



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

Activity Report

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SIGRID RAUSING TRUST



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1. Summary

Over the course of 2018, the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders (EMHRF) continued to play a critical role in strengthening the protection, resilience and innovation capacity of human rights defenders and civil society actors in the Arab region. During the course of the year, the Foundation carried out 132 interventions totalling 1,8 million Euros to fulfil this purpose.

Overall, the Foundation recorded a six percent **increase in its budget**, with a noticeable rise of requests and interventions in Egypt because of the continued deterioration in the human rights situation in the country.¹ Activities in support of defenders accounted for 77% of the Foundation's budget while administrative costs and wages were capped at 23%. Nearly eighty percent of **the Foundation's interventions were carried out in countries in situations of armed conflict or hostile environments** (Syria, Libya, Egypt, Algeria, Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory) and were aimed at protecting human rights defenders from danger, documenting violations and assisting victims.

Although the Foundation's interventions were mostly made in emergency contexts, their effects are long-lasting. In 2018, Foundation support protected the lives and supported the activities of 44 defenders : 33 were able to pursue their human rights advocacy activities in their home country or abroad; those who were relocated were able to adapt themselves to the new environment, get access to trainings and secure job opportunities. In response to the threats targeting civil society actors in the region, the Foundation provided support to more than 2,670 victims of violations through legal, medical and psychosocial assistance and documented violations committed against them. Thanks to the Foundation support, more than 200 reports were published and transmitted by its partners to regional and international mechanisms.

The results of these interventions are encouraging, as illustrated in the following examples.

*The Foundation was instrumental in protecting the lives of twenty-six **Syrian** defenders threatened in besieged areas in 2018 after the government launched violent offensives to recapture large swathes of territories, in particular in the countryside of Damascus and in southern Syria. It coordinated efforts with other international and local human rights organisations to ensure that these defenders reached safety and got access to urgent medical and psychological support to address physical and emotional trauma endured during years under siege and forced displacement. Thanks to such support, one of these defenders has today launched a website specialised in the war memory and is preparing a documentary film on the human rights defenders' path in Syria.*

¹ The EMHRF received and assessed 584 requests in 2018. Requests for assistance from Egypt rose by 17% compared to 2017. Most notably, actions to support Egyptian defenders and NGOs rose by 60% compared to 2017.

*A joint report was produced on Capital Punishment in **Egypt** in February 2019 that documents and analyses death sentences handed down in civilian and military tribunals from 2013 to 2018. This unique report provides the first figures regarding swelling death sentences issued against over 700 civilians in 2018, including minors, and a comprehensive picture about the legal and security processing of those cases. The data collected and presented in this report, which also examines the criteria for fair trial and due process in Egypt, were later officially communicated to different UN human rights mechanisms that will engage with the discussions of Egypt's human rights situation in the Universal Periodic Review session of the UN Human Rights Council, scheduled for November 2019.*

*Legal representation and subsequent international pressure led to the acquittal of an **Algerian** defender who was arbitrarily prosecuted on charges of "contempt of an official state body and producing forged evidence" after lodging a complaint against the police for acts of torture.*

Nearly twenty percent of **the Foundation's interventions were aimed at strengthening the core operations of innovative and emerging civil society initiatives working primarily in remote regions of Morocco and Tunisia** to address inequalities, notably in the field of economic and social rights as well as women's rights, and to empower disadvantaged populations to be actors of sustainable democratic and human rights change.

The Foundation's interventions contributed to raising awareness, in particular among the youth and women, on fundamental rights through educational and cultural events. The Foundation also built the capacities of civil society actors by promoting coalitions and partnerships with authorities. 69% of the supported civil society organizations have then established partnerships with local and central authorities thus increasing the impact on the issue of fighting impunity and ensuring respect for fundamental freedoms.

The results of these interventions are particularly compelling, as illustrated by the examples below.

*To strengthen education on and enforcement of existing laws to protect women from violence in **Morocco**, training sessions were organised by an emerging organisation, established in 2017 in the region of Rabat-Salé-Kénitra, that allowed 52 women to deepen their knowledge on the Law no. 103-13 on combating violence against women that came into effect in 2018. These trainings led to the collection of six audio podcast testimonies of sexual harassment and sexual assault experienced by women in different places, including at schools and universities, at home and work, and in the street. Twelve of these victims were offered legal advice and psychological follow-up, thanks to collaborations established with listening centres and NGOs.*

*Based on the collection of digital material by a group of civil society activists throughout **Tunisia** over the period 2016-2018, an outstanding document library of the 2011 'Arab Spring' was handed to the National Archives in Tunis in 2017 and served to launch a unique exhibition in Tunis' Bardo Museum on 14 January 2019. This initiative also represents a model of cooperation between civil society and State institutions for the preservation of the national memory; it was organised with the support of the Ministry of Culture and under the patronage of the President of the Republic Béji Caïd Essebsi. Made available to the public, the library and exhibition, which have an educational, documentary and artistic scope, will serve to strengthen scientific research on these developments and to preserve the collective memory, especially of the young actors of change, and of their demands.*

*Established in April 2017 in Agadir, **southwestern Morocco**, a grassroots civil society organisation held four legal workshops, attended by 159 young participants, 30% of whom were women, to strengthen their knowledge of democratic participation in local and territorial governance and participatory budgeting over the period October-December 2018. These workshops empowered Moroccan youth to understand the mechanisms for addressing inequalities, evaluating and advancing public policies respectful of their demands at the level of the elected regional councils in the region of Souss-Massa. A handbook of the mechanisms for democratic participation in local affairs will be developed and published by the association to strengthen the reach of knowledge beyond the participants in the workshops.*

The Foundation made it a priority to cover **operating costs, i.e. rental and human resources costs**, that are rarely supported by other donors, so that civil society actors might sustain their activities. Operating costs made up 76% of all costs covered by the Foundation in 2018.² The Foundation also strengthened its support to **youth and women**, who made up 46% and 32% respectively of its beneficiaries.³

Beyond this direct support, and in view of threats to civil society actors, financial difficulties and obstacles to creating alliances in the region, the Foundation helped its partners contact other donors, with **35% of them securing additional funding at the time of writing**. It was also instrumental in leading coordination efforts between public and private donors to **promote an enabling environment for civil society**, and to **consider means to mobilise and expand foreign and national resources for the local human rights movement**, in order to uphold its resilience and sustainability prospects.

