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Who We Are

Our Mission and Vision
We advance human rights worldwide. We investigate wrongs, expose the facts, offer solutions, and pressure those with power to respect rights. We collaborate with people claiming their rights, learn from partners, and engage the public. Human Rights Watch upholds the freedoms and defends the protections that promote dignity, equality, and justice.

Our Values
Human Rights Watch is anchored by Guiding Principles that orient us in the world and by Core Values that inform our standards, practices, and treatment of one another.

Guiding Principles
COMMITTED TO PROMOTING EQUALITY, DIGNITY, AND JUSTICE WORLDWIDE. Our work is grounded in standards contained in international human rights law, humanitarian law, criminal law, and refugee law. In applying these standards, we are guided by those most affected and by our partners, as well as by the principles of dignity, equality, and justice.

INDEPENDENT. We maintain neutrality in armed conflict, do not endorse political parties or candidates, and focus on promoting and advancing human rights rather than pursuing partisan agendas. We do not accept government funds, directly or indirectly, or support from any private funder that could compromise our objectivity, independence, or reputation.

ACCURATE, OBJECTIVE, TRANSPARENT, AND ETHICAL. We maintain high standards in our research, communications, and advocacy to ensure that HRW investigates, assesses, and presents information that is accurate and impartial. We uphold high standards of ethics when engaging with victims, witnesses, partners, and others; responsibly collect data; and strive for transparency regarding our methodology, structure, and funding.

FOCUSED ON IMPACT. In pursuing our work, we focus on impact, whether immediate or in the long term. Incremental progress can sometimes involve curtailing or preventing worsening rights situations. We succeed when we contribute to positive and sustainable changes to laws and policies and their implementation, as well as concrete improvements in people’s lives, through our direct work and in consultation and collaboration with others.

ENGAGED WITH DIVERSE MOVEMENTS FOR CHANGE. Through mutual respect and reciprocity whenever possible, we seek active and sustained partnerships with a diverse range of activists and movements, especially those most affected by abuses and groups working alongside them. We work to defend civil society from attack, magnify the work of partners, and help secure the space that they require to operate.
Core Internal Values
TRANSPARENCY. We value honest, respectful, and inclusive communications. All staff members are encouraged to express their views, share information, and offer feedback to colleagues. We are committed to timely information sharing, respectful dialogue, and transparent decision making. Similarly, honoring our duty of care requires transparency with constituents, collaborators, and sources on the possible impact and risks of our work.

RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION. A diverse staff and leadership are crucial to our effectiveness and enrich our organization and our work. We are committed to treating staff according to principles of equality, equity, and non-discrimination; to ensuring diversity as we continue to grow and globalize; and to being inclusive of all staff. We encourage staff to be kind, value positive behavior, break down barriers to understanding, and embrace difference.

LEARNING, TRUST, TEAMWORK, AND COLLABORATION. We foster a culture of learning, trust, teamwork, and collaboration. We value our skilled, creative, committed, and diverse staff. We defer to expertise and recognize that it is key to our strength and comes in many forms. We offer staff training; encourage the sharing of experiences and knowledge; encourage humility, reflection, and listening; and support staff in efforts to learn new skills that will contribute to our cause.

SAFETY, RESILIENCE, AND BALANCE. We are committed to staff wellbeing and resilience and to supporting staff in achieving a healthy, flexible work-life balance. We promote professional development and provide safe, positive working conditions, including fair and competitive compensation, opportunities for promotion, support on security, and zero-tolerance for bullying and harassment. We believe such treatment is critical to staff solidarity, wellbeing, retention, safety, and effectiveness.

ACCOUNTABILITY. We are committed to consistent, thoughtful evaluation of our internal operations and decision-making mechanisms to ensure staff conduct at all levels reflects and embodies HRW’s mission, Guiding Principles, and Core Values. All staff members are accountable for upholding these standards in their own work and that of their colleagues, as well as in their interactions with funders, partners, and other external stakeholders. We strive to fulfill our duty of care to people with whom we work, including those most affected by abuse, so that we do no harm in carrying out our mandate. Managers have a special responsibility to abide by and uphold these standards.

Our Theory of Change
Human Rights Watch catalyzes momentum for change by conducting rigorous fact-finding, proposing effective policy solutions, and powerfully communicating our message to relevant audiences, all in collaboration with our partners and those impacted by abuse. We pressure those with power and persuade them that it is possible and beneficial to respect human rights.

When governments and other actors commit, neglect, or profit from human rights abuses, or fall short of their obligations, we investigate and carefully document their conduct. Drawing on
the framework of domestic and international norms, we urge actionable steps to close the gaps we identify, remedy harms, and secure accountability.

We pressure and persuade people to act when we expose our findings in traditional and emerging media platforms as well as our own publishing channels. To harness our collective power, we build and support an influential chorus of voices, including local civil society and the broader public.

Securing change demands more than awareness of problems. We identify decision makers and influencers who are in a position to address the solutions we advance and engage them directly to seize opportunities for reform. We make concrete recommendations stemming from human rights standards and values to prevent or curtail abuse and neglect. We often raise the political, reputational, and financial costs of failing to uphold rights.

This model requires us to maintain our independence, impartiality, and commitment to the highest standards, while forging authentic, effective partnerships. As adversaries seek to obscure evidence and undermine our message, we are ensuring that our tools evolve and our voice resonates with new allies and audiences.

**INVESTIGATE**

Rigorous, independent, impartial, in-depth research and analysis lie at the core of our ability to protect human rights, differentiate fact from falsehood, and influence public debate. Our researchers get as close as safely possible to the scene of human rights harms, interviewing victims of abuse, making direct observations, speaking to witnesses, and seeking the perspective of alleged perpetrators and others implicated in abuse. We conduct multiple interviews, corroborate facts, access documentation, and shoot photographs and video. We use remote sensing, data analysis, and verified open source material to determine whether a pattern of abuse or neglect exists, including when security or political restrictions limit physical access. Based in or regularly visiting some 100 countries, our researchers’ deep country and subject-matter expertise is complemented by the capabilities of our local and regional partners.

We respond to and affect urgent developments as events unfold. At the same time, we undertake long-term, in-depth projects that break new ground and build a case for engagement in circumstances characterized by chronic repression, abuse, or neglect. We prioritize situations where the number of people affected is significant, the abuses are serious, there is an opportunity to move an influential regional or global actor, and HRW’s methodology and global platform can add value. We work with those most affected and with partner organizations to make the right choices about where and when our contributions can be most effective.

**EXPOSE**

Human Rights Watch publishes our findings and recommendations in reports, press releases, stories, photographs, and videos, in multiple languages across the web, on social media platforms, and in print. We publicize patterns of abuse and neglect as well as personal accounts that illustrate and magnify their human toll. To reach the decisionmakers who can act on our
recommendations, a global team of communications experts ensures that the news outlets most relevant to our advocacy goals report our findings, quote our specialists, and carry our opinion articles. By shaping the public’s view of rights problems and solutions to address them, we buoy the effectiveness of our advocacy and those of partners and reinforce broad human rights values.

Our credibility and reach are grounded in consistently high research standards. We strive to be a widely recognized source of reliable fact-finding, which is especially important as we contend with the erosion of some traditional media outlets and active efforts to spread misinformation. We seek to communicate not only with people who are steeped in human rights issues, but also individuals who may not recognize the relevance of human rights to their lives. To counter anti-rights rhetoric, we tell stories in ways that are accessible and emotionally resonant. To maximize our influence, we track public sentiment and leverage our research and expertise to respond rapidly and persuasively to issues as they develop or to make interventions at key moments to help overcome entrenched problems and neglect.

CHANGE

HRW generates momentum for change by persuasively advocating policy recommendations with those in a position to take action. We magnify and generate attention to solutions that are informed by affected communities. We apply targeted pressure on those who abuse, profit from, or neglect human rights to upend the cost-benefit analysis behind their conduct.

Drawing on the powerful framework of international laws and norms and joining with allies, our advocates and researchers leverage the credibility of HRW and build relationships with policymakers and officials in countries and multilateral institutions, business leaders, and civil society to prevent or curtail abuses and neglect.

As some states that traditionally if imperfectly defended human rights retreat from this role, we actively build strategic coalitions of small- and medium-sized states and engage regional and international bodies. If national governments are unresponsive or hostile, we address other levels of government. We seek alliances with other human rights groups, as well as those who share similar values and support the struggle for dignity and equality, including faith-based communities, labor unions, and social movements. We conduct digital campaigns that add crowd pressure to our advocacy to achieve the change we seek in the world.

The World and Our Institution Today

External Assessment

Human Rights Watch was born of the Cold War, looking toward the gulags of the Soviet Union and its satellite states on the one hand, and toward the dictatorships of Latin America on the other. We grew and globalized during the wave of democratization that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall, the wars that followed 9/11, and the global upheaval prompted by the collapse of financial markets in 2008.
We are a larger, stronger, and more diverse organization than ever, but we must confront complex new challenges from a foundation that was built during a different geopolitical age. If we are to continue to effect change, we too must evolve.

Major global trends affecting our work pose new and often intersecting threats.

The **climate crisis** and environmental degradation are already impacting lives and livelihoods around the world, particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable. Some 68.5 million **people are displaced** from their homes by conflict, persecution, and violence. Neither the refugee rights framework, nor broader human rights standards, are currently able to hold up against pressures to limit the movement of people by undermining basic protections.

**Technology** is fueling new abuses. Private and state entities now have unprecedented power to amass and process private information. Artificial intelligence provides authoritarian regimes with inordinate power for repression. It also introduces potential large-scale abuses by enabling bias in predictive policing, discrimination in access to welfare, and impacts on workplace rights, healthcare, speech regulation, and weapons systems.

Development has lifted millions out of poverty, but the rights-harming effects of deep and persistent **inequality** are sharpened by asymmetries of information and power. **Social protections** are often undermined by governments that shirk their responsibilities to realize access to healthcare, housing, education, water, and food; by corruption that erodes states’ capacity to pay; and by austerity programs implemented without adequate regard to rights.

Against this troubling backdrop, **changes in the political, media, economic, and civil society environments** challenge important aspects of our methodology and resource allocation. **Authoritarian populism** is on the rise. Populist leaders come to power in democratic elections, using emotive appeals to physical, cultural, and economic security. They proceed to attack the institutional arrangements—including independent judges, international standards, media, and fact-based discourse—that both constrain their authority and set positive standards that governments must meet.

**Longstanding dictatorships and repressive governments**, meanwhile, continue to maintain and extend their control through extrajudicial killings, torture, disappearances, arbitrary arrests, censorship, and impunity. They have been emboldened by the inaction or active encouragement of prominent leaders and institutions, as well as by access to new technologies for surveillance, propaganda, and control.

