



# Annual Activity Report ► 2023

National Human Rights Commission

National Human Right Commission

Annual Activity Report  
**2023**

March 2024

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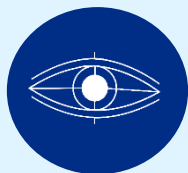
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## Our Vision:



A Gambia where everyone enjoys their fundamental human rights and freedoms.

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## Our Mission:



To promote and protect the fundamental human rights and freedoms of everyone through law, policy, education and partnership.

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## Our Core Values:



- ❖ Independence
- ❖ Integrity
- ❖ Impartiality
- ❖ Equality
- ❖ Inclusivity
- ❖ Confidentiality
- ❖ Accountability
- ❖ Accessibility

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## Foreword

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As mandated by Section 33(1) of the NHRC Act 2017, the National Human Rights Commission hereby presents its fifth Annual Activity Report covering the period 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023. The report highlights the main activities implemented by the Commission, key achievements registered, partnerships and collaborations formed, challenges, and lessons learned.

In fulfilment of its mandate to promote and protect human rights in The Gambia, the NHRC has implemented a series of programmes, projects, and activities to strengthen the culture of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the country. In this regard, we continued investigating alleged cases of human rights violations, published Advisory Notes on pertinent human rights issues such as Mental Health and the Right to Food, held consultations with relevant State and Non-State Actors to advance the enjoyment of human rights, conducted community outreaches and awareness programmes on human rights and other related



matters, embarked on monitoring visits to prisons and detention facilities, organised training for stakeholders, and monitored the Councillor, Mayoral and Chairperson elections. Furthermore, the NHRC held sensitisation and advocacy activities on the Government White Paper on the Report of the TRRC and the Concluding Observations on The Gambia's 6th Periodic Report on the Convention against the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The NHRC also implemented several projects supported by partners in the Gambia, such as UNDP, OHCHR, the British High Commission, the U.S. Embassy, the European Union Delegation,

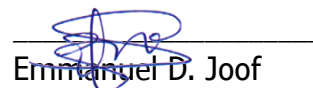
International IDEA and UNFPA. The Commission continues to maintain strong partnerships and cooperation with the Government as well as building strong national and international networks guided by its policies and guidelines to promote a culture of respect for human rights in the country.

You would recall that the NHRC in 2021 developed a five-year Strategic Plan (2021-2025). The Plan sets out clear targets, timelines, and allocated resources to achieve its set Strategic Objectives. Following more than two years of implementation, the Commission, cognizant of the prevailing realities, conducted a mid-term review to assess the progress and effectiveness of the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2021-2025 and to enhance the effective coordination, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of NHRC programmes.

During this review, the Commission re-examined and reformulated its Strategic Objectives, and identified new areas of focus and impactful activities. The Commission also refocused the Resource Mobilization Plan for the Strategic Plan.

We recognise the commitment of the Government to fulfil the State's human rights obligations and hope that it will fully and effectively implement the recommendations issued in the 2023 State of Human Rights Report of the Commission, the Report on the Implementation of the Government White Paper on the Report of the TRRC, Press Statements, and monitoring and investigation reports undertaken in 2023. The Commission also reiterates its commitment to providing the necessary advice and technical support to the Government in the fulfilment of its human rights obligations, while actively playing its role as a watchdog to ensure that the rights of all people in The Gambia, especially the most vulnerable, are respected, protected, and fulfilled.

As we look forward to 2024, we renew our commitment to creating a Gambia where everyone enjoys their fundamental human rights and freedoms.



Emmanuel D. Joof  
Chairperson NHRC

## Statement by the Executive Secretary

In 2023, the NHRC turned four since it became operational. The Commission is still gradually expanding alongside its broad mandate of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms in The Gambia. The Commission's evidence-based investigation, monitoring, and reporting methodology, which guides our way of work, has become an integral part of our building block.

Notwithstanding the continued challenges posed by the global economic environment and restricting donor funding space among other financial/economic challenges impeding the full implementation of the NHRC Strategic Plan (2021-25), the Commission registered significant progress in the implementation of its 2023 Work Plan.

The NHRC conducted a mid-term review of its Strategic Plan 2021-2025 in November 2023 and has been intensifying its resource mobilisation efforts to cover the funding gap of the Plan. The Commission's resource mobilisation drive was hugely boosted by the British High Commission which supported a project: "bringing



human rights service closer to the people."

The NHRC initiated a National Support Monitoring Committee on the implementation of the Government White Paper on the Report of the TRRC and has proactively conducted its quarterly meetings.

The Committee comprising of various national stakeholders supports the NHRC to effectively monitor the implementation of the White Paper.

In 2024, the NHRC will submit its second status report to the National Assembly on its monitoring of the Government White Paper on the report of the TRRC.

Similarly, the NHRC enhanced its flagship community engagement

and citizen's awareness programmes such as equitable access to justice through mobile legal aid clinics, addressing caste-based and descent-based discrimination, investigating human rights violations to enhance respect for human rights across the country.

With support from the European Union through International IDEA the NHRC also consolidated the international dimensions of the Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara International Human Rights Moot Court Competition with seven participating universities from five African countries (Nigeria, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Gambia) participating in the 2023 edition.

In addition, the NHRC monitored the 2023 electoral cycle with the Commission deploying teams to monitor the Councillorship and Mayoral/Chairperson elections to assess compliance with human rights standards and norms.

Similarly, two advisory notes were issued one on the Right to Food, another on Mental Health. Through these, the NHRC utilised its advisory role to advise the Government on concrete steps to address the challenges posed by food insecurity and mental health

In March 2023 during the Annual GANHRI Meeting, NHRC was conferred with its certificate affirming that the Commission was accredited under the Paris Principles with 'A' status.

The NHRC has been engaged in networking, partnership building and strengthening relationships with various organisations both public, private, and civil society organizations to promote and protect human rights across the country in line with our Vision. At the international level, the NHRC participated at the 14<sup>th</sup> *Biennial Conference* of the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI) in Accra in October 2023; supported the organisation of the annual meeting of Network of National Human Rights Institutions in West Africa held in The Gambia.

This proactive networking and international engagement has facilitated a strong sustainable partnership-building approach for the Commission among our global peers of NHRIs and other partners.



Dr. Saikou Kawsu Gassama  
Executive Secretary, NHRC

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## Acknowledgements

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Our achievements in 2023 would not have been possible without the support, partnership and commitment of our partners to the work of the Commission in our quest to build a culture of respect for human rights in the country.

We acknowledge and extend our sincere gratitude to the Government of The Gambia for the support provided during the year. We also extend our appreciation to the National Assembly, through the Honourable Speaker and members of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and Constitutional Matters in particular, for their encouragement, partnership and continuous commitment to the work of the Commission.

Our sincere appreciation goes to all our past and present donors and partners, both national and international. Special thanks and appreciation are extended to UNDP, UNICEF, OHCHR WARO, UNESCO, UN Peace Building Fund, UNFPA, FAO, the British High Commission, the Swiss Embassy in Dakar, French Embassy in Dakar, the European Union Delegation, the U.S. Embassy, International IDEA, the American Bar Association, GANHRI, NANHRI and NANHRI-WA.

We also acknowledge the support and collaboration of State Institutions and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the implementation of our programmes and activities. With the establishment of two regional offices, the Commission was able to forge partnerships with local authorities, communities and grassroots organisations.

We recognise and appreciate the commitment of the Government, through the Ministry of Justice, to effectively implement the Government White Paper on the Report of the TRRC and enjoin the Government to make the necessary resources available for the implementation of the White Paper.

Recognition goes to all Commissioners and Staff of NHRC for their tireless efforts and contributions to the work of the Commission in delivering its mandate.

## Abbreviations & Acronyms

ADRS	-	Alternative Dispute Resolution Secretariat
ACHPR	-	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
ACERWC	-	African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
ACRWC	-	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
ACHPR	-	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
ANEKED	-	African Network Against Extra-Judicial and Enforced Disappearances
AU	-	African Union
CEDAW	-	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
COOPI	-	Cooperazione Internazionale
CRR	-	Central River Region
CSOs	-	Civil Society Organisations
DP	-	Development Partners
ICESCR	-	International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
HRE	-	Human Rights Education
GANHRI	-	Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions
GBA	-	Gambia Bar Association
GCVHRV	-	Gambia Centre for Victims of Human Rights Violation
GID	-	Gambia Immigration Department
GPF	-	Gambia Police Force
GPS	-	Gambia Prison Services
GRTS	-	Gambia Radio and Television Services
IEC	-	Independent Electoral Commission
IDEA	-	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
KMC	-	Kanifing Municipal Council
LRR	-	Lower River Region
MoBSE	-	Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education
MoI	-	Ministry of Interior

MoJ	-	Ministry of Justice
MoU	-	Memorandum of Understanding
NALA	-	National Agency for Legal Aid
NANHRI	-	Network of African National Human Rights Institutions
NANHRI-WA	-	Network of National Human Rights Institutions in West Africa
NBR	-	North Bank Region
NCCE	-	National Council for Civic Education
NDLEA-G	-	National Drug Law Enforcement Agency-Gambia
NGOs	-	Non-Governmental Organisations
NHRC	-	National Human Rights Commission
NHRI	-	National Human Rights Institution
OHCHR	-	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OHCHR	-	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
WARO	-	West Africa Regional Office
OIF	-	Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie
OSF	-	Open Society Foundation
PATP	-	President's Alternative Treatment Programme
PBF	-	Peace Building Fund
PBSO	-	Peace Building Support Office
PRM	-	Programme and Resource Mobilisation
RMC	-	Resource Mobilisation Committee
SO	-	Strategic Objective
TAC	-	Technical Advisory Committee
TANGO	-	The Association of Non-Governmental Organisations
TRRC	-	Truth, Reconciliation and Reparation Commission
UN	-	United Nations
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	-	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	-	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UTG	-	University of The Gambia
UPR	-	Universal Periodic Review
URR	-	Upper River Region
WAVE	-	Women's Association for Victims' Empowerment
WC	-	West Coast
WILL	-	Women In Liberation and Leadership

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## Executive Summary

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The mandate of the Commission is the promotion and protection of human rights. In 2023, the Commission, under its protection mandate, received a total of seventy-one (71) complaints of alleged human rights violations, of which nineteen (19) were against law enforcement agencies namely the Gambia Police Force, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, Gambia Armed Forces, and the Gambia Immigration Department. Out of the total number of complaints received, forty-five (45) complaints were resolved.

During the Local Government elections, the NHRC monitored all phases of the election, including the voting days. Twenty (20) political campaigns were monitored during the Mayoral and Chairpersonship election while one hundred and fourteen (114) polling stations were observed during both the Councillorship and Mayoral and Chairpersonship elections. The election monitoring activities were guided by standard checklists developed in accordance with international human rights standards.

Nationwide monitoring of places of detention (Police Stations, Prisons and Army Barracks) was also conducted. Twenty-four (24) police stations, the three (3) main Prisons - Mile II, Jeshwang and Janjangbureh and the Yundum and Basse Army Barracks were visited. During the visits, interviews were held with detainees, prisoners and the officers. These monitoring visits were guided by a standard checklist.

The NHRC recognises that building a culture of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms depends largely on awareness raising, public education, knowledge development on human rights, and capacity strengthening and advocacy to enhance human rights compliance. To this end, the NHRC implemented a series of promotional activities, such as conferences, workshops and trainings, community outreach and awareness-raising activities, including radio talk shows, on pertinent human rights issues. Countrywide popularisation of the Concluding Observations on The Gambia's 6<sup>th</sup> Periodic Report on the

on the CEDAW and the Government White Paper on the Report of the TRRC were also undertaken. A series of activities aimed at enhancing the capacity of duty bearers, including law enforcers, Local Government Authorities and the regional Technical Advisory Committees (TACs), on thematic human rights topics such as corruption and human rights, disability rights, mental health rights and policing of public assemblies were also implemented. The NHRC website, social media platforms, quarterly newsletter, and the media were also used to disseminate information on the work of the Commission.