Lastly, twenty years after the adoption of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, the Foundation organised the regional workshop on the situation of defenders in the Middle East and North Africa at the [2018 Human Rights Defenders' World Summit](#) that took place in Paris on 29-31 October 2018.⁴

The main areas of the Foundation's interventions, financial and non-financial, in support of NGOs, groups and individual defenders in the region, are outlined in more detail below.

2. Direct Interventions

The Foundation allocated direct support to 131 defenders (72 civil society initiatives and 59 individual defenders).⁵ 51% of the Foundation's direct interventions were made in an emergency context to protect the lives and well-being of defenders, while 49% were aimed at strengthening the functioning of groups or associations that do not have access to traditional sources of funding.

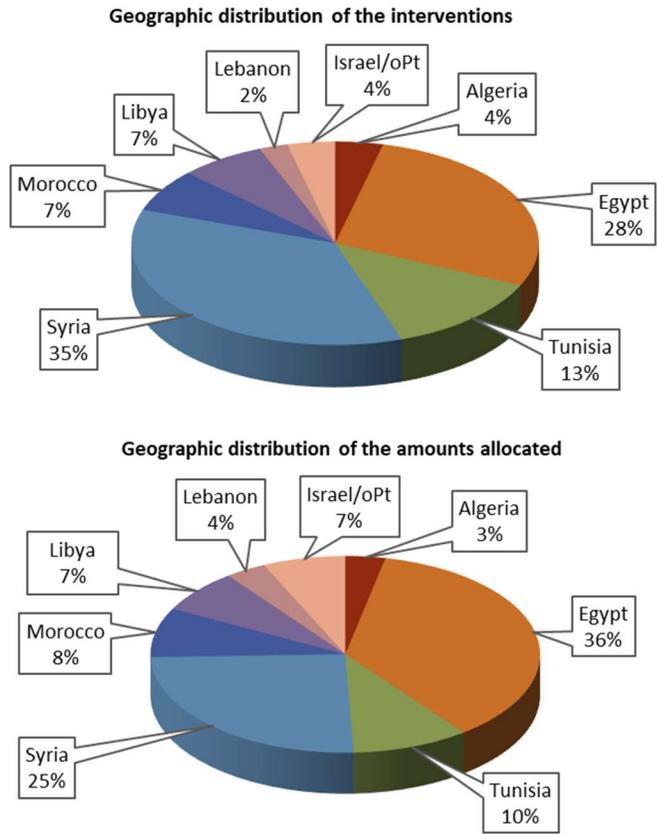
² The protection needs of defenders in the region, including health care, basic resources for families and urgent/temporary relocation, represented 19% of the costs covered. The remaining 5% supported projects, notably timely or innovative ones, that didn't require support for operating costs.

³ These beneficiaries comprise female and young defenders (below the age of 35) as well as civil society groups led by and working toward youth and women in particular.

⁴ The session aimed at making a diagnosis of the situation and obstacles facing defenders in the region and reflecting on the major universal challenges facing defenders in the future in view of the political, social and economic reality in the region and the "end" of a consensus on human rights at the global level. Two panels focusing on human dignity and gender equality, and eight speakers, including academics and defenders, were invited by the EMHRF.

⁵ Based on thorough due diligence reviews performed by the Secretariat according to selection criteria, the Board decided to allocate direct support to 23% of the requests received. 6% of the Foundation's beneficiaries are members of its founder, EuroMed Rights.

As illustrated by the breakdown of grants by country provided below, Syria and Egypt represent a significant share of the Foundation’s interventions due to the harsh conditions for human rights work:



Support is distributed in two main categories: urgent interventions to protect individual defenders, and flexible interventions to support innovative or emerging initiatives in the regional context.⁶

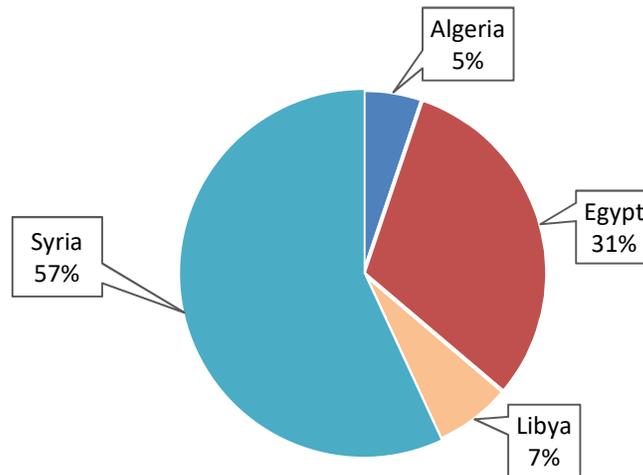
2.1. Urgent Interventions to Protect Individual Defenders

In 2018, the Foundation granted urgent support to protect the safety of 59 individual defenders (34% of them women and LGBTQ defenders) and their families, at risk because of their work in Syria, Egypt, Libya and Algeria.

As shown in the pie chart below, the vast majority of the Foundation's urgent grants was awarded to Syrian defenders who continued to experience significant violence and forced displacement as well as arbitrary and variant measures of harassment, deprivation of freedom, torture and ill-treatment.

⁶ The Foundation set up two mechanisms to respond as flexibly as possible to the needs expressed by defenders: an emergency response mechanism, through which the Board can decide to allocate grants of €5,000 (with a maximum of 20% of overhead costs, i.e. €6,000 in total) in less than ten days, and a mechanism based on regular consultations of Board members at their annual meetings, through which requests of up to €60,000 are considered (the ceiling has been increased from € 40,000 to € 60,000 by the Board in 2018 given the increasing needs expressed by local actors).

Distribution of grants to individual HRDs per country



In particular, 51% of the grants were provided to cover the **immediate and temporary relocation of defenders abroad**, 21% covered **medical costs and psychosocial support** and 28% covered **internal relocation, legal aid and/or basic needs** of defenders' families. These grants were mainly allocated in response to threats and in view of their precarious situations, and they aimed at allowing these defenders and their families to regain a sense of normalcy in their lives and consider means to pursue their activism in the future. Furthermore, the Foundation followed up closely on the situation of 77% of these defenders with a view to securing additional forms of support (that is, other than financial). In particular, it coordinated its urgent interventions in support of 19 recipients with partners implementing solidarity actions (urgent appeals, letters to support asylum and resettlement requests, trial observation missions, meetings with officials, etc.); it assisted 18 defenders in accessing rehabilitation services, training or scholarship opportunities abroad, and secured longer term financial support for six relocated defenders, notably from the Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM), the Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights Defenders (UAF), Dignity for All, Reporters without Borders (RSF) and the EU Mechanism *ProtectDefenders.eu*.