Many authoritarians are learning from one another and refining techniques on methods to **curtail civil society**. Under the convenient guise of fighting terrorism, the techniques are countenanced by or directly borrowed from democratic governments in the West. The tools used often transcend overt repression to include less visible but often incapacitating steps such as restricting foreign funding of civil society.
A theory of change predicated on exposing governmental misconduct to public criticism is only viable if the public finds the conduct shameful. But demagogues and authoritarian leaders work hard, and often effectively, to make harmful conduct a source of pride and mobilization.

In driving home their message, they lay siege to the information infrastructure that undergirds democratic accountability. The traditional toolkit of media capture, surveillance, arrests, and legal restrictions remains in use, but is often complemented by organized trolling, online censorship, and disinformation operations. In efforts that purport to control “fake news” or “extremist content,” some governments and companies are seeing renewed opportunities to crack down on critics.

Controls are not the only threat. Autocratic leaders and their supporters use social media to deliver divisive messages directly to the public to polarize societies and tacitly encourage discrimination and other abuses. Digital attacks on journalists, human rights defenders, and civil society are a growing threat.

The advocacy environment is also difficult. Many states that have been important if inconsistent allies are moving away from defending human rights. The European Union is struggling to resolve the contradiction between its values and the xenophobic tendencies of some of its member states. The United States often blocks efforts for accountability and justice. The powers of the Global South have not filled the leadership gap, too seldom putting human rights at the center of their foreign policy. Paralysis at the UN Security Council emboldens abusers to commit war crimes with near impunity.

In the face of these evolving challenges, we also see opportunities to advance our mission. Popular support for rights and justice continues to buoy and inform new social movements from Sudan to Poland and the US, and we have seen how unexpected change can come to countries like Uzbekistan and Ethiopia long held in the grip of repression.

Broad grassroots movements for change, journalists, environmental activists, anti-corruption voices, religious leaders, and union members are potential allies in the struggle for human rights. Through coalitions and partnerships, new movements and models for change can help reinforce the values at the core of both human rights and democratic governance. They can also inform our efforts to build alliances that respect authentic ways of working with local groups and those most affected by abuses.

New technologies may be deployed in ways that threaten rights, but also provide platforms for expression and information-sharing, new approaches to ameliorating human welfare, and new tools for research, media, and advocacy work. And public concern about threats to rights expressed in new media formats can be channeled in support of much needed protections.

Internal Assessment
Human Rights Watch meets this complex environment with extraordinary assets: a reputation for accuracy and impartiality; relationships across governments, media, civil society, and major
Institutions worldwide; sophisticated capabilities in human rights research, policy advocacy, and communication; deep fundraising capacity; a global network of supporters; and a diverse, talented team.

Our staff of nearly 500, representing 82 nationalities, based in 50 countries and 31 registered offices, is our most significant resource, bringing to bear an immense range of experience, skills, and insight on all aspects of our work.

Amid the clamor of the digital news cycle, we are heard. Some 140 media stories cite HRW staff or reporting every day. We create and publish some 6,000 products annually in 60 languages, with wide distribution to the public via traditional and digital media, including our more than 10 million social media followers.

In an increasingly politicized debate over rights, we have influence, with skilled advocates on six continents advancing credible policy solutions to secure rights.

Human Rights Watch activates the media, mobilizes the crowd, and changes the minds of the powerful because we are believed. Our research across key human rights themes and some 100 countries is the basis for our advocacy, and the core of our messaging.

This structure is supported by a powerful revenue model. We accept no government money and fundraise around the world in 12 currencies. The HRW Council consists of 22 committees comprising more than 1,000 members from 34 cities worldwide—a global network of relationships that is a strong resource for HRW and the wider human rights movement.

This legacy has enduring value. It also has gaps that have widened as we have grown, and limits that are being tested by a changing world.

Despite enormous strides in building a more international staff, we have not done enough to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion across HRW. We recognize that the values we champion externally must be upheld consistently internally. Moreover, a lack of diversity at senior levels of the organization constrains our effectiveness and can harm our credibility.

Related concerns around our culture require urgent and ongoing attention. Staff report frustration with accountability processes, levels of transparency, workloads, and behavior by some colleagues and managers that exacerbate rather than ameliorate stress levels. Many express a desire for more support and pathways for professional development, to make their work as meaningful as possible regardless of their level in the organization.

Our structure combines centralized and decentralized components that developed out of the merger of semi-autonomous Watch Committees, and our reliance on the creation of new divisional structures to address new areas of work. Devolving much programmatic and departmental decision making is a strength, but also a challenge to manage and optimize. We often have nimble and responsive decision making led by experts. However, we sometimes
miss opportunities to leverage the organization’s full power and tolerate inefficiencies or risks that may only be evident with a more holistic view. Coordination mechanisms built for a much smaller organization are under strain, with inconsistent internal communication processes and technology for information sharing.

We have not invested in formal monitoring and evaluation, and knowledge sharing, internally or with partners. Nor have we wrestled sufficiently with the challenge of measuring impact in human rights work. Despite many examples of success in partnership, we need to clarify and be more open and consistent in supporting different forms of collaboration.

Our existing mix of processes, tools, skills, and culture can constrain our effectiveness in other ways. We have a strong mandate, founded in human rights standards. But standards are not static. Uncertainty over the process for arriving at new policies or agreeing new approaches can limit our timely response to important opportunities and threats. More clearly linking our policymaking process and our strategic priorities will support innovation and sustained impact.

Similarly, we can draw on four decades of leadership in pioneering protections for marginalized groups, securing treaties that ban weapons such as landmines and bar the use of children as soldiers, and establishing a new international court to try the world’s worst crimes. Building on this experience, we can stake out progressive ground on international standards and policies that ensure the continued evolution and relevance of human rights and their application to new areas of global concern.

New technologies hold potential for aiding human rights research, not just in data-rich societies but also in closed countries or conflict zones that are difficult for our researchers to access. Our media, advocacy, and fundraising efforts are all supported by increasingly sophisticated publishing, public engagement, and storytelling tools. HRW now has a track record of using geospatial techniques to secure evidence of abuses, and a growing practice of data-informed investigations. We must continue to innovate in our research and communications methodologies and build our capacity around technology and data skills that support our programmatic work and core operational functions.

As we become increasingly sophisticated in our use of technology, and reliant on digital platforms, so too do those who wish to surveil or disrupt our work. We are building our security capacity, but the scale of the threat is not yet fully appreciated across the organization. We must also be ready to respond to growing attacks on our fact-finding, and on a fact basis of public policy discourse. That means ensuring that our standards, processes, and practices for research, communication, advocacy, and fundraising be rigorous, ethical, and transparent.

Finally, our major gifts fundraising model is a strength, but it can leave us vulnerable to changes in philanthropic culture and regulation. By further diversifying our revenue base, including with smaller donors, we can better insulate ourselves against economic and political risk and respond to emerging trends in philanthropy.
Our three-year strategic direction seeks to build on the foundation laid over 40 years, extend the evolution of the past decade, and meet new challenges by ensuring Human Rights Watch remains relevant, resilient, and impactful.

**Human Rights Watch’s Three-Year Strategic Direction**

Human Rights Watch is at an inflection point. Four decades of growth and evolution provide a solid foundation of expertise, relationships, methodology, and global infrastructure. But external challenges to our values and model are as profound as they are urgent. And they are deepening even as we run up against the limits of our current management practices, culture, and capacity for growth.

From 2019 through 2022, our aim is to **invest the time and resources and to have the courage to adapt and ensure that our remarkable legacy forms the basis to address the threats facing human rights. We must seize opportunities to promote respect for human rights that are available to a global institution built to deliver impact through unparalleled fact-finding, communication, and advocacy.**

We will continue to invest in existing strategies that point us in the right direction. Compared with 10 years ago, HRW is a more international, diverse, impact-driven organization in every way. We cover more countries and have a broader range of thematic expertise. More of our staff are from the countries and regions we cover. We are transforming our communication and publishing activities with innovative technology. Our advocacy has a more diverse range of targets. Our donors are more geographically diverse.

Today we need to better support these continuing strategies. And we need to complement them with significant new efforts that address both the internal character and functioning of all aspects of HRW and the ways in which we engage the external world.

This strategy is not a programmatic roadmap, nor a rigid central plan. Rather, it aims to **build and secure the strong, flexible organizational spine that is needed to improve our effectiveness and respond with agility to a constantly changing external environment.**

These efforts will touch every part of HRW and every aspect of our work. They are organized under six broad, closely related categories, which bring our objectives together in a coherent, consistent, and visible framework for the allocation of resources and effort.

First, we have the opportunity for even greater impact on some issues if we break down division and department silos that constrain our effectiveness. Unlocking our potential for **Impact** requires a strong framework for priority setting, coordination, and collaboration. It will help further unleash the power of diversity and foster a culture of inclusion. [Our cross-cutting programmatic priorities will be inserted here in future drafts of this strategic plan.]
strategic plan also points towards how we can better work together to address challenges such as authoritarian populism, climate change, inequality, migration, and technology.

Second, we face major external threats: international institutions that are at times indifferent, ongoing attacks on civil society and democratic norms, and an information ecosystem that puts pressure on traditional approaches. Maintaining, expanding, and transforming our Influence in this environment demands that we further develop our media and publishing capabilities, increase our focus on partnerships with other organizations, ensure that our legal and policy framework supports both principled rigor and relevance, and focus our advocacy resources on countries and institutions where our approaches move the right people to act.

Third, we seek to more cohesively and proactively address both the threat and the opportunity of new Technology. We must ensure that we have the capacity and structure to promote standards to address rapidly emerging threats to human rights in the digital domain. We must upgrade our investigative toolset and build our internal technology platforms.

Fourth, our values are at the core of our mission. We must live them, both in our culture and in our policies and practices, because it is right, and because it makes us more effective. That means treating diversity, equity, and inclusion as critical to every aspect of our operational and programmatic work. It means creating an environment that fosters the long-term wellbeing of our staff. True Respect for our values, and for one another, requires that we have and implement a strong, transparent, and effective framework for internal accountability, built on clear and credible policies.

Fifth, while our operational scaffolding continues to evolve, we are now functioning at a scale and complexity that requires us to re-examine what is needed. To support true Organizational Excellence, we need to bolster finance, human resources, information technology, security, compliance, and facilities, as well as our ongoing training, research standards, and knowledge management. HRW requires a comprehensive risk management framework to address security, reputational, and legal and compliance risk across a wide range of operating environments.