This 2023 Annual Activity Report is divided into six chapters which focuses on various thematic areas. Chapter 1: details the Mid-term review of the Strategic Plan 2021-2025 and the revised Strategic Objectives. Chapter 2: focuses on the main activities implemented during the year. Chapter 3: showcases the partnerships and collaboration entered into. Chapter 4: is a summary of stakeholders' assessment of the effectiveness, relevance and impact of the activities implemented. Chapter 5: assesses the lessons learned and the challenges faced and surmounted, and Chapter 6: provides a breakdown of the funds received from the State and other donors/development partners.

# CHAPTER 1:

## Mid-term Review of National Human Rights Commission Strategic Plan 2021-2025

In execution of its mandate, the Commission in 2021 commenced the implementation of its 5-year Strategic Plan 2021\_2025. which outlines the priorities of the Commission in the medium term. The Strategic Plan focuses on six (6) Strategic Objectives, each covering a programme area to enhance effective coordination, planning, implementation, monitoring, and the expected key results. It is accompanied by a comprehensive 5-year Implementation Plan, a Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) and a Resource Mobilisation Plan.

After two and a half years of implementation, the Commission in September 2023 conducted a mid-term review of the Strategic Plan to assess how far the strategic objectives set have been achieved and whether resources (human, financial, technological) have been allocated effectively for implementing the plan; evaluate the alignment of the Plan with the Commission's vision, mission and core values; and analyse the realisation of the strategic targets.



Through the review, the Commission, based on stakeholder engagement and feedback, revised and refocused its goals for the second half of the Strategic Plan implementation period and identified risks and mitigation strategies.

The Revised Strategy condensed the prior six (6) Strategic Objectives into four (4) transformative strategic result areas, namely:

- i. Strengthening state institutions, civil society organizations, communities, and leadership for the promotion and protection of human rights;
- ii. Ensuring improved compliance from the state on matters of human rights, rule of law and access to justice;
- iii. Developing the NHRC's capacity to advance human rights in the country; and
- iv. Advancing the realization of economic, social and environmental rights.

To ensure effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and impact in the execution of its mandate, the revised Strategic Plan recommended the creation or establishment of the following:

- i. The Directorate of Education, Research and Training.
- ii. Unit on ECOSOC Rights (with a focus also on business and human rights).
- iii. Unit for the Advocacy and Advancement of Economic, Social and Environmental Rights.
- iv. Gender Observatory Unit.
- v. Desk Officer for CSOs.
- vi. Desk Officer for monitoring of the White Paper on the Report of the TRRC.

**Key areas of focus**

In 2024, the key areas of focus for the NHRC will include the following:

- i. Business and Human Rights
- ii. Corruption and Human Rights
- iii. Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
- iv. Climate Change and Human Rights
- v. Sustainable Development Goals
- vi. Social Protection

The revised Strategic Plan 2021-2025 is costed at Sixty-Two Million One hundred and Fifty Thousand Dalasis (GMD62,150,000/US\$914,307).

The successful implementation of the activities contained in the revised Strategic Plan will require sufficient funding from the Government, a robust resource mobilisation effort by the Commission and the support of donor/development partners, both national and international.

## CHAPTER 2:

### Activity Report

During the period under review, a myriad of activities were implemented by the Directorates of the NHRC. They included activities relating to awareness creation and public education, capacity building, community mobilisation, partnership strengthening, radio talk shows, advocacy, monitoring of human rights and development of Advisory Notes.

### Key Highlights and Achievements in 2023

#### **1 - Development and Dissemination of the Status Report (May 2022 – May 2023) on the Implementation of the Government White Paper.**

In the Government White Paper on the Report of the TRRC, released on 25 May 2022, the NHRC is assigned the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of the recommendations and to submit annually a report to the National Assembly on the status of implementation. Thus, as per this role in the Government White Paper, the Commission submitted its first report to the National Assembly on the status of implementation of the Government White Paper and the challenges encountered by State actors in the implementation process. The report also made recommendations to various State actors to ensure the effective implementation.

## **2 - Investigation into Alleged Human Rights Violations.**

The investigation and monitoring of human rights violations is a core mandate of the NHRC. In that vein, the Commission investigated several complaints of alleged human rights violations and abuses, including economic and environmental rights, caste-based discrimination and allegations of inhumane and degrading treatment or punishment.

A total of seventy-one (71) complaints of alleged human rights violations were received, out of which forty-five (45) were successfully investigated and recommendations forwarded to the relevant institutions for implementation and redress.

## **3 - Monitoring of Detention Facilities**

The NHRC also conducted nationwide monitoring of all the prisons and selected detention centres across the country and conducted interviews with detainees in these institutions to identify challenges they are facing, in order to proffer appropriate recommendations to the Government to address them.

## **4 - Submission of the NHRC's Midterm Assessment Report on the 2019 UPR Recommendations.**

The NHRC submitted its Mid-term Assessment Report to the Universal Periodic Review Working Group on the implementation of the UPR Recommendations issued to The Gambia by the Working Group in November 2019. The Report highlighted progress made by the Government in the implementation of the recommendations, challenges and strategies to accelerate implementation.

## 5 – Enhancing Capacity of Duty Bearers for Respect and Protection of Human Rights.

In line with its mandate under Section 12 of the NHRC Act 2017, the Commission conducted nine (9) capacity-building programmes, twenty (20) awareness-raising activities and nineteen (19) radio programmes. These activities increased public awareness of human rights and enhanced the skills and expertise of duty-bearers to effectively deliver human rights services to the people.

## 6 – The Solarisation of the NHRC.

The NHRC received support from the British High Commission (BHC) to solarise its offices. Through this support, the NHRC has minimised resources spent on electricity to increase funds for the implementation of other activities in line with its mandate.



NHRC office

## **7 – Monitoring of the Local Government (Councillorship and Mayoral/Chairpersons) Elections.**

The Commission monitored the 2023 Local Government elections to ensure compliance with human rights and electoral standards and norms. The monitoring of both the Councillor and Mayoral/Chairpersons elections covered the whole process from submission of nominations, the campaign period, voting day, and the post-election situation. The monitoring of polls was conducted in one hundred and fourteen (114) polling stations across the country. A comprehensive monitoring report on these elections, with recommendations to various stakeholders, was prepared and shared with partners and actors and is also on the NHRC website.



NHRC staff during election monitoring

## 8 – Post-TRRC work of the Commission

The NHRC is the body assigned to monitor the implementation of the Government White Paper. However, the NHRC recognises the need to support the Government to effectively implement the White Paper. To this end, the NHRC, through the UNDP – OHCHR Post TRRC Project, has implemented the following key activities: interface with victims and victim-focused organisations; nationwide popularisation of the Government White Paper on the Report of the TRRC, Nationwide Popularisation of the Concluding Observations on The Gambia's 6<sup>th</sup> Periodic Report on the CEDAW, several engagements with National Assembly Members on the Implementation of the Government White Paper, Adoption of Human Rights Bills, and the review of key legislations, broadcasting of recorded jingles and a video on the White Paper on TV and Radio Stations and Quarterly Meetings of the NHRC Multi-Stakeholder Committee to Support the Monitoring of the Implementation of Recommendations of the TRRC. These activities were implemented in collaboration with relevant Government Ministries, Local Government Authorities, victim-focused organisations, CSOs and the media.



One of the meetings on the Government White Paper and Implementation of the Recommendations of the TRRC

## 9 – Donor Roundtable (Resource Mobilisation Initiatives)

The Donor Roundtable was convened to enhance the resource mobilisation of the Commission for the effective implementation of the NHRC Strategic Plan 2021-2025. The activity was attended by both national and international development and donor partners. At the programme, the Commission shared with the partners its achievements, challenges and outlook for the future, and revised Strategic Plan. In return, partners expressed satisfaction with the work of the Commission and pledged to support the implementation of the revised Strategic Plan and the realisation of its mandate.



Participants of the Donor Roundtable

## 10 – Nurturing a culture of Human Rights:

### The 4<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Sir Dawda K. Jawara International Moot Court Competition

The Moot Court Competition was organised in partnership with the Law Faculty of the University of The Gambia. The theme of the Moot Court was centred on the Justiciability of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Seven (7) Universities in Africa participated in the Competition. It helped to hone the skills of the students in legal advocacy and research and public speaking and presentation and enhanced their interest in the African Human Rights System and jurisprudence. It also established relationships between and amongst the participating universities.



Obafemi Awolowo University, winners of the Moot Court Competition

### Commemoration of the Day of the African Child

A 3-day capacity building activity was organised for children from child-led groups, including the Voice of the Young and the Children's Parliament, to increase their awareness on the theme of the 2023 Day of the African Child celebrations which focused on the rights of children in the digital environment. The children were educated on their rights and responsibilities on the internet, safe usage of online and other digital media, how to prevent cyberbullying and how to identify and report online child predators to help curb this menace.

The Commission also issued a Press Statement in which it reminded the Government and stakeholder institutions of their commitment to the protection of the rights and welfare of children.



Participants of the Capacity Building Training on a group work

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1:

To Promote and Deepen a Culture of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

Some of the major activities implemented under this Strategic Objective were:

### **1. Monitoring of Local Government Elections (Councillorship and Mayoral/Chairpersons): 15<sup>th</sup> April – 20<sup>th</sup> May 2023.**

The NHRC monitored the various phases of the Local Government elections (Councillorship and Mayoral/Chairpersons) upon receipt of accreditation from the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) as a local election observer.

During the Councillor election, the NHRC and its partners observed polling at one hundred and fourteen (114) polling stations across the country. For the Mayoral/Mayoress and Chairperson election, NHRC observers monitored twenty (20) political campaigns and observed voting at one hundred and fourteen (114) polling stations. The observers were guided by a checklist developed by the NHRC which was informed by electoral best practices.

A report on the Local Government election was prepared and shared with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), the Government, political parties, Civil Society Organisations, and national and international election observer bodies. The recommendations are expected to enhance our electoral system and democratic process.

### **2. (Activity 1.4.1) Develop business relations and sign MOUs with relevant stakeholders to intensify outreach activities.**

#### **Memoranda of Understanding Signed with the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) and International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ)**

In the quest to broaden its partnership Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) were signed with the International Development Law Organization (IDLO), Justice Defenders and the International Centre for Transitional Justice (UNTJ).

### **3. The Regional launch and dissemination of the Report on Caste and Decent-based Discrimination in The Gambia (Kerewan, NBR and Basse, URR (26<sup>th</sup>& 27<sup>th</sup> April))**

Two-day workshops were held in Kerewan, NBR, and Basse, URR, to popularise and disseminate the findings and recommendations of the NHRC 2021 Study on Caste and Descent-Based Discrimination in The Gambia.

The workshops were attended by 30 participants in each region, including traditional and religious leaders, Islamic scholars, Local Government authorities, women leaders, community members, law enforcement officials and community members. The participants discussed the effects of caste and descent-based discrimination on social cohesion and the enjoyment of human rights, and their role in the implementation of the Study's recommendations and the creation of a 'casteless' society.



Group photo of participants

#### **4. Regional Sensitisation of Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Members of URR and NBR on the work of the NHRC and Human Rights Protection - 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

The Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) of URR and NBR were trained on national and international human rights frameworks, standards and best practices, human rights-based approaches to programming, the NHRC Act 2017 and the role of the TACs in the promotion and protection of human rights. The members of the two TACs also identified strategies to mainstream human rights standards and principles in their service provisions and programmes. This training additionally strengthened areas of collaboration between the TACs and the NHRC Regional Offices of URR and NBR.

#### **5. Nationwide Popularisation of the Concluding Observations on The Gambia's Sixth Periodic Report on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 24 July – 10 August 2023**

In October 2022, the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms

of Discrimination Against Women published its Concluding Observations following a review of The Gambia's Sixth Periodic Report. The Concluding Observations not only recognised the progress made by the country in advancing the rights of women and girls but also identified the challenges along with strategies the Government should employ to ensure greater protection and enjoyment of the rights contained in the Convention.

As a State organ with the responsibility to monitor the implementation of recommendations from human rights mechanisms, the Commission embarked on a nationwide campaign to popularise the Concluding Observations amongst women groups and leaders, women councillors, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities, Government officials, Local Government Authorities and stakeholders in all the Regions. Through the campaigns, women became aware of the commitments and obligations of the State under CEDAW, the available legal mechanisms for redress and how to hold the State accountable for the implementation of the Concluding Observations.