Overall, the **results of these protection grants** are encouraging:

- In **75% of the cases**, the grants and the follow-up undertaken **likely saved lives and helped secure long-term protection**. For example, an Egyptian LGBTQ activist, who fled the country during the security crackdown targeting people perceived to be LGBTQ or LGBTQ supporters in early October 2017, avoided arbitrary arrest and forced anal examination on charges of “debauchery,” “immorality” or “blasphemy.” Thanks to his urgent relocation abroad and follow-up to introduce him to other likeminded partners, the defender was recognised as a refugee and granted international protection in Europe in August 2018. Today, he continues addressing EU and national institutions, among others, on how to fight racism and homophobia in Egypt. At the time of writing, 21 Syrian, Libyan and Egyptian defenders supported have lodged asylum claims in Europe and the United States of America.
- In several cases, the **support allocated also helped to build the defenders’ employability prospects, notably when relocated abroad**. For example, a women rights’ defender and lawyer, threatened with death and detention by the Syrian regime, relocated and regularised her situation in Lebanon, which allowed her to concentrate on developing her long-term prospects. Thanks to support from the Foundation, among others, the activist took English lessons and registered for the IELTS examination in June 2018, which was a precondition for her to enrol in a master’s degree. The activist is one of the leading voices advocating at the international level for truth and justice for Syrian victims of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance. At the time of writing, 37% of the defenders supported have secured a stable source of income.
- Last but not least, the grants were instrumental in helping **63% of them to resume their work in defence of human rights whether in their countries or abroad**. For example, a 38 year-old Libyan human rights activist, who was arbitrarily detained in December 2017 and ill-treated by agents of the Libyan army district chamber in Benghazi, was able to relocate to and access psychosocial support sessions in Tunisia. Thanks to such support, the activist regained a sense of normalcy in his life, allowing him to resume his human rights activism. He notably participated in the final report of the consultation phase of the National Conference Process, which was presented to SRSO Ghassan Salamé, Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya in November 2018, and he returned to Libya volunteering for a civil society organisation in December 2018.

However, 15 defenders were unable to reach safety abroad, or to return to their home country due to the persistence of threats, and two activists supported in 2018 are arbitrarily detained in Syria.

2.2. Interventions in Support of Innovative and Emerging Human Rights Initiatives

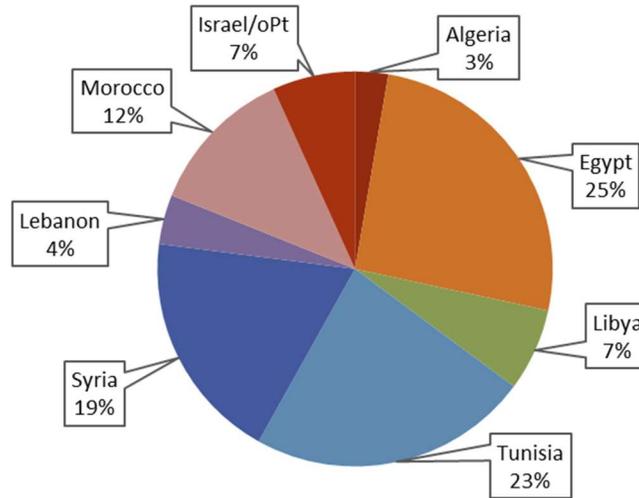
With a view to adapting interventions to different national dynamics, the Foundation provided flexible support, **both on an urgent and regular basis**,⁷ to 72 civil society initiatives, including unregistered groups, **57% of whom are based in remote and hard-to-reach areas**.

These grants were mainly awarded to recently established innovative initiatives, to support the start of activities, and to well-established and reputable organisations that faced sudden financial shortfalls, in order to fill unexpected funding gaps.⁸ The activities of the supported groups or associations mainly took place in Egypt, Tunisia, Syria and Morocco, as illustrated in the pie chart below.

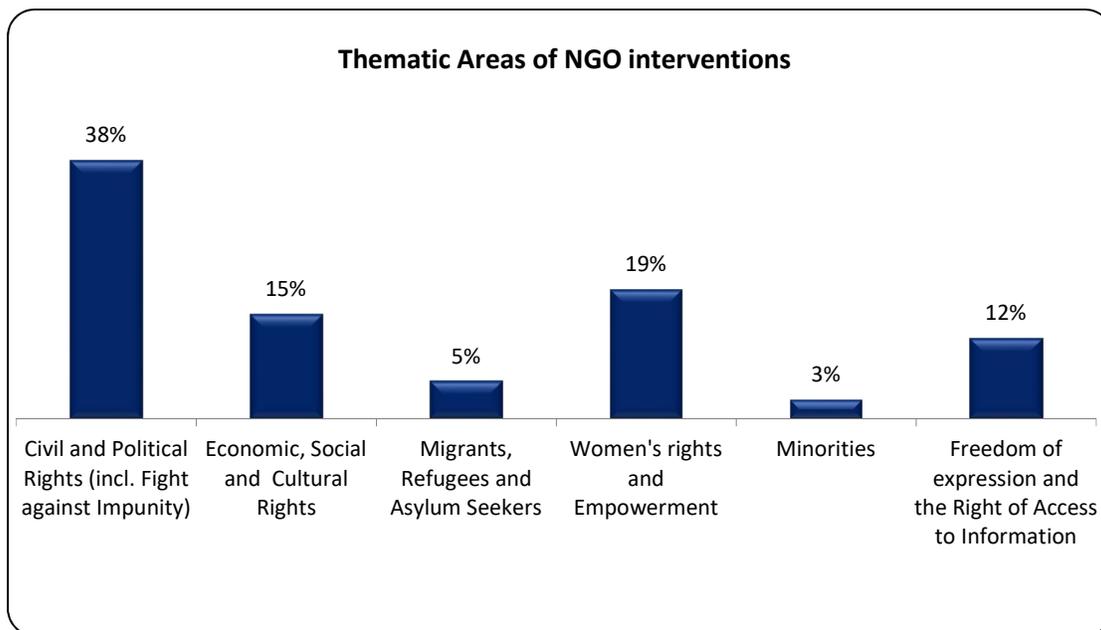
⁷ 9 of the 72 civil society groups supported received urgent bridge grants to cover unexpected legal and financial shortfalls in 2018.