Sixth, with a financial forecast heading towards $110 million during this strategic plan, Human Rights Watch can feel confident that its work is valued and that resources are available to back its intended impact. Sustainable growth requires systems and tools that link our programmatic human rights-driven priorities to our financial planning, to proactive management of anticipated changes in expenditures and important revenue sources, and to the diverse revenue sources that ensure our health and buffer against economic shocks. Recognizing that there will be tradeoffs and that the strategic plan is a roadmap for our annual forecasting, the implementation of the plan must be sustainable and phased.

Above all else, our strategy for the next three years is: To implement the systems, tools, processes, and culture that will ensure our organization functions within the broad human rights movement to deliver sustained impact to advance human rights and the principles of human dignity, equality, and justice.
Human Rights Watch’s Continuing Strategies

1. **Ensure Relevant and Strategic Research Coverage**

   Human rights research and documentation continues to be important to the global human rights movement. HRW is one of the world’s leading global rights organizations. Officials, journalists, funders, and colleague organizations expect us to address the most serious abuses and neglect wherever and whenever they occur. Effective research coverage is critical to our ability to respond effectively to priority issues. We aim to ensure research coverage by prioritizing the allocation of resources on issues, countries, governments, and other issues based on our potential for impact and value-adding work, including to magnify partners’ efforts so they achieve their own goals.

   While recognizing that strategies need to be tailored to specific situations, we will also continue to ensure our capacity to develop and promote norms, and to propose policy approaches that protect, promote, and advance human rights in areas that affect marginalized and neglected individuals or groups and where threats and opportunities cut across countries, regions, and institutions. We will continue to foster work and build expertise on economic, social, and cultural rights, and to address systematic root causes of human rights harm to prevent neglect.

   In our research coverage, we will emphasize innovation and creative approaches to our work, including to push boundaries by contributing to stronger international human rights laws and standards, developing work on chronic or emerging global threats or opportunities, and leading global campaigns. Annex C provides additional guidance on factors to assess prioritization and phasing of country coverage for those parts of the organization that focus on country coverage.

2. **Use the Most Effective and Inclusive Information Distribution Strategies**

   To ensure we are able to reach the most influential journalists, policymakers, activists, and others regardless of their location or language, we seek to extend our reach on a range of platforms and languages; expand our translations capacity to make more of our print and digital content available in multiple languages; ensure the accessibility of our information online; and increase key coverage in local media outlets including by bolstering the location of press officers and relationships with media in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America. At a minimum, we aim to build social media and web audiences in Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Swahili commensurate with their importance to our advocacy.

   Seeking to inform and inspire, HRW will dynamically engage new audiences and extend our influence beyond traditional media and broaden distribution channels by expanding video production, social media, and immersive storytelling capacities; producing more short-form content that has proven effective in boosting audience engagement; and continuing to publish long reports where detailed factual accounts are needed.

3. **Engage Those with Influence and Locate Ourselves Close to Them**
In general, and where possible, locating more staff in or closer to the regions and countries on which they work continues to strengthen us. We continue to maintain advocacy offices, or bolster capacity, around the Group of Seven (G7) capitals and countries like Belgium and Switzerland that host multilateral institutions. Due to their systemic importance and investments in sustaining the order built in the aftermaths of World War II and the Cold War, these countries and multilateral institutions play an enhanced regional or international role in human rights diplomacy, or have meaningful potential to do so, and are places where HRW has the potential to be relevant and effective influencing outcomes.

Often less constrained by national interests and double standards, countries with smaller economies that historically wielded less power offer an antidote to the gaps in human rights leadership from G7 countries. By increasing our engagement with small or mid-size countries, we can mobilize coalitions of states on specific thematic or country issues. We will also continue targeting governments, as well as a range of non-government actors who commit or profit from abuses, or who have influence to curtail or prevent them, such as businesses, non-state parties to conflicts, humanitarian agencies, and regional or international courts.

4. Diversify and Internationalize Fundraising
The HRW Council will continue to serve as the primary vehicle to connect HRW supporters to the human rights cause, and to deepen and diversify the network that supports our organization and movement. Building on recent rapid Council expansion, we will deepen relationships in existing locations where we see opportunities for programmatic presence, fundraising, or leadership potential. We anticipate a balanced approach between deepening our established locations (such as Geneva, London, New York, San Francisco, and Silicon Valley) and launching new initiatives (such as in Australia, Brazil, and South Korea).

Our strong and geographically diverse revenue-raising capabilities will continue to prioritize retaining leadership donors ($100,000+), identifying new prospects, and upgrading current donors with high capacity. As leadership donors represent a continued driver of our growth, we hope to increase their number in part through deeper engagement and learning experiences for the organization’s top supporters. Institutional (foundation) fundraising is focused in the US and especially in Europe to support those efforts.

Strategic Initiative #1—Building for Impact: Expanding Research Strategies and Programmatic Coordination

Unlocking Potential through Collaboration and Priority Setting
Human Rights Watch values and practices a combination of bottom-up priority setting and close programmatic collaboration across divisions and departments within a strong organizational framework. We seek to strengthen collaboration and address major threats to human rights and opportunities for impact by setting a small number of “cross-cutting programmatic priorities” that will be shared among Program, Media, and Advocacy.
Choose cross-cutting programmatic priorities that respond to global threats and/or emerging opportunities and require a level of cross-division and department collaboration that might not emerge without proactive support from the center.

Evaluate possible cross-cutting programmatic priorities based on criteria, which include potential for impact, clarity of goals, availability of partners, suitability for HRW’s methodology, commitment from programmatic divisions, and institutional capacity.

Solicit proposals for HRW leadership to support cross-cutting programmatic priorities based on merit and potential for impact, considering recommendations from the cross-cutting programmatic priorities working group.

Implement 1 to 3 cross-cutting programmatic priorities over an 18- to 24-month period, extendable depending on the priority selected and progress in achieving its goals.

Integrate cross-cutting programmatic priorities into the annual plans of departments and divisions where relevant.

Implement cross-cutting programmatic priorities from existing departmental and divisional budgets. Development may assist in raising additional funds to support these programmatic priorities.

**Measures of Success**
- Implemented 1 to 3 cross-cutting programmatic priorities.
- Generated evidence of broader external impact.

**Identifying Cross-Cutting Programmatic Priorities**
EMT received proposals from staff for seven potential cross-cutting programmatic priorities, all of which evidence programmatic collaboration and have potential. EMT has requested further analysis on a subset of these potential cross-cutting programmatic priorities and will decide by July 2019 which will be selected for fiscal year 2020. The selected cross-cutting programmatic priorities will be inserted here in subsequent versions of this strategic plan.

**Creating a Planning Framework**
We are revitalizing our framework for annual planning and creating more formalized, robust project planning to enhance the visibility of division and department plans and to link them to strategic planning. The purpose is to facilitate a consistent process of priority and objective setting across the organization, early collaboration where required across divisions and departments, transparent and sustainable financial forecasting, and effective monitoring and evaluation. While programmatic annual plans are at the core of annual planning, all departments will produce annual planning documents.

- All departments and Program divisions create and share annual strategy memos accompanied by planning top sheets, including priorities, objectives, inputs, growth plans, and financial needs.
- Produce and disseminate a list of planned projects by each Program division, including the project lead and a brief description of and rationale for the work.
III. Implement redesigned Project Design Memos (PDMs) for all reports and other major projects to provide objectives across research, advocacy, and communications, as well as how we will achieve our goals and measure impact.

IV. Make planning information available to all staff by storing annual planning memos, project lists, PDMs, and top sheets on the Intranet.

V. Assess Program office research and product strategies in terms of balancing immediate and long-term impact. Provide guidance to researchers and research assistants on how to assess tradeoffs and prioritization in their work. Examples of guidance may include what criteria to use for managing and balancing in-depth research versus responsive work; training on the format, packaging, value, and role of different products; and the risks/rewards of focusing on uncovered subjects versus what is already in the news.

Measures of Success
- Accounting for changing circumstances and opportunities for reactive work, effective implementation of PDMs, project planning discussions, and annual planning as measured by staff reports of earlier, more collaborative work and the usefulness of such processes in guiding day-to-day work.
- Implementation of clear guidance on research design and product selection.

Strengthening Internal Coordination and Collaboration
As a large and complex global organization, we seek to continually improve internal coordination and collaboration, both among our programmatic departments and around initiatives related to our institutional infrastructure, in ways that respect different locations and time zones. Better collaboration enables us to more fully harness resources across the organization to achieve impact and ensure systematic information sharing. These efforts will elevate insights from all relevant parts of the organization early in a project’s design and support decision making about tactics and strategy on cross-cutting and high-priority issues.

I. Strengthen LPACA as the day-to-day coordinating body addressing responses to breaking events and longer-term issues.

II. Promote the Leadership Management Team (LMT) as an interface between staff and the Executive Management Team (EMT), support implementation of action plans on Stress and Resilience and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, strengthen LMT’s role in providing decision making support to EMT, and promote financial sustainability through the Staff Budget Committee (SBC).

III. Upgrade, build, and integrate tech platforms and systems to automate and promote collaboration and train staff in using chosen applications.

IV. Increase the capacity and authority of the Program office to ensure effective coordination of project planning, vetting, and research staff security, and to proactively cultivate synergies across the organization on high-priority issues.

V. Increase issue-specific coordination among Advocacy, Media, and Program through core groups.
VI. Converge Media planning and production in collaboration with Program and Advocacy, to implement coordinated strategies across press, multimedia, campaigns, and digital channels.

VII. Implement project teams, anchored by the primary researcher, with Media, Legal, Advocacy, and other expert reviewers assigned and consulted from the outset.

VIII. Ensure mechanisms of engagement of staff across time zones and geographies.

**Measures of Success**
- LPACA and LMT serving as effective information-gathering, decision making, and support mechanisms for staff and EMT.
- Tangible steps taken towards collaborative inter-divisional coordination and work, including joint research, reports, and campaigns.
- Programmatic work is better informed by insights from all parts of the organization through increased information sharing and earlier consultation.
- Increased collaboration and utility of communication tools in supporting coordination and day-to-day workflow. Staff report greater efficiency and fewer conflicts.
- Advocacy, press, and digital impact increased.

**Strategic Initiative #2—Building for Influence: Broadening and Integrating Our Avenues for Engagement**

**Engaging Audiences Through Our Communications Reach**
HRW seeks to inspire and engage audiences to join together and take action for human rights. We must vary our communication methods and assess how these goals impact our choices around language, accessibility, partnership, collaboration, diversity, research, and product design. To speak to diverse and growing audiences, we seek to strengthen our digital publishing infrastructure, build a new base of storytelling skills, create more collaborative workflows, and adopt new approaches to research that support these forms of communication.

I. Strengthen our capacity to create rich, engaging stories for digital platforms, including video, immersive interactive features, data visualization, short formats, and graphics.