As part of the activity, a one-hour radio programme on the Concluding Observations was held at radio stations in each of the Regions, including Banjul and Kanifing Municipalities. In total, 113 people (30 men and 104 women) were reached through this activity which was implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare, Network Against Gender-Based Violence (NGBV), Women in Leadership and Liberation (WILL) and Women's Association for Victims' Empowerment (WAVE).



**Participants attending the activity in the West Coast Region**



**Participants from KM and BJL**

**6. Regional Sensitization and Popularisation of the Government White Paper on the TRRC recommendations (LRR, WCR, KM and Banjul)**

In September, the Commission embarked on this tour to popularise the White Paper within communities in LRR, WCR, KM and Banjul. Local authorities, women, youth groups, and victims of the Jammeh regime were targeted to maintain their interest and support in the transitional justice process of the country. The discussions and presentations were conducted in the local languages and focused on the various thematic areas of the Government White Paper and the roles of communities, Local Government Authorities and the NHRC in the implementation and monitoring processes.



Participants at the popularisation held in Soma, LRR

In the discussions, participants expressed dissatisfaction with the slow implementation of the White Paper and also raised concerns about the poor reporting of SGBV cases despite the existence of laws such as the Sexual Offences Act 2013, Children's Act 2005 and the Criminal Code. Participants recommended more intensive and targeted awareness activities to be held with community members to encourage the reporting of SGBV cases to the Police and other relevant authorities.

### ***7. Engagements with National Assembly Members on the Implementation of the Government White Paper on the Report of the TRRC and Adoption of Human Rights Bills, 15&16 September 2023***

The two-day engagement with the National Assembly Members was held to discuss the human rights obligations of the Government, encourage the Assembly to push for the effective and holistic implementation of the White Paper on the TRRC Report, advocate for the adoption of pending Human Rights Bills, discuss human rights issues in the country and strengthen ties between the Commission and the Assembly. The interface was attended by Members of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and Constitutional Matters and the Select Committee on Gender, Children and Health, and key staff of the two Committees.



National Assembly members during the activity

Presentations were made on national and international human legal frameworks and the role of the National Assembly in the promotion and protection of human rights. Discussions were also held on the Women's (Amendment) Act 2015 which prohibits the practice of female circumcision in the country and the repercussions of its repeal. The Persons with Disabilities Act 2021, including challenges faced by PWDs and the non-announcement of the commencement date for the Act which hinders it from coming into full effect, were also discussed. Parliamentarians during the forum were reminded of their sacred duty to defend and protect the most vulnerable members of the society, the human rights obligations of The Gambia and findings on the health effects of FGM/C. They were also urged to ensure the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare publishes as a matter of urgency, a commencement date for the Persons with Disabilities Act 2021.

**8. National Assembly Standing Committee on Human Rights and Constitutional Matters Residential Retreat to review Key Legislation. 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> July 2023 and 6<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023)**

This activity, attended by 30 participants (20 men and 10 women), was organised to support the Standing Committee on Human Rights and Constitutional Matters conduct an in-depth review of the Criminal Offences Bill 2022 and the Criminal Procedure Bill 2022.



Members of the Committee and Commissioners of the NHRC

Experts on Gambian criminal law and subject matter experts of the Committee facilitated the review process supported by Commissioners and Staff of the Commission. Each provision of the Bills was thoroughly scrutinised to ensure that Members understood its content, rationale and compatibility with the human rights obligations of the country. This process enabled the Committee get well-informed advice on the Bills which they would eventually submit to the plenary of the National Assembly for its adoption.

During the engagement, the Standing Committee members were updated on the Commission's work since the start of the year and the status of implementation of the Government White Paper on the Report of the TRRC.

They also reviewed and adopted the Terms of Reference of the Quarterly Meeting between the Standing Committee and the Commission and the Human Rights Compatibility Assessment Framework both of which were initially adopted by the Fifth Legislature. The Commission requested the Committee to ensure that its annual State of Human Rights Report and the Status Report on the Implementation of the Government White Paper are tabled for discussion in the National Assembly, to hold the Government accountable for the effective implementation of their recommendations.

#### **9. Periodic interface with victims and victim organisations on the implementation of the Government White Paper on the Report of the TRRC, 29 August 2023**



Survivors of human rights violations at the interface

As part of its monitoring mandate, the Commission held its quarterly interface with victims and victim-led organisations to share information on the progress of implementation of the Government White Paper on the report of the TRRC and promote active victim participation in the monitoring process. This is important as implementation and monitoring of the Government White Paper is supposed to be victim centric.

During the interface, victims who came from all the regions, discussed their level of inclusion and satisfaction in the implementation of the White Paper, especially the implementation of recommendations relating to prosecution and reparations.

They expressed concerns over the lacklustre commitment of the Government to the implementation of the White Paper, particularly the slow pace of prosecution and their inability to hold perpetrators accountable for the human rights abuses of the previous regime. The participants called on the Government to expedite the enactment of the Victims Reparation Bill, ensure timely sharing of information on the implementation of the White Paper by the Ministry of Justice, provide immediate medical and psychosocial support to victims suffering from severe medical conditions and facilitate reconciliation in communities through programmes that promote healing and unity among citizens.



A survivor of human rights violation sharing her story

***UNDP – OHCHR PBF funded post-TRRC Project supported activities for the effective monitoring of the White Paper***

***10. Broadcasting of recorded Jingles and Video on the White Paper on TV and Radio Stations.***

As part of its efforts to popularise the TRRC findings and recommendations, the NHRC developed edutainment video and jingles in the local languages on specific themes of the White Paper. The recorded video was broadcast on GRTS and QTV while the jingles were broadcast on 9 radio stations, including radio stations with national coverage and Community Radios. Additionally, one-hour radio programmes were held to discuss the implementation of the White Paper through the following radio stations GRTS (Mile 7, Soma radio station, Paradise FM Farafenni, Brikamaba Community, and GRTS (Basse).

This approach ensured that more members of the public were reached, and their knowledge was enhanced on the contents of the White Paper and the responsibilities of the Government regarding its effective implementation.



**NHRC Communication and Media Officer**

### **11. Nationwide Popularisation of the White Paper through a caravan with Bright Star Entertainment Group**



Partners engage participants during the activity.

A nationwide popularisation was organised from 30<sup>th</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> November to popularise the Government White Paper on the TRRC Report in communities in the Central River Region (North), Upper River Region and Lower River Region. The activity was conducted with partner institutions such as Women in Leadership and Liberation (WILL), African Network against Extrajudicial Killings and Enforced Disappearances (ANEKED), Gambia Centre for Victims of Human Rights Violations, Women Association for Victims Empowerment (WAVE), and Survivors of the Presidential Alternative Treatment Program (PATP).

The team was accompanied by Bright Stars Entertainment a local entertainment group that recorded the Jingle on the White Paper. The jingle was used as a medium to draw people to a central location within the area to be engaged on the various thematic areas of the White Paper and the position of the Government. Along with this, the team also informed communities about the status of implementation of the White Paper to ensure the public is kept abreast of the implementation process. By keeping the public updated on the implementation of the White Paper, the NHRC with its partners was able to contribute to managing public expectations on the implementation process as many of those engaged had expressed dissatisfaction with the implementation of the White Paper nor believed

the White Paper would be implemented as stated by Government. Through this activity, seven hundred and sixty-two (762) community members were engaged.



Partners engaging community members during the activity.



NHRC and partners engaging market women during the caravan.

## **12. Quarterly Meetings of the NHRC Multi-Stakeholder Committee to Support the Monitoring of the Implementation of the Government White paper on the TRRC Report**

In 2022, the Commission established a Multi-Stakeholder Support Monitoring Committee, comprised of implementing institutions identified in the Government's Implementation Plan and relevant CSOs, to support the effective monitoring of the Government White Paper on the Report of the TRRC. It has defined Terms of Reference and meets quarterly to report on the progress of implementation, identify bottlenecks and map out strategies to address the challenges.

In 2023, the Multi-Stakeholder Monitoring Committee held four quarterly meetings. In this period, the members provided regular updates on the status of their sectoral implementation and constraints, validated and approved the content of the White Paper online monitoring matrix and contributed to the preparation of the first NHRC Status Report on the Monitoring of the Implementation of the Government White on the Report of TRRC which was submitted to the National Assembly in May as directed by the White Paper.

## **13. Strengthening Local Capacity for Greater Accountability and Respect for Human Rights in The Gambia**

### **i. Training of Community-based Structures and Organisations on Human Rights and Social Accountability, 27-28 November 2023 and 4-5 December 2023**

The NHRC Regional Offices in Basse and Farafenni conducted two-day workshops in the Upper River , North Bank and Lower River Regions to strengthen the capacity of community structures for greater accountability and promotion and protection of human rights. The programmes were attended by 87 participants (42 men and 45 women).

The workshops were funded by the American Embassy and the sessions focused mainly on the functions and powers of the NHRC, human rights, social accountability, the Local Government Act 2002 as amended and domestic, regional and international human rights instruments, in particular those protecting the rights of marginalised groups such as women, children, and Persons with Disabilities.



**Participants during the training in Basse**

The workshops were attended by representatives from groups such as the Mothers' Clubs, members of Community Child Protection Committees, women's groups, and members of the National Youth Council. The activity provided the Staff of the Regional Offices the opportunity to amplify the work of the NHRC at regional levels and identify possible areas of collaboration with the participating groups.

Through this engagement, the NHRC enhanced the understanding of the participants on social accountability, developed Score Cards and Citizens Reports, and identified strategies through which they could promote and protect human rights and hold the Local Governments accountable for the services they provide to the people.



**Participants engaging in group exercises.**

**ii. Training of Trainers for Law Enforcement instructors on the Policing of Public Assemblies and Demonstrations in The Gambia and the Code of Conduct for the Gambia Police Force, 5-7 December 2023**



Group photo of participants during the training of security officials

The Commission, in collaboration with the Gambia Police Force, organised a three-day Training of Trainers, held from 5 -7 December, for law enforcement officers on freedom of expression and assembly, the Code of Conduct for the Gambia Police Force and the Guidelines for Policing Public Assemblies in The Gambia. Both the Code of Conduct and the Guidelines were developed by the NHRC in collaboration with the Gambia Police Force.

A total of 40 law enforcement instructors, including 11 women, from the Police Training School and other law enforcement institutions such as The Gambia Immigration Department, Gambia Prison Services, Gambia Fire and Rescue Services, Gambia Armed Forces and the Drug Law Enforcement Agency-The Gambia (DLEAG) benefitted from the training

The training enhanced the understanding of law enforcers on legal provisions and standards on freedoms of expression and assembly and strengthened their understanding of how to effectively and within the bounds of the law police public assemblies in the Gambia.



**Participants of the training from different security units**



**A participant receiving her certificate.**

**14. Conduct sensitisation campaigns, radio/TV programs, booklets, posters, leaflets, policy briefs, newsletters, and billboards, as well as translate materials into local languages.**

***i. Radio Talk Shows on Human Rights 2023***

Nineteen radio programmes (phone-in talk shows) were held on radio stations including Community Radios of Brikamaba and Soma with wide coverage and audience base. The topics of discussion ranged from the mandate and functions of the Commission, human rights, Government White Paper on the Report of the TRRC and the Concluding Observations on the 6<sup>th</sup> CEDAW Periodic Report. The radio programmes were also used to popularise the themes of International Days such as the Day of the African Child International Day of Persons with Disabilities and International Human Rights Day.

The radio programmes contributed to enhancing public awareness of the work and functions of the Commission, the rights of children and Persons with Disabilities, the opening of the Regional Offices, the Government White Paper on the Report of the TRRC, and what strategies and mechanisms should be put in place for the effective implementation of the Concluding Observations.

***ii. Popularisation of the 2022 Annual State of Human Rights and Activity Reports***

As part of efforts to popularise the 2022 Annual Activity Report and the State of Human Rights Report, the Commission convened a press briefing to inform the media about the human rights situation in the country. This briefing served as an opportunity for the NHRC to update stakeholders on other key activities undertaken by the Commission during the year and for the media to dialogue with the Commission on its achievements, challenges and plans for 2023.