⁸ Well-established associations facing difficulties made up 43% of the recipients of the Foundation’s flexible support interventions, which represent a significant increase compared to 2017, while 57% were new civil society initiatives.

Distribution of grants to associations per country



The activity of the innovative and emerging initiatives mainly focused on the following thematic areas:



In particular, the Foundation sought to respond to tangible needs expressed by civil society actors in the five countries outlined below.⁹

⁹ This report does not provide details about interventions in Lebanon and Algeria because of their small number (3 and 2 respectively). Furthermore, no grant was allocated to Jordanian civil society initiatives, mainly due to other sources of funding available in the country.

2.2.1. Supporting Victims in Syria and Neighbouring Countries

The Foundation supported 14 Syrian human rights groups, **half of them focused on women rights**, that aim at **documenting violations, providing assistance and empowering victims of violations to call for justice and accountability in Syria and neighbouring countries**. The specific focus of the grants was:

- To strengthen specialist or local initiatives that aim at documenting violations by all parties to the conflict and against the general population to exploit this documentation in future advocacy and litigation activities, with a focus on violations against women,¹⁰ on detention, torture and enforced disappearances in general and on the use of chemical agents in the conflict;
- To support autonomous victim-led efforts, notably of former female detainees and of families of torture victims, at pursuing justice and redress, and to make it a political priority in any future transition;
- To nurture grassroots awareness projects aimed at educating and empowering women to defend their rights, to seek support in society and to engage in public life in the Idlib province and in government-controlled areas; and to preserve the cultural property and prevent further violations against archaeological sites and artifacts in the Idlib province;
- To provide legal, administrative and psychosocial assistance to vulnerable displaced and refugee populations, notably women, children and persons with disabilities in Southern Damascus, Lebanon and Turkey, while empowering them to develop knowledge about fundamental rights and political participation.

2.2.2. Preserving and Developing Emerging Human Rights Initiatives in Libya

The Foundation's interventions aimed at supporting five Libyan organisations, two of whom are based abroad for safety reasons,¹¹ to **develop and maintain their activities aimed at defending victims of violations and promoting respect for fundamental rights in Libya**. In particular, the initiatives supported pursued the following objectives:

- To provide legal assistance to victims of violations and their families, notably victims of torture, abduction and death in custody;
- To combat hate speech and incitement to violence and discrimination, and to promote respect for the rights of journalists;
- To document violations and defend the rights of detained migrants and persons with disabilities in Tripoli and Benghazi;
- To strengthen the skills and knowledge of civil society actors, notably on data journalism, human rights campaigning and strategic planning.

2.2.3. Upholding the Resilience of Independent Civil Society in Egypt

The Foundation continued to focus its interventions on **upholding the resilience of the independent civil society movement in Egypt** by helping human rights organisations to **protect their very existence and influence, at home**

¹⁰ Illegal detention, forced displacement, physical assault, early marriage, looting and theft, and public executions.

¹¹ It is worth noting that additional legal assistance was provided by the EMHRF to one of these initiatives to register its activity in Tunisia.

and partially abroad,¹² to enable them to continue documenting violations, assisting victims of the repression and advocating for respect of fundamental rights. The Foundation notably supported 17 initiatives seeking:

- To secure their internal management and communication systems, and to challenge the legality of assets freeze and tax evasion claims arbitrarily brought against them;
- To report on fake news and document violent incidents, human rights violations and arbitrary legal practices, notably military trials of civilians, death penalties, detention, torture and ill treatment, sectarian violence against religious and ethnic minorities (Christians and Nubians), violations against women and refugees, to preserve the memory;
- To provide pro bono legal assistance and representation to victims of human rights violations before various judicial branches, notably human rights defenders and their organisations, pro-democracy activists, university students, bloggers and journalists, workers, migrants and refugees victims of torture, arbitrary detention, and capital punishment as well as women survivors of violence;
- To raise public awareness of the State's human rights record by analysing and exposing arbitrary government policies and practices, including in the areas of budget planning and spending, in order to promote the right to access information, transparency and to advocate for accountability.

2.2.4. Protecting Civil Society Action and Innovation in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The Foundation focused its interventions on providing **bridge funding to enable human rights organisations to partly overcome the implications of the closing civil society space, and seed funding to innovative initiatives that strive to prevent and respond to violations and discriminations** in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory. The mission of the five supported NGOs was the following:

- To maintain independent media coverage of sensitive human rights issues and violations;
- To protect the well-being of women human rights defenders, and to raise awareness of the gendered aspects of the occupation;
- To provide a safe space where young Palestinians and Israelis are encouraged, through educational, artistic, cultural and media projects, including games, to think critically and discuss the different aspects of the Nakba, transitional justice and the right of return, and to build their resilience to withstand violence.

2.2.5. Strengthening Associations in Remote Regions of Tunisia and Morocco

Beyond the differences and complexity of the democratic transition processes taking place in each of the two countries, the Foundation continued to give priority to strengthening the core operations of 26 **local associations to address inequalities, notably in the field of economic and social rights as well as women's rights, and to empower disadvantaged populations, notably youth and women, to be actors of sustainable democratic and human rights change.** In particular, the Foundation supported 17 Tunisian and 9 Moroccan initiatives that pursued the following specific objectives:

- To educate, including through cultural, artistic and media activities, youth and women on economic and social rights, and to empower them to evaluate public policies and play a greater role in matters relating to local development, good governance and the fight against corruption;

¹² 29% or 5 out of 17 Egyptian recipients of financial support have registered and partially relocated their activity abroad for safety reasons.

- To promote respect for women rights and gender equality, by educating about laws, strengthening access to justice and providing support to women and LGBTQ persons in distress and victims of harassment and violence;
- To strengthen visibility and promote coalition building of civil society actors working in the field of individual and collective freedoms;
- To preserve the collective memory and path to justice by collecting historical sources of information and creating discussion forums on politics, rights and culture to contribute to a democratic future.