II. Deepen our analysis of metrics and data on audience engagement on web, mobile, and social media, and consistently test the effectiveness and ethics of our products, platforms, and messages.

III. Adopt new approaches to report on human rights issues, consistently emphasizing unbiased messaging and offering solutions that instill hope over fear.

IV. Deploy new distribution strategies including investing in social media ads and pitching to digital outlets.

**Measures of Success**
expanding our advocacy approaches

in these troubling times, hrw and the wider human rights movement must expand their strategies for change. considering our existing advocacy deployments, we will balance consolidation in systemically important advocacy targets with agile and flexible internationalization. we will draw on our policy expertise to emphasize best practices and informed, practical solutions. widening our scope of action will yield new opportunities and avenues for addressing human rights issues.

i. build an agile and flexible advocacy structure that can adapt to a fast-changing external environment, adequately cover multiple advocacy targets in more than one location, and hedge against uncertainty about our lasting ability to influence or access any particular country. we seek to proactively deploy advocates globally for issue-specific missions and locate core advocates in regional centers where they are well placed to travel to neighboring states, while ensuring that they have the necessary skills, experience, and relationships to work on more than one country and/or institution.

ii. in addition to traditional advocacy work with and within key international organizations, we will target non-traditional multilateral venues such as the organization for islamic cooperation to leverage a human rights angle to their mandate.

iii. expand into additional modes of advocacy in key countries and on select issues, including enlisting like-minded communities whose moral voices are essential in any debate about values, such as faith communities, unions, environmental groups, and social movements.

iv. strengthen our digital campaigns to inspire and engage with the wider public to complement our high-level advocacy and achieve our intended outcomes.

measures of success

- documented ability to respond promptly to crises and high-priority issues and advocate with governments or institutions in locations where we do not have an advocate based.
- more avenues for engagement with diverse alliances, starting in kenya and the us, including in research design and communications strategies.
- increased numbers in terms of reaching advocacy targets and new followers on social media.
- increased verified actions on digital campaign asks.
Ensuring Our Legal and Policy Frameworks Address Emerging Threats and Opportunities

HRW’s legal and policy standards enable us to protect and advance human rights and prevent abuse and neglect. These standards are the cornerstone of our independence, impartiality, and accuracy and must continue to evolve to ensure our relevance and leadership on emerging threats and opportunities. We will continue to embrace a progressive reading of international human rights law, humanitarian law, criminal law, and refugee law. We seek to increase the dynamism, inclusivity, and transparency of our formal policymaking, extend our mandate to areas where existing international standards fall short or are poorly suited to some of today’s pressing rights problems, and ensure we are proactive in participating in developments and policy outside HRW.

I. Ensure early Legal suggestion of, and participation in, projects involving emerging, controversial or complex areas of international law, disseminate information on approaches, foster internal discussion, and document resolutions to ensure adoption across the organization.

II. Strengthen Legal engagement with cutting-edge human rights analysis and scholarship, including in non-Western countries or non-common law systems, and with partners.

III. Improve HRW’s voice in human rights standard setting and strategic litigation. Enhance internal coordination to provide earlier, more substantial HRW input to influence standard-setting processes at the UN, regional-level bodies, and NGO initiatives.

IV. Codify a clear, efficient, and accessible process for proposing and adopting new policies, which enables key stakeholder participation.

V. Explore additional mechanisms for flexibility and innovation in our policy work and act as a thought partner to programmatic staff wishing to address gaps in the law. Wrestle with and interpret the law to help formulate solutions and champion policies that allow us to respond to emerging areas.

VI. Assess how to implement diversity, equity, and inclusion values in Legal, including how to further integrate perspectives from non-US/non-European contexts.

Measures of Success

- Documented boundary-push HRW-wide positions on key emerging issues, and visible HRW leadership in relevant external conversations.
- Legal staff engaged more strategically and collaboratively in programmatic work.
- More diverse voices and inclusive representation in legal and policy decisions.
- Implementation of a clear, rigorous, and efficient process for adopting new policies.
- Staff report strong partnership with Legal and Policy team.
- Measurable increase in work on new and relevant areas of human rights.

Strengthening Authentic Partnerships and Collaboration with Movements for Human Rights

Partnerships form a core part of HRW’s methodology. We seek to strengthen existing partnerships with groups in the traditional human rights movement, as well as build new
relationships beyond it. We will dedicate time and energy for joint, mutually beneficial work that increases the overall strength and effectiveness of the human rights movement and HRW, including with groups most impacted by abuses. We aim to connect with allies such as faith groups, unions, and social movements that are close to or made up of people directly affected by abuse and that have significant influence with an array of constituencies. We seek to advance the goals and interests of our allies and to deepen our learning and engagement with them, recognizing that cultivating impactful relationships that respect distinct organizational mandates is time and resource intensive.

I. Recognize support for partnership building by ensuring job descriptions and performance reviews acknowledge the importance of this work.

II. Ensure that activities around building partnerships are included in annual planning documents, project design memos, and fundraising, financial, and monitoring and evaluation documents.

III. Integrate and elevate training on partnerships, including best practices for selecting partners, approaching local NGOs with sensitivity, achieving success, nurturing long-term partnerships, sharing resources, managing expectations, and defining contributions and divisions of labor.

IV. Share our information, strategies, and access with partners, such as advocacy and media contacts, training resources, and best practices on fundraising, operations, security, and governance.

V. Use media and technology platforms to support partners and their priorities and implement a model to allow partners to access HRW’s communications capabilities.

VI. Pilot civil society alliance-building efforts, including with local social movements, to reshape and reinvigorate rights values globally. Establish global alliance and outreach program to identify allies, provide leadership on new approaches to working with social movements, assess lessons learned, and identify cutting-edge areas for research.

VII. Connect our external work with partners more explicitly to our internal work on diversity, equity, and inclusion, including institutional discussions on privilege.

VIII. Continue raising internal awareness of the risks, responsibilities, and duty of care considerations associated with supporting and acting with local partners.

Measures of Success

- Job descriptions and performance evaluations reflect, where relevant, partnership work.
- Expanded coverage of partnerships in onboarding and ongoing training for researchers.
- Increased levels of trust in and support from HRW reported by partners, initially measured informally, moving to more formal measurement.
- Implementation of guidelines on institutional best practices on partnerships, including risk assessment and mitigation.
- Documented communication projects in support partner organizations’ objectives.
Strategic Initiative #3—Building for the Digital Age: Technology Transformation

New technologies present challenges and opportunities for Human Rights Watch. Given the scale and speed of change, we must actively pursue technology transformation across all aspects of our work. We will create an infrastructure that will enable HRW, in collaboration with partners, to keep human rights relevant in the digital age, power our research with appropriate tech tools, innovate our systems and reach, and keep our staff and partners safe. We will pursue this work with the same agility, thoughtfulness, and ethical grounding that we embody in our programmatic work.

HRW will engage thoughtfully with governments, companies, civil society groups, and funders, as well as ensure that our tech-related work considers practical, ethical, privacy, and security implications. We will also work to ensure that our tech capabilities, expertise, tools, and information are available to and supportive of partners.

Tackling Tech Challenges: Research and Advocacy to Keep Human Rights Relevant

HRW seeks to curtail or prevent human rights violations related to technologies as they are developed and tested, rather than later when abusive systems are created and become entrenched. Cutting across four priorities, we aim to set rights-respecting standards for how such technologies are developed and used; target tech companies that profit from, exacerbate, or commit violations; contribute to collective efforts with partners; and advance concrete, practical, tailored recommendations to address these difficult, cutting-edge issues.

I. Deepen digital rights research on the private sector to enable us to propose solutions that respect and appropriately balance privacy, speech, and other rights. Address rights-respecting platform accountability for the spread of misinformation or online harassment, and content moderation.

II. Develop and propagate human rights standards on, and critiques of, automated decision-making products, as well as government procurement and corporate sales of them. Articulate human rights standards on transparency, accountability, and fairness in this sector. Document harms of automated decision making such as in the criminal justice, defense, and welfare systems, as well as the financial and insurance sectors.

III. Ensure that technology used for public ends does not exacerbate discrimination and provides access to remedies. Develop best practice guidelines on how to respond to abusive technologies that replicate biases.

IV. Focus on data collection as a means of social control, including to expose government mass surveillance, and develop rights-respecting standards to regulate and prevent abuses such as related smart cities and facial recognition/biometric technology.

V. Increase internal technical expertise available to collaborate on research and engage with the broader technical community.

VI. Assess and strengthen the structure of, coordination of, and vision for our research, communication, and advocacy on abuses related to technology.
Measures of Success

- Secured steps toward decreased government use of surveillance or automated decision-making technologies that invade privacy, harm free expression, or facilitate discrimination or other harms to disfavored groups.
- Internet and social media platforms adopted stronger rights-respecting policies and practices.
- Secured steps toward transparent, accountable, narrowly defined regulation of online services, such as related to moderating content via notice and take down provisions.
- Secured steps toward stronger, rights-respecting data protection laws.
- Ensured HRW research on technology has strong leadership, relevant advocacy frameworks, and internal structure to conduct and coordinate this work.

Seizing Tech Opportunities: Powering Our Investigations with New Tools

The world is changing, and our research methodologies will change with it. Complementing our traditional methodologies, powerful technologies now exist that challenge the limitations of access and offer new ways of making visible what governments and others try to hide from view. To further innovate and expand our mixed quantitative and qualitative methods of research, we will create a Digital Investigations Lab with data, remote sensing, and open source investigative capacities, and explore machine learning.

I. Expand our use of remote sensing (satellite and drone capabilities) to document abuses in conjunction with field research and in areas where physical access is restricted; use machine learning to recognize the visual and remote signs of abuses and serve as an early warning system to help mitigate violations.

II. Conduct more open source investigations using the vast amount of material online, especially verified photos and videos posted by social media users. Together with satellite and drone imagery, use open source tools to conduct crime scene geolocation, reproduction, and 3D modeling.

III. Expand our ability to acquire, organize, and analyze data for research on human rights violations, including through web scraping and data manipulation.

IV. Synthesize capacities into an integrated platform and make them accessible to our researchers.

Measures of Success

- Creation of Digital Investigations Lab, integrating units dedicated to remote sensing, open source investigations, and data analysis.
- Increased use by researchers of diversified tech research methodologies to aid investigations, reveal or verify findings, sharpen analysis and recommendations, and provide additional, often visual, avenues to package information.
- Contributed to the creation of a human rights-technology network that maintains and develops new technologies with a focus on reducing duplication, improving sustainability, and promoting responsible, efficient use of these technologies.
- Created and implemented the HRW “Tech Cabinet” to financially support this work.
Accessing and Connecting Tech for Our Vision: HRW’s Internal Systems

We will upgrade and, in some areas further build, our technical infrastructure to promote more secure and efficient internal processes and data management, and to connect these internal systems in ways that advance our external work. Our technologies need to be responsive, adaptable, and able to link together. We will create an integrated ecosystem of HRW systems that can leverage each other to streamline our organizational processes. We will develop a platform on the base of our existing information technology, wrapping digital security around all systems and the data they contain.