***i. Press Releases and Statements***

Press releases and statements were issued on issues of concern affecting or that may affect the enjoyment of human rights in the country, major milestones of the Commission and the commemoration of international human rights days. The following are some of the press releases that were issued:

1. The Alleged Shooting of a Police Officer at Fass Njaga Choi by Armed Robbers -2nd February 2023
2. Affiliate Status to The African Committee of Experts on The Rights and Welfare of The Child (ACERWC) -24th February 2023.
3. Concerns About the Rising Religious Tension in The Country -May 3, 2023
4. Prevailing Intense Political Situation in The Run Up to The Mayoral and Chairpersonship Elections -May 4, 2023
5. Attempts By Some National Assembly Members to Repeal the Laws Which Criminalise Female Genital Mutilation / Cutting (FGM/C) In The Gambia -12th September 2023
6. Fatal Shooting of Police Officers at Sukuta Traffic Lights Junction -13th September 2023
7. Concerns Over Recent Statements of H.E. President Of the Republic and Current Political Intolerance in The Country -6th October 2023
8. Call For Urgent Government Action to Address Irregular Migration -10th November 2023
9. International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation -6th February 2023
10. International Women's Day 2023 -8th March 2023
11. Day of The African Child -16th June 2023.
12. 75th Anniversary of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) On International Human Rights Day - December 10, 2023

**16. Organise human rights competitions for formal and non-formal learning institutions.**

***i. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara International Human Rights Moot Court Competition, 13<sup>th</sup> November to 10<sup>th</sup>***



**NHRC Staff & Commissioners, Partners and Winners of the Moot Court**

The Commission, in collaboration with the Faculty of Law of the University of The Gambia and with support from the European Union through International IDEA, organised the 4<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara International Human Rights Moot Court Competition.

The theme of the Moot Court competition centred on the justiciability of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The mooters argued on a hypothetical case before the African Court.

The following seven Universities participated in the preliminary rounds: Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria; Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law, University of Liberia; University of The Gambia; International Open University, The Gambia; Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone; Makerere University, Uganda; and University of Lagos, Nigeria.

After the preliminary rounds, the University of Lagos, Makerere University, the University of The Gambia and Obafemi Awolowo University made it to the semifinals. Following intense submissions by the participants, who argued for both the applicant and respondent and

meticulous assessments by the panel of Judges, the University of Lagos and Obafemi Awolowo University proceeded to the final stage of the competition.

In a gruelling and intense final round, both universities demonstrated exceptional legal acumen, navigating complex human rights scenarios and presenting compelling arguments rooted in international human rights law. However, Obafemi Awolowo University emerged as the winner and the University of Lagos was the runner-up.

The Competition gave the participating students a valuable opportunity to practice and improve their written and oral advocacy skills in ESCRs. It also enabled them to improve their substantive knowledge of regional and international human rights law, especially the African human rights system.



Preliminary rounds



Participants of the Moot Court

### **ii. Training of Children on Human Rights, 16 & 17 June 2023**

As part of commemoration for the Day of the African Child whose theme was 'The Rights of the Child in the Digital Environment', a training workshop on children's rights, child protection and cyberspace or digital violence was organised for 15 children from child-led organisations, including the Children National Assembly of The Gambia, Voice of the Young and the Girls Platform of ChildFund, The Gambia.

The workshop raised the children's awareness of their rights and responsibilities, the benefits of the digital space and how to responsibly use the internet and other digital platforms while keeping safe. They were also taught life skills to protect themselves against online sexual abuse and cyberbullying, and how and where to report online child sex predators.

### **iii. Training on Public speaking for Students, 20<sup>th</sup> & July 2023**



Group photo of NHRC staff and participants of the training.

In partnership with the University of The Gambia Debate Association (UTGDA), a two-day training on human rights and public speaking and debate competition was organised for 100 students from Senior Secondary Schools and tertiary institutions in the Greater Banjul area.

This workshop is part of the efforts of the Commission to promote a culture of respect for human rights in The Gambia, especially within learning institutions. Through this activity, the students were able to learn about the role and mandate of the Commission, their human rights and responsibilities, and human rights principles.

## **17. National Forum on Disability Rights in The Gambia, 25-26 October 2023**



**Group photo of participants**

In partnership with the Gambia Federation of the Disabled, a two-day National Forum on Disability Rights in The Gambia was organised on the theme “Advancing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in The Gambia”. The Forum raised awareness on the rights of Persons with Disabilities in The Gambia and what environmental, institutional, community and social changes ought to be in place for Persons with Disabilities to live dignified lives. In various panel discussions, state actors and disability rights activists deliberated on the level of implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act 2021, including progress and challenges registered, and what strategies should be put in place to accelerate the effective enforcement and implementation of the Act. Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies were reminded of the obligations imposed on them by the Act, including the mainstreaming of issues of disabilities in their services and programmes.

Attending the programme, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare pledged to accelerate the gazetting of a Commencement Date for the Persons with Disabilities Act 2021 and to ensure that the National Advisory Council on Persons with Disabilities is adequately supported and functional with the National Fund for Persons with Disabilities set up with the required funds from the Government. Persons with Disabilities in The Gambia continue to face serious

challenges in the enjoyment of their human rights, including stigmatisation in society and discrimination in accessing services such as health, education and employment. The inability of many PWDs to access education, vocational and livelihood skills has exacerbated poverty amongst them, while their exclusion from key public sectors and minimal inclusion in governance severely hampers their contribution to the socio-economic development of the country. The programme also revealed the multi-discrimination facing women and children with disabilities.



Participants of the Forum



Participants with sign language interpreters

ACTIVITY	PARTICIPANTS	DELIVERY METHOD	IMMEDIATE OUTCOME	FOLLOW-UP ACTION
Enhancing the enjoyment of human rights in The Gambia through the implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act 2021	NHRC Gambia Federation for the Disable (GFD) Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare PWDs Other Stakeholders	Presentation Panel Discussion	1. Constructively engage PWDs, and their representatives, and Duty bears on issues preventing them from fully enjoying their human rights.	Continue advocacy efforts to promote the rights of PWDs by annually organizing such forums.
WHAT	WHO	HOW	RESULTS	ACTION POINT

## **18. Conference on Corruption and Human Rights in The Gambia – 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023**



**Vice-Chairperson of the NHRC delivering the Welcome Statement at the opening ceremony.**

The one-day conference, attended by over fifty (50) participants from Civil Society Organisations, the media, Government institutions and the National Assembly, was organised to discuss the links and intersectionality between corruption and human rights, and the effects of corruption on the enjoyment of human rights in The Gambia.

The panel discussions unpacked the Anti-Corruption Bill 2019, allegations of exploitation and unabated depletion of the country's natural resources by a few individuals. Panellists also discussed the impact of corruption on political participation and good governance; the permeation of corruption in every facet of society; social acceptance and encouragement of corruption and corrupt practices; and the strategies CSOs should explore to curb corruption and support the strengthening and effective functioning of State institutions.

The forum created an understanding of the impact of corruption on the enjoyment of human rights, the urgent need to enact the Anti-Corruption Bill 2019, identified strategies through which the public can hold the Government accountable and encouraged effective and concerted stakeholder coordination in addressing corruption in The Gambia.



A cross-section of stakeholders during the forum.

ACTIVITY	PARTICIPANTS	DELIVERY METHOD	IMMEDIATE OUTCOME	FOLLOW-UP ACTION
<b>NATIONAL FORUM:</b> <i>Impact of corruption on the enjoyment of Human Rights</i>	NHRC Government officials Members of Diplomatic missions National Assembly Members Civil Society	Presentation Panel Discussion	1. Engage key stakeholders on the need to accelerate the enactment of the Anti-Corruption Bill. 2. Identify ways to enhance the addressing of corruption.	Continue to remind the Government of its obligations to address corruption in the country.
WHAT	WHO	HOW	RESULTS	ACTION POINT

## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2:**

To Enable People Whose Rights Have Been Violated to Have Access to Appropriate Redress

Ensuring access to justice and redress, particularly for the youth, women, and other marginalised groups is critical to achieving full enforcement and monitoring of laws addressing violence and harassment. Thus, every individual who perceives that his or her right has been violated by the State or private individuals and institutions should have unhindered access to justice and appropriate redress.

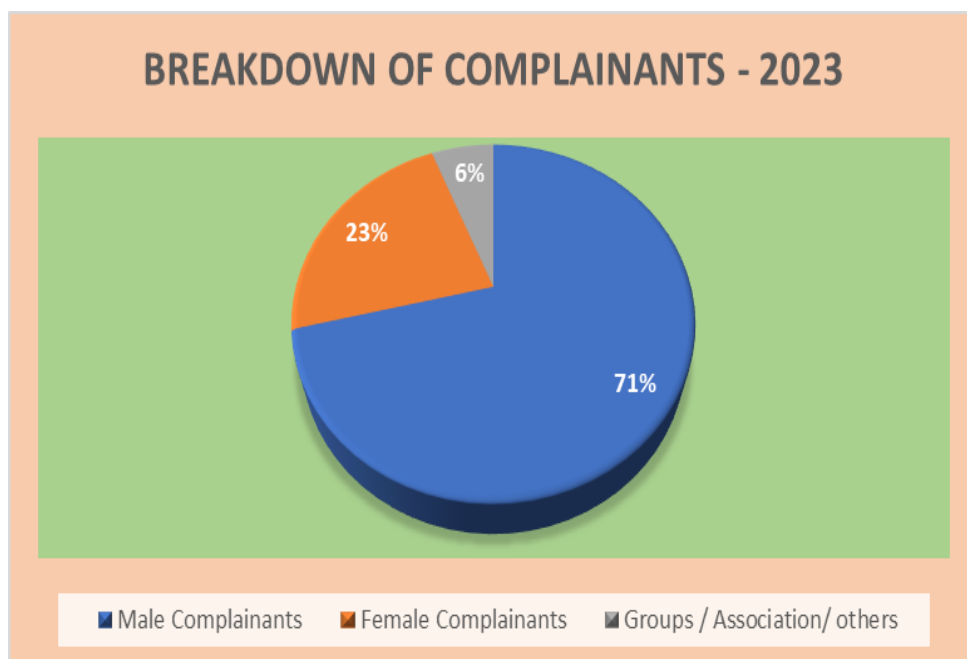
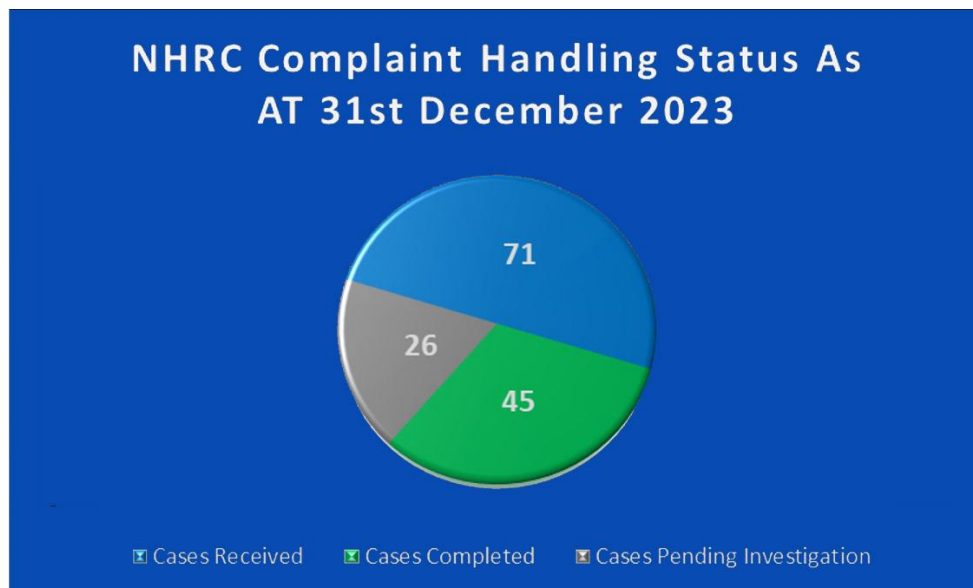
Details of some of the major activities implemented towards the attainment of this Strategic Objective are provided below.

