



**Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to
Human Rights Defenders**

Activity Report

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1. Introduction

Human rights abuses continued unabated in some of the countries in the South Mediterranean region throughout the year 2014, resulting in greater vulnerability of the human rights defenders and a greater need to support and protect them. In other countries, progress made by human rights defenders in securing certain rights for its citizens led to increased trust in the civil society movement and a growing need for support to enable it to continue making positive changes.

Consequently, the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders (EMHRF; also referred to in this report as the Foundation) increased its annual budget by 12% to carry out activities that responded flexibly and efficiently to rapidly changing events in the region, depending on each of the country's situation and defenders' needs. In particular, the Foundation provided financial assistance on 116 occasions to support 135 human rights defenders (64 individuals and 71 groups or NGOs as end-beneficiaries).

Eighty percent of the Foundation's expenses covered activities in response to developments adversely affecting the situation of human rights and the human rights movement. These targeted defenders who were unable to secure funds from major donors and included basic protection needs for individual defenders and core expenses for NGOs to enable them to respond to unpredictable and unfavourable situations. Particular attention was given to civil society actors working in remote regions with 72% of the Foundation's overall interventions in 2014 targeting remote areas.

In countries of armed conflict or under repressive rule with shrinking space for its civil society, the Foundation responded to the growing needs of human rights defenders at risk, both individuals and organisations, by increasing urgent grants for their protection by 170% compared to the previous year.

Syria remained a primary concern for the Foundation in 2014 with 43% of the Foundation's overall interventions going to Syria-related work. In addition to protecting defenders and supporting work on impunity, the Foundation provided support to organisations offering psychosocial, legal, administrative and knowledge-based services to vulnerable groups: women, children, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons and refugees.

Human rights defenders in Libya, the other country in armed conflict, continued to face serious risks to their lives due to increased incidents of kidnappings and assassinations. The Foundation therefore prioritized supporting defenders who sought protection in neighbouring states.

The 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict affected negatively the sustainability of the human rights movement in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories as it compounded the difficulties that NGOs were facing, prior to the conflict, in obtaining core funding. This prompted the Foundation to prioritise providing core bridging funding to NGOs working on protecting and advocating human rights and documenting, preventing and responding to key human rights violations in 2014.

In Egypt and Algeria, the Foundation focused its interventions on the protection of human rights defenders in response to the shrinking space for civil society resulting from the governments' increased repressive measures in the name of fighting terrorism and/ or political reforms. The Foundation strategically expanded its work on Egypt compared to the previous year to contain the damage sustained by the human rights movement and to help maintain the space for democratic freedoms. It also supported documentation of serious human rights

violations in Egypt, given the lack of independent investigations and accountability. Additionally, the Foundation played a leading role in coordinating strategies with local, regional and international actors to respond to the shrinking space for civil society in the region, particularly in Egypt, aimed at efficiently supporting defenders.

In countries where progress was made in terms of democratic freedoms and other human rights issues, such as in Tunisia and Morocco, the Foundation recognized the significant role that the civil society played in achieving such progress and focused its interventions to consolidate the civil society movement. The Foundation prioritized activities advocating economic, social and cultural rights in electoral and reform programs, particularly the rights of disadvantaged youth and women, in Tunisia. In 2014, the Foundation conducted 18% of its interventions in Tunisia, of which 86% targeted remote areas to ensure that local actors would benefit from the undergoing positive changes in the country.

Other interventions by the Foundation aimed at boosting the professionalization of NGOs and supporting experimental innovative projects that had no other source of funding in Tunisia, Morocco and Lebanon.

In general, the Foundation's support of human rights defenders continued to grow in 2014 and, as in previous years, the majority of the overall budget went to grantees in the South Mediterranean region as the Foundation kept its own core costs to a minimum.

2. Direct Support to Human Rights NGOs, Groups and Defenders

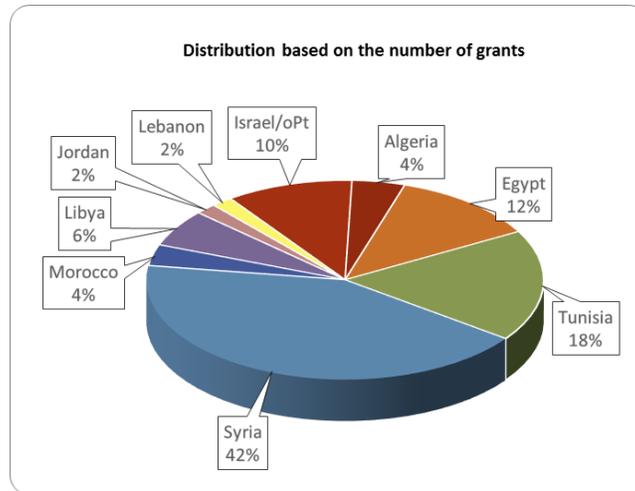
The Foundation undertook 116 interventions aimed at supporting 135 human rights defenders (71 NGOs or groups and 64 individual defenders) who foster, support, protect and monitor respect for human rights in the South-Mediterranean region¹ in 2014.

The grants provided to these defenders totalled over 1.4 million euros.²

The following chart shows the overall percentage distribution of grants per country, with Syria remaining at the core of the Foundation's interventions in 2014:

¹ The Foundation received 512 funding proposals and inquiries from human rights defenders during the year 2014, compared with 405 in the previous year. The majority of the applications received came from Syria and Egypt, which accounted for 53 percent of all applications in 2014. Following a thorough due diligence process and in compliance with the principal selection criteria, which can be consulted on the Foundation's website, the Board granted urgent and flexible support to 23% of applicants. The majority of the requests came from defenders who had heard of the Foundation by word of mouth (from other defenders or partners), through field visits, from members of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) or via the Foundation's website. 6% of beneficiaries of the Foundation's assistance were EMHRN members.

² The precise amount was € 1,414,140.



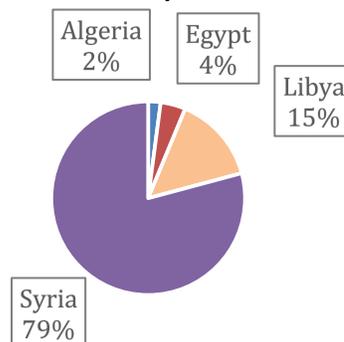
The support provided to defenders in the region can be divided into two broad categories, as set out below.³

2.1. Urgent interventions to protect individual defenders at risk in highly repressive and volatile contexts

In 2014, the Foundation granted **urgent support** to protect 64 individual human rights defenders and their family members at risk because of their work in human rights in the South-Mediterranean region.

As indicated in the chart below, the majority of these interventions supported human rights defenders of Syria due to the continued armed conflict and widespread human rights abuses, including crimes against humanity, war crimes and other violations of international humanitarian law.

Distribution of grants to individual HRDs per country



³ Two mechanisms have been established by the Foundation to provide flexible responses to the needs expressed by human rights defenders: an urgent response mechanism, allowing the Board to make a decision on an application in the amount of € 5,000 (with a maximum 20 % overhead, i.e. € 6,000) within a maximum of 10 days, and a regular consultation mechanism employed at bi-annual meetings of the Board, during which proposals amounting up to € 40,000 each are discussed.

In particular, the Foundation's actions targeted the following situations for emergency support:

- a. Two Syrian defenders whose lives were at risk due to serious health conditions were given financial assistance to seek proper **medical treatment and rehabilitation** in Lebanon and Turkey. The decisions to grant them support were based on factors, such as violations committed against the defenders' rights and their inability to cover the costs involved because of their on-going struggle in favour of human rights.
- b. Thirty-three Syrian and Libyan defenders and their families, who had to flee their home country because their lives were threatened as a result of their work and faced grave economic difficulties, received urgent support to **relocate temporarily to a neighbouring country** allowing them to protect their safety and continue their work.⁴
- c. Sixteen Syrian, Egyptian and Algerian defenders who had faced constant harassment due to their human rights work, received support **to meet their basic safety needs inside their home country**, enabling them to mitigate threats and continue their human rights work.
- d. **Family members** facing precarious conditions in the absence of seven human rights defenders arbitrarily detained and prosecuted or abducted in Syria and Egypt, received urgent support to meet their **basic needs**.

Since one of the main objectives of these interventions is to ensure that defenders facing difficulties or at risk can be supported over the medium and long term, the Foundation has therefore engaged in coordinated actions with partners in order to ensure that a number of defenders and their relatives would receive effective support. More specifically:

- The Foundation coordinated its urgent interventions in support of eighteen Syrian, Algerian, Libyan and Egyptian human rights defenders with several regional and international organisations, as part of their solidarity actions (urgent appeals, letters to support asylum and resettlement requests, press releases, trial-monitoring missions, meetings with officials, etc.). In particular, the Foundation provided information about detained Syrian activists within the framework of the *Free Syria's Silenced Voices campaign*, which sheds light on their plight.⁵ It also coordinated its urgent interventions aimed at supporting Libyan activists with a recently-established group of international NGOs to synchronize funds and with the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) to ensure their protection by the Tunisian authorities. The Foundation wrote to the UNHCR and various European states in support of ten Syrian defenders' applications for asylum and resettlement owing to the risks they continued to face in neighbouring countries. In addition, the Foundation mediated with the French authorities to obtain an emergency visa and resettlement for a Palestinian defender from Syria and his family who were at high risk of arrest in Lebanon.
- The Foundation recommended two protective fellowship applications to ensure the longer term protection and education of two defenders, a Syrian and a Libyan, who were both at risk. Unfortunately, they were not selected due to the limited places at the fellowship program and the defenders' insufficient foreign language skills.

⁴ The EMHRF keeps in consideration the 'do no harm' principle and is highly cautious of the drainage effect the relocation of activists could cause.

⁵ The EMHRF is a member of a core group of international NGOs on Syria, together with Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Humanist Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries (Hivos), Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), International Media Support (IMS), Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR), Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and Front Line Defenders. The *Free Syria's Silenced Voices* campaign is co-sponsored by the FIDH, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Front Line Defenders, RSF and the EMHRN.

- The Foundation coordinated two of its urgent interventions in support of Syrian human rights defenders, with a rehabilitation centre in the region to ensure that they would receive long term medical and psychosocial support.
- Finally, the Foundation was instrumental in arranging for two international partners to cover the additional costs associated with the basic expenses of two Syrian defenders facing precarious situations. In one case, the Foundation acted as an intermediary.

In general, the outcome of the Foundation's emergency interventions was encouraging:⁶

- The human rights defenders and their families who received support, of whom 22% were women, were able to avoid increased risks to their personal security and safety and threats against their lives.
- The vast majority of the defenders, who benefited from the Foundation's interventions and who had been subjected to abuse or threats of abuses as a result of their human rights work, gave their testimonies to international human rights organisations including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. Moreover, advocacy campaigns calling for the release of five Syrian activists detained or abducted were conducted by the members of the *Free Syria's Silenced Voices* campaign.
- Seven human rights defenders were granted asylum and resettled in Europe, especially in France, Sweden, Germany, Holland and the United Kingdom on the basis of their profiles as human rights activists and the highly precarious conditions they continued to face in neighbouring countries.
- 70% of the beneficiaries have been able to resume or continue their human rights work, notably those in neighbouring countries due to the assistance they received from the Foundation, among other factors. Most of them used their new location as a base to monitor and advance the human rights situation in their home country. For instance a group of Libyan human rights defenders in temporary exile in Tunisia is currently developing a platform to represent their interests and influence the human rights agenda in the country. Two Syrian activists have secured paid work with international NGOs in Gaziantep, a Syrian women's rights activist has co-founded a children's magazine that is distributed in Syria, and a fourth activist is planning to disseminate a documentary film that he has just completed. A fifth activist, who developed a pilot project to train and employ people with disabilities, won a competition organized by an international NGO named "Syrians in Diaspora."