These financial interventions in support of emerging and innovative initiatives have received additional support, other than financial, that could contribute to disseminating and sustaining their activities. The specific follow-up undertaken and the results of both financial and non-financial interventions by the Foundation in support of these initiatives are presented below.

2.2.6. Follow-up and outcomes of interventions in support of innovative and emerging initiatives

As an intermediary and adviser to its beneficiaries, the Foundation:

- Encouraged and helped 41 newly formed groups, representing 57% of the NGO beneficiaries, to draft action plans and proposals to enable the Foundation, in conjunction with other partners, to strategically respond to their needs;
- Coached 13 new partners, in particular those working in Tunisia's remote regions, by providing them with strategic advice on the democratic management of associations, project implementation and sustainability prospects in cooperation with EuroMed Right's regional office for the Maghreb;
- Encouraged 22% of its beneficiaries to build and maintain ties with other groups and institutions working on similar themes at the local, national and regional levels. Contacts between organisations aimed at fostering information exchange and experience sharing, identify synergies and joint actions;
- Participated in a seminar organised in September 2018 by the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and Algerian civil society actors aimed at reflecting on the shrinking space of Algerian civil society and the means of action that could be implemented to overcome current challenges;
- Coordinated its interventions with private foundations active in supporting Syrian civil society and met with the members of the Syria Working Group (SWG)¹³ to discuss the priorities and needs of Syrian civil society as well as the different models for supporting it with academics and representatives of Syrian civil society actors in October 2018;
- Coordinated its interventions in Libya with the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) to strengthen the role of Libyan civil society in influencing the human rights components of the political agreement from December 2015, and participated in Libya Working Group meetings organised in January, March and June 2018;
- Co-organised consultations held by EuroMed Rights to develop a joint approach to support and advocate for upholding the resilience of the Egyptian civil society movement in the current repressive context in May and November 2018;
- Facilitated the exchange of contacts, acted as an intermediary, forwarded a list of potential donors and/or assisted in drafting funding applications for 38% of its beneficiaries, that is, 27 NGOs in total. In

¹³ In June 2018, the EMHRF was invited to become a member of the steering committee of the SWG (along with the Asfari Foundation, the Sigrid Rausing Trust and the Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights Defenders), which aims to inform and enable greater philanthropic support for Syrian-led civil society in Syria and neighbouring countries (Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq and Jordan).

addition, the Foundation directly helped several applicants whose activities fell outside the scope of its mandate but which could be of interest to and may be supported by other donors.

Some of the main impacts of the Foundation's partners in 2018 are highlighted below:

Over two hundred documented reports, articles and documentaries were produced, and specific cases of grave violations were subsequently communicated to international and regional mechanisms to uncover the truth and seek justice for the victims in Syria, Egypt and Libya.

- This includes, among others, comprehensive reports produced - including jointly - by Egyptian NGOs on deaths resulting from torture in detention centres, on sectarian violence, and on violations against religious and ethnic minorities as well as on capital punishment in Egypt. The latter report notably provides the first figures regarding swelling death sentences issued against at least 737 civilians in 2018. To call for the repeal of such arbitrary frameworks and practices, 47 formal complaints were subsequently filed by these NGOs to the UN Special Procedures and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. These reports, and the related visibility actions undertaken, prompted the EU Parliament to adopt a [resolution](#) in December 2018 strongly condemning the continuous restrictions on fundamental rights in Egypt, including freedom of expression, association and assembly, political pluralism and the rule of law.
- Eight field visits were also carried out to detention centres in Benghazi, Khoms, Souk Al-Khmiss, Kararim, which resulted in the production of in-depth reports about poor conditions and rights violations facing 622 migrants, 52 disabled people and 25 orphans in Libya. Such reports served as the basis for the holding of a capacity building workshop on migrants' rights for six penitentiary civil servants to prevent further violations.
- This also included the documentation of 596 deaths, including of 79 women and 106 children, as well as arrests, enforced disappearances and forced recruitments of civilians in Daraa province in June and July 2018 when the Syrian government retook control over the Daraa and Quneitra governorates, considered as two of the last major opposition strongholds in Syria. The association behind this documentation work was considered one of the main independent sources of information available in southern Syria, and its data was quoted by international, regional and local media outlets including CNN, AFP, Al Jazeera, Middle East Eye, Enab Baladi, and The New Arab, among others.

- ***Legal assistance and representation as well as psychosocial and rehabilitation services were provided to more than 2678 victims of violations and discriminations in the region, notably peaceful demonstrators, human rights and pro-democracy activists, stateless, displaced and refugee populations from Syria, Egypt, Libya and Lebanon.***
 - More precisely, pro bono legal assistance and representation services were provided to 331 victims of violations in Egypt, notably civil society organisations and human rights defenders, pro-democracy activists, journalists, writers and bloggers, workers and women who were arbitrarily discriminated, investigated and/or prosecuted in judicial cases such as the 173/2011 known as the “Foreign Funding” case, and the new judicial cases 441/2018, 621/2018, 718/2018 aimed at criminalizing human rights and political opponents, among other high-profile judicial cases, because of their peaceful actions calling for justice and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms. This assistance took place before various judicial branches – criminal, administrative, labour, state security courts and prosecution offices in seven governorates, in particular the Greater Cairo, Nile Delta and Upper Egypt regions. As reported by a beneficiary, such support was essential *“to continue challenging arbitrary closure and detention cases, to obtain the release of defendants and to handle appeal cases in particular, comprising sometimes over thousands of files to study.”* Thanks to the assistance provided, eight activists and one female minor were released in 2018. Moreover, 15 cases of victims of arbitrary dismissals have obtained more than 3 million Egyptian Pounds in compensation. Last but not least, six police officers are being tried on charges of “torture” and “beating that lead to death” for the murder of an Egyptian citizen in a police station.
 - Daily legal and administrative guidance, including on personal status laws, polygamy, early marriage, domestic violence, child soldier’ recruitment and citizenship, access to education as well as educational and psychosocial support sessions were provided to 2037 Syrian displaced and refugee women and children in southern Damascus and southern Turkey.
 - Legal counselling was also provided to 130 stateless families living in remote and undeveloped regions in Lebanon, including 44% of women, on birth registration, nationality related matters, and access to education and health services. Trainings were further organised for 54 lawyers, including 7 assigned by the Ministry of Justice, in Tripoli, Beirut and Chtaura to focus on outstanding legal and judicial procedural issues related to both birth registration and nationality cases. Besides legal counselling, a unique dialogue was engaged by the association with the General Security, Ministries of Social Affairs, Justice, Education and Health and the UNHCR on issues related to statelessness (including civil registration, access to justice, education, health and social services) to jointly debate on measures that need to be adopted to end the phenomenon of statelessness in the future.
 - Lastly, a new rehabilitation centre was opened for women victims of domestic and gender-based violence and desocialisation that hosted 33 women and their children who received daily individual support sessions in administrative and legal matters, medical and psychosocial support as well as socialisation and integration trainings in southwestern Morocco. In addition, a listening centre provided support and guidance to 124 LGBTQ people in distress in Tunisia.