### ***19. Investigations on alleged human rights violations 2.1.2***

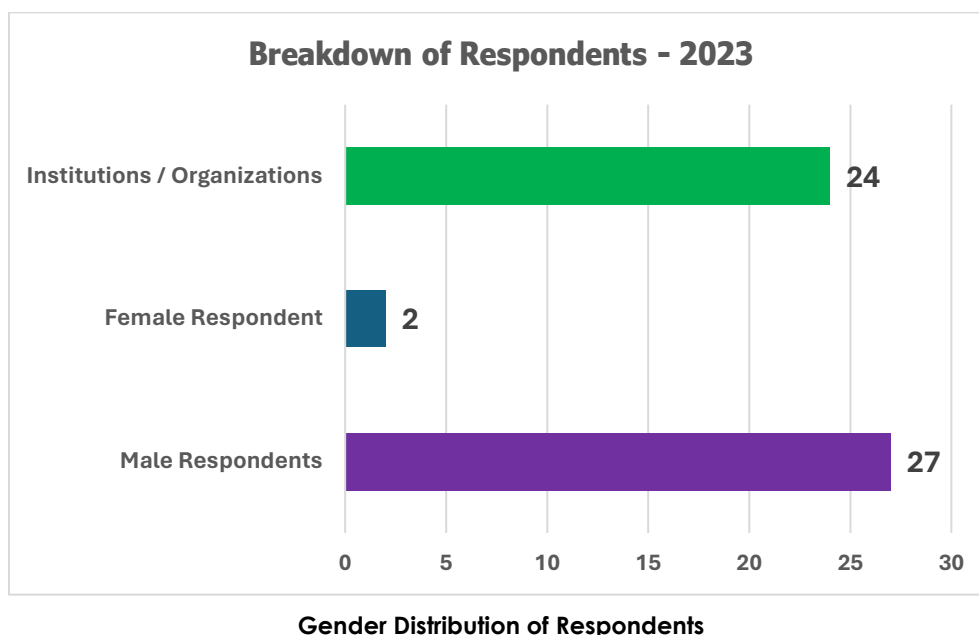
#### ***Complaints of Human Rights Violations Received, Investigated and Finalised.***

In 2023, the Commission received a total of seventy-one (71) complaints. Of this number, forty-five (45) cases were completed and resolved, while twenty-six (26) cases are at various stages of investigation. It is worth noting that nineteen (19) of these cases received were brought against security officers of the Gambia Police Force, Gambia Armed Forces, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency-Gambia and Gambia Immigration Department. Forty-seven (47) complaints, comprising 71% of the cases received, were from male complainants, fifteen (15) complaints, which is 23% of cases reported, were from female complainants and four (4) of the complaints (6% of cases) from institution/organisations.

*Note: Some of the complainants filed more than one complaint*



**Gender Distribution of Complainants**



**Make policy recommendations to Government, National Assembly, LGA and private entities on how to better combat human rights abuses. 2.1.3**

### ***Advisory Notes***

In fulfilment of its advisory mandate under Section 12 of the National Human Rights Commission Act 2017 which authorises the Commission to assess current human rights laws, conduct research, help the State in policy formulation and provide recommendations, the NHRC developed an advisory note on Mental Health in The Gambia and on the Right to Food.

#### **i. Development and Validation of the Advisory Note on Mental Health, 4-5 May 2023**

The Advisory Note on Mental Health Rights in The Gambia was formulated due to grave concern about the situation of persons with mental health issues in the communities and at the country's only psychiatric facility (Tanka Tanka) and the existence of an archaic Lunatic Detention Act 1917 which is incompatible with international human rights standards and norms.



**Group photo of participants**

The Advisory Note examined the current state of accessibility and quality of mental health services in The Gambia and efforts made since the decision of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in the landmark case of Purohit and Moore v The Gambia, a case that highlighted mental health-related human rights violations in The Gambia. The Commission made a series of recommendations to the State to improve respect for the rights of persons with mental health issues and their situation, including the expeditious enactment of the Mental Health Bill 2019 and the allocation of an adequate budget to Tanka Tanka.



**(L-) participants during the discussions  
(R-) Dr Mustapha Bittaye delivering the opening remarks.**

**ii. Development and Validation of the Advisory Note on Right to Food in The Gambia - 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023**



(L-R) FAO Country Representative, Dr. Desta Tiruneh, the WHO Representative and UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Emmanuel D. Joof, NHRC Chairperson, Dr. Saikou Sayang, Director of Agriculture and Mr. Malang Fofana, Deputy Director of NaNA.

The Commission, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Nutrition Agency (NaNA) and with the technical and financial support of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), developed the Advisory Note on the Right to Food in The Gambia to advice and assist the Government in the formulation of laws, policies, and action plans to promote, protect and fulfil the enjoyment of the right to food.

The Advisory Note provided an overview of national legal frameworks on the right to food in The Gambia and at the regional and international levels; highlighted the gaps in the national legal framework; proffered recommendations to the Government to guarantee and render justiciable the right to food and suggested best practices for the attainment of the right to food in The Gambia.

The right to food is a fundamental human right guaranteed under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and other international and regional human rights instruments ratified by The Gambia. This right is an integral element of the realization of all other human rights, and thus the NHRC, in line with its broad mandate to promote and protect human rights, would continue to advocate for and collaborate with the State and other partners for the justiciability of the right to food in The Gambia.

The Validation Workshop was attended by the Country Representative of the FAO, senior Government officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, NaNA, and representatives of Civil Society Organisations working on food security in the country. It was officially launched at the Commemoration of World Food Day on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2023.



(Photos 1 & 2) Cross section of participants

### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3:**

#### **To Ensure Improved Compliance from the State on Matters of Human Rights and Access to Justice**

To achieve this Strategic Objective, the Commission employs the following strategies: assisting in ensuring equitable access to justice; ensuring conditions of detainees in prisons and other detention centres meet the requirements of best standards and supporting the security sector training schools to incorporate human rights norms and standards in their curricula.

The following activities have been implemented towards the realisation of this Strategic Objective:

#### **20. *Legal Aid Clinics on Human Rights Laws in Rural Communities, 13<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> March 2023***

The NHRC, in partnership with the Ministry of Justice, Directorate of Social Welfare, NALA, ADRS and NCCE, organised Legal Aid Clinics in nine (9) communities in the Lower River Region (LRR), namely Sadeng village; Kiang West, Kiang East, Jarra West, Jarra Central and Jarra East.

As part of the clinic, communities were sensitised on human rights, the work and mandate of the Commission and other institutions working on human rights issues, including the protection of vulnerable groups, and how and where to seek redress for human rights violations. They were also provided legal advice or clarifications on various issues, including economic, social, cultural and legal rights. Issues raised by communities included insecurity, land conflicts, lack of social and basic amenities such as schools, health facilities, electricity and potable water, the prevalence of child marriage and the absence of entrepreneurship & skills training for women. During the outreach activity, a total of one hundred and two (102) human rights complaints were received, out of which sixty-three (63) were from female complainants. Complaints within the mandate of the Commission were dealt with while the others were referred to the appropriate State institutions, Nine (9) to the Police, twelve (12) to the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) and four (4) to the Alternative Dispute Resolution Secretariat (ADRS).

## **21. Preparation and Submission of the Annual Status Report on the Implementation of the Government White Paper on the Report of the TRRC to the National Assembly**

As per the Government White Paper on the Report of the TRRC, the Commission has been mandated to monitor the implementation of the recommendations by the TRRC and to submit an annual report to the National Assembly on the status of implementation. As the Government White Paper was published on 25th May 2022, the Commission, in line with its mandate, prepared, validated and submitted its first Status Report to the National Assembly in June 2023.

The Status Report was prepared with input and contributions from all the implementing stakeholders, including Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, and victim-led organisations. Information on implementation was also sought from other sources, including print and online media. The Stakeholders also took part in the validation of the draft Report held on 29th May 2023 during which they reviewed, assessed, and provided additional information and suggestions to the document.

Of the two hundred and sixty-three (263) recommendations accepted in the White Paper, the Report indicated that only 6 have been fully implemented, 165 being implemented and 91 not implemented. The Report identified challenges and provided recommendations and strategies to accelerate efforts for the effective implementation of the White Paper.

## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4:**

### **To Develop NHRC's Capacity to be a Credible, Trustworthy, and Knowledgeable "Agent" to Advance Human Rights and Equality**

To mainstream a culture of respect for human rights, the NHRC recognises the need to build a functional human rights protection system that is accessible, transparent, efficient and responsive. By raising awareness, providing advice, monitoring and holding authorities to account, the Commission has a central role in tackling human rights concerns like discrimination and inequality experienced by certain groups or communities. Therefore, institutional strengthening is of paramount importance to make the Commission an effective, credible, and trusted institution.

Activities implemented under SO4 are as follows:

#### **22. NHRC Institutional Strengthening through the British High Commission funded Project "Bringing human rights services closer to all individuals in The Gambia"-**

Through an institutional strengthening project funded by the British High Commission, the Commission purchased two (2) vehicles, two (2) motorcycles, office equipment and multimedia materials, erected seven (7) billboards in key strategic locations across the country and solarised its Secretariat.

The vehicles, which have been assigned to the Regional Offices in NBR and URR, have enabled the Regional Staff to reach remote parts of the country to popularise the work of the Commission and respond effectively to reported and known cases of human rights complaints and violations in the communities. The office equipment and solarisation of the Secretariat have increased productivity and efficiency in the work of the Staff – the huge expenditure that used to be incurred on electricity is now used to fund programme activities. The multimedia materials and the erection of billboards around the country have contributed to the popularisation of the work of the Commission and given it the much-needed visibility and demand for its services.

### **23. TRAINING ON PROJECT MANAGEMENT FOR NHRC COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF- 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023**

With funding support from the European Union Delegation through International IDEA, a two-day training on Project Management was organised for Commissioners and Staff of the Commission. The training, facilitated by a trainer, enhanced the capacity of the participants on effective project planning, implementation and delivery, approaches and strategies for achieving objectives and outcomes on time, and effective leadership and coordination from project inception to completion.

### **24. NHRC Donor Roundtable, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023**

The second Donor Roundtable briefing was held with development, donor partners and critical stakeholders within The Gambia and abroad during which the Commission had the opportunity to share its achievements, challenges and lessons learned in the implementation of its Strategic Plan 2021-2025. The forum provided the Commission the opportunity to share its new areas of focus and the support it will require as it pushes to promote and protect human rights in The Gambia in 2024.

Development partners expressed their appreciation and admiration of the work of the Commission and pledged to support the Commission in its quest to deepen understanding and respect for human rights in the country.

## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5:**

### **Enforce Human Rights Within the Justice System**

The Commission has the mandate to protect human rights and the specific authority to investigate or monitor any violation of human rights, as well as to consider any questions falling within its competence. It may, in addition, consider “complaints and petitions concerning individual situations”, investigate and make recommendations or decisions on them or refer them to the proper authority for prosecution or adjudication. Additionally, the Commission can assist the justice system to identify and address instances of human rights violations within the Justice system.

Activities implemented under SO5 are detailed below.

#### **25. MONITORING VISIT TO PRISONS AND OTHER DETENTION FACILITIES (14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023)**

The Commission, in partnership with Justice Defenders and Yakarr Justice Foundation, embarked on this countrywide monitoring of detention facilities. The three main Prisons of Mile II, Jeshwang and Jangjanfburreh, 24 Police Stations and 3 Military Barracks were visited. The monitoring visits provided the Commission with the opportunity to interact with detainees and individuals working in these places of detention to identify the constraints and challenges they encounter. Through the visits, the Team was able to evaluate the extent of compliance with international standards and established laws on the treatment of detainees and inmates.

#### **26. CONFERENCE TO ENHANCE ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN THE GAMBIA, 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023**

In partnership with Yakarr Justice Foundation, the Commission brought together stakeholders working on access to justice, including the Judiciary, Ministry of Justice (MOJ), National Agency for Legal Aid (NALA), Gambia Bar Association (GBA), representatives from the Gambia Prisons Service, the Gambia Police Force Prosecution Unit, and human rights CSOs to discuss and map out a way forward for speedy and equitable access to justice in The Gambia.