However, by the end of 2014, six activists remain detained in Egypt and Syria, two of whom are disappeared without any acknowledgment of their whereabouts. A seventh activist was abducted by the *Islamic State of Iraq and Shams* (ISIS) on 20 January 2014 and, by the end of 2014, his fate remained unknown. In the absence of the main breadwinner, the families of these defenders may need renewed support in the future to meet their basic needs. One activist who was released in December after around two months of detention by the Syrian authorities was unable to resume his human rights work due to being monitored closely by the security following his release and because of chronic health issues. Lastly, it is worth noting that important needs remain in the field of lasting educational opportunities for Syrian and Libyan human rights defenders in exile, particularly in the areas of human rights, languages and management to help them consolidate their role and work in the longer term.

⁶ All human rights defenders and NGOs acknowledged receipt of the funds in a timely manner. The urgent financial assistance provided by the Foundation did not increase security threats to the recipients, thanks to the confidentiality rules applied prior, during and after the transfer of the funds.

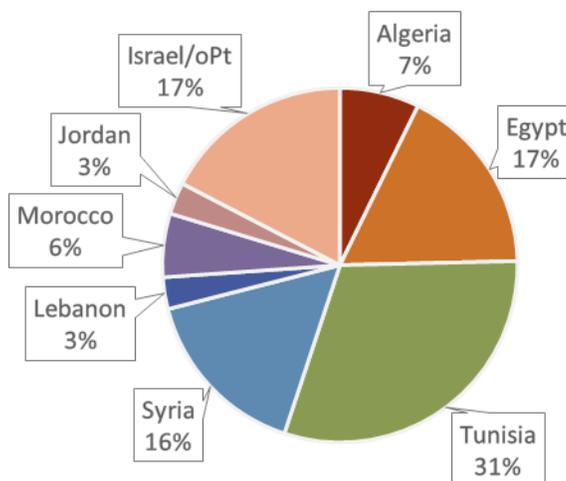
2.2. Flexible interventions in support of emerging NGOs and sensitive projects in the regional context

With a view to adapting to the different situations and dynamics at work in the region, the Foundation allocated **flexible support**, both on an urgent and standard basis, to 71 human rights groups and NGOs that faced difficulties in securing funds or fell outside mainstream donors' priorities.⁷ These interventions focused on the following situations:

- Leveraging 49 emerging innovative human rights initiatives in the face of rapidly changing developments;
- Reinforcing the capacities of 22 established human rights groups or NGOs by enabling them to boost their professionalization and sustain their work.

Note that 72% of the activities supported by the Foundation targeted remote areas in the countries appearing in the charts below in 2014:⁸

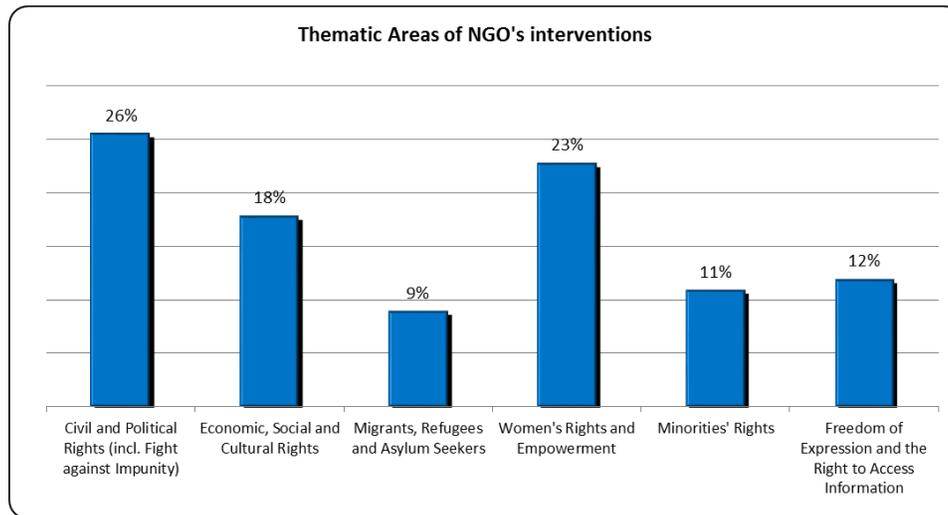
Distribution of grants to NGOs/groups per country



⁷ In particular, 17 out of the 71 recipient NGOs received urgent support from the EMHRF in the course of 2014.

⁸ While the scope of the action of 72% of the Foundation's beneficiaries is targeting both capital cities and remote areas, 49% of them are based in remote areas.

The following issues were given special consideration during the year 2014:



In particular, the Foundation sought to respond to specific needs expressed by civil society actors in contexts in which events moved quickly and national dynamics differed from one country to another. To explain and provide examples of the Foundation's activities, six contexts of intervention are described below.

2.2.1. Protracted War and Impunity for Mass Atrocities in Syria

The armed conflict in Syria escalated further in 2014. Mass atrocities by government forces and non-state armed groups continued to take place, in total impunity, as mentioned in the UN Commission of Inquiry's 8th report dated August 2014.⁹ Moreover, "the international community's failure in its most elemental duties – to protect civilians, halt and prevent atrocities and create a path toward accountability"¹⁰ – has been matched by a growing human rights fatigue on the ground. The Syrian civil society has thus played a dauntless role in expanding efforts aimed at combatting impunity and developing innovative activities responding to the most crucial protection needs of especially vulnerable populations in the country and in neighbouring countries.

The Foundation therefore prioritised supporting these efforts. It supported 12 initiatives to **combat impunity** and to **provide psychosocial, legal, administrative and knowledge-based services** to the afflicted Syrian population, especially **vulnerable groups such as women, children, the disabled, internally displaced and refugees**.

In particular, the Foundation's interventions focused on the following objectives:

- Providing legal aid and representation to prisoners of conscience and victims of repression appearing before domestic tribunals in government-controlled areas in Syria. In particular, these services were

⁹ A/HRC/27/60: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/IICISyria/Pages/IndependentInternationalCommission.aspx>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

provided to peaceful activists and human rights defenders who were referred to the Anti-Terrorism Court in Damascus.

- Reinforcing the monitoring and documentation of human rights violations in areas under prolonged sieges as well as the violations of international humanitarian law during fighting and shelling, including in Idlib, Aleppo and Rif Dimashq governorates.
- Raising awareness of fundamental rights of vulnerable groups, i.e. women, children and the disabled, through innovative activities¹¹ such as cultural events, new media projects, psychosocial and rehabilitation services, skills development sessions and employment-generating activities in Syria. Among these activities were three projects that promoted respect for women rights and an end to violence against women in rebel-held areas in Syria, through raising awareness in the newly established media, documenting cases of women subjected to violence, and offering medical, psychosocial and reintegration services to the victims. Another project promoted respect for fundamental rights of persons with disabilities through the provision of psychosocial, rehabilitation and reintegration services and by holding raising-awareness sessions on the rights of disabled persons targeted at the local communities.
- Providing urgent legal, administrative, psychosocial and knowledge-based support to refugees from Syria. The Foundation supported services tailored for vulnerable groups and those in need of special assistance, including isolated women and children, Palestinian refugees of Syria, human rights defenders, and others in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and some European countries.

2.2.2. Crackdown on Dissent and Independent Civil Society in Egypt

In Egypt, mounting arbitrary policies and practices have been enacted against civil society actors in 2014. The Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS) gave an ultimatum to Egyptian non-governmental organisations to register as NGOs under the restrictive Law 84/2002 passed during the rule of Hosni Mubarak by November 10, 2014. Failing to do so may lead to dissolving the organisation and put its members at risk of imprisonment and other criminal penalties. Fears of an imminent crackdown on human rights organizations grew following the amendment of article 78 of the Egyptian penal code in September 2014, which criminalises receiving foreign funds to conduct activities that harm national interests and punishes those found guilty of that with life imprisonment.¹² Additionally, human rights defenders became targets of unprecedented defamation media campaigns, portraying them as traitors to foreign agents; several defenders received death threats in 2014. Many organisations were threatened by different governmental bodies compelling some to adopt contingency plans in the country or abroad; some reduced or modified their activities. Others took more drastic measures and stopped all their activities. For the first time in eight years, all international NGOs active in Egypt closed their offices and donors have been considering withdrawing from the country.

The Foundation expanded its work on Egypt over the course of 2014 to respond to the needs of the civil society in light of these increasing restrictions. The Foundation's interventions focused primarily on ***containing the damage sustained by the human rights movement*** in order to maintain the space for democratic freedoms. It also focused on the ***documentation of serious human rights violations***, given the lack of independent

¹¹ Impunity and the lack of education with regard to human rights can lead communities to be especially sceptical or distrustful of activities that are specifically or traditionally related to human rights.

¹² The sentence pronounced can reach the death penalty if staff members are working for the government

investigations and accountability. The Foundation's interventions therefore supported 16 civil society initiatives on the following objectives:

- Protecting vulnerable human rights NGOs and activists facing an escalating level of governmental crackdown through flexible urgent response mechanisms such as providing distinctly tailored trainings to NGOs' staff in order to strengthen the privacy and safety of their work as well as providing vital legal aid and representation services to Egyptian pro-democracy and human rights activists in prisons and/or facing trials under variant and at times fabricated accusations.
- Documenting serious human rights violations including political violence, armed intra-tribal violence, attacks against journalists, women and minorities as well as refugees and migrants in urban centres and marginalised areas.
- Ensuring the sustainability of the work of women human rights defenders, including survivors of sexual violence and former detainees, by providing training, medical assistance and counselling, and by engaging in advocacy at the governmental and community levels to improve their situation in the country, including in remote areas.
- Promoting tolerance in response to the rise of hate rhetoric, by supporting emerging media initiatives to counter the control of the flow of information by the state media, and cultural activities targeting marginalized youth and children.

2.2.3. Enduring Threats facing Civil Society in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The year 2014 witnessed the highest civilian death toll since 1967 due to the July-August hostilities in Gaza, and a significant increase in Palestinian fatalities in the West Bank.¹³ There was also a marked increase in Israeli casualties, as a result of Gaza hostilities and from tension in East Jerusalem.¹⁴ These hostilities took place as the land, air and sea blockade on Gaza by Israel entered its seventh year.¹⁵

Meanwhile, the Israeli government continued demolishing hundreds of Palestinians' homes, while expanding its settlement policy and practices in violation of international law. In addition, Israel continued clamping down on immigrants, and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza continued their crackdown on civil society actors.

Still, civil society actors operating in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories continued to document, and at times prevent human rights violations as well as respond to the victims' needs for protection in 2014. Civil society actors, however, faced increasing difficulties in obtaining financing for their activities due to the shift in donors' priorities to other countries in the region. The majority of funds allocated for the occupied Palestinian territories went to reconstruction of Gaza in the aftermath of the July-August hostilities. Palestinian and Israeli human rights NGOs in Israel also voiced increasing concerns with regards to accessing mainstream donors' funding and funds from Jewish foundations, which previously financed them.