- **211 educational events, often making use of film narratives, games and the arts, were held to create debate on human rights, and to empower over 2858 marginalised persons, notably youths and women, to play a greater role in matters relating to promoting respect for fundamental rights, sustainable development, social cohesion and good governance at the local level in Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, Libya, Syria and Lebanon.**
 - For example, a Tunisian association organised a *Youth Academy* in October, aimed at empowering 25 young civil society actors (aged 18 to 35) from the governorates of Kébili, Tataouine, Gafsa and Tozeur to debate about economic, social and cultural rights' issues facing youth in the southern regions and to develop alternative solutions to political and social issues. Such academy served to finalise a movie, entitled "*Social Portraits of Kébili*," in December 2018. Partnerships were further concluded with the Regional Youth and Sports Commission to create a training centre for media and human rights, and with the University of Gafsa to support journalism clubs for youth in the region.
 - An association also organised workshops to develop and create games aimed at encouraging and educating Israeli and Palestinian youth about power relations, conflicts and injustice surrounding the 1948 Palestinian exodus, and its ramifications. These workshops culminated with the finalisation of five box games that were publicly launched and tested by 55 participants, including school teachers and students, in May 2018.
 - To promote respect for women's rights and gender equality in Morocco, a local association trained 79 members of local civil society organisations and representatives of the body for equal opportunities and gender approach to the regional Council of Rabat-Salé-Kénitra, on the manual of procedures for monitoring respect for equality in municipalities. As a result, participants could better understand the procedures that can be used by municipalities to promote gender equality at the local level and identify opportunities for collaboration between Moroccan civil society actors and members of these newly formed bodies, in application of the 2011 Constitution.
 - A Libyan association organised two training workshops in Tripoli and Sebratah for 35 journalists - 23% of them females - to deepen their knowledge of the role of the press in combatting misinformation and hate speech. At the end of these trainings, journalists participated in elaborating a lexicon of hate speeches on social media sites; they signed a code on journalistic ethics, and three videos on hate speeches against women were produced, which were widely relayed on social media.

- ***Various civil society coalitions were formed; campaigns and advocacy arguments were moved forward by the civil society beneficiaries to call for accountability and harmonise the legislations and practices with the constitutional provisions and the international conventions ratified by the countries of the region.***
 - For instance, a new campaign has been launched 28 years after the civil war in Lebanon, to continue calling for accountability for 17,000 Lebanese and Palestinian missing persons, that was largely relayed by the [local](#) and [international](#) media in August 2018. Thanks to the sustained mobilisation by the Lebanese civil society on the issue of enforced disappearances, the Lebanese Parliament passed a law to create a national commission to investigate the whereabouts of the missings and to hold those responsible to account. To promote the implementation of the law, a leading Lebanese association started digitising archives of the disappeared to preserve memory at a time when those searching for their missing relatives are getting old or passed away.
 - At a time when Tunisia’s Ministry of Civil Society and Human Rights pledged to reform Decree 88 of 2011 regulating associations, an interactive platform composed of thousands of civil society actors in Tunisia launched the “Civil Alliance for Security and Freedoms,” which developed [arguments](#) and created advocacy materials to guarantee *“the freedom of forming, adhering to and exercising activities within associations, and the reinforcement of the role of civil society organisations as well as their development and respect for their independence.”* Meetings were subsequently held with the Assembly of the Representatives of the People in August to push back against efforts to “improve” sector regulations that would go against the provisions of the Constitution by leading to an aversion to civic work and affecting the transformative role played by Tunisian associations in advancing democratic change in the country..
 - Despite the severity of the Egyptian authorities’ crackdown on dissidents in recent years, and at the time when the Egyptian government proposed constitutional amendments in defiance of the Constitution of 2014, an unique video campaign was launched by civil society actors and started flooding social media networks in Egypt, featuring citizens from various backgrounds making a unified statement: *“I am an Egyptian citizen, and I say no to the constitutional amendments.”* Ordinary people have been filming themselves to express their opposition to the amendments in rapidly increasing numbers and to seek “change for the better.” Some of the videos had attracted more than 225,000 views, ten days after the start of the campaign.
 - A new and unique Syrian victim-led civil society initiative was also launched to empower former female detainees to take a leading role in seeking truth and justice, and to provide the survivors of detention with a safe environment to speak up and share testimonies and to make it a political priority presently and in any future transition in Syria.
 - Thanks to the holding of two workshops with over twenty legal experts, civil society representatives, academics and representatives of civilian authorities in Idlib province, an online campaign, widely largely relayed by local and international media, was launched to call for the protection of the endangered cultural heritage in Syria, to stop acts of hostilities against artefacts and to propose amendments to the existing local law based on international conventions to protect cultural property despite the volatile security situation and the recent military takeover of the Idlib province by Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham. A memorandum of understanding was further signed between civil society organisations and Al Bara’s local council in November 2018, and with the Provincial Council to ensure cooperation to protect archaeological sites.

It is worth noting that **29% of the civil society organisations developed partnerships with the local and central authorities**, notably in **Tunisia and Morocco where this percentage reached 69%**. These included the ARP in Tunisia and the Parliament of Morocco, the Ministries of Human Rights, Social Affairs, Women, the Family and Children, Culture, Education, Youth and Sports, their regional commissions, regional councils as well as the national institutions – notably the National Anti-Corruption Instance and the High Instance for Human Rights in Tunisia, and the National Human Rights Council and its regional commissions in Morocco.

Lastly **35% of them secured additional funding** at the time of writing to ensure -at least in part- the sustainability of their activity.