I. Build an integrated platform for compelling digital publishing to mainstream high-quality, interactive features and immersive storytelling across the organization.

II. Build or procure a digital asset management (DAM) system to archive and make our visual content readily accessible to staff.

III. Enable researchers to collect, store, organize, and control access to restricted information in a secure archive and/or evidence management system.

IV. Upgrade our core client resource management database, which stores fundraising data, supports financial management, and elevates marketing.

V. When safe and strategic, link the publishing platform, DAM, evidence management system, and client resource management database with each other and our existing IT.

VI. Further upgrade our IT systems to ensure the accessibility and integration of our data and information systems, such as Development’s migration to Salesforce needed to fully link our revenue, accounting, and forecasting systems.

VII. Ensure that our use of audience data and targeting with technology, such as for campaigns, fundraising, or the Lab is consistent with our external recommendations and best practices on privacy, data protection, and other rights norms and ethics.

VIII. Assess and implement tools needed to operationalize elevated human resources functions.

Measures of Success

- Built or procured platforms enabling our core work, including systems for evidence management, digital asset management, publishing, and development.
- Increased accessibility to staff of digital assets such as photos, videos, and infographics.
- Full compliance with the EU’s GDPR and other data protection regulations.
- Increased safety and control of information gathered in the field; increased likelihood that such information used to hold accountable those who commit or profit from abuse.
- Implemented effective staff trainings on technology.

Strategic Initiative #4—Building for Respect: Putting Our Values into Practice to Foster a Resilient, Diverse Community

Implementing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

HRW recognizes that staff diversity of all types enriches our organization and helps us work more effectively. A staff with diverse expertise, opinions, and perspectives is fundamental to
promoting a culture of innovation, excellence, and impact and to remaining relevant and strategic in our work. While we are making progress in advancing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), gaps remain. We seek to foster a workplace culture that enables people from a broad range of backgrounds to thrive, minimizes organizational stress, and builds resilience.

I. Implement a detailed DEI Action Plan to incorporate DEI considerations into decision making at all levels.

II. Improve and support workforce diversity, especially in leadership and management teams, including by strengthening the capacity of HR to support recruitment and retention, building managers’ capacity to lead diverse teams, ensuring equitable pay practices, and building a robust internal pipeline of talent and leadership.

III. Benchmark and implement promising practices in diversity, equity, and inclusion.

IV. Develop and strengthen a culture of inclusion and kindness that fosters participation and innovation, encourages confidence and job satisfaction, and supports all staff to achieve success.

V. Ensure diverse voices surface ideas, innovations, and solutions so we fully nurture the organization’s creativity, productivity, and energy.

VI. Strengthen a culture that creates safe spaces for staff to discuss and raise awareness of individual and institutional blind spots.

VII. Further diversify our staff, leadership, Board of Directors, Council, Advisory Committees, and our donor base to ensure an inclusive governance and funding structure.

Measures of Success

- Training in DEI accessed by all staff.
- Staff views, assessed though an annual survey, show positive reports of feeling valued and experiencing a sense of belonging.
- Improved staff data indicators on diversity.
- Consistent engagement from senior leadership in DEI activities and promotion.
- DEI Action Plan milestones are achieved on an ongoing basis.
- Global compensation review completed and proposals for adjustment to support DEI goals implemented.

Promoting Staff Resilience and Wellbeing

HRW will focus on strengthening our capacity to build a resilient organization and staff and to reduce and prevent stress, whether internally or externally created.

I. Implement key recommendations of the Stress and Resilience Action Plan, including training for managers and an organization-wide peer-to-peer support system.

II. Implement policies and practices that give all HRW staff information and support, including appropriate access to mental health care.

III. Equip managers to recognize, manage, and prevent staff stress, and hold managers accountable for doing so through job descriptions, performance evaluations, and promotion processes.
IV. Adjust workflows, deadlines, and meeting times to minimize expectations that staff, especially those in time zones distant from New York, are always available to work outside office hours.

V. Integrate stress and resilience considerations into annual workplans, project plans, and performance reviews, such as by relying on project teams, addressing researcher workloads, pacing traumatic assignments, and supporting vacations and sabbaticals.

VI. Ensure senior leadership model practices promoting positive mental health and resilience.

VII. Reduce staff exposure to threats, harassment, or online attacks, and provide support when such incidents occur. Approach and engage partners and victims with sensitivity to mitigate against re-traumatization and support their access to assistance when needed.

**Measures of Success**

- Staff report greater attention to and ability to manage stress and resilience.
- Accessible, equitable, and affordable mental health care is available to all staff.
- An organization-wide peer-to-peer support system is established and/or merged with an expanded mentoring program.
- Stress and Resilience Action Plan milestones met.

**Standardizing Personal Conduct and Complaints Mechanisms**

A thriving organization requires both clear values and strong accountability systems. Staff, Board of Directors, and external stakeholders must be able to trust a consistent framework of policies, and robust avenues for complaints investigation and resolution. The growth, diversity, and complexity that now characterize Human Rights Watch require us to re-examine our policies and policymaking, strengthen complaints mechanisms, deepen General Counsel (GC) and HR capacity, communicate more effectively, and invest in training.

I. Review, revise, and expand existing personal conduct policies and guidance to ensure compliance with legal standards, HRW values, and DEI goals.

II. Establish and communicate enhanced avenues for complaints including through managers, HR, ombudspersons, the GC’s office, and an anonymous hotline.

III. Establish a complaints management system, including for investigation, tracking, and communication of complaints to staff and Board.

IV. Ensure GC’s office has the capacity to enforce the personal conduct and complaint policies, handle investigations in a timely manner, empower managers with legal and compliance advice, and ensure accountability.

**Measures of Success**

- Implementation of new ombudspersons system, investigations, and complaints tracking mechanism.
- All managers trained in policies and complaints handling.
- Complaints resolved within recommended timeframes and to the satisfaction of stakeholders.
• Created “reporting back” mechanism so complainants know the matter was addressed.
• Ensured GC’s office has capacity to provide legal advice, complaints management, and support functions.

Ensuring Professional Development and Training
Our staff is our most important resource. We want to attract and retain a diverse organizational team and build an inclusive community. We recognize the importance of implementing a well-defined professional development and training plan for all staff. Through structured professional development, staff will increase their knowledge and gain the competencies necessary to effectively perform their roles, including where appropriate managing staff, leading to greater opportunity within and beyond HRW. These steps will help us create a pipeline of diverse talent to decrease undesired turnover, achieve our impact, and contribute to the human rights movement.

I. Establish clear expectations on opportunities for growth and advancement within and outside HRW for all staff, including support staff and research assistants/assistant researchers; assess and adjust as necessary the way we structure some roles.
II. Examine internships, fellowships, and other pre-professional opportunities that support our mission and ensure they are financially sustainable and contribute to developing the individual, profession, and diversity of the human rights movement.
III. Train and hold managers accountable for regularly engaging with supervisees to discuss career goals and track progress, using the annual performance review (APR) process.
IV. Encourage professional staff to lead trainings and talks with support staff and interns.
V. Assess how to strengthen, expand, and potentially combine sustainable, well-functioning, and effective mentorship and/or peer-to-peer support programs.
VI. Continue to expand HRW’s management training program.

Measures of Success
• All managers receive some form of management training.
• Quarterly staff check-ins confirmed by all managers and tracked by HR.
• Established a policy framework to support staff development.
• Mentorship program bolstered and expanded.
• Internal mobility—lateral and promotions—meets benchmark standards.

Elevating Human Resources
Some 500 passionate and committed people work at Human Rights Watch, in 31 offices and more than 50 countries. They investigate human rights abuses and neglect, expose them in media, and advocate for solutions. They raise money to support our mission, ensure our security, and manage a complex operations environment. Our HR team needs the strategies, tools, policies, and leadership, as well as the capacity, to ensure that our growing staff is diverse, equitable, inclusive, and resilient. Our HR team must maintain and implement policies
around performance, management, compensation, benefits, and learning and development across all our functions and jurisdictions to support a thriving, effective organization.

I. Build a strong, effective, and accessible HR team that partners with leadership and advocates for all staff.

II. Ensure HR leadership participates in key strategy and decision-making processes.

III. Ensure consistent implementation of HR policies and practices, including those supporting DEI, personal conduct standards, and stress and resilience goals.

IV. Increase the HR department’s global reach by adding capacity outside headquarters.

V. Benchmark and implement best practices in HR and organization development fields.

VI. Implement fair global staff compensation by conducting a transparent salary survey and considering factors such as location, market salaries, and job descriptions.

VII. Assess and implement tools HR needs to effectively execute its oversight responsibilities, including on DEI, quarterly check-ins, exit interviews, and APRs.

Measures of Success
- Better resourced, more global HR department, with leadership that participates in strategic decision making at HRW.
- Gender and geographic pay audits conducted, with results communicated to staff.
- DEI and stress and resilience factors included in manager job descriptions and evaluations.
- Staff reported increased trust in HR and HRW.

Strategic Initiative #5—Building for Organizational Excellence

Ensuring Trust in HRW Research
HRW places the highest value on accurate, impartial, and ethical fact-finding and reporting. To maintain high research standards uniformly and consistently across the organization, we are implementing a more comprehensive and robust mechanism of policy and guideline setting, training, fact checking, vetting, and corrections. We will monitor, review, and further strengthen these over the life of the strategic plan.

I. Diversify, strengthen, and expand training, including initial and ongoing researcher/research assistant training that serve as refreshers and introduce new methodologies and techniques; implement new guidelines that require new staff who will conduct field research to first train on mission with an experienced researcher and that any staff conducting remote research in closed countries undergo appropriate training.

II. Standardize fact-checking by implementing new fact-checking guidelines that present roles and responsibilities of key staff to ensure information accuracy.

III. Standardize note-taking by implementing new guidelines on how to take accurate and secure notes during research, whether in written or recorded form.

IV. Systematize interview standards using the updated and expanded Interviewing Manual, which provides detailed guidelines on ethical interviewing techniques, including how to
cross check information, interview vulnerable groups, conduct remote interviews, obtain informed consent, and avoid re-traumatization.

V. Clarify a uniform publications vetting process by implementing new guidelines that describe responsibilities, establish accountability mechanisms to mediate disputes and communication lapses within the process, and move the Program office review earlier in the process to ensure better internal communication, collaboration, and quality control.

VI. Examine the full spectrum of policies and practices related to research standards to identify and plug any gaps, led by a working group on researcher standards.