¹³ Fragmented Lives: Humanitarian Overview 2014 report by UNOCHA, published in March 2015; you can read full report on http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/annual_humanitarian_overview_2014_english_final.pdf

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Egypt took part in the blockade by keeping its border with Gaza mostly sealed.

The Foundation therefore focused its interventions on ***providing core bridging funding to 12 civil society actors working on documenting, preventing and responding to human rights violations*** in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories over the course of 2014. In particular, these NGOs aimed at addressing the following challenges:

- Ensuring the security of NGO staff while reporting on the casualties in Gaza during the July-August hostilities and offering vulnerable women psychosocial, educational and economic support services.
- Documenting human rights violations perpetrated by the Israeli government and international companies in the occupied Palestinian territories, such as those carrying out activities in Jewish settlements that are illegal under international law and engaging in illegally exploiting natural resources in the Syrian Golan Heights, which has been occupied by Israel since 1967.
- Reinforcing the advocacy efforts towards legislators and the government in their attempts to secure full compliance and implementation of international law and rulings with respect to the rights of internally displaced Palestinians and the prohibition of torture in Israel.
- Promoting respect for immigrants' rights by raising public awareness on the situation of asylum seekers; providing information on and assistance to asylum seekers on the Refugee Status Determination, which is the legal or administrative process by which governments or UNHCR determine whether a person seeking international protection is considered a refugee under international, regional or national law; pursuing resettlement options and exposing the negative effects of government policies towards immigrants.
- Promoting respect for women's rights and empowerment among Palestinian communities in Israel and the West Bank by increasing awareness of and respect for sexual and reproductive rights; providing interfaith and bi-national couples with alternative options to religious marriage; countering the practice of polygamy and so-called "honour killings" as well as promoting women's full and equal access to economic, social and cultural rights.

2.2.4. Stalemate of Impunity and Shrinking Civil Society Space in Algeria

In Algeria, obstacles, arrests and prosecutions of independent civil society actors, especially union leaders and human rights activists, continued unabated in 2014, limiting their rights to freedom of assembly and association. Meanwhile, security forces and armed groups continued to enjoy impunity for atrocities they committed during the civil war of the 1990s.

As a result, the Foundation's interventions focused on ***protecting those who faced arbitrary criminal and administrative sanctions*** because of their human rights work, and ***building capacities and ensuring the sustainability of the human rights movement at the local and national levels***. The Foundation's interventions supported 5 civil society initiatives focused on the following objectives:

- Providing legal aid and representation to Algerian pro-democracy and union activists, including bloggers, facing trials on charges under anti-terrorism laws or other loosely-worded penal code provisions, because of their activities, such as participating in peaceful demonstrations or promoting respect for economic and social rights.

- Strengthening advocacy efforts led by Algerian civil society actors to hold the government accountable for its non-compliance with workers' protection standards and rights and for enacting reforms that were not in conformity with international conventions to which Algeria is a party.
- Raising public awareness of human rights and citizenship and documenting the state of human rights violations at the national and local levels.
- Increasing the operating and communication skills of Algerian civil society actors, particularly in the journalistic writing, newspaper and web bulletin production or a web bulletin to boost their visibility and reinforce their role in their communities.

2.2.5. A Promising Path towards Democracy led by Civil Society in Tunisia

Tunisia has good prospects to make a relatively successful transition to democracy, thanks to the crucial role played by its civil society. Despite some serious challenges, the Tunisian Constituent Assembly passed a new constitution, the Basic Law of 26 January 2014 that secured key political and civil rights as well as social, economic, and cultural rights. These include rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly; rights to citizenship, bodily integrity, fair trial, and freedom from arbitrary detention and torture. The new constitution also introduced a goal of gender parity in elected assemblies for the first time in the Arab region.¹⁶ Tunisia's civil society was very active in following up on a crucial electoral process, with the legislative and presidential elections taking place on 26 October and 23 November 2014 respectively.

In this context, the Foundation's interventions mainly aimed at consolidating and accompanying concerted efforts of local civil society organisations, especially those operating in remote areas, to ***influence the political agenda for elections and reforms***. Meanwhile, although the constitution and the elections were important steps, many thorny issues remained to be addressed, in particular social justice demands, including deteriorating living conditions and increasing unemployment among the youth.¹⁷ The Foundation therefore carried out interventions to promote respect for ***economic, social and cultural rights, especially of the disadvantaged youth and women***.

The Foundation's interventions supported 21 civil society initiatives focusing on the following objectives:

- Assessing various electoral programs in terms of rights promotion, raising awareness on the participation of youth and women, and monitoring the legislative and presidential elections in Tunis and the remote governorates of el Kef, Sidi Bouzid, Sfax, Kasserine and Tataouine.
- Documenting social and economic issues facing young people and rural women; assessing governmental strategies and promoting reforms in favour of economic and social rights for Tunisian youth and women.
- Raising awareness on citizenship rights, incorporating rights and freedoms in the constitution and promoting the culture of non-violence, especially towards the youth in disadvantaged neighbourhoods of Tunis and in the remote governorates of Béja, Gafsa, Kebili, Tozeur and Zaghuan. These actors

¹⁶ In Morocco, gender balance was listed as a Constitutional objective.

¹⁷ The years 2013 and 2014 mark a deep-reaching turmoil in the country with political, economic, social, security and identity crises including violent Salafist groups taking centre stage, the political assassination of an MP and an opposition leader.

increasingly carried out cultural and artistic activities as an alternative to conventional means to reach a younger audience.

- Assessing the needs in terms of legal assistance and representation of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Tunisia.
- Educating and developing public awareness of sexual and reproductive rights among Tunisian women in disadvantaged regions.

The Foundation's future interventions will focus on civil society activities ensuring laws are in compliance with the Constitution in the areas of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights as well as ensuring that democratic gains secured so far are protected.

2.2.6. Challenges facing Civil Society in Morocco and Lebanon

The civil society continued to enjoy relative autonomy and freedom in Morocco and Lebanon. However, concerns surfaced in Morocco when the interior minister accused NGOs of answering to foreign agendas and compromising the country's reputation and security. His statement was followed by worrying incidents during which authorities prohibited the holding of organizational meetings, sit-ins and conferences, trainings, as reported by three human rights associations.

In addition, civil society organisations in Morocco and Lebanon continued to face difficulties in accessing core funding to expand and sustain their work.

The Foundation's interventions therefore aimed at **boosting the professionalization** of NGOs and **supporting experimental innovative projects** that faced difficulties in securing funds in these two countries. In three cases, the Foundation's interventions focused on supporting civil society efforts to produce qualitative reports and recommendations aimed at influencing legislative reforms.

In particular, the Foundation's interventions supported 5 civil society initiatives aimed at addressing the following challenges:

- Consolidating the structural capacities of NGOs to professionalize their work by recruiting qualified managers and developing management controls to ensure the sustainability of their activities, particularly in rehabilitating victims of torture and monitoring public policies.
- Producing analytical reports on the state of media freedoms and freedom of expression, as well as forced separation and the right to origins with a view to influence upcoming legislative reforms in Morocco and Lebanon.
- Encouraging freedom of expression and civic engagement of Moroccan youth in public life and on human rights issues through an innovative and experimental media activity, i.e. the establishment of an independent web TV.

2.2.7. Follow-up and Results of Flexible Interventions

In its role as intermediary and coach to the beneficiaries of its support, the Foundation:

- Provided encouragement and assistance to all 49 emerging groups and two established NGOs, especially those located in Syria, Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt, in developing strategic action plans and proposals with the aim of enabling the Foundation, in consultation with other partners, to respond strategically to the needs of these newly formed groups and NGOs;
- Provided coaching to all new partners, especially those working in remote areas of Tunisia, by offering strategic advice relevant to their work and to the democratic management of an association, in cooperation with the regional office of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN);
- Encouraged 75% of the recipients or 54 NGOs to establish or maintain contacts with other groups and institutions working in the same thematic areas at the local, national and regional levels. This aimed to enable these NGOs to share information and experiences, identify potentials for synergies and coordinated activities, and consequently benefit from non-financial support that would contribute to the impact and sustainability of their activities;
- Coordinated its interventions and participated in consultations aimed at reinforcing documentation efforts on human rights violations in the Syrian context, organised by the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) in connection with Syrian civil society organisations and other regional and international organisations active in this field, including inter-governmental organisations and few donors. As a result of these consultations, two groups and NGOs who were beneficiaries of EMHRF support have benefited from the capacity building activities implemented by the EMHRN over the course of 2014, while three more should benefit from this programme in 2015;
- Organised a donors' consultative meeting focussed on the protection and sustainability of human rights work in Egypt in order to exchange information and strategies related to the donors' interventions due to the arbitrary policies and the shrinking funding opportunities. Greater cooperation and exchanges with these partners was crucial to discuss and coordinate strategies that can effectively support Egyptian independent civil society over the short and medium term;¹⁸
- Facilitated exchange of contacts, acted as intermediary, forwarded a list of potential donors and/or helped in the submission of funding requests for 54% of the recipients or 39 NGOs. The Foundation also provided similar support to a number of funding applicants whose applications did not fall within the Foundation's mandate but whose work was valuable and had the potential to be supported by more appropriate donors.

It is difficult to measure the long-term results of the support provided to these groups and NGOs, not only because most of the partnerships are still on-going but also because political will — from both inside and outside the region — is often a precondition to achieving long-term results. Nonetheless, some of the main achievements that resulted from the Foundation's collaboration with its local partners in 2014 can be highlighted:

- ***Unique legal aid and representation services were provided to over 100 prisoners of conscience in Syria, Egypt and Algeria***, among them many human rights and union activists, journalists, as well as

¹⁸ Cf. below section 4.2 for further information.

women and minors, who were facing trials under fabricated criminal accusations as a result of their work or participating in peaceful pro-democracy demonstrations in these countries.¹⁹

