



Investing in Hope: Our Strategic Outlook, 2025–2030

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1. Who we are

The Fund for Global Human Rights invests in the power of human rights activism to expand justice, dignity, and fundamental freedoms.

We're a global team of fundraisers, grantmakers, technical experts, and activists with decades of experience navigating practical and political barriers to support human rights movements, including in some of the world's most restrictive and repressive contexts. We work in solidarity with hundreds of grantee partners, united by our core values: respect, agility, integrity, sustainability, and inclusivity. Supported by generous institutional and individual

donors who champion democracy and deplore despotism, we find ways through crackdowns, setbacks, and uncertainty to ensure that human rights defenders have what they need to achieve lasting change for their communities.

We were founded in 2002 by a group of activists and donors with a simple idea: that funding should go directly to people whose rights have been violated, because they are best placed to develop and deliver sustainable solutions. Since then, we have raised and delivered more than \$166 million to human rights activists, organizations, and movements around the world.



2. Meeting the moment

The current global landscape is characterized by a new age of authoritarianism, spiraling inequality, escalating climate crisis, and an international legal system under immense strain.

Over the past decade, civic space for human rights activism has become contested or closed across much of the world. Authoritarian governments—including in the United States—are amassing power, discriminating against vulnerable populations, and cracking down on people who engage in legitimate forms of dissent. States are increasingly exploiting security laws, rolling out surveillance technologies, and propagating polarizing anti-rights narratives. At the same time, governmental funding for social justice work globally is declining, with some estimates suggesting that grants for human rights initiatives could soon fall by up to 30 percent.

In this challenging context, our mandate—to resource and enable activism by communities most affected by rights abuses—is more relevant and critical than ever. With a view to meeting this moment, we have undertaken a process of strategic reflection to take stock of who we are, what we do, and how we can be most effective in the years ahead. Our goal has been to assess the challenges of this moment, consolidate what we have learned over more than 20 years of work, and plot a path forward that ensures we can continue to nurture and sustain social movements that create durable change and improve lives.

Amid the fluid and turbulent external environment, we have set an ambitious goal of raising a total of \$170 million over five years, which would enable us to deliver on the strategic priorities set out below and power our grantmaking to frontline activists around the world.

Our purpose statement

We invest in the power of human rights activism to expand justice, dignity, and fundamental freedoms.

Our purpose encapsulates our belief, substantiated by lived experience and historical analysis, that human rights activism holds unique potential to drive sustainable social change around the world.

3. Our programmatic priorities



This tumultuous global moment—of closing civic space, contested narratives, and government impunity—demands a reimagined approach from the human rights community. In such a fraught political climate, our strategy has progressively moved toward resourcing work that builds collective power—the capacity of people to come together in pursuit of a shared vision over the long term. At this juncture, with methods of traditional international policy advocacy under increased strain, we are seeking to formalize and consolidate our focus on long-term movement building over the years ahead.

There are numerous examples from history that can inspire us in this moment of challenge: the global anti-slavery movement, the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, and the movement to resist caste

discrimination and violence in India, to name just a few. More recently, the viral online activism of the so-called Arab Spring; the sustained pushback against the renewed dictatorship in Myanmar; and Indigenous, LGBTQ+, and feminist movements protecting their lands in Central America are all examples of a new ecology of grassroots-led activism for a more just world.

While they may not all be well known, grassroots efforts in every corner of the world demonstrate the promise of community-led activism. To withstand the widespread assault on civic space and continue to effect sustainable change, we must do more to nurture these efforts and build power from the ground up—fostering interactions among diverse actors and facilitating a dynamic ecosystem of community-led mobilization.

Against this backdrop, we are prioritizing the following areas of strategic investment:



Resourcing human rights work in closed spaces

As operating space for independent civil society has narrowed or closed in the past 20 years, FGHR has increased its ability to deliver funds in some of the most challenging contexts, often where other grantmakers are unable to operate or unwilling to accept the risks involved. Over the coming years, we will lean further into this contribution. We will focus on continually building our capacity to navigate restrictive contexts, in order to reach activists where support is most needed.



Investing in systemic change

Because we seek to enable long-term, durable structural change, FGHR will look beyond isolated policy campaigns and will support groups addressing root causes rather than symptoms. Over the years ahead, we will prioritize cross-cutting efforts that seek to challenge interlocking systems of oppression, such as patriarchy, capitalism, racism, and militarization.



Centering lived experience

Over time, FGHR has largely moved beyond supporting organizations that work on behalf of others to those that advocate on their own behalf. Looking ahead, we will formally prioritize support for groups and movements that are led by those most affected by rights abuses, or groups centering analysis grounded in the lived experiences of the most marginalized. This means prioritizing grantmaking to groups led by, composed of, or centering analysis by women and gender-diverse people; Black, Indigenous, ethnic, and religious minorities; those suffering caste discrimination; young people; and others who historically have been excluded from power and representation.