Measures of Success

- Clearly established, systematic Program office role on research standards training, oversight, and management.
- Documented quality and ethical standards and integrated them into training and ongoing management.
- Staff report a more robust efficient, transparent, systematic, and productive vetting process.
- Regular reporting to EMT on standards, including reported corrections, near-misses, and concerns.

Fostering a Culture of Learning and Managing with Information

We are committed to further creating a culture of learning from each other and our partners, as well as from information and data, to refine our strategies and enhance our impact. The need to conduct more robust and transparent monitoring and evaluation (M&E) includes all parts of the organization, with a focus on our programmatic work. Meaningful learning will depend on the project, context, and function. What is uniform is our goal to cultivate trust and learning as a core part of who we are and what we do, in ways that add value to staff in their day-to-day work.

I. Implement the recommendations of the report on programmatic M&E by Morris Lipson, including to create a knowledge management system, formalize project planning, and set clear action-guiding objectives and measures against which progress can be charted.

II. Communicate a clear policy that M&E will be used for planning, learning, and strategy adjustments.

III. Assess our definition of impact, incorporating factors such as how we magnify partners’ work so that they achieve their own goals and recognizing tradeoffs between planned and reactive work.

IV. Evaluate our media reach in the context of our advocacy goals and encourage staff to respond to, and help us learn from, our media monitoring. Detect patterns, trends, and actionable data on audience behavior that can be responsibly used to refine our media strategies and boost engagement; measure our performance through focus groups, polling, and analytic tools that sharpen our editorial and distribution practices; extend and automate data analysis for specific projects and entire divisions; and integrate this data with new digital publishing and digital asset management tools and skills.
V. Assess key performance indicator (KPI) development and management tools for departments such as Advocacy, Development, Legal, and Operations.

VI. Assess how M&E can serve as a tool for management accountability to implement initiatives around DEI, stress and resilience, personal conduct, better internal communications, mutually beneficial partnerships, and professional development.

**Measures of Success**
- Increased capacity to conduct, manage, and support M&E efforts across HRW.
- Shared knowledge management system created.
- M&E policy created and shared with staff, and regular trainings and support provided to develop and implement M&E.
- Regular internal evaluations of projects conducted.
- Stronger engagement with our material, evidenced through performance reports on web traffic, social media traction, and media mentions.
- KPIs used for Advocacy, Development, Legal, and Operations.

**Aligning Risk Management with Operational Reality and Strategic Intent**

HRW operates in increasingly complex, polarized, and connected environments. This context requires a more mature and systematic approach to managing and mitigating legal, compliance, reputational, and financial risks that aligns with our mission and values. Our aim is to strengthen and implement a risk management process that encourages continual improvement and is practical, sustainable, measurable, easy to understand, and well communicated.

I. Develop an overarching risk management and implementation strategy and methodology, which identifies priorities, phasing, and effective oversight approaches.

II. Better coordinate risk management activities, including organization-wide tracking, mitigation strategies, and consistent communication.

III. Implement a risk management oversight structure to facilitate continuous improvement and learning, prioritization in addressing risks, and consistent and communicated decisions on risk appetite.

IV. Assess whether an external risk management system or application is needed.

V. Assess compliance risks related to existing charitable entities and adjust as required.

VI. Establish consistent processes for the creation of new offices and entities addressing strategic objectives and risk.

**Measures of Success**
- Implemented standardized risk management processes, procedures, and policies.
- Clarified and defined responsibility, authority, and accountability to manage and monitor specific risks.
- Performed periodic audits and reviews of key measures and reports and compliance with established policies.
• Continual evaluation of the design and effectiveness of internal controls by designated risk owners, including tracking to resolution corrective actions taken on any identified, material deficiencies.
• Developed, documented, and implemented a standard process for the establishment of new offices and entities.

Further Embedding Security Across HRW

HRW will further cultivate and embed a security-aware culture and systems that can confront increasing, diverse, and inter-connected security challenges that threaten staff, partners, people we interview, and our infrastructure. Rooted in the realities of our work and enabling us to meet our duty of care, our approaches to physical and digital security will be innovative and scalable, while providing timely, tailored, and accessible guidance and training to keep us safe.

I. Further build our ability to provide consistent, timely, objective, and expert safety guidance and support across the organization.
II. Fully standardize and implement security processes and systems to support organizational processes and procedures, including to prevent and detect incidents.
III. Increase access to relevant and scalable security training and guidance. Potentially create an internal security guidance portal for staff, which would include security intelligence and metrics. Assess how to make this information available to partners in the human rights movement.
IV. Clarify and embed responsibility and accountability for security in all departments, codify security risk tolerance and expectations, and ensure compliance, including through early engagement with security teams when planning projects and activities, as well as performance evaluations.
V. Make our security practices and implementation as inclusive as possible, ensuring equal support regardless of staff member location or role. Ensure security trainings and information are available in multiple languages.

Measures of Success
• Clarified responsibility and accountability for security.
• Security processes implemented and operating successfully, including tailoring of practices and policies based on role and location.
• Increased staff knowledge of security risks, ability to mitigate them, and ability to find guidance and support when needed.
• De-briefs/learning sessions conducted after security incidents and “near misses.”
• Further ability to tailor security practices, policies, and technologies to individual staff member needs and offices and more consistent support to staff regardless of location.
Strengthening Internal Communications
To increase coordination across divisions, departments and regions, break down internal silos, and maximize productivity and ultimately our impact, we will focus efforts to strengthen internal communications and further promote open, honest, and respectful feedback.

I. Implement more inclusive communication practices, including holding meetings at times that accommodate multiple time zones and regions, using different approaches (video, Intranet), and translating select written communications into multiple languages.
II. Drive more consistent, effective communication from leadership to all parts of the organization by holding directors and managers accountable for communication, prioritizing communication meeting preparation and follow-up, and formalizing communication as part of the Deputy Executive Director’s role.
III. Increase communication from all levels and parts of the organization to senior management to support optimal decision making, including through surveys, focus groups, small meetings with EMT or LMT members, and department meetings.
IV. Continue to improve how our annual all staff meeting is used as a communication, idea-generation, and employee engagement vehicle.
V. Revise the management reporting system to the Board and its Committees to reflect the values of transparency and accountability and to enable the Board to discharge its fiduciary duties regarding planning, implementation, and evaluation of HRW’s operations.

Measures of Success
- Documented examples of more inclusive communication practices.
- Improved internal communication reported by staff via employee surveys, focus groups, and informal feedback to management.
- Creation and dissemination of an all staff directory.
- Increased cadence of communication in all forms at all levels, with the focus on organizational, departmental, and divisional leadership.

Mainstreaming Environmental Sustainability
Human Rights Watch is addressing organizational sustainability efforts to better align with best practices for respect and stewardship of the environment. An HRW environment sustainability working group exists to examine the tools and expertise needed to manage environmental impact. We endorse efforts that will identify our organization’s environmental impact and reduce our ecological footprint.

I. Assess how to measure and track our organization’s carbon footprint.
II. Implement policies on more efficient energy use and recycling efforts in our offices.
III. Establish more green procurement policies that will support purchasing more environmentally friendly products and services for our offices.
IV. Ensure that HRW funds are ethically invested.
V. Compile best practices, provide a set of recommendations, and implement them systematically to lessen the environmental impact of HRW events, as well as other development and outreach activities.

Measures of Success
- Creation and communication of energy use and recycling policies.
- Sustainability audit of HRW investments conducted.
- Measurable progress made in reducing HRW’s baseline environmental footprint.

Strategic Initiative #6—Building for Sustainability: Ensuring Sound Financial Management and Innovative Fundraising, Consistent with Our Values and Priorities

By 2022, we envision an organization that will reach $110 million in annual revenue, with a global staff of more than 500 people.

From 2008 to 2019, HRW more than doubled in size, slowing slightly from our historic pace of rapid growth. As we continue to expand, HRW cannot sustain these historic growth rates, nor plan strategically, if there is volatility in our finances or insufficient cost controls.

To ensure we remain a strong, effective institution, we must have a forecast that is sustainable and reflects our values and priorities and manage our revenues and expenditures responsibly. Our financial approach rests on adopting strategic and transparent financial management methods, ensuring balanced and sustainable growth, managing donor falloff, and continuously diversifying revenue sources. These activities are critical for staff morale and wellbeing, as well as organizational impact.

Reducing Our Budgetary Gap
HRW has typically entered each financial year with projected expenses of $4 million to $6 million higher than its known revenue, a gap covered through new fundraising or cuts. During this strategic plan period, this approach will come under strain. We are planning for diminished contributions from two important foundation donors and must protect against unexpected significant donor falloff. We plan to reduce any budgetary gap between projected expenses and known revenue as a core financial management sustainability strategy.

I. Implement new financial metrics intended to promote steady-state fundraising and expense levels.
II. Implement new financial controls intended to fully pay for new growth.
III. Reduce our growth rate and headcount rate of growth.
IV. Implement new mechanisms around accountability, cost control, monitoring, and contraction, such as those recommended by the SBC and approved by EMT.

Measures of Success
• Reduced gap on a multiyear basis in real terms and as a percentage of the budget.
• Implemented key EMT-approved recommendations of the Staff Budget Committee.
• Implemented new metrics to forecast and manage revenue falloff.

Implementing New Financial Management Systems
HRW will modernize our financial management and data systems to manage the finances of an organization of our size and ensure our spending is consistent with our goals and strategic objectives.

I. Implement Beyond Budgeting, a multiyear financial planning system that supports departments and divisions in aligning resources with strategies, while reducing annual financial volatility through increased visibility and transparency.

II. Re-designate most of our restricted work to the general fund to align with actual organizational priorities and practices.

III. Implement new financial data systems to support timely revenue and expenditure tracking, including incorporating metrics on return on investment of fundraising and other activities, so we can adjust strategies and adhere to KPIs (replacing our former “income tracking” system).

IV. Ensure the sustainability of personnel growth by accurately assessing the projected costs of positions to fully cover their multiyear expenses, as well as monitoring the aggregate impact of new positions.

V. Change our real estate procurement and use policies and practices to reduce long-term expenses.

VI. Strengthen our operational auditing and accounting functions, automate manual bookkeeping systems, and manage compliance with accounting standards in multiple jurisdictions.

VII. Ensure implementation of the strategic plan is paced properly and can be afforded by costing, prioritizing, and sequencing implementation of activities with cost implications.

Measures of Success
• Beyond Budgeting is fully operationalized.
• Key metrics such as expense guidelines and revenue renewal and growth rates are continuously monitored.
• Completed projects to automate basic financial functions, including entering revenue data in finance systems.
• Improved ability to manage multiple accounting and audit reporting standards.
• Strategic plan sustainably implemented.