- **Analytical and documented reports on grave human rights violations were produced by NGOs in Syria and in Egypt.** In particular, the specific goals of these reports were to cover the stoning of women by ISIS militants and the disaster threatening the Euphrates dam in al-Tabqa as well as the use of barrel bombs in the systematic bombardment of the city of Aleppo and its countryside by the Syrian government air force. Moreover it covered violations of women's bodily integrity in prison, violations facing Egyptian journalists during the anniversary of the Rabaa protest dispersal and the arbitrary detention and specific conditions facing Palestinian and Syrian refugees in Egypt.
- In Egypt, eight human rights NGOs **received distinctly tailored security trainings and IT equipment aimed at mitigating threats and securing their communications**, thus allowing them to continue promoting and defending respect for fundamental rights at a crucial moment.
- In Algeria, **a timely advocacy mission contributed to Algeria's inclusion in International Labour Organisation (ILO) review of the country's application of workers' protection standards.** This represents a major breakthrough in terms of international pressure on Algeria to respect economic and social rights and to be held accountable for its recurrent arbitrary measures against independent unionists.
- **Temporary refuge was provided for especially vulnerable Syrian refugees in Turkey**, i.e. threatened human rights defenders and Syrian-Palestinians refugees that allowed for a number of psychosocial and educational services to continue being delivered to its occupants, such as language courses, photography, poetry readings and films screenings, as well as debates about justice, equality, citizenship and human rights. Moreover, **individual and group counselling sessions directed at 564 Syrian refugees located in urban areas in Jordan** were held. These sessions especially addressed their legal, medical, psychosocial and educational rights in the country. In addition, a referral network comprising of 20 NGOs in the greater Amman area has been established, which benefited 25 Syrian refugees in the course of 2014, and two legal studies highlighting deficiencies in Jordan's parliamentary decision-making processes as regards respect for Syrian refugees' rights and assessing the legal compatibility with broader international human rights conventions ratified by Jordan were conducted.
- Hundreds of conferences, cultural initiatives, round tables and debates were held by over twenty Tunisian local partners, in partnership with other civil society NGOs, across the country,²⁰ aimed at assessing the different electoral programs in terms of rights promotion and raising political awareness of about 10,000 Tunisian citizens. In particular, these events focused on **increasing the participation of 1496 women, especially rural women, and youth in the Parliamentary elections** as voters, constituents and observers. These events, among others, allowed for **a third of the seats in the Parliament to be held by women, which represent an exceptionally high level in the Arab world.** Although the elections were a success, the lack of youth participation however continues to be a cause for concern as Tunisia moves forward in its transition towards democracy.
- Litigation efforts of an NGO **facilitated difficulties facing officially unrecognised interfaith and bi-national couples and families** by the State of Israel. Their union was certified by Domestic Union Cards, a contractual marriage prepared by the NGO that was validated by the Family Court. These cards thus gave couples a legal status albeit not a marital status and opened possibilities for family unification,

¹⁹ The general amnesty, enacted on 9 June 2014 by Bashar Al-Assad in Syria, has not extended to many human rights activists. It is thus expected that about 15000 cases will continue being investigated by the anti-terrorism court in Damascus in the future.

²⁰ In particular in Tunis surroundings (Douar Hicher, etc.) and in the cities of Jendouba, Gafsa, el Kef and surrounding rural areas (Ksour, Dahmeni, Klaat Snen, Sers, Kef East, Kef West), Sidi Bouzid, Thala, Jbeniana, Leghressa, El Amra, Hazeg, Kasserine, Sbeitla, Foussana, Freyana, Majel Belabbes, Jedelyenne and Tataouine.

which constitutes a revolutionary legal precedent in relation to family status.²¹ As a result, 4.100 families gained access to legal assistance, including 2.362 families who obtained Domestic Union Cards and many Palestinian families and migrants benefited from family unification in Israel.

- **Three innovative Web projects** have been launched, including a web-TV and a web-radio, to promote civic engagement of youth and respect for freedom of expression in Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt. In addition, **scores of articles, photographs and media coverage**, including in major international news outlets, **significantly raised the issue of Palestinians' right to return and the effects of war on Gaza in Israel**.
- Twenty NGOs, facing a shift in donors' priorities and/or serious difficulties in securing support for their core activities, received bridging support. This enabled them to **retain a physical presence and staff members**, a prerequisite to sustaining their leadership and ensuring the consolidation of the civil society movement.
- Thanks to the Foundation's **closer cooperation with international partners**, several of its beneficiaries were able to benefit from capacity-building trainings and are cooperating with the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), Front Line Defenders, the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Reporters without Borders (RSF), PEN International, the Foundations to Promote Open Society (OSF), the Sigrid Rausing Trust, Oxfam Novib, the European Endowment for Democracy (EED), the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), Mama Cash, Hivos - Humanist Institute for Cooperation, the Comité Catholique contre la Faim et pour le Développement (CCFD), the Fund for Global Human Rights, the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS), the Arab Institute for Human Rights (AIHR), the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR), the Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Canal France International, International Media Support (IMS) as well as foreign representations and the delegations of the European Union, among others.
- 32% of NGO beneficiaries were able to obtain complementary and additional financing from other institutions, thus ensuring, at least in part, the sustainability of their activities.

Despite these positive results, Libyan, Egyptian and Syrian civil society partners have experienced major difficulties and delays in implementing their activities due to the precarious political and security situations in the countries. The Foundation thus adopted a flexible approach accommodating the fact that actions supported may not be fully implemented on time and as initially agreed upon, taking into consideration alternative implementation plans.

3. Indirect Support to Human Rights NGOs, Groups and Defenders

Beyond providing financial assistance, the Foundation took other steps to support human rights defenders - mainly by strengthening its presence at the local level and by meeting with regional and international funders involved in the promotion of democracy and the protection of human rights.

The purpose of these activities was to assess the developments occurring in the region, measure the impact of the assistance provided and, where appropriate, consider additional support actions adjusted to the needs and

²¹ This precedent was largely relayed in the [media](#).

challenges facing human rights defenders. They also resulted in strengthened partnerships with key actors whose focus is on supporting the local human rights movement over the long term.

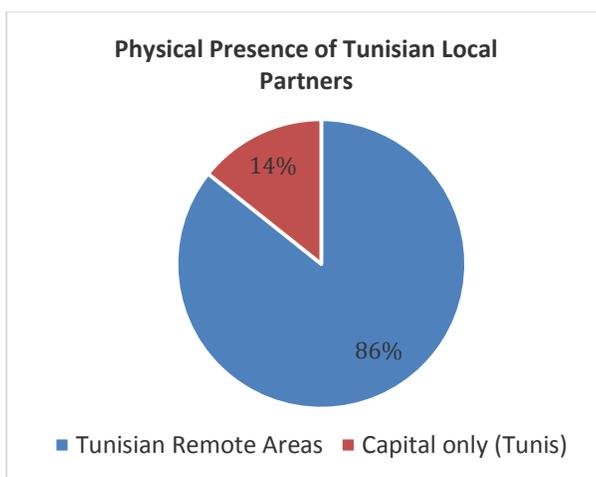
Two activities were devoted to achieving this goal in 2014, as set out below.

3.1. Strengthened presence in the Maghreb and Mashreq regions

The Foundation sustained its activities in the Maghreb and Mashreq regions through its physical presence in Tunisia and regular visits to Egypt and Syria's neighbouring countries in order to adapt more quickly to changing circumstances and the needs of local defenders in the course of 2014.

3.1.1. Maghreb: Reinforced Presence in Tunisia and Consultations of Libyan Civil Society

The Maghreb mission of the Foundation, located in **Tunisia**, focuses its interventions on the local level, especially in its remote areas, in order to consolidate the work of emerging or less-connected civil society and human rights actors. It has thus organised regular field visits to the cities and governorates of Kasserine, Sidi Bouzid, el Kef, Djerba, Sfax, Béja and the Southern mining area in the course of 2014. On these occasions, it met with the Foundation's local partners in order to follow up closely on the developments of their actions, advise them on possible collaborations, the definition of projects and the democratic management of NGOs. It also met with applicants to assess their needs, their performances, and the relevance of their actions as well as the positioning of regional and international actors with a view to refining the most pressing priorities with regard to Foundation's mandate. As a result of these regular visits, the twenty-one Tunisian partners of the Foundation in 2014, who were largely physically present in remote areas of the country (as shown in the chart below), received both direct support and coaching services aimed at leveraging and strengthening their actions focused primarily on influencing the political agenda for elections and reforms in Tunisia's marginalised regions, as reflected in above section 3.2.5.



Moreover, although the Maghreb mission couldn't conduct field visits to **Libya** due to the worsening security conditions across the country, the increasing threats facing human rights defenders and the sustainability of the Libyan civil society movement remained central concerns for the Foundation in 2014.

The Foundation decided to organise, jointly with the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), a discussion seminar on '*Protecting and Strengthening Libyan Civil Society to Promote Respect for Human Rights*' in Tunis on 28-29 April 2014. The objectives of this seminar, which hosted a panel of 20 representatives of the Libyan civil society and 10 representatives of international organisations active on/in Libya, were to review the developments that occurred in the country during the past three years and how these affect the human rights situation, the civil society dynamics and their needs, with a view to address the latter in a concerted manner. Some of the specific needs identified by Libyan civil society included reinforcing their protection (both by activating regional and international solidarity appeals as well as international protection mechanisms), building their capacities (on various methodologies²² and specific issues²³), accessing geographically-balanced funding opportunities (that include core expenses, respond to Libyan civil society needs and are available in Arabic), as well as furthering networking with other Arab NGOs, networks in neighbouring countries and international NGOs.²⁴

Moreover, given the worsening political, security and humanitarian situation in the summer of 2014,²⁵ the Foundation has continued to actively participate in several information and coordination meetings organised with Libyan activists, international NGOs working on Libya and with the Human Rights Division of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), especially on the issue of the protection and sustainability of Libyan human rights defenders' work. Given the limited technical and financial partners supporting Libyan civil society, the Foundation will continue coordinating efforts on protection and training actions for Libyan activists with international NGOs and also provide assistance to collective initiatives led by Libyan human rights defenders that might be established to represent their collective interests in the future.

3.1.2. Mashreq: Renewed Field Visits to Egypt and Syria's Neighbouring Countries

Although the Foundation hasn't established a physical presence in the Mashreq region because of worsening security conditions, field visits took place to Egypt and Syria's neighbouring countries in February and June 2014. The fast-changing developments at the local levels and the deteriorating conditions facing Syrian and Egyptian independent civil society prompted the need for these repeated visits. The objective of the visits was to deepen the understanding of civil society dynamics in these countries and to refine the required priorities, mechanisms and means to provide protection and support in a swift and effective manner.

On the occasion of its visit to **Egypt** in the course of February 2014, the Foundation met with 27 human rights NGOs, activists, emerging groups, INGOs and diplomatic missions. The following brief points denote some of the observations identified on the occasion of this visit:

²² How to document violations, how to create an observatory of human rights violations, basic advocacy strategies, etc.

²³ Basic notions on human rights, transitional justice, CEDAW, application of international conventions, etc.

²⁴ For further information about specific recommendations made at the meeting, please contact the EMHRF Secretariat.

²⁵ Most of local Libyan NGOs, international NGOs and intergovernmental bodies have stopped their activities in the country due to the security conditions and an important number of them relocated to Tunisia during this period.

- Since June 30th, there has been a rising anticipation for a crackdown on human rights NGOs similar to the ongoing crackdown on journalists, youth activists, peaceful protestors, and political opponents. However, variant scenarios were expressed among the NGOs with regards to the timing and severity of such move. As a result, NGOs were in the process of setting up contingency plans to consolidate the existing structures and legal support efforts to defend those arbitrarily arrested.
- While many Egyptian human rights NGOs have resorted to silence as a strategic choice to avert a severe backlash from the authorities, a number of NGOs have decided to favour political stances over the universality of human rights principles. This divided status amongst the Egyptian NGOs amplified the vulnerabilities of the independent human rights movement.
- Grave and massive human rights violations are committed across the country without any independent investigations being carried out by the authorities. In addition, there is a rise in hate rhetoric and incitement to violence, smear campaigns against human rights NGOs and defenders in the Egyptian media, with very few outlets providing balanced reporting on events happening in the country.

In view of these developments, the Foundation has decided to focus its support actions on containing the damage sustained by the human rights movement in order to protect NGOs and maintain the space for democratic freedoms and on the documentation of human rights violations committed by all parties, as reflected in the above section 3.2.2.

