

HUMAN
RIGHTS
WATCH

Introduction to Human Rights Watch

A brief snapshot of how HRW gets the job done

November 2011



Human Rights Watch

- Is independent and international
- Gives voice to the oppressed and holds violators accountable
- Investigates and exposes human rights violations
- Advocates for sustainable change



What do we do?

- We bring the words of some of the most disempowered, vulnerable and abused people in the world and put them in front of some of the most powerful people in the world and demands a response.
- We put public and political pressure on perpetrators and those whose actions or inactions facilitate them
- Neither Just Nor Effective : we challenges perceptions that human rights are an obstacle to other goals
- We break new ground for human rights: disability, pain relief, environmental health, etc



By the Numbers:

- Human Rights Watch has 320 staff members, including 100 researchers.
- Staff members work in 40 locations around the world.
- 51 nationalities are represented on our staff.
- 80 languages are spoken by our staff.
- 100+ reports per year, more than 700 press releases.
- Committees with local leadership in 18 cities, with a total of 560 members.



By the Numbers:

- HRW's annual budget is \$56 million for Fiscal Year 2012 (FY12), the current fiscal year. (HRW's fiscal year runs July 1 – June 30.)
- HRW does not receive any government funding.
- HRW accepts limited corporate funding, governed by strict conflict-of-interest policies.
- HRW receives about 60% of its funding from individuals and about 40% from private foundations.



How We Work: Our Methodology



Internationalization

- Aim is to take HRW to the next level as an NGO with real global influence
- More targets with focus on emerging powers: India, Brazil, South Africa, Turkey
- More research, advocacy and communications staff in more places
- Managing networks across continents and institutions
- More translations
- One message but varied tone

How do we set priorities?

- Scale of the violations
- Gravity of the violations
- Access to problem, victims and witnesses
- Value added: work of partners
- Likelihood of impact
- Breaking new ground



Step 1: Investigate

- Credibility – rigorous vetting process
- Voices and words of victims and witnesses
- Information from hospitals, morgues, police stations, national statistics, journalists, other organizations
- Challenges of access and closed societies
- Satellite images
- Security of staff, information, partners

Step 2: Expose

- Timely and authoritative reporting
- Finding right product: report, letter, presser, oped, campaign, audio-visual images, tweets
- Using social media
- Ensuring press and TV coverage – reaching out to journalists
- Partnerships: local and international

Step 3: Change

- Transforming facts into pressure through active advocacy strategy: messages; targets; defined impact
- Clear, actionable, targeted recommendations
- Targets: direct perpetrators and indirect
- Indirect: donors, arms suppliers, neighbors, members of key international and regional bodies (UN, EU, AU, ASEAN, SADCC)
- Partnerships



What makes an effective recommendation?

- Well-researched policy context
- Timely
- Principled
- Pragmatic
- Places pressure on perpetrator



Syria: pushing for change

- Targets: Syrian government, UNSC, UNGA, UNHRC, Arab League, Turkey, India, Brazil, South Africa, Russia, China
- Key demands: end violence, release prisoners, bring perpetrators to justice, economic sanctions, arms embargoes, human rights investigations, access for journalists and human rights monitors, referral to ICC, suspension from Arab League,

What kinds of impact does HRW make?

- Ending violations
- New laws and standards – domestically and internationally
- New institutions
- Bringing high level perpetrators to justice
- Enforcing existing commitments
- Changing attitudes and understanding

Special challenges of emergencies work

- Fast-moving pace of events
- Security/access
- Identifying perpetrators
- Establishing responsibility and chain of command
- Neutrality and impartiality