The two-day conference consolidated the resolutions of a similar engagement held in 2022 and discussed innovative approaches to enhance speedy access to justice in The Gambia. The participants highlighted the challenges litigants, children in conflict with the law, adult detainees and inmates, women and other vulnerable groups face in accessing speedy justice in the country.

The Conference discussed and identified key steps and approaches that the Government should consider as part of efforts to accelerate access to justice, including greater decentralisation of courts to rural communities, providing adequate resources to NALA to enhance legal aid provision, having mobile courts in the prisons, and building the capacity of the Police Prosecution Unit.

# CHAPTER 3:

## International Partnerships

The NHRC continues to develop and maintain partnerships with various partners which is vital to its success. In 2023, the NHRC partnered or supported various partners with the implementation of their activities in The Gambia.

**a. 4<sup>th</sup> Regional Consultation of National Human Rights Institutions in West Africa - (7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> of June 2023).**

The Commission hosted the above-named Consultation which was organised by the Network of National Human Rights Institutions-West Africa (NANHRI-WA) in collaboration with the ECOWAS Commission, OHCHR and UNOWAS.

This Consultation brought together National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) from ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania to enhance their overall role in the promotion and protection of human rights, especially their independence and effectiveness. They also discussed ways to enhance the role of NHRIs in business and

human rights, maintenance of subregional peace and security, protection of migrants and internally displaced persons and in the implementation of UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the African Agenda 2063 and the ECOWAS Vision 2050.

The Consultation adopted a Resolution with recommendations regarding regional cooperation between NHRIs, rising insecurity, instrumentalisation of the justice system, and shrinking democratic space for NHRIs and other non-state actors.

**b. IDLO SUPPORTED 'IMPROVING ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN THE GAMBIA' PROJECT - Stakeholder Consultation – (4<sup>th</sup> December 2023)**

The International Development Law Organization (IDLO), a global intergovernmental organisation with Observer Status at the UN, is implementing a 2-year project entitled "Improving Access to

Justice in The Gambia” in partnership with The Judiciary, the Ministry of Justice, and the National Human Rights Commission. Under the Project, IDLO is working with a select number of civil society organizations working on enhancing access to justice in The Gambia.

In line with the objectives of the Project, the NHRC hosted a consultative meeting which brought together justice sector actors from the State, CSOs and Academic institutions.

They discussed efforts being undertaken to ensure access to justice for people in the country, challenges hindering such efforts and what strategies and activities can be implemented by the stakeholders to enhance access to justice in The Gambia, especially for women and vulnerable groups in the rural communities.

At the end of this engagement, a list of proposed activities to be implemented in 2024 was developed for consideration by IDLO under the project.



Cross section of participants

## CHAPTER 4:

### Beneficiary Assessment of NHRC Activities

Monitoring and Evaluation form a critical component of NHRC programming to provide the basis for accountability and informed decision-making. The NHRC recognises the pivotal role of beneficiary feedback in enhancing the effectiveness of its programmes, as well as other human rights initiatives aimed at strengthening democracy and the rule of law. Engaging directly with beneficiaries is crucial to understanding the impact of implemented projects, identifying areas of improvement, and ensuring the Commission's interventions align with their needs and expectations.

This Beneficiary Impact Survey captures the views and opinions of individuals who participated in programmes and activities organised by the Commission in 2023. It aims to ensure that the Commission's programmes and activities geared towards the implementation of its mandate and functions align with the aspirations and needs of those it seeks to serve.

Standardised questionnaires were administered online to a representative sample of beneficiaries who participated in selected activities implemented in 2023, ensuring a systematic and comparable analysis of responses. In-depth interviews were conducted with select beneficiaries in the communities to capture nuanced and detailed narratives that complement quantitative findings.

The survey focused on the following areas:

1. Popularisation of the Government White Paper on the TRRC report
2. Access to justice
3. Rights of women
4. Rights of persons in conflict with the law
5. ToT on code of conduct for the police & guidelines for policing public assemblies in The Gambia

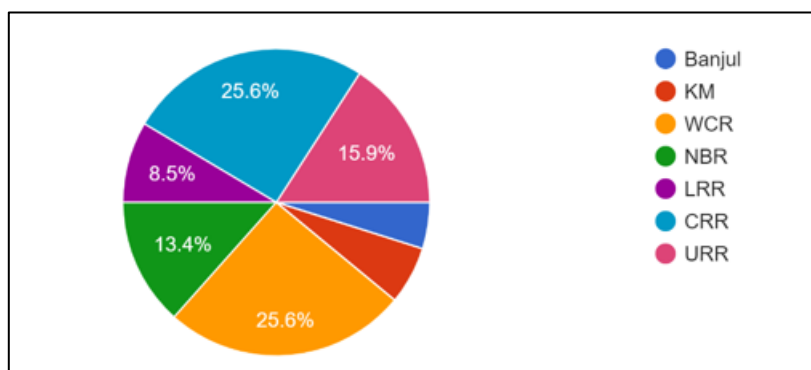
6. Mobile Legal Aid Clinic
7. Rights of Persons with Disabilities
8. Corruption and Human rights
9. Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara International Human Rights Moot Court Competition 2023
10. Popularisation of the CEDAW Concluding Observations
11. Stakeholder Conference on Access to Justice
12. Regional sensitisation of the Technical Advisory Committee on the Mandate of NHRC

The participants for the survey were randomly selected and interviewed to identify gaps, success stories and lessons learnt that could improve the way future interventions are designed and implemented.

The survey had over 80% response rate from the selected targeted beneficiaries with a sample size of a total of 100 targeted beneficiaries. A total of eight two (82) interviews were conducted with respondents from Government institutions, CSOs, religious leaders, students, scholars, victim focus organisations, and community members amongst others.

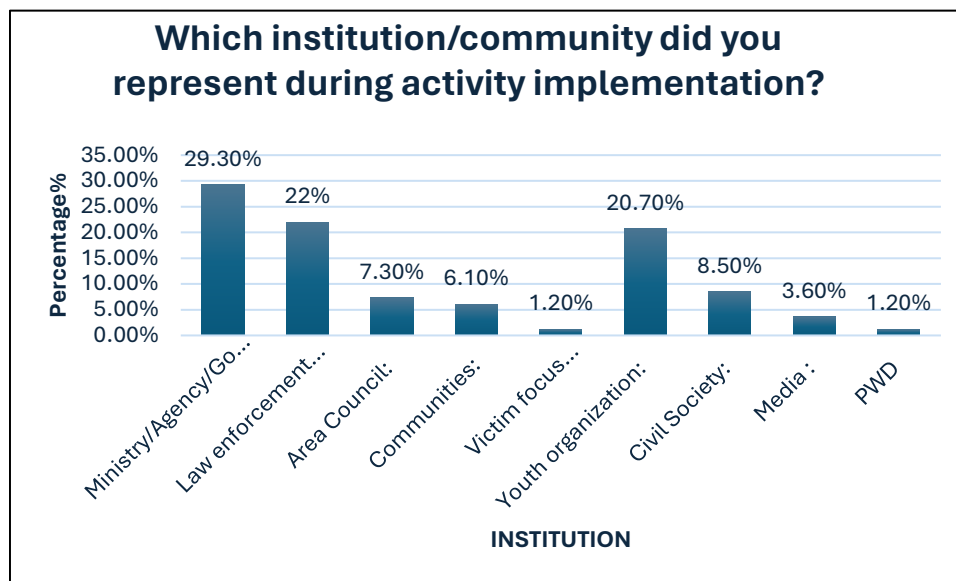
In terms of regional distribution, the survey findings revealed that most participants were from the West Coast Region and the Central River Region at 25.6%, followed by URR at 15.9%, and the North Bank at 13.4%. The Banjul and Kanifing Municipality (KM) regions have relatively lower representation, with 4.9% and 6.1% of respondents, respectively. This suggests a smaller proportion of beneficiaries from these urban areas compared to other regions.

***A Pie Chart Showing the Regional Distribution of Participants.***



**Graph Showing No. of Participants Interviewed and the Institutions they represented.**

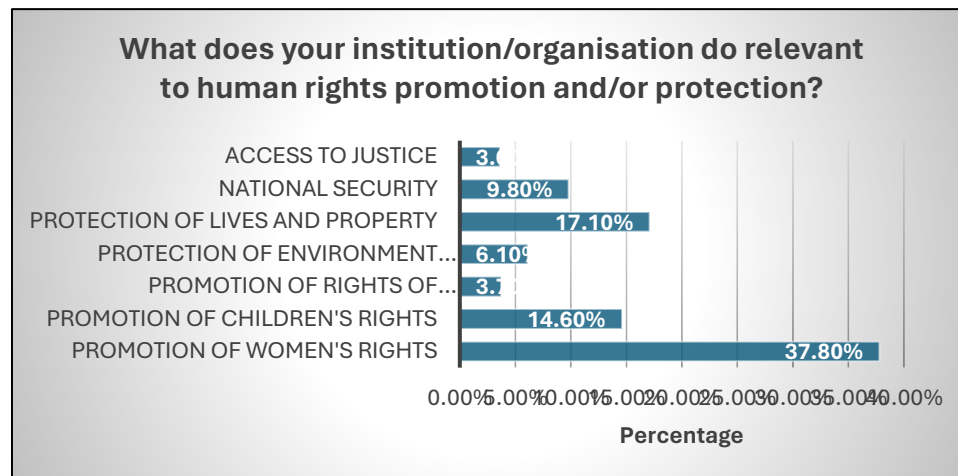
The diverse participants' representation of institutions and communities among beneficiaries surveyed highlights the engagement of various stakeholders in the implementation of human rights activities and initiatives.



**Main Findings**

Based on the question relating to What does your institution/organisation do relevant to human rights promotion and/or protection? 37.8% cited the promotion of women's rights, and 17% reported engagement in the protection of lives and property. A range of other human rights areas are also addressed to varying degrees, including the promotion of children's rights, protection of environmental rights, national security, the promotion of rights of persons with disabilities, and access to justice. This highlights the breadth and diversity of efforts aimed at advancing human rights principles and values within their respective spheres of influence.

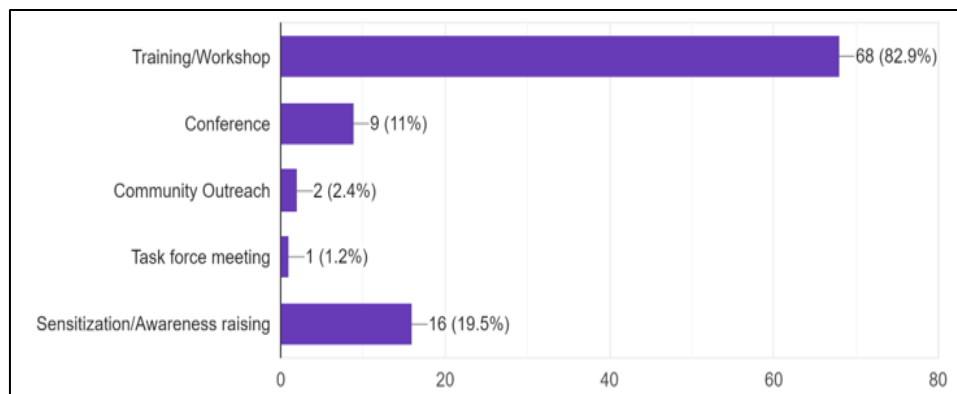
**Chart Showing respondent's institutions' activities relevant to Human Right Promotion/Protection**



Types of activities attended.

The most attended service or programme of the NHRC among respondents is training/workshop, with 82.9% of respondents indicating attendance. Approximately 19.5% of respondents reported attending sensitisation programmes organised by the NHRC. Sensitisation activities aim to raise awareness and educate individuals on human rights issues, indicating a moderate level of engagement with outreach efforts aimed at promoting human rights awareness. The findings indicate that the NHRC offers a range of services and programmes aimed at engaging beneficiaries in different capacities, including capacity-building workshops, awareness-raising events, community outreach activities, and stakeholder meetings. The diversity of engagement opportunities reflects the commitment of the NHRC to reaching a broad spectrum of stakeholders and addressing various aspects of human rights promotion and protection.