The Mashreq mission also organized a renewed visit to ***Syria's neighbouring countries*** in June 2014 to complement an earlier visit organised in December 2013. On this occasion, the Foundation met with about 40 Syrian NGOs, activists, representatives of regional and international institutions as well as foreign delegations in order to assess civil society dynamics, gaps, opportunities and caveats in terms of support actions. These visits especially underlined the following elements:

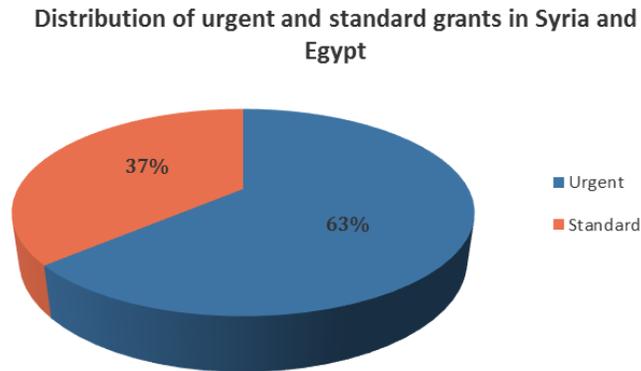
- Because of their efforts to document the repression and to provide assistance to the civilian population under attack, defenders and groups working in Syria continue to face significant threats from various groups depending on the area of influence of their actions. In addition to direct threats, they must also contend with increased indirect risks related to their monitoring of massive and systematic human rights violations. These threats often cause symptoms of post-traumatic stress and have a significant impact on the well-being and sustainability of the actions of human rights defenders in Syria.
- Syria's "associative" landscape remains volatile, as many advocates and activists have been forced to flee the country to protect their safety. Although diminished at times, activism in the country remains no less widespread. The efforts and actions carried out by these actors, however, are significant in view of the obstacles, the magnitude of the needs and their recent establishment. However, they have to struggle with difficulties related to their safety and capacities, access to funding²⁶ and barriers preventing them from associating.
- A number of elements have contributed to the development of specific and distinct civil society dynamics inside Syria, including increasing rates of international and regional interferences in support of variant competing forces operating in different regions and on different frontlines; the different social contexts and the proximity to borders (access points). Moreover, Syrian activists and NGOs operating in neighbouring countries are constrained by conditions and national dynamics that are

²⁶ In general, funding provided for human rights projects do not match needs in terms of protection, capacity building and sustainability.

specific to each country and to regions within each country. They often do not have clear legal recognition or do not have the possibility of registering an associative activity.

The Foundation has thus decided to focus its support actions on the protection of defenders and on combatting impunity as well as providing psychosocial, legal, administrative and knowledge-based services to the afflicted Syrian population, especially vulnerable groups such as women, children, the disabled, internally displaced and refugees, as reflected in above section 3.2.1. In particular, priority was given to support associative actors often working without legal cover inside Syria.

These visits were thus essential to remain attuned to the shifting developments affecting human rights defenders and NGOs in Egypt and in Syria, and to respond to their needs in a rapid and tangible manner, as shown in the chart below:



3.2. Reinforced cooperation with other foundations to address the shrinking space for civil society

As part of its activities aimed at strengthening cooperation to ensure long-term and sustainable support to human rights defenders, the Foundation co-organised and took an active part in consultations and meetings with foundations involved in human rights issues, within the Ariadne European Human Rights Funders' Network²⁷ and the International Human Rights Funders Group.²⁸ In particular, the Foundation strengthened collaboration with regional and international foundations as well as donors in order to strategically address and respond to a shrinking space for civil society at the global level in general and in Egypt in particular.

3.2.1. On the occasion of the Annual Policy Briefing of the Ariadne Network of European Human Rights Funders, the Foundation actively took part in discussions aimed at considering collective actions that foundations could undertake to ***address the global rising trend of shrinking space for civil society***. In particular, the Foundation became a member in the steering committee of a newly-established working group

²⁷ Ariadne is a peer-to-peer network of more than 400 grant-makers and funders across Europe, who support human rights and social change projects worldwide. The Foundation became a member of Ariadne in 2011.

²⁸ The International Human Rights Funders Group (IHRFG) is a network of international foundations which currently has more than 650 members representing approximately 275 organisations that provide human rights-related grants around the world. The Foundation became a member of IHRFG in 2010 and it is a co-founder and member of IHRFG working group on human rights defenders, established in 2011.

on “*Cross-Border Philanthropy*”. In the course of 2014, the members of the working group especially agreed on a number of priorities for future collective work among INGOs and international foundations, in particular:

- Ensuring that key actors across the development, humanitarian and human rights fields jointly pursue indicators and commitments to civil society as part of the post 2015 SDGs;
- Developing strategies in the business and human rights sphere to hold the corporations who benefit from the shrinking space to account;
- Countering the impact of counter-terrorism legislation and policies on civil society;
- Strengthening and diversifying counter-narratives around civil society space and value, and the long-term security and building resilience of defenders and NGOs;
- Developing approaches to help bridge international norm setting with domestic legal reform initiatives;
- Advocating for a strengthened diplomatic response to civil society pushback;
- Enabling peer-to-peer exchange and learning between domestic civil society actors and supporting coordinated national level and regional responses.

3.2.2. Moreover, due to serious fears of an imminent crackdown on the main Egyptian human rights organisations, the Foundation decided to organise -jointly with the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) - a ***consultation meeting with donors and private foundations on Egypt*** in Brussels on 7 October 2014. This meeting, attended by representatives of 18 private foundations, institutional donors, diplomatic representatives and civil society organisations, aimed at exploring potential means of enabling Egyptian NGOs and defenders to maintain a certain level of activity despite the drastic shrinking space for freedoms in Egypt.

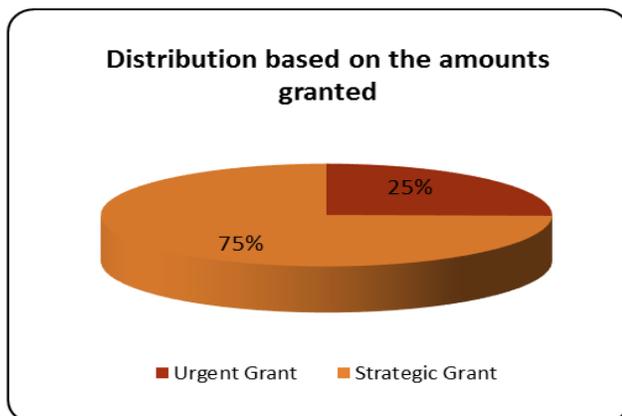
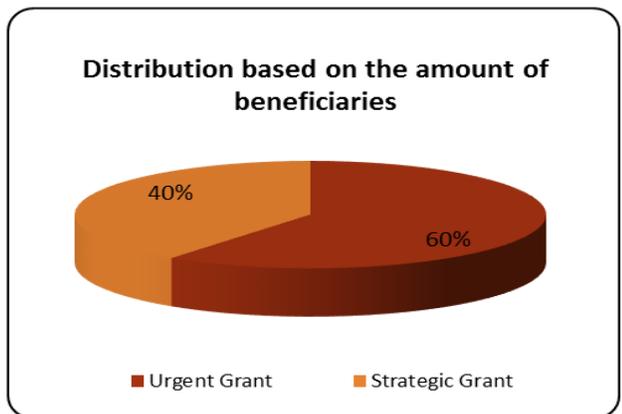
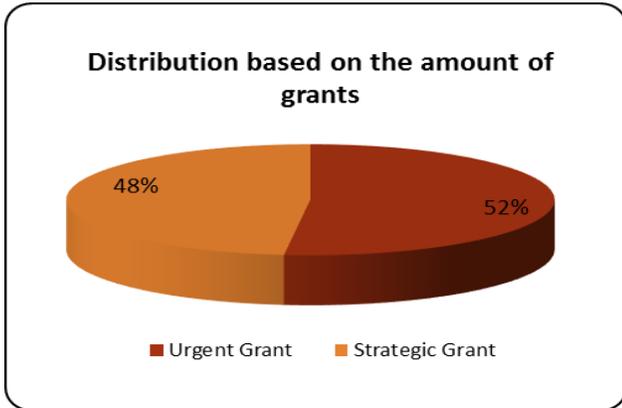
The participants expressed particular concern about the constant intimidation by state authorities, against independent Egyptian human rights NGOs and their international partners. They stressed the need to continue supporting the human rights movement, by all available means. Above all, they emphasized the absolute necessity to increase the pressure on the Egyptian authorities. Preventing, or at least delaying, the crackdown should remain the main priority for all actors. The need to support the activists in detention, with the ultimate goal of setting them free, was also identified as a top priority. Recommendations were made to set up a strategic and targeted international advocacy campaign; review ongoing activities in light of the current repression; adopt contingency plans; put in place enhanced security measures (physical & IT security); identify flexible and alternative funding mechanisms; review existing contractual obligations to best respond to beneficiaries’ protection needs; reduce the visibility of foreign funding; assist Egyptian organisations to relocate, when necessary and setting-up focal points/intermediaries in Europe.²⁹

²⁹ For further information about specific recommendations made at the meeting, please contact the EMHRF Secretariat.

4. The 2014 interventions in figures

The following charts present the Foundation's support for human rights defenders in 2014.

4.1. Types of grants



The proportion of urgent interventions in 2014 increased by 170% compared to 2013, because of a deterioration in the human rights situation in a number of countries and more specifically for the safety of human rights defenders and NGOs in Syria, Egypt and Libya.

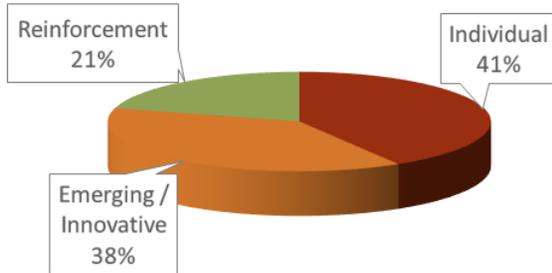
As a result, the Foundation's urgent grants, with amounts that are generally lower than those of strategic or standard grants, benefited a larger number of individuals and NGOs.

These two public grant-making mechanisms established by the Foundation proved to be crucial in order to be both responsive to unanticipated situations as they arise and to consolidate sensitive activities and capacities of defenders and NGOs at the local levels.

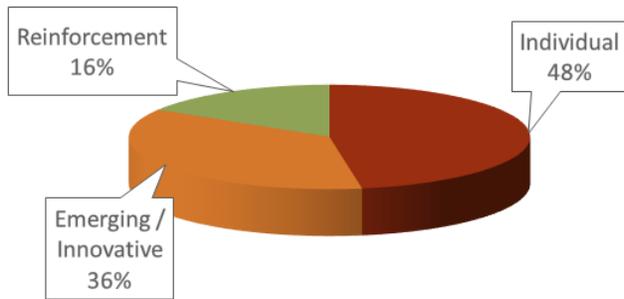
The average amount of grants provided in 2014 was € 12,191, which is slightly lower than in 2013. This figure reflects the significance of the support action rather than the level of funds needed to protect and consolidate defenders' work in the Arab region.