Implementing Training and Accountability for New Financial Management
Transitioning to Beyond Budgeting and new financial management systems will require staff to be proficient in their operation and implementation. The transition will also require managers to be held accountable.
I. Provide regular and ongoing staff training to facilitate the transition to new systems and ensure transparency and consistency of information.

II. Provide regular and timely revenue, expenditure, and other financial data to senior management, LMT, and budget holders to allow monitoring of finances and ensure accountability for decisions.

III. Utilize financial dashboards with 15-month rolling forecasts so potential new expenditures can be identified earlier, and managers can be held accountable for new growth or loss in revenue.

**Measures of Success**
- Regular and ongoing training on Beyond Budgeting.
- Financials monitored monthly by EMT, and quarterly by LMT with SBC input.
- Implementation and use of financial dashboards.

**Diversifying Revenue Sources**
To support continued growth, we will broaden, deepen, and diversify our fundraising to ensure sustainable funding and better manage financial risk. Increasing gifts under $100,000 and expanding planned giving provide opportunities for new revenue growth, particularly as planned giving remains more insulated from short-term economic downturns and benefits from shifting demographics. These are crucial imperatives for an organization moving to multiyear forecasting and growing to more than $110 million.

I. Develop revenue streams under $100,000 by further developing tools and metrics to capture major gifts and smaller donations through investments in select annual dinners and direct marketing.

II. Invest and grow our planned giving program and integrate it with our direct and digital marketing program by using more data analytics and deeper investments to acquire new donors.

III. Manage reputational risk that could compromise revenue by applying rigorous policies on fundraising conflicts.

IV. Manage the endowment and reserves responsibly, making strategic withdrawals from reserves to offset the loss of gifts without jeopardizing future budgeted revenues from the endowment.

**Measures of Success**
- Sustainably secured total revenue of $110 million on an annual basis by FY22, including:
  - Increased funding from outside the US from 46% to 50%.
  - Increased leadership donors from 139 to 200.
  - Increased direct mail and digital revenue from 8% to 10% of total revenue.
  - Increased planned giving revenue from 1.25% to at least 1.5% of total revenue.
- Maintained reserves at 10% of our annual operating budget.
- Ensured our endowment provided a minimum of $5 million annually to the operating budget by FY22 on an ongoing basis.
Accountability around the Strategic Plan

Implementation of the Plan

This strategic plan is centered on HRW’s mission of advancing human rights worldwide. The plan is intended to serve as a guiding roadmap for decision making, resource allocation, and action for the next three years. Yet, it is meant to be flexible and responsive to dramatic changes we may face in our external or internal environment. The plan will be reviewed regularly and adjusted appropriately to remain a relevant and living guiding document.

All departments and divisions are expected to consider the principles and priorities included in this strategic plan when developing their annual plans and allocating their budgets. These priorities will need to be considered in light of the historically decentralized, devolved planning processes at HRW that ensures staff are working on the issues considered most relevant and pressing in their geographic and thematic context.

While linking annual planning and budgeting to the strategic plan in fiscal year 2020 is challenging, it is a start. Moving forward, the linkages will be clearer. The plan is intended to communicate the highest-level organization-wide priorities that will be increasingly reflected in annual plans and forecasts in subsequent years.

Successful implementation of the plan requires that financial resources be allocated to Continuing Strategies and new Strategic Initiatives in the most thoughtful, strategic way. Not all strategies, particularly those requiring significant financial investment, can be implemented at once. Implementation must be costed, prioritized, and sequenced in a way that balances urgency with sustainability, recognizing that these decisions are based on a combination of data and judgment. The draft strategic plan costing template in Annex D (proposed by the SBC) will serve as a tool to facilitate that decision making by LMT and EMT.

EMT is ultimately responsible for the plan’s implementation. To help guide and hold the organization accountable, and in particular, to ensure the implementation of the cross-organizational Strategic Initiatives that do not fall neatly into the purview of a single department or division, co-leads will be assigned responsibility for each of the initiatives. The leads will be tasked with ensuring the sub-strategies are implemented over the course of the plan period and that measures are tracked, or that conversations occur to adjust the plan appropriately.

It should be noted that the strategic planning process did not deeply engage HRW’s Board of Directors, nor did it include an assessment of the Board’s ability to support the plan’s implementation in terms of its composition, competencies, and structure. We anticipate that the Board and staff leadership will work together in late 2019 and early 2020 to address this gap, leading to updates to the document as needed to ensure the strategic plan reflects the full breadth of priorities and strategies needed to maximize HRW’s impact.
Monitoring and Evaluation of the Plan
EMT will review and discuss the strategic plan and progress towards its implementation at least on a quarterly basis and communicate to staff updates on plan implementation and achievement of key milestones also quarterly. At the annual staff meeting each year, EMT will report on progress and adjustments to the plan. EMT will report on the plan’s implementation to the Board of Directors each year in December, focusing on measures of success, proposed adjustments to the plan, and implementation priorities for the next fiscal year.

In early 2021, at roughly midway in the plan’s implementation, EMT will conduct a more formal review to ensure that the plan continues to serve as a relevant, useful roadmap to guide the organization’s priorities and activities. The plan will be modified as necessary, as will any other related documents and processes. At the start of FY22, EMT will begin discussing with the Board extending this strategic plan’s implementation horizon or developing HRW’s next plan.

Strategic Planning Process and Consultation
EMT officially launched the strategic planning process in December 2018 at the senior staff retreat, but this process began much earlier. The process drew upon information and input gathered via staff-led efforts conducted in years prior, including by the Stress & Resilience Task Force; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force; Staff Budget Committee; 2015 Strategic Reassessment Task Force; and others. It also drew upon Board of Director input regarding internal processes and priorities as reflected in minutes and communication to staff.

EMT has ultimate ownership and accountability for both the strategic planning process and the final strategic plan. EMT spearheaded the process, with key leaders from the Program Office and Finance team, led by Deputy Executive Director Nic Dawes and Director Zoë Maddox and guided by strategy consultant Gayle Northrop.

In this process, we sought to involve and engage staff as much as feasible; build upon past strategy and staff work; create a “living” plan that could be easily communicated, regularly updated, and realistically implemented; and start linking organizational priority setting (at the highest level) with annual planning (priority setting at the department and division level) and budgeting. We reviewed past plans, reports, and staff recommendations; conducted an online staff survey; consulted with divisions/departments; and held strategy sessions at crosscutting. LMT was asked to solicit and consolidate feedback on a plan draft that was shared with all staff.

In developing this plan, the strategic planning team is striving to make visible what is currently less visible at HRW—the sometimes unknown and, in many cases inconsistently known or understood, principles and strategies that guide our work. Our goal is to set the foundation for more inclusive and transparent conversations about HRW’s decision making, priorities, intended impact, and operating environment. The conversations will not end with the publication of this plan; they will continue and become more robust and more embedded in our culture. In doing so, we will ensure that we are maximizing the contributions of each HRW staff member and are better able to fulfill our ambitious mission and goals.
Annex A: Glossary of Terms

Leadership/Groups
ACs: Advisory Committees
HRW’s Advisory Committees are designed to provide HRW’s programmatic divisions with substantive and policy advice, as well as to deepen the engagement of key members of the HRW community in the organization’s programmatic work. Current committees include Africa, Americas, Asia, Children’s Rights, Disability Rights, Environment and Human Rights, Europe and Central Asia, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights, Middle East and North Africa, United States, and Women’s Rights.

Cross-Cutting
The term cross-cutting means collaboration across departments and divisions. Historically, it has also referred to the annual staff meeting.

DED: Deputy Executive Director
HRW’s Board of Directors and EMT created a new Deputy Executive Director post in May 2019 to manage an increasingly complex organization in an uncertain world. All department heads will report to the DED and the DED will report to HRW’s Executive Director and the Board.

DEITF: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Task Force
An internal task force that aims to help drive and implement HRW’s commitment towards diversity, equity, and inclusion. HRW’s DEI Action Plan represents HRW’s commitment to be an organization where all staff have the same opportunities to thrive and succeed. HRW is more effective and impactful when it benefits from and can mobilize different staff perspectives, experiences, and expertise. The plan represents our commitment to a deliberate approach to advancing diversity, inclusion, and equity, regularly measuring our progress, and sharing that information with staff.

Department
HRW departments refer to major functions of the organization around which we structure our teams and staffing, such as Advocacy, Development & Outreach, General Counsel, Legal & Policy, Media, Program, and Operations.

Division
HRW’s departments comprise separate divisions to further delineate organizational function and workflow. For example, in Program, research divisions are dedicated to geographic regions or themes, while the Operations department has divisions on Administration, Finance, Human Resources, Information Security, Information Technology, and Security.

EMT: Executive Management Team
The EMT consists of the Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, five Deputy Executive Directors, and two Divisional Program Directors joined by legal, financial, programmatic, or
human resources expertise as needed. The EMT is the highest staff decision-making body at Human Rights Watch.

**LMT: Leadership Management Team**
The LMT consists of all EMT members, the General Counsel, the Legal and Policy Director, one of the Deputy Program Directors, one of the Deputy Development Directors, the Communications Director, the Human Resources Director, the Finance Director, and the Global Advocacy Director. Non-permanent members include two Regional and one Thematic Director, two Core Advocates or Country Directors, and one Senior Researcher. LMT is currently reviewing its role, structure, and terms of reference to interface between staff and EMT; support implementation of action plans on stress and resilience and diversity, equity, and inclusion; and enhance its ability to make recommendations that assist EMT with its decision-making.

**Legal & Policy Department**
The Legal & Policy department provides guidance and advice to HRW staff and to external entities on international law and HRW policies, practices, and mandate. The department reviews nearly all HRW published material, including reports, news releases, dispatches, opinion pieces, Q&A documents, amicus briefs and other legal submissions, videos and related multimedia, advocacy letters, campaign material, and direct-mail information.

**LPACA: Legal, Program, Advocacy, Communications, Associate Director**
An internal coordination body that discusses cross-departmental and cross-divisional substantive programmatic issues on a bi-weekly basis.

**RMF: Researcher Management Forum**
A space for researchers and representatives of senior executive management to discuss issues of importance to the researcher community. This can include internal organizational issues such as the budget, DEI, or stress and resilience. It is also a forum for management to communicate with and solicit researcher input on a range of issues.

**SBC: Staff Budget Committee**
An independent body established by LMT that seeks to provide expertise on matters pertaining to the financial health of the organization, educate staff on financial issues and key decision making, and ensure that financial decisions are made in a timely and transparent way. The group makes recommendations to the LMT as needed.

