV informed the development of phase V, while measuring impact and harvesting cross-country learning.

The final evaluation included two case studies on partnerships, five regional analysis and eleven country deep dives. The evaluation confirmed these key strengths of the Global Programme:

- strategic relevance
- integrated approach
- partnerships
- 80 percent of resources go directly to programme countries.

In 2025, the Global Programme piloted country case studies – a new Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) initiative – in Kyrgyz Republic and Pakistan, which assessed its medium-term impact on national rule of law,

security and human rights systems. Using this evidence, the Global Programme convened national validation workshops to jointly reflect on the strategy and way forward for strengthening the rule of law, security and human rights systems in these countries.



SALIENT global learning event brought together all beneficiary countries and SALIENT donors.

Photo: UNDP

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

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