4.2. Types of beneficiaries

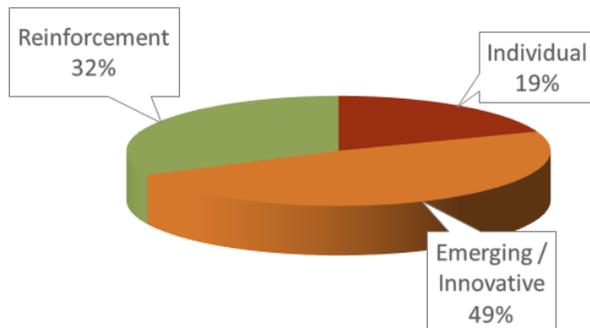
Distribution based on the number of grants



Distribution based on the number of beneficiaries



Distribution based on the amounts granted

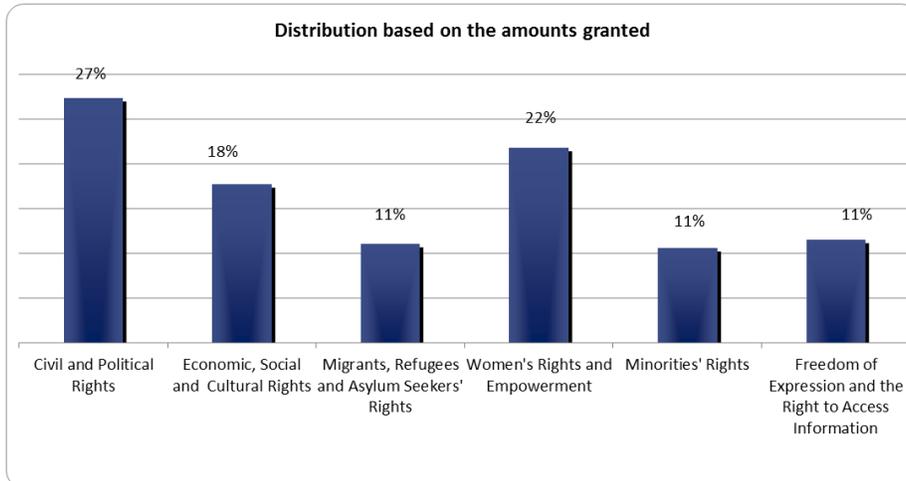
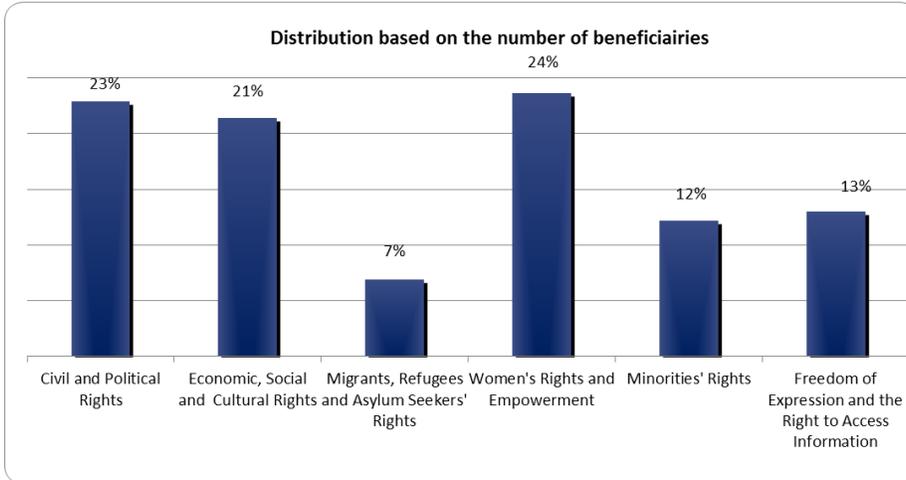
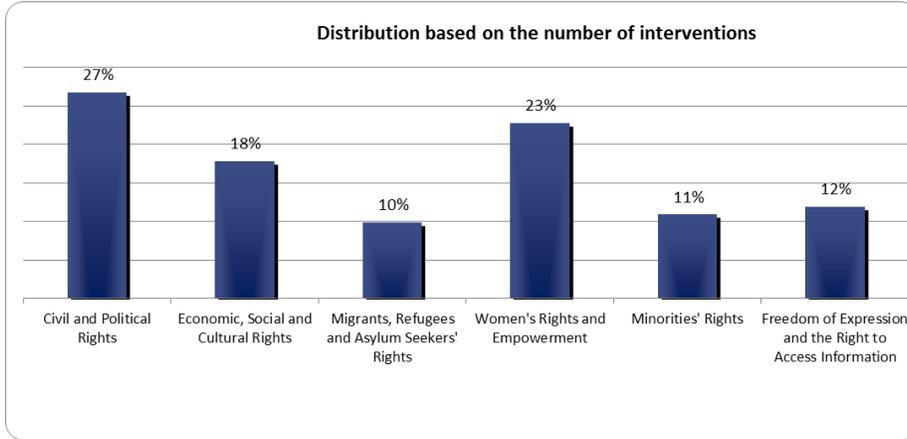


Although the actions of defenders prove crucial for building and maintaining the rule of law, they remain undermined by significant threats, financial difficulties and obstacles to creating alliances. In 2014, these issues remained central to the Foundation's concerns. As a result, the Foundation continued to provide special support to individual human rights defenders in danger as well as emerging civil society groups and established NGOs in order to leverage sensitive activities, advance professionalization and cohesion of their actions at the local levels.

In particular, specific attention was paid to groups considered to be especially vulnerable or less-connected because of the scope of their action, i.e. actors working in isolated regions. 72% of the Foundation's interventions targeted remote areas in Arab countries.

This support is especially necessary to allow civil society to influence political agendas at local levels in a timely manner, in contexts where mainstream donors may not have the required mechanisms to meet and support newly-established groups or initiatives acting in remote areas.

4.3. Thematic focus



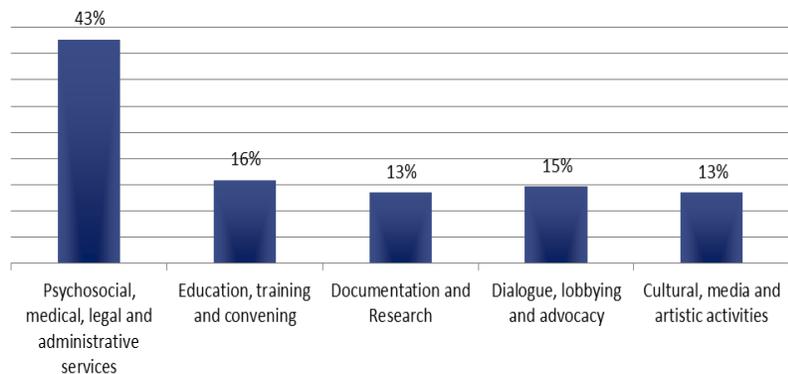
In 2014, the Foundation continued to be particularly concerned with strengthening activities aimed at combatting impunity and promoting national efforts towards the adoption and implementation of reforms in the areas of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, given the interconnected nature and relevance of these subjects in transition contexts and in environments where repression against defenders grows harsher.

The portion of interventions dealing with these issues reached 45% in 2014.

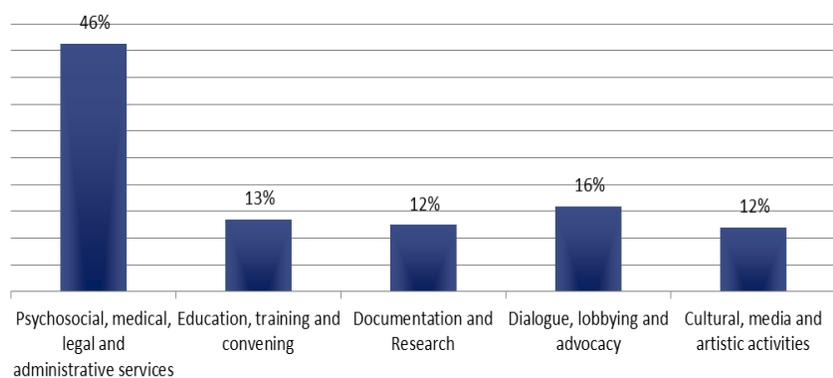
Moreover, given their central role in democracies and the various forms of violence they increasingly suffered, the Foundation continued to give priority to support initiatives aimed promoting and defending respect for women's rights and women's empowerment.

4.4. Activities of recipients

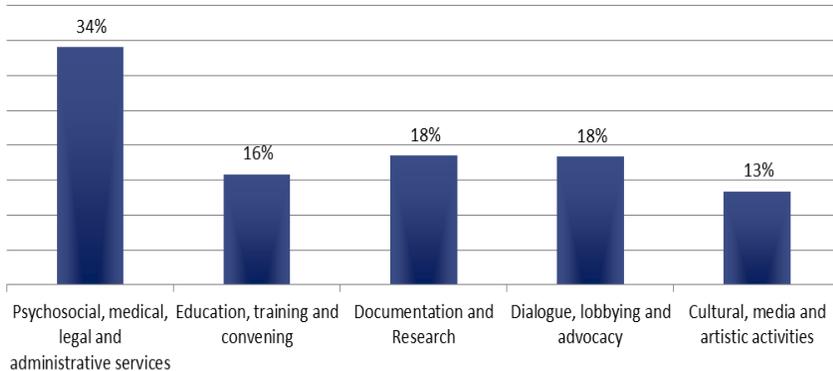
Distribution based on the number of interventions



Distribution based on the number of beneficiaries



Distribution based on the amounts granted

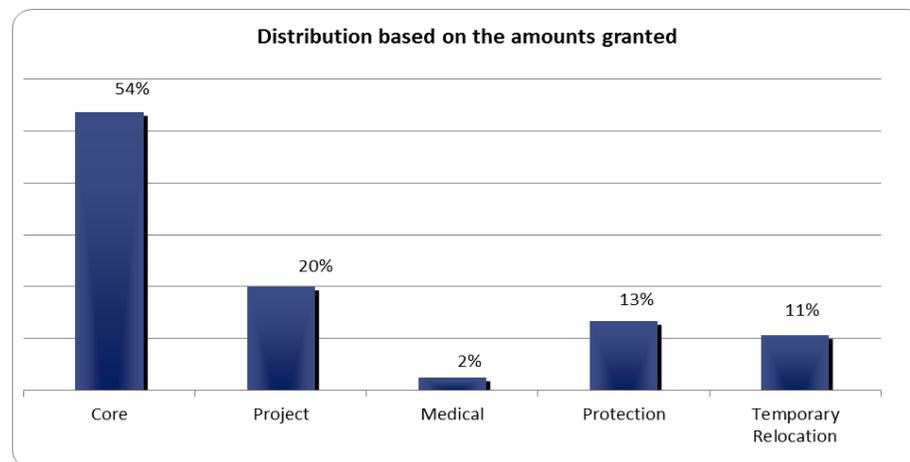
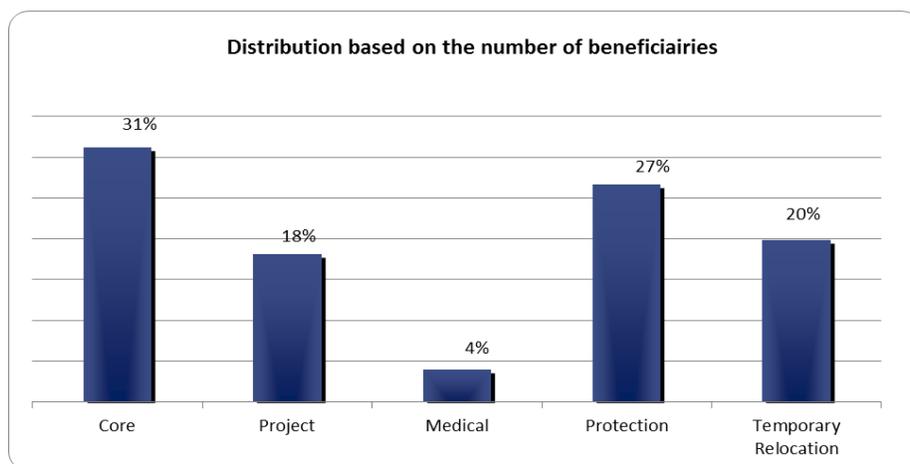
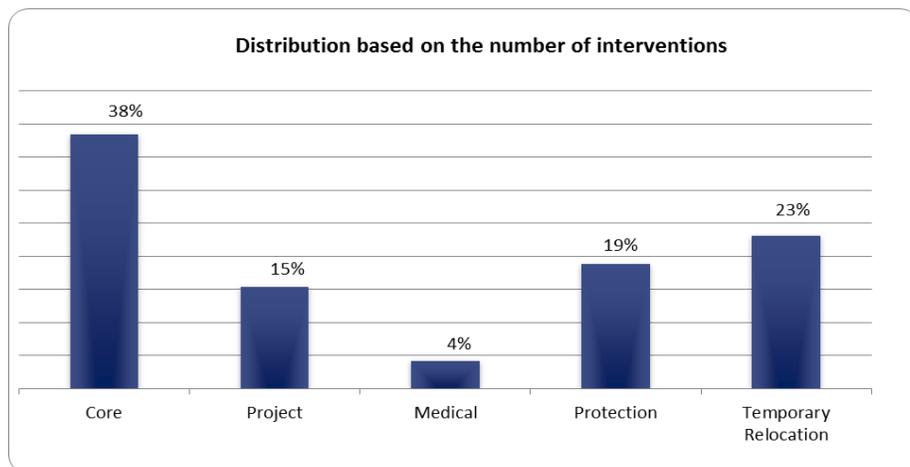