**SSMF: Support Staff Management Forum**
An internal body comprised of seven elected support staff representatives who meet to discuss issues and the needs of all support staff at HRW. The forum meets with management on a quarterly basis to address support staff priorities.
SRTF: Stress & Resilience Task Force
An internal task force which aims to help HRW reduce stress and build resilience among all staff, regardless of where they work or what they do. This group helps drive and implement the Stress and Resilience Action Plan that proposes concrete and implementable policies and practices that will help staff reduce stress and build resilience.

Strategic Planning
Cross-Cutting Programmatic Priorities
A distinct subset of priorities that are cross-cutting and programmatically focused, developed and recommended by staff, and agreed to by EMT. A cross-cutting programmatic priority will address a threat or opportunity that would benefit from a more coordinated approach among divisions and departments at HRW. The cross-cutting programmatic priorities are distinct from the strategic initiatives in the strategic plan.

Strategic Initiatives
Strategic initiatives refer to the new or elevated initiatives that are outlined in the strategic plan, which will be the organization’s focus for the next three years and can be oriented toward programmatic work and/or institutional infrastructure and operations.

Strategic Plan
A strategic plan is a document used to communicate the organization’s goals and values and the actions needed to achieve those goals. This HRW strategic plan builds upon many historical and ongoing initiatives, some of which are linked in the plan, and covers the organization’s activities in fiscal years 2020, 2021, and 2022.

Strategic Planning
An organizational management activity that is used to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure that staff and other stakeholders are working toward common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes and goals, and assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment. HRW’s strategic planning process for fiscal years 2020 to 2022 was streamlined and occurred over some six months, driven by the need to complete it by June 2019 and to link it with our fiscal year 2020 financial planning and forecast.

Annual Planning
Annual Planning Meetings
Annual planning meetings outline the priorities, goals, and resource needs for the upcoming year. Historically only geographic and thematic Program divisions held annual planning meetings, in the first quarter of each calendar year, and produced annual plans that were approved by EMT. Starting in fiscal year 2020, all departments and Program divisions will produce annual plans, including a top sheet.

Annual Planning Top Sheet
The annual planning top sheet is designed to aid internal communication and coordination. The top sheet will distill the annual plans of departments and divisions. It will provide the rest of the organization with a concise summary of priorities, objectives, and required inputs. This sheet will also help with the development of monitoring and evaluation. All of these factors will support the implementation of this strategic plan.

PDM: Project Design Memos
A newly re-designed Project Design Memo for Program divisions to submit for all reports and other major projects. These memos provide project objectives across research, advocacy, and communications, as well as how we will achieve our goals and measure impact. PDMs will be submitted for early comment and input to divisions and departments implicated in the work and to LPACA members to share information with their constituents.

Finance (Beyond Budgeting)
Annual Growth Plan
Growth pre-approved by EMT during the annual planning cycle to identify specific positions or areas of work put forth by each division to be eligible for growth for the current fiscal year should it meet its revenue growth target.

Beyond Budgeting
An adaptive financial system designed to strengthen performance management and reflect HRW’s internal values. Replacing static budgets and controls, Beyond Budgeting is a continuous improvement plan with a direct link to organizational priorities, which is accomplished through rolling forecasts and transparent priority setting.

Dashboard
A comprehensive financial report that provides divisional revenue and expense forecasts for each director monthly. The dashboard will allow divisions to regularly track the status of their overall historical, current, and projected revenue and expenses.

Designated or Donor Earmarked Fund
Expenses considered to be to ongoing core functions of the organization that are financed by revenue earmarked by donors for specific areas of work.

Direct Cost
The cost of activities or items associated entirely with a project or division, directly utilized to achieve the organization’s mission. Personnel, travel, and publications constitute most of HRW’s direct costs.

Expense Target
A financial metric identified for every division by finance to reflect the level of expenses a division is expected to incur within a given period based on steady-state spending levels. The expense target is calculated on a rolling quarterly basis by applying a slight inflationary growth
rate to average expenses over the prior four quarters. The expense metric will fluctuate over time, as it is informed by on-going historical actuals.

**Financial Forecasts**
Financial data based on past, current, and projected financial conditions. The forecast helps identify future revenue and expense trends that may have an immediate or long-term influence on goals, impact, and strategy.

**General Support Fund**
Expenses considered to be to ongoing core functions of the organization and guaranteed to be supported by unrestricted revenue.

**Indirect Cost**
Expenses associated with running the organization, beyond those associated with achieving a specific mission. Central program and operations staff salaries, rent, utilities, office supplies, and IT costs are examples of HRW’s indirect costs. While these items contribute to the organization, they are not assigned to the achievement of any one mission or project.

**Restricted Fund**
Expenses related to work that is not considered core to the organization and strictly aligns with the following criteria:
- Fully funded (both direct and indirect costs)
- Time-bound
- Donor-specific
- Pass-through
- Not a core organizational function

**Revenue Growth Target**
A financial metric set for every division by EMT to incentivize divisional growth only, not as a fundraising requirement. The revenue growth target is derived by adding a stretch goal of $300,000 to the revenue renewal rate. This enables a division to grow based on a pre-approved growth plan (either in personnel, activity, or scope of work), provided that it aligns with divisional priorities and is sustainable on a multi-year basis. EMT will evaluate this revenue metric on an annual basis.

**Revenue Renewal Rate**
A financial metric set for every division by EMT to reflect the amount of revenue that can reasonably be raised by a division. Divisions are encouraged to maintain this rate along with steady-state expenditures to avoid the risk of cuts. The revenue renewal rate is calculated for a division by taking the average of its prior two years’ actual revenues raised, plus current and future year revenue projections. Funds raised beyond a division’s renewal rate, but under its revenue growth target, go towards supporting existing costs and cannot be used toward growth. Historical revenue fall-off and indirect costs are built into this revenue metric.
Annex B: List of HRW Departments and Divisions

Advocacy Department

• Washington, DC
• European Union
• France
• Germany
• United Kingdom
• United Nations (New York and Geneva)
• Program Division Advocates

Development & Outreach Department

• Board & Council
• Council Staff and Americas Initiatives
• Development Operations
• Direct Marketing & Planned Giving
• Film Festival
• Foundations and Program Liaison
• Leadership Gifts & Stewardship
• Multimedia
• Prospect Research
• Special Events

General Counsel Department

Legal & Policy Department

• International Justice (IJ)

Media Department

• Campaigns
• Communications
• Digital
• Multimedia

Operations Department

• Administration
• Finance
• Human Resources
• Information Security
• Information Technology
• Security
Program Department

- Africa Division
- Americas Division
- Arms Division
- Asia Division
- Business & Human Rights Division (BHR)
- Children’s Rights Division (CRD)
- Crisis and Conflict Division
- Disability Rights Division (DRD)
- Environment & Human Rights Division (EHR)
- Europe & Central Asia Division (ECA)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights Division (LGBT)
- Middle East & North Africa Division (MENA)
- Refugee Rights Division
- Women’s Rights Division (WRD)
- United States Program (USP)
Annex C: Definition of Research Coverage

Generally, a decision to invest in research will be guided by the extent to which a country or issue fits one or more of the following categories:

a. **Crisis countries**: These are countries characterized by armed conflict, or sites of significant turmoil/civil unrest, or other causes of widespread death and harms. They may include countries that recently emerged from armed conflicts but still face long-term rights challenges and risk regularly relapsing back into conflict if peace deals fail. Where possible, these situations require our active on-the-ground documentation of violations and our local partners and international media expect us to be present and vocal. We expose facts at critically important times when parties to the conflict or with vested interests commit abuses or attack the truth. Given the expectations of international media and policymakers, our flexibility to opt out of covering such crises is limited. As a matter of credibility and legitimacy, crisis country coverage extends to covering all sides of the conflict and may require coverage of domestic and regional human rights concerns related to all parties.

b. **Opportunity countries**: These are relatively stable countries and with institutional capacity and potential for reform, identified and informed by our perspective in a country or region and our partners there. Human Rights Watch sometimes focuses in these countries on longer-term projects for systemic change or standard setting, with the opportunity for dedicated work on priority issues and focused advocacy over several years. This work may not be in the spotlight or attract media attention, yet remains important because our collaborative, long-term, and close partnerships with other organizations often results in real improvements on the ground for directly impacted people. Opportunity countries may also present short-term possibilities to achieve significant change that impacts large numbers of people.

c. **Countries at risk**: Countries that are at significant risk of retreat on human rights, or where norms are under significant pressure, and where HRW’s methodology and global reach is likely to add value to their defense. These at-risk countries require focused work on the areas facing the most urgent threat.

d. **Hard cases or situations of severe repression**: Countries characterized by severe, systemic, and widespread repression where bearing witness, building the long-term case for accountability, and ensuring the international community and individual countries do not backslide on their obligations require our sustained attention. While change is often extremely difficult and slow, incremental change and pressure from secondary advocacy targets is possible with long-term, dedicated work by HRW in and on these countries.

e. **Regional or global heavyweights**: Countries in any of the four main categories may stake a further claim for attention if they are a key regional or global power and/or champion an issue, characterized by significant media attention, or set precedents in their domestic conduct for others.
Annex D: SBC Proposed Template for Costing Strategic Plan Implementation

This Staff Budget Committee proposes the following template for costing strategic plan initiatives. It is included in the strategic plan to pilot as we begin to implement the strategic plan and will be adjusted over time. The process and template remain subject to EMT approval.

SBC proposes a three-stage process for costing strategic plan initiatives.

- Stage 1: Initial planning and conceptual phrase, which includes completing the survey below and engaging with Finance to develop a multi-year forecast.
- Stage 2: Deliberation by EMT
- Stage 3: Approval by EMT

SBC proposes the following survey questions to pilot how to cost strategic plan initiatives.

1. Identify the **strategic initiative**
2. Identify the **organizational lead(s)**
3. Indicate the **general timeline** for this initiative
4. List the key internal and external **stakeholders**
5. Detail anticipated **personnel** needed
   - List any staff that will work on this project, in their current capacity, and at what percentage of their time.
   - List any staff that will work on this project who will take on new or additional work to advance this initiative, and at what percentage of their time. For each role, state whether this will replace existing work or whether their existing work would be deployed to others.
   - List any new hires that would be required to implement this priority.
6. Detail the need for **consultants**, if needed, including how many, when they will work, their fees, and their responsibilities.
7. Describe other anticipated **(non-personnel) resource requirements**, such as:
   - New travel costs incurred by staff working on this project;
   - The use of any field offices, specifying location;
   - The purchase of unique technology or new systems and their estimated costs;
   - Multimedia that is above and beyond our standard, report-accompanying MM.
8. Identify the expected **phasing** and whether the expected deployment of resources on this project (evenly over 5 years, most new costs in early stages, etc).
9. List secured and prospective **funding** for this project.