However, these above-mentioned results should not conceal the **significant threats, managerial and financial difficulties facing the civil societies within the region**. Beyond reviewing rising requests for bridge funding or for budget-neutral extension of partnership agreements in 2018, the EMHRF has adopted specific follow-up measures and arrangements to ensure the safety of three targeted NGOs in Syria, Libya and Egypt, to circumvent the liquidity crisis in Libya, and to closely monitor the implementation of a partnership agreement with a Syrian NGO.

3. Indirect Interventions

Beyond direct financial interventions, the Foundation strengthened its presence or exchanges with civil society actors to closely monitor local dynamics, and it organised specific activities to increase and sustain financing for local civil society actors in the region.

3.1. Presence in the Maghreb and Mashreq Regions

The Foundation maintained its presence in Tunisia, and it participated in several consultations to remain attuned to civil society developments and needs in the region.

The Foundation's regional mission for the Maghreb, based in Tunisia, organised **four field visits in the governorates of Siliana, el Kef, Jendouba, Gafsa, Tozeur, Kébili, Tataouine, Gabès and Médenine** to review challenges and needs of emerging associations in the fields of development and assistance in the course of 2018. Thanks to these visits, four emerging associations were granted seed support and received tailored coaching and advice on project planning and implementation. In addition, the EMHRF provided daily advice to these groups and other beneficiaries on exploring synergies and developing technical and financial partnerships with other national institutions, civil society stakeholders, and donors. This proved to be valuable as 71% of the beneficiaries developed partnerships with local and central authorities, and 47% of them secured additional means of funding to ensure - at least in part - the sustainability of their activity.

Six local and national Tunisian NGO beneficiaries participated -along 400 civil society representatives- in the **annual conference of the League of Independent Public Bodies**, which brings together the seven entities ensuring the fight against corruption (INLUCC), access to information (INAI), the prevention of torture (INPT), the protection of personal data (INPDP), the fight against human trafficking (INLTP), the proper conduct of elections (ISIE), good practices in the audiovisual sector (HAICA), and a High Committee on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (CSDHLF). The conference, which took place from 30 November to 2 December 2018 in Hammamet, provided an opportunity for these newly formed organizations to establish contacts with national institutions to

address common priorities in the country. A regional meeting in Tozeur, with the participation of EMHRF partners and beneficiaries, is also planned for April 2019.

Moreover, the Foundation took part in **three meetings of the Libya Working Group**, coordinated by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) with a view to increasing collaboration and information sharing between Libyan and international NGOs. Lastly, it ***maintained regular exchanges with Egyptian civil society*** throughout the year. It also took part in biannual meetings, coordinated by EuroMed Rights, with international organisations to develop a coordinated approach on solidarity and advocacy actions to respond to the repression.

3.2. Strengthening Financial Support for Local Civil Society Actors

During the year, EMHRF was also leading coordination efforts among donors and private foundations to address the closing space for civil society and to consider means to mobilise and expand foreign and national resources for the local human rights movements in order to uphold their resilience.

3.2.1. Promoting an Enabling Environment for Civil Society

To complement regular exchanges with local and international NGOs, the Foundation organised with International Media Support (IMS) a consultative meeting with 29 representatives of the main bilateral, multilateral and private donors involved in supporting civil society in the Middle East and North Africa in June 2018. This unique space for consultation aimed at sharing knowledge on the strategies adopted by the NGOs and the funders to circumvent the closing space and at considering means and mechanisms to adapt and sustain funding for the resilience of the human rights movement presently and in the future.¹⁴ Comprehensive exchanges took place on the directions of the governments of the region, and on the opportunities and challenges facing civil society in relation to their partial relocation abroad. Moreover, this meeting gave an opportunity to learn from experiences in other regions and conversations have resumed within three working groups: 1) on regional issues, exploring in particular support networks/initiatives for civil society at the regional level, 2) on practical issues, exploring in particular funding models for the civil society, among other issues, and 3) well-being and stress management to coordinate and answer needs for tailored psychosocial education.

3.2.2. Increasing Flexible Foreign Resources to Local Civil Society Actors

In line with the Board's decision to engage with networks of funders to increase resources for local defenders and NGOs, and taking into consideration the conclusions from the [study on funding available for human rights defenders](#) that the EMHRF co-led within the EU HRDs Mechanism,¹⁵ the Foundation held a session at Ariadne Annual Policy Briefing in March 2018¹⁶ to discuss changes in supply of public and private funding for human rights defenders and to engage in dialogue on how private foundations can build arguments and pursue strategies that increase public and private funding to human rights defenders within their own foundations or with bilateral

¹⁴ Undertaken by the Foundation, a survey on the opportunities and challenges of partial relocation was prepared by the EMHRF to complement a previous survey undertaken last year on civil society challenges and approaches to the closing space.

¹⁵ The study acknowledges, among others, 1) a growth in the interest among private funders to support defenders (+12%) that however falls short in compensating for the decline in public funding (-2%), and 2) an overall focus on defenders being marginal in all donors' budgets.

¹⁶ Ariadne is a European peer-to-peer network of more than 600 funders and philanthropists who support human rights worldwide.

donors. A few private foundations agreed to further engage in advocacy with bilateral and multilateral donors, notably within the Funders' Initiative for Civil Society (FICS).¹⁷

3.2.3. Strengthening Endogenous Funding for Civic Engagement and Human Rights

Recalling that there cannot be a democratic path in the region if civil society solely depends on foreign funding, and governments from the region are reinforcing their controls over civil society's financing, the Foundation started in 2017 a new direction to its work by commissioning a study to identify pathways to strengthen national funding opportunities for Tunisian civil society actors, in conjunction with similar efforts underway in Morocco. Finalised in October 2018,¹⁸ this research offers a retrospective dimension, presenting a state of law and practice in terms of national funding (both from the public and corporate sectors), the mechanisms that have existed, those in force or those that have recently been established. It also proposes recommendations that can be considered by civil society actors, institutional and corporate representatives.¹⁹

¹⁷ The Funders' Initiative for Civil Society (FICS) is a unique coalition of public and private foundations, who are grappling with and seeding multiple responses to the issue of closing civil society space. EMHRF is a member of FICS Advisory Board.