4. What we do

FGHR's approach includes four major pillars of work:



We mobilize funding, support, and solidarity for frontline activists.

- We collaborate with donors who share our deep commitment to rights and justice.
- We partner with activists, organizations, and movements working to protect and promote human rights.
- We organize donors and philanthropists at all levels to increase the quality and quantity of funding available for grassroots-led activism globally.



We deliver critical resources and partnership under challenging conditions.

- We forge long-term, trusted relationships with local groups in the complex and rapidly evolving contexts where they work.
- When human rights groups face political, legal, or operational restrictions, we find agile, creative routes to ensure resources reach frontline communities.
- We go beyond grantmaking by providing hands-on strategic support and training.
- We assist activists imperiled for their work, facilitating security assistance, rapid response, and relocation when necessary.



We connect human rights defenders and allies to build stronger movements.

- As activists take on progressively interconnected abuses—from authoritarianism and LGBTQ+ discrimination to gender inequality and environmental destruction—we invest in activism that joins up movements across issues, geographies, and generations.
- We act as a bridge between the philanthropic community and frontline human rights movements, linking donors to activists, movements to allies, and the grassroots to the global.
- We facilitate learning exchanges, convenings, and spaces for strategic collaboration.



We catalyze transformative action against injustice and inequality.

- We ensure that activists, organizations, and movements can organize and build power to counter rights abuses.
- We hold the line when forward motion is thwarted, ensuring that human rights conditions don't worsen.
- We enable long-term movement building so that activists can push for transformational solutions when opportunities for change emerge.

5. Where we work



FGHR provides flexible financial support, technical assistance, accompaniment support, and emergency grants to activists around the world. Our locally based program staff are deeply rooted in the movements and communities we serve in East Africa, Latin America, North Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and West Asia. Key thematic areas of work across these regions include expanding civic power, labor rights, climate justice, migrants' rights, legal empowerment, and gender justice with an emphasis on building movements that cross borders, issues, and generations.

Moving ahead, we will continue to prioritize working in the countries and subregions where we have the cultural, contextual,

and/or linguistic expertise to effectively partner with activists or assess opportunities and invest with care. By forging long-term, trusted relationships with groups on the ground, we're able to deliver strategic support that is uniquely tailored to the complex and rapidly evolving contexts where they work.

Some of this work is invisible to the outside world. To ensure the security of grantee partners and FGHR staff living proximate to them, we are unable in some cases to publicize our grantmaking or other forms of support. But we continually monitor levels of risk and can provide closed-door briefings to supporters of these sensitive areas of investment.

6. Resourcing our work

As a public foundation, we don't have an endowment and therefore must fundraise for every dollar of our budget.

That means that donors are critical partners in our work. We develop close, trusting relationships with institutional and individual supporters, working as strategic partners to translate their aspirations into concrete plans. At the same time, we advocate for grantee partners, ensuring they have the resources they need to operate creatively, strategically, and without undue restrictions.

We deploy the funds we raise tactically, carefully considering the specific dynamics and nuances of movements on the ground. In practice, this often means pooling resources from a range of donors and finding agile ways to split funding we receive into targeted grants that best meet the needs of local communities, while removing administrative burdens from grantee partners so they can focus on meaningful work.

We are committed to critically unpacking our own role in the philanthropic system, learning from our own experiences, and presenting this learning in a way that helps shift other grantmakers toward being less transactional and more movement-focused in their funding. We work behind the scenes to influence philanthropy toward greater investment in frontline activists, always advocating for long-term unrestricted funding.

We know we can't do this work alone. We understand it to be about enabling the entire human rights ecosystem to be healthier and better resourced, and we speak out on these issues to improve the experience and impact of grantee partners and our peers, as well as our own. Since our founding, we have been pioneers in trust-based philanthropy—with a focus on shifting power and agency to grantee partners rather than dictating the terms of our support—and we will continue to work progressively to push others in the sector toward adopting these practices.



7. Looking ahead with hope



The Fund for Global Human Rights is part of a diverse global movement, working together in solidarity across issues, geographies, and generations—united by our common purpose of creating a world in which all people can thrive with dignity, justice, and equality.

Our investment in activism means, quite literally, that we are investing in hope. Because when any one of us takes action—whether by giving money, time, or skills—we do so because we believe we have the power to contribute to change. And that belief in our collective power and hope for the future will continue to guide us, whatever threats we face.

With resourcefulness and resolve, we will maintain focus on our founding truth: that supporting creative, strategic, and courageous human rights movements will, over time and with sufficient solidarity, lead us into a more just future.

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