In 2014, the largest category of activities implementing the Foundation's beneficiaries aimed at ensuring the tangible protection of human rights defenders and victims of grave and massive human rights violations, especially in hostile and unstable contexts. These psychosocial, medical, legal and administrative services represented 43% of the activities engaged by the Foundation's local partners.

Moreover, complementary activities related to human rights education, documentation, dialogue and advocacy, which are crucial to bolster national efforts of reconstruction and to promote the implementation of human rights reforms, accounted for 44 % of all interventions.

Last but not least, new unifying approaches have continued being encouraged by the Foundation, such as cultural, media and artistic activities, as alternatives to traditional means to reach out to a younger audience in the region.

4.5. Types of expenditure covered³⁰



The Foundation's interventions especially reacted to developments adversely affecting the human rights and the human rights defenders' movement at the local levels in 2014.

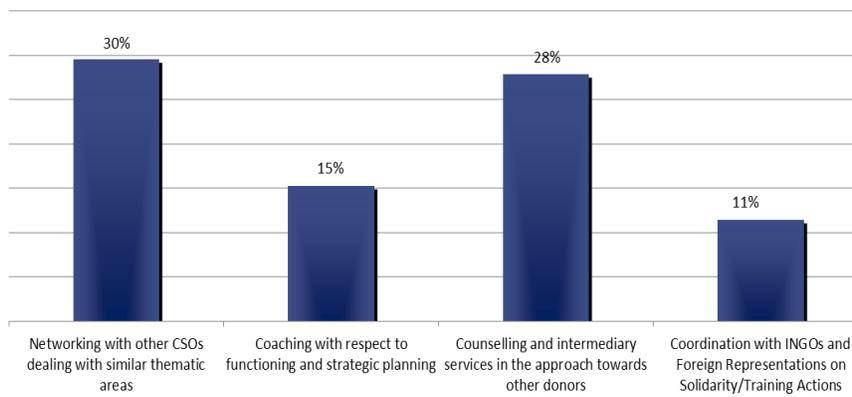
The basic needs in terms of protection and relocation as well as the core expenses of NGOs, essential to be responsive to unanticipated situations as they arise, thus represented 80% of the expenses covered by the Foundation in 2014.

Such interventions took place in a region where most donors often tend to limit their funding opportunities to project-related activities, and/or do not have the required mechanisms to transfer funds in a rapid and creative way, nor the means to provide large numbers of small or individual grants.

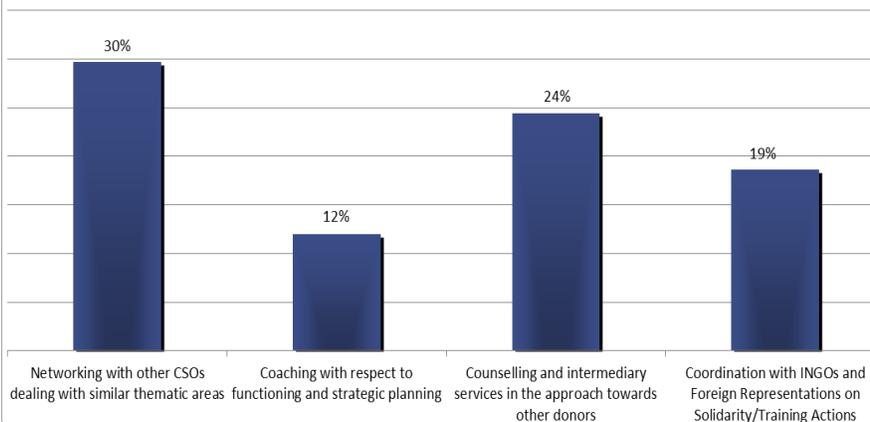
³⁰ Some interventions may have been allocated to more than one category, as appropriate, in order to generate a comprehensive and relevant overview. As a result, the total for all categories may not equal 100 percent.

4.6. Types of indirect support

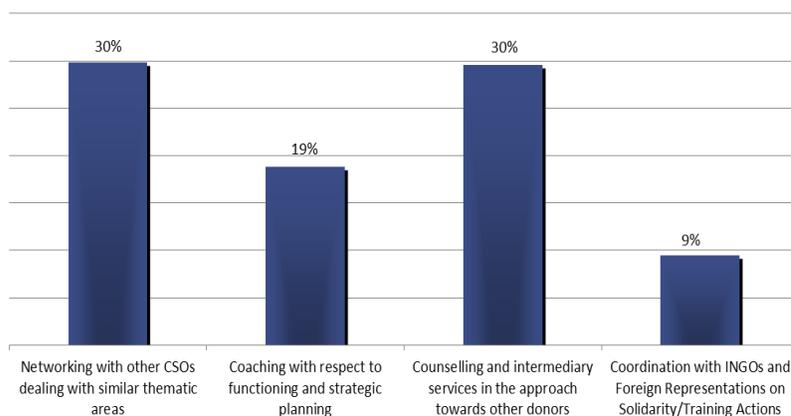
Distribution based on the number of interventions



Distribution based on the number of beneficiaries



Distribution based on the amount granted



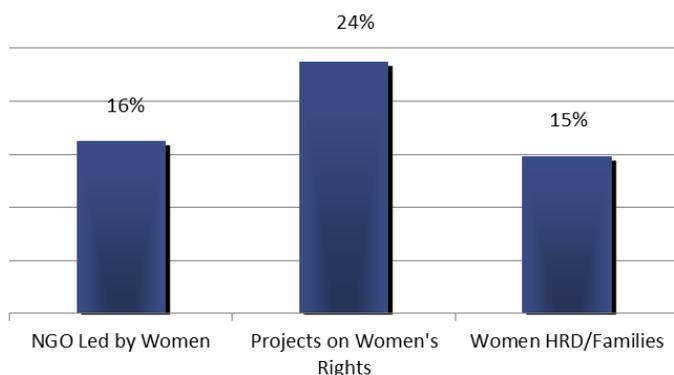
In addition to providing financial assistance, one of the main goals of the Foundation is to help defenders and NGOs in pursuing their work over the long term. To that end, the Foundation has reinforced its indirect support to human rights defenders, especially its counselling services aimed at strengthening networking opportunities with other civil society organisations dealing with similar thematic areas at the local, national, regional or international level.

These are especially important for emerging NGOs in order to allow them to exchange information and experiences, to explore the potential for synergies and coordinated activities, and as a corollary to benefit from non-financial support that contributes to the impact and sustainability of their work.

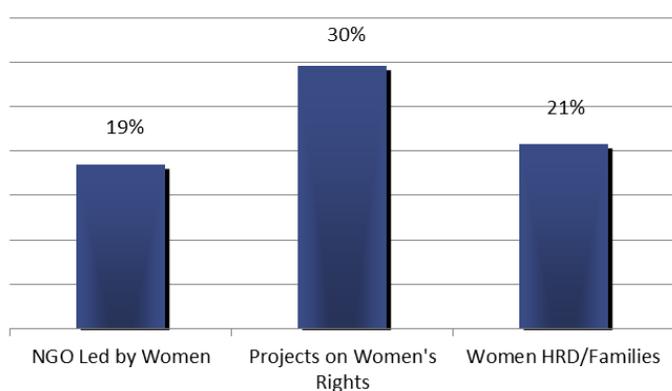
Last but not least, the Foundation continued to facilitate contacts, act as an intermediary, and assist a number of its beneficiaries in the submission of funding requests to other potential donors. This proved to be valuable since 32 % of recipients of EMHRF funding were able to obtain additional financing from other institutions.

4.7. Gender³¹

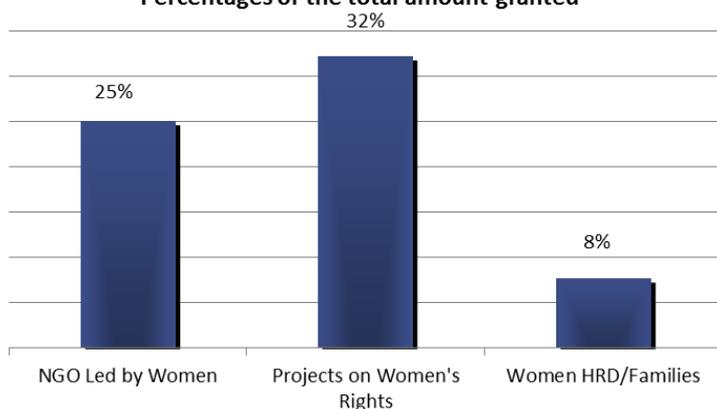
Percentages of the total interventions



Percentages of the total beneficiaries



Percentages of the total amount granted



The gender dimension is an integral part of the Foundation's intervention strategy.