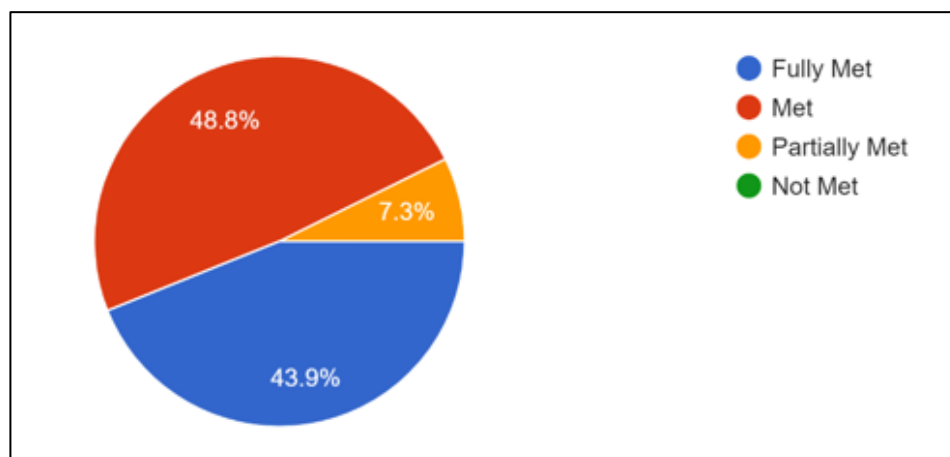
**Chart Showing the type of activities attended.**



### **Beneficiary Perspectives on NHRC Activities**

Most respondents reported positive outcomes regarding the main objective of the activity, with 43.9% indicating it was fully met, and 48.8% stating that it was met. This indicates a high level of achievement among beneficiaries in terms of meeting the primary objectives of the activities they participated in. A smaller proportion of respondents (7.30%) reported that the main objective of the activity was only partially met. The high achievement levels reported by beneficiaries regarding the main objectives of the activities reflect positively on the NHRC's ability to design and implement interventions that effectively address the intended goals and outcomes.

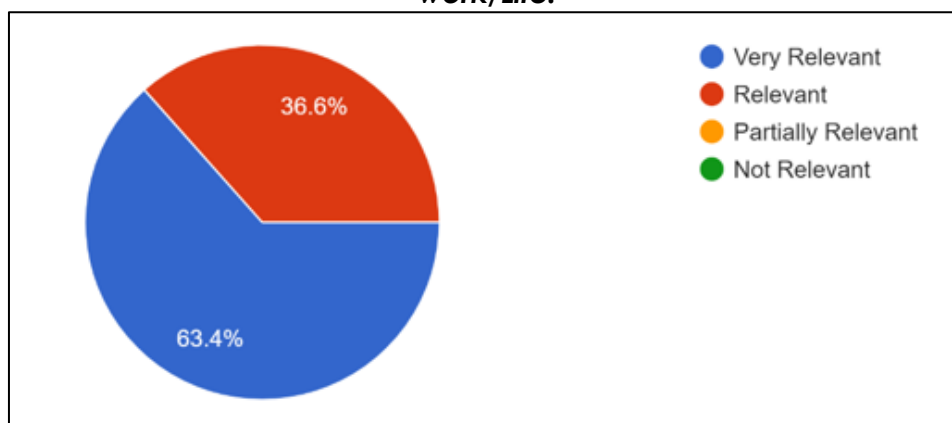
**Pie Chart Showing whether the objectives of the activities are met.**



## Assessment of Relevance, Effectiveness and Impact

Most respondents (63.40%) and (36.6%) rated the activity/ies they attended as very relevant or relevant to their work, respectively. This indicates a strong perception among beneficiaries that the activities aligned closely with their professional responsibilities or objectives. This feedback indicates that NHRC activities are seen as meaningful and impactful within the professional contexts of the beneficiaries, contributing to their overall effectiveness and value.

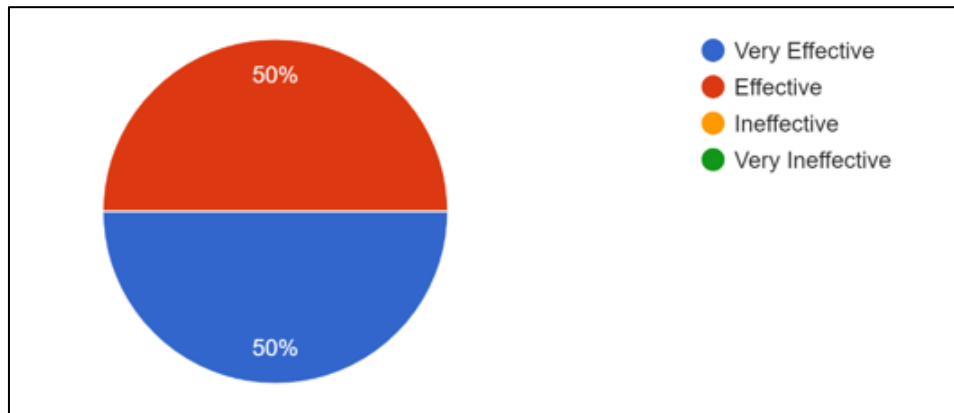
***Pie Chart Showing the Relevance of activities to participants' work/Life.***



### Effectiveness

All respondents rated the activity or programmes they attended as either very effective (50%) or effective (50%). This indicates a unanimous perception among beneficiaries that the activities or programmes were successful in achieving their intended objectives and outcomes. This feedback underscores the value and effectiveness of NHRC interventions in promoting and protecting human rights.

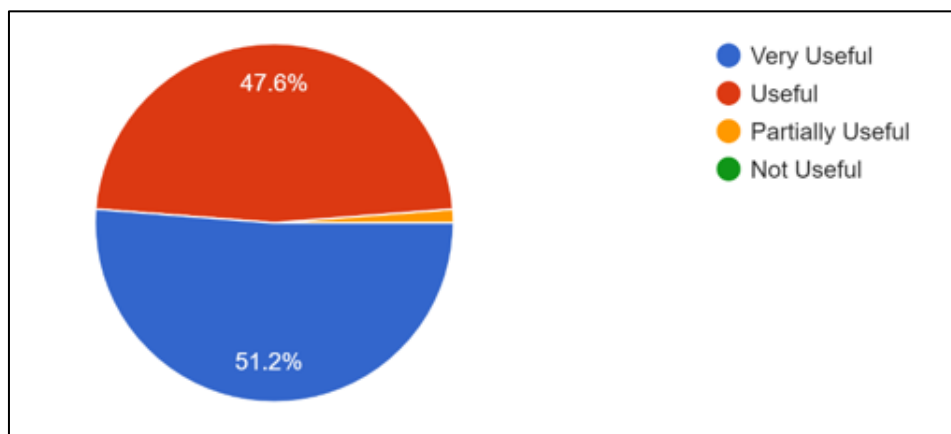
**Graph showing the effectiveness of activities or programs attended.**



### **Usefulness of the activities**

Most respondents (51.20%) and (47.60) rated the training/awareness raising/conference/event they attended as very useful and useful to their work, respectively. This indicates a strong perception among beneficiaries that the event provided valuable knowledge, skills, or insights that directly benefited their professional responsibilities or objectives. The high ratings of usefulness reported by beneficiaries reflect positively on the NHRC's ability to design and implement training, awareness raising, conferences, and events that provide tangible benefits and value to participants in their professional contexts.

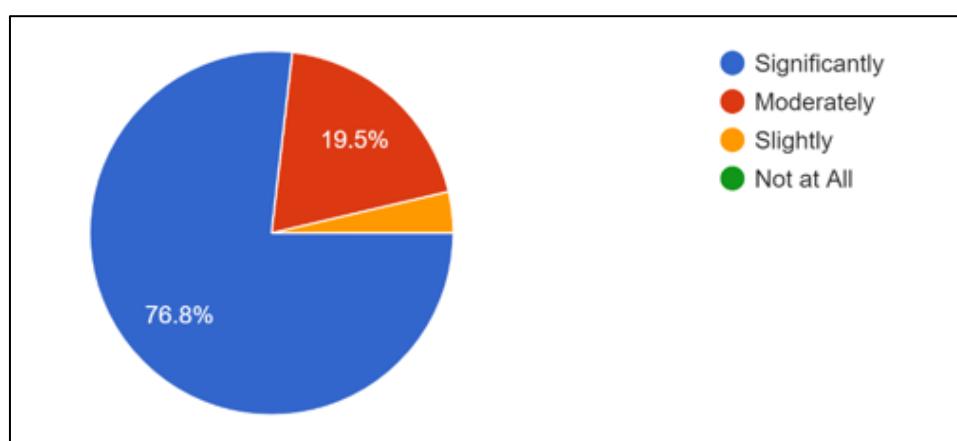
**Graph Showing the Usefulness of NHRC Activities.**



## Impact

Most respondents (76.80%) reported that the activity or services received from the NHRC have positively impacted their situations or work. This indicates a strong perception among beneficiaries that the NHRC's interventions have had a substantial and meaningful influence on their professional or personal circumstances. Among the respondents, 19.50% also reported a moderate positive impact on their situations or work as a result of the NHRC's interventions. This suggests that while not all beneficiaries experienced a significant impact, a sizable portion still benefited to a notable degree.

**Graph showing rating of impact for NHRC activities.**



Participants were asked: Can you provide specific examples of positive outcomes or changes in your work or personal development resulting from the activity or information provided by the National Human Rights Commission? Here are a few excerpts from the respondents:

***"There was detention beyond 72 hours' time limit but that is not happening now."***

***"It improved understanding of rights and ensured more support for each other to get socioeconomic rights/benefits."***

*"Understanding the issues of CEDAW in promoting and protecting women."*

*"Informed about the rights of women, differently abled, etc."*

*"The sensitization gave me an insight into what is contained in the Government White Paper and the status of implementation thus far."*

*"Now I will be able to observe the rights of the immigrants."*

*"Before attending training with NHRC, as SO and CID of...unit, I was strict with the 78hrs bail of suspects at times I go beyond the 78hrs but after the training, now I give bail within 24 hrs. If the bail will not tamper with the investigation. Thanks to the NHRC for the Training."*

In conclusion, the overwhelming majority of respondents expressed their gratitude for the efforts of the NHRC, noting that their participation in NHRC activities has deepened their comprehension of the Commission's role. Additionally, some respondents noted that their involvement has enhanced their capacity for tolerance and interpersonal relations. Looking ahead, the NHRC will continue to conduct this evaluation on an annual basis to gather essential insights for strategic planning, policy formulation, and informed decision-making. The findings of this assessment will be utilised to enhance the ongoing implementation of initiatives, including the adaptation of current plans and the creation of new strategies where necessary.

# CHAPTER 5:

## Lessons Learnt and Challenges

### Lessons Learnt

The NHRC in 2023, learned major valuable lessons that will significantly enhance its effectiveness in executing its mandate and ensure that everyone enjoys their fundamental human rights. Key lessons learned include:

#### 1. Prioritisation in

**Programming:** As an expanding institution with limited resources to effectively implement its functions, the Commission must prioritise its programmes and interventions for greater impact and sustainability.

#### 2. Building Partnerships and Strengthening

**Collaboration:** Continuous building and strengthening of strategic partnerships is vital to the achievement of our mandate, especially with State structures at the community and regional levels and Community-Based Organisations.

#### 3. Promotion of the Indivisibility of Human Rights:

For most individuals, human rights are limited to civil and political rights. Creating a better appreciation and significance of human rights in national development would require that our advocacy and awareness efforts put equal emphasis on economic, social and cultural rights and the indivisibility and interrelatedness of human rights.

#### 4. Evidence-based data –

Strengthening our advocacy and adviser role to the Government on policy and legal reforms, and protection of human rights requires that the Commission engages in research and knowledge development and documentation.

- 5. Addressing 'sensitive' human rights issues:** Tackling entrenched discriminatory practices against marginalised and vulnerable populations is a slow process that requires patience, tact and continuous engagement with duty-bearers and communities.
- 6. Expanding human rights services to regions:** The establishment of two regional offices has enhanced access of remote communities and vulnerable groups to the services of the Commission. However, there is a need for a presence in all the regions of the country so that all communities can have equitable access to the services of the Commission and be able to report human rights violations that are time sensitive.
- 7. Relationship with Development Partners:** Strengthening relationships with development partners and donors requires regular engagements and sharing of planned programmes, achievements, challenges and plans.
- 8. Maintaining Public Trust:** Remaining accountable to the public through constant information sharing and interfaces is an effective strategy for maintaining public trust and support in the work of the Commission.