¹⁸ The Steering Committee for the study, composed of seven respected Tunisian civil society representatives, met to discuss its development and conclusions in September 2018. Furthermore, the study was enriched with Tunisian civil society representatives on the occasion of EuroMed Rights' Tunisia Civil Society Platform on 15-17 December 2017.

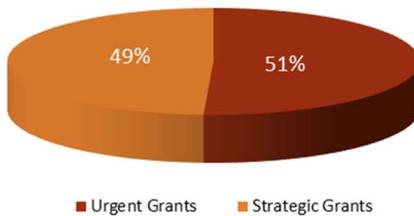
¹⁹ A technical follow-up seminar should be held in 2019.

4. Quantified Review of Interventions

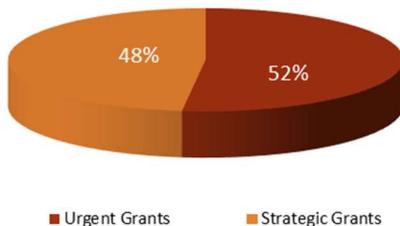
The following pie charts and graphs provide a quantified summary of the grants allocated by the Foundation to defenders and NGOs in 2018.

4.1. Type of Interventions

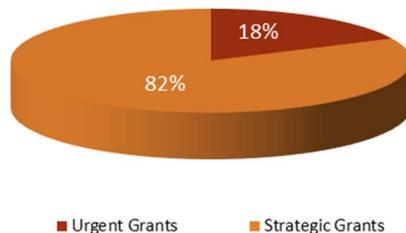
Type of interventions (# grants)



Type of interventions (# beneficiaries)



Type of interventions (amounts)

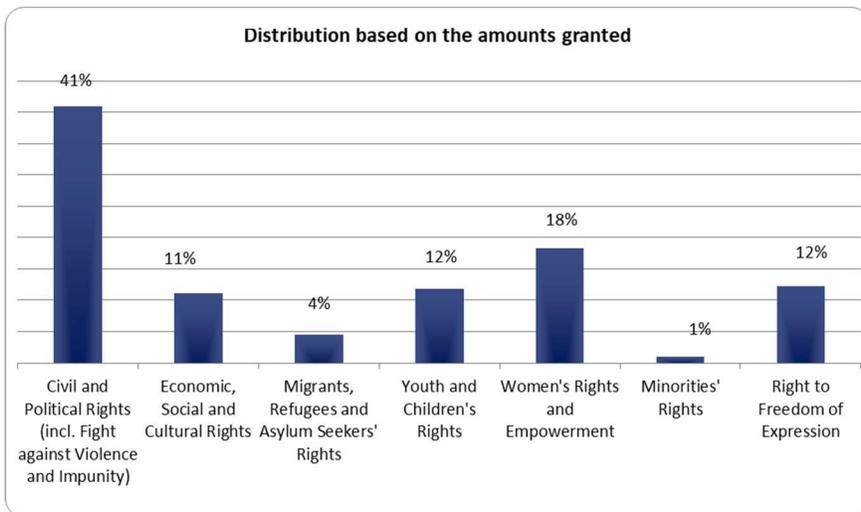
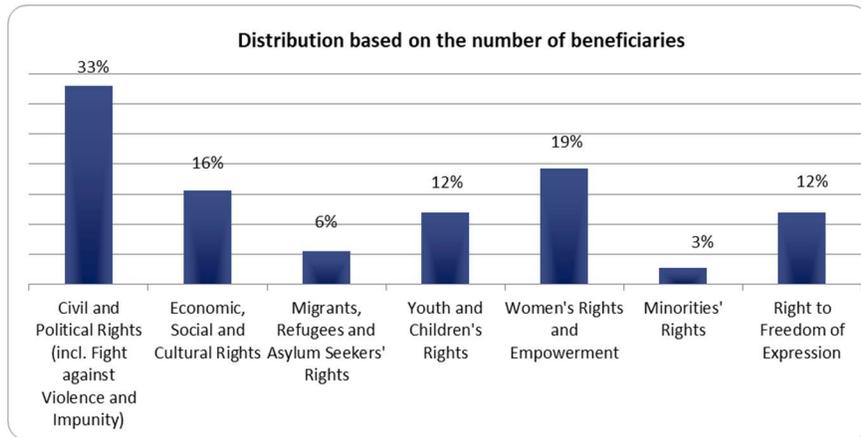
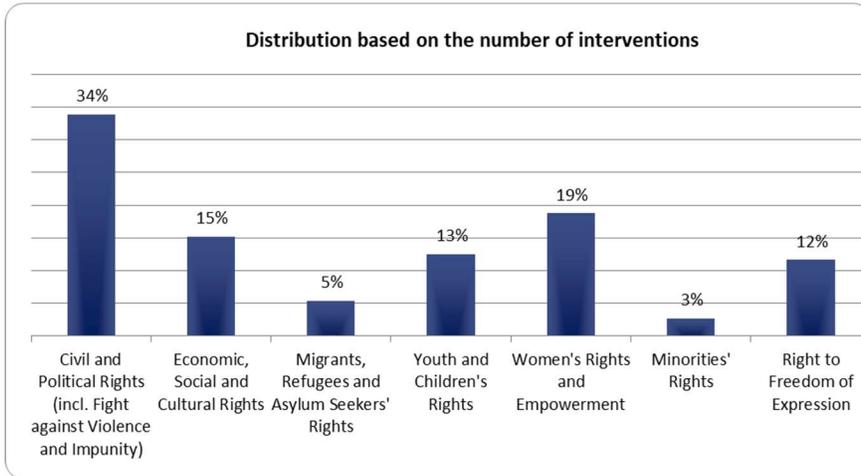


Although they represent much smaller sums of money than regular/strategic grants, the Foundation's urgent interventions to protect the lives and security of defenders working in hostile environments remain significant in number, in particular in Syria and Egypt. The urgent interventions in 2018 levelled those of 2017.

51% of the Foundation's grants were provided in an emergency situation, whereas 49% were allocated in the framework of biannual calls for proposals and meetings of the Board. Through these two support mechanisms, available [online](#), the Foundation is able to address in a flexible way both life-threatening situations and innovation.

The average amount of the grants allocated (both urgent and standard) was €13,637, slightly higher than in 2017. This figure not only emphasises the significance of the grant but also the limited budgetary means for the region's civil societies.

4.2. Thematic Areas