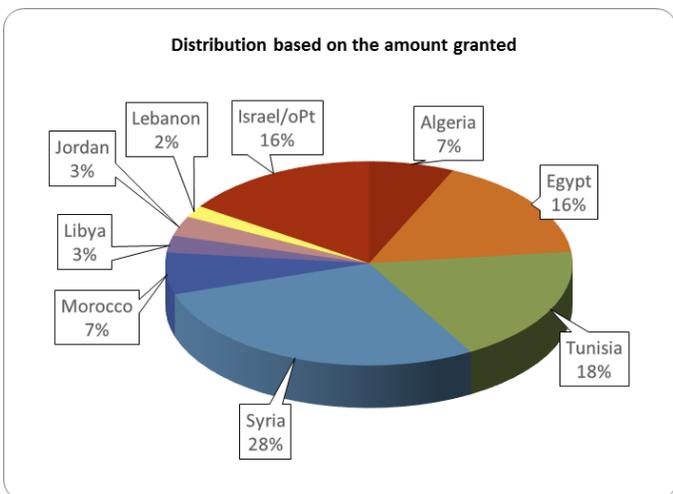
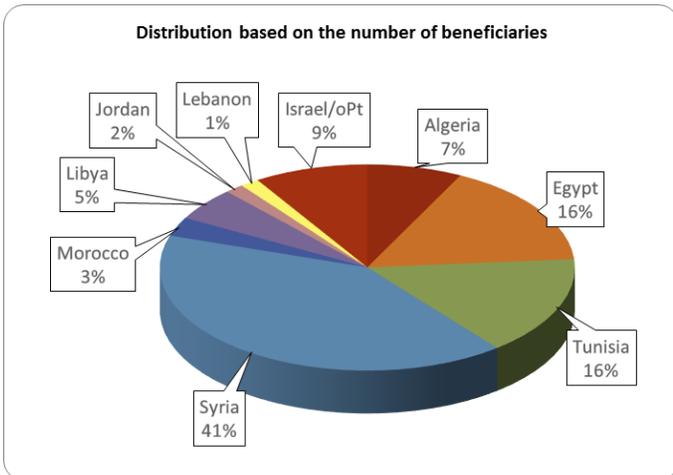
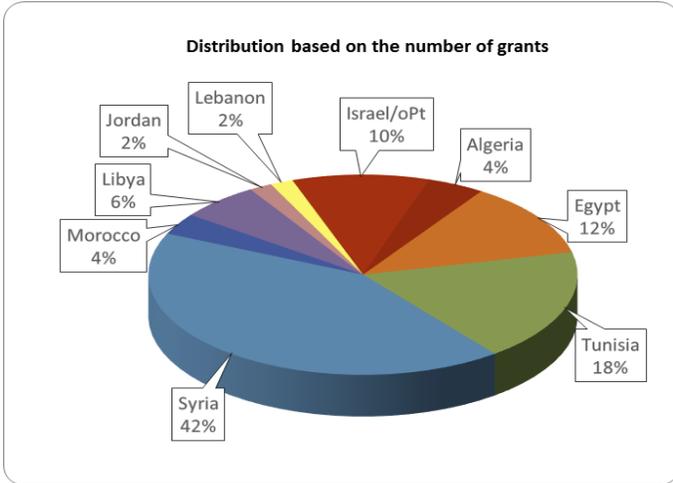
The situation and specific role of women in the protection of human rights require special attention, and the Foundation accordingly attaches great importance to projects that are specifically designed to deal with gender equality and parity, and to strengthen the involvement and leadership of women.

This is all the more relevant in current circumstances, where women are increasingly the target of various forms of violence and not sufficiently represented in transition processes at work even though they were at the forefront of the revolutions.

Considering that the issue of gender equality is central to the democratisation process, the percentage of total amounts allocated, dealing with the protection and promotion of respect for women rights, reached 32 % of all interventions in 2014.

³¹ More than one intervention may have been intended both to strengthen the leadership of women defenders and support a project on women's rights. The interventions were allocated between these two categories as appropriate in order to generate a comprehensive and relevant overview.

4.8. Countries



The protracted war in Syria has been at the centre of the Foundation's concerns in 2014. In a context of complete impunity and of growing human rights fatigue, the Foundation's interventions have been focused on protecting defenders and providing psychosocial, legal, administrative and knowledge-based services to the afflicted Syrian population, especially vulnerable groups such as women, children, the disabled, internally displaced and refugees.

In addition, the Foundation significantly expanded its work in Egypt compared to the previous year, due to mounting arbitrary policies and practices developed against independent civil society. As the Foundation consolidated its local presence in Tunisia, local actors, especially those emerging in neglected regions, also remained important recipients of Foundation grants in 2014.

At the same time, the Foundation was mindful of the challenging environments in which civil society must operate in Algeria, as well as of the consequences of the reshuffling of some funders' priorities and politically driven agendas that have affected the work of Lebanese, Israeli and Palestinian civil society actors. These actors have seen funding sources drying up in the past year.

5. Organisational Matters

5.1. Financial Partnerships

In 2014, the Foundation continued to enjoy the trust of, and received renewed contributions for its main operations from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DANIDA), the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Sigrid Rausing Trust (SRT). In addition, it received support for country-specific actions from the Foundations to Promote Open Society (OSF) on Syria, from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Syria and Egypt, and from Oxfam-Novib on Tunisia.

Lastly, given the severe deterioration in the human rights situation in general and for human rights defenders in particular in Egypt, Libya and Syria, the Foundation has explored, jointly with the EMHRN, possibilities of receiving additional support for future concerted solidarity actions in these countries.

5.2. Information and Communication

In 2014, the Foundation maintained its policy of confidentiality regarding most of the information related to the beneficiaries of its funding. This policy was adopted and carried out because of the serious risks to which the activities and persons applying for funding, the recipients of funds or other human rights defenders in the region could be exposed. At the same time, the Foundation ensures that its activities are transparent by providing detailed information to its main donors about its interventions and activities in support of organisations, groups and individual defenders in the region.

The Foundation has also updated its website (<http://www.emhrf.org/>), with clear explanations about the rules governing the presentation of emergency and regular funding requests, as well as other news, in the three working languages of the Foundation (English, French and Arabic), so as to make this information and these basic documents easily accessible.

5.3. Internal Governance

The composition of the Foundation's Board, made up of nine members who fulfil their mandate on a volunteer basis, remained unchanged in 2014. Moreover, a couple of new members were integrated in the Foundation's core activities in a process of replacing current members, whose terms are coming to an end in 2015. In 2014, the Board of the Foundation was assisted by a Secretariat consisting of the following five full-time and four part-time staff members:

Programme Staff:

- Anne-Sophie Schaeffer (graduate in International Public Law), employed full-time as Programme Director in Denmark until June 2014, and subsequently in France;

- Nael Georges (PhD in Human Rights), employed part-time as Regional Consultant Mashreq in France until November 2014;
- Samy Lendvai-Karmout (graduate in International Relations), employed full-time as Regional Coordinator Mashreq in Denmark;
- Rami Salhi (graduate in Sociology), employed part-time as Regional Consultant Maghreb in Tunisia;
- Anne-Sophie Jouanneau (graduate in Political Sciences), employed full-time as Regional Coordinator Maghreb in Tunisia.

Technical Staff:

- Améline Jaskowiak (graduate in International Economics), employed full-time as Head of Unit Administration and Finances in Denmark;
- Karin Søndergaard (graduate in Accounting), employed part-time as Chief Accountant in Denmark;
- Katrine Høybye Frederiksen (graduate in Foreign Languages), employed part-time as Administrative Officer in Denmark until July 2014, and subsequently replaced full-time by Wafaa Jørgensen.

Moreover, Nathan Teitgen (graduate in Middle Eastern Studies) and subsequently Frances Topham Smallwood (graduate in International Relations and Middle Eastern Studies) were employed full-time as Interns in Denmark to support the work of the programme and administrative staff over the course of 2014.

The EMHRF has also entered into a renewed formal partnership with the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) which notably covers the issues of the sharing of offices and the related expenses. This arrangement is made so as to regulate and minimize the administrative costs of both organisations. Finally, the audit of the Foundation's accounts was performed by the Copenhagen office of *Deloitte*.

Appendix: Synopsis of Grants Applications in 2014

1. Overview of the Number of Grants Applications

In 2014, the Foundation received and dealt with **512** grants applications.

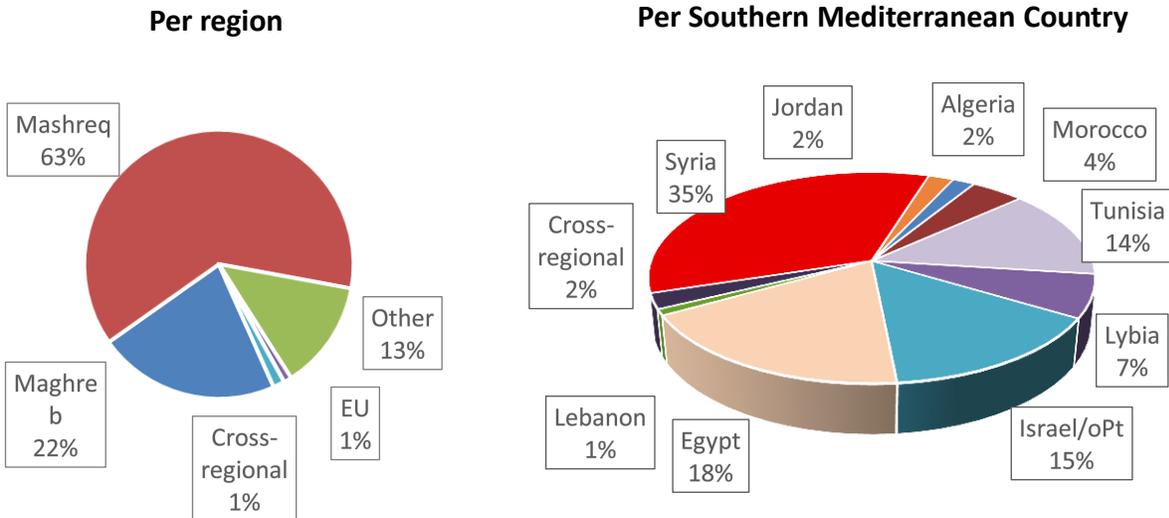
Per Status:		
<i>Granted</i>	96	19%
<i>Rejected</i>	310	61%
<i>Pending</i>	106	20%

Per Type:		
<i>Urgent</i>	178	35%
<i>Strategic</i>	286	56%
<i>Inquiry</i>	48	9%

The total amount granted by the Foundation was **€ 1,414,140**.

2. Geographic Distribution

434 applications came from the Southern Mediterranean region (representing 85% of all applications received).



3. Reasons for Rejection

Three main reasons have justified the ineligibility of the proposals received:

- The activities suggested in the application fall outside the scope of the promotion or defence of universally-recognised human rights standards. These applications accounted for **22%** of all proposals rejected.
- The application does not fall or encompass human rights activities within the geographical mandate of the Foundation, i.e. Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the occupied Palestinian territories and Israel. These applications accounted for **26%** of all proposals rejected.
- The applicant is a well-established NGO which has not experienced any problem in securing funding from mainstream donors. These applications accounted for **5%** of all proposals rejected.

However, in the case where the application does not fall within the mandate of the Foundation, the Secretariat still provides information and advices to the applicant to contact other potential donors better positioned to support the proposal. This is more specifically the case for proposals dealing with threatening situations facing human rights defenders in another region or with specialised areas of intervention, such as the media.

These ineligible applications that have been redirected to other potential partners and donors accounted for **14%** of all applications rejected.

4. Average Response Time

As a rule, the Foundation aims at making sound and rapid decisions related to the applications received.

The interval between the reception of the application and the answer provided by the Foundation is reflected in the chart below:

Total Average Response Time	19 days
✓ <i>for urgent request</i>	19 days
✓ <i>for strategic application</i>	34 days
✓ <i>for inquiry</i>	4 days