## Challenges

Despite the many successes registered since its operation, the Commission continues to be faced with numerous challenges which hamper the effective implementation of its mandate. The main challenges are as follows:

1. The annual budget allocation from the Government covers mainly operational costs and less on programming which negatively impacts the implementation of the NHRC 5-year Strategic Plan 2021-2025. This leaves the Commission with funding gaps to implement key programmes and activities.
2. Inadequate in-house technical capacity on emerging human rights issues such as Business and Human Rights, human rights and climate change, protection of key populations and post-ante evaluation of policies.

3. Lack of a National Witness Protection Act to provide adequate protection to the Commission's complainants, witnesses, and respondents.
4. The absence of a nationally standardised education curriculum on human rights which hampers the Commission's efforts to introduce Human Rights Education in the education system.
5. Inadequate material resources to effectively support the operations of the NHRC (office space, equipment, and generator for both central and regional offices).
6. Inadequate financial support to continue the opening of offices in the remaining regions of the country.
7. The lack of a permanent infrastructure for the Secretariat and Regional Offices which compromises its independence as per the Paris Principles and the high cost of rents eats into the Commission's limited financial allocation from the Government.
8. Challenges in the timely submission of information from stakeholders during the collation of data for the Report on the status of implementation of the white paper on the TRRC.

# CHAPTER 6:

## Financial Report

### Introduction

The year 2023 was the third year implementing the National Human Rights Commission's (NHRC) five-year Strategic Plan. During the planning phase for the 2023 programme of activities, it was determined that a total budget of ninety-nine million, nine hundred and ninety-seven thousand, seven hundred and thirty-three Dalasi (GMD 99.9m) would be required to implement all the activities identified for the period. This also included activities rolled over that were not implemented in the previous periods.

During the year, a mid-term strategic plan review was undertaken to refocus the plan for the remaining period, considering current dynamics and challenges. Even though the original six strategic objectives were realigned to four strategic objectives, the overall indicative budget for the Strategic Plan remains the same.

Following NHRC bilateral consultations with both the Ministry of Finance and the

National Assembly respectively, a total budget of sixty-eight million four hundred and eighty-two thousand, four hundred and forty-eight Dalasi (GMD 68.5m) was approved for the NHRC for the year 2023. This comprised both Personal Emoluments (PE), budgeted at forty million, one hundred and fifteen thousand, seven hundred and sixty-four Dalasi (GMD 40.1m), and Other Charges (OC) budgeted at twenty-eight million, three hundred and sixty-six thousand, six hundred and eighty-four Dalasi (GMD 28.4m). The approved budget from the government represents 68.5% of the NHRC's total budgetary requirements for the year.

The NHRC, through its resource mobilisation efforts, was also able to obtain development partner funding for some of its 2023 programmes and activities amounting to seventeen million two hundred and sixty thousand, seven hundred and seventy-nine Dalasi (GMD 17.3m). This represents 17.3% of the total budgetary requirements for 2023.

From 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, an amount of GMD 67m was allocated to the NHRC by the Ministry of Finance, as shown in the following table. This amount represents 97.8% of the total 2023 NHRC approved budget. In addition, a total of GMD 17.3m, also shown in the same table, was received from development partners.

In total therefore, the NHRC obtained funding for 84.4% of its overall budgetary requirements for 2023 – total funds received were GMD84.3m against a total budgetary requirement of GMD99.9m.

***2023 funds received from government and development partners.***

<b>Period</b>	<b>GLF Fund Actual Funds Received (GMD)</b>	<b>Donor Funds Actual Funds Received (GMD)</b>	<b>Total (GMD)</b>
January	3,378,109	136,125.00	3,514,234
February	6,391,650	9,470,150.00	15,861,800
March	4,871,650	-	4,871,650
April	4,871,650	-	4,871,650
May	4,871,650	-	4,871,650
June	4,871,650	5,102,212.00	9,973,862
July	5,045,726	57,820.00	5,103,546
August	4,871,650	341,763.50	5,213,414
September	8,285,650	-	8,285,650
October	5,045,725	1,115,380.00	6,161,105
November	6,341,650	887,330.63	7,228,981
December	8,161,198	149,997.94	8,311,196
<b>Total</b>	<b>67,007,958</b>	<b>17,260,779</b>	<b>84,268,737</b>

## Expenditure

### ***From State Funding (GLF)***

As of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, the total expenditure against the NHRC budget approved by the National Assembly amounted to GMD 63.9m. This amount represents a total absorption rate of 95.4% and 93.3% of the total funds allocated to the NHRC and the budget for the 2023 fiscal year respectively.

Expenditure on personal emoluments (PE) as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 was GMD 38.7m against a total allocation and budget of GMD 39m and GMD 40.1 respectively. This represents a 99% absorption rate against allocations and 96% against budget. 97% of the PE budget was allocated to the NHRC.

Other recurrent expenditure or other charges (OC) expenditure as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 amounted to GMD 25.2m against a total allocation and budget of GMD 28m and GMD 28.4m respectively. This represents a 90% absorption rate against allocations and 89% against budget. 99% of the Other Charges budget was allocated to the NHRC.

***The following table shows a summary of expenditures against the budget and allocations as of the end of December 2023.***

	Budget	Total Allocations	Total Expenditure	Absorption Rate against Allocations	Absorption Rate against Budget	Allocations against Budget
	GMD	GMD	GMD			
PE	40,115,764	39,020,780	38,661,005	99%	96%	97%
OC	28,366,684	27,987,178	25,239,108	90%	89%	99%
TOTAL	68,482,448	67,007,958	63,900,113	95%	93%	98%

**Budget and expenditure lines are as shown in the following table:**

<b>Expenditure Type</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>
	<b>GMD</b>	<b>GMD</b>
Travel	3,902,500	3,785,716
Telecommunication	1,555,800	1,309,906
Electricity and water	708,000	707,860
Annual Office Rent - Head Office & Regions	1,944,000	1,804,000
Fuel	4,287,750	4,287,750
Maintenance of Vehicles	620,000	555,582
Maintenance of Building and Facilities	388,000	382,940
Maintenance of Equipment	72,000	38,600
Conferences, Workshops and Seminars	3,716,564	2,925,678
Stationery	326,350	321,250
Miscellaneous Office Expenses	500,000	498,092
Printing Expenses	959,500	743,150
Advertisements and Publications	454,800	435,800
Consultancy	2,005,000	1,195,560
Uniforms and Protective clothing	65,000	3,900
Training	65,670	45,144
Motor Vehicles	2,500,000	2,500,000
Contribution to International Organisations	655,850	642,250
Gratuities	1,520,000	1,340,050
Office Equipment	654,000	653,097
Furniture & Fittings	146,000	141,710
Motor Vehicle Insurance	360,000	358,246
Application Software Systems and Licenses	548,800	539,326
Expenses of Committees	311,100	23,500
Resource Mobilisation	100,000	-
Salaries and Allowances	40,115,764	38,661,005
<b>Total</b>	<b>68,482,448</b>	<b>63,900,113</b>

### ***Expenditure From Donor Funding***

As indicated above, the NHRC was also supported by donors/development partners during 2023 to fund some activities in the NHRC annual work plan. The total amount mobilised from development partners to fund activities and/or programmes of the Commission in 2023 was GMD 17.3m. This represents a 98.8% increase against the GMD8.7m received from development partners in 2022. The 2022 increase against 2021 was 164%.

The following table shows a breakdown of the funding received from development partners and the activities for which the funds were utilised.

<b>Development Partner</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Funds Received (GMD)</b>	<b>Total (GMD)</b>
The Danish Institute for Human Rights	Consultancy to conduct a study on the right to social protection in The Gambia - People left behind	Hiring of Consultant and Validation of report - final 30%	136,125	136,125
British High Commission	Bringing human rights services closer to all individuals in The Gambia	Procurement of two vehicles and two motorcycles; design and raise five billboards in five strategic locations within the country; procurement of office and communication equipment; solarisation of the NHRC head office; procurement of a CCTV system for the NHRC head office.	9,470,150	9,470,150
PBF/UNDP/ OHCHR	Support the implementation and monitoring of the TRRC Recommendations	Popularisation of the Concluding Observations on The Gambia's Sixth Periodic Report issued by the UN Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women	851,000	

<b>Development Partner</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Funds Received (GMD)</b>	<b>Total (GMD)</b>
		Conduct regional sensitization and popularisation of the TRRC recommendations in three regions	696,000	
		Development of a comprehensive monitoring plan to guide the NHRC in effectively monitoring the implementation of the White Paper	624,000	
		Engagements with National Assembly members on human rights obligations of the government to push for the implementation of the White Paper on the TRRC report and adoption of human rights Bills	398,400	
		Support the National Assembly Standing Committee on Human Rights and Constitutional Matters through a residential retreat to review key legislation	506,000	
		Periodic interface with victims and victim organisations on the implementation of the White Paper	241,930	
		Development of a Communication Strategy on the implementation of the White Paper on the TRRC Report	624,000	
		Support the NHRC with equipment for the effective monitoring of the White Paper	302,262	
		Inclusive communication campaign to enhance public understanding of the Government White Paper on the TRRC recommendations including broadcasting the recorded TRRC Jingle and video on TV and Radio stations	277,120	

Development Partner	Project Name	Activity	Funds Received (GMD)	Total (GMD)
		Conduct nationwide popularisation of the recommendations through a caravan with Bright Star Entertainment Group	550,000	
		Operational NHRC Multi-Stakeholder Committee to Support the Monitoring of the Implementation of Recommendations of the TRRC	31,500	5,102,212
University of Dayton - Human Rights Center		Internship Support	57,820	57,820
French Embassy in Dakar	Strengthening respect for human rights in The Gambia	National Forum on Disability Rights - Advancing the Rights of Persons With Disabilities in The Gambia	341,764	
		National Conference on Corruption and human rights in The Gambia	149,998	491,761
United States Embassy in The Gambia	Strengthening Local Capacity for Greater Accountability and Respect for Human Rights in The Gambia	Training of newly elected Councilors; Development of Primer; Development of Human Rights based Budgeting Guide; Train Community based structures and organisations on human rights and social accountability; Interface' between the councillors and members of the LGA; Training of trainers - Advance Payment	1,115,380	1,115,380
UNESCO	Strengthening the National Infrastructure for Peace to Promote Social Cohesion in The Gambia	National research on the prevalence of hate speech (online and offline) in The Gambia; Capacity Building For NHRC, IEC, IPC and NCCE on Mainstreaming Hate Speech - Advance payment	887,331	887,331
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>17,260,779</b>

Actual spending from funds received from development partners in 2023 was GMD 13.8m as shown below:

<b>Development Partner</b>	<b>Funds Received GMD</b>	<b>Actual Spending in 2023 GMD</b>
The Danish Institute for Human Rights	136,125	136,125
British High Commission	9,470,150	9,470,150
PBF/UNDP/OHCHR	5,102,212	3,211,437
University of Dayton - Human Rights Center	57,820	-
French Embassy in Dakar	491,761	477,725
United States Embassy in The Gambia	1,115,380	527,475
UNESCO	887,331	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17,260,779</b>	<b>13,822,912</b>

In addition, the NHRC is one of three institutions being supported under the European Union Consolidation of democratic dispensation in The Gambia (CODE) project. This project is being directly implemented by International IDEA for a thirty-six-month period from February 2023 to February 2026. Two activities were implemented in the latter part of 2023 under this project – technical support to the annual international Moot Court competition and Project Management training for Commissioners and staff of the NHRC. The total budget for the NHRC for the project period is EUR 243,685, approximately GMD 17.5m. The total sum of EUR 32,360 which is approximately GMD 2.3m was incurred in funding the activities implemented in 2023.

Support amounting to GMD 30,000 towards a Disability Rights forum titled “Advancing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in The Gambia” was also given by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

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**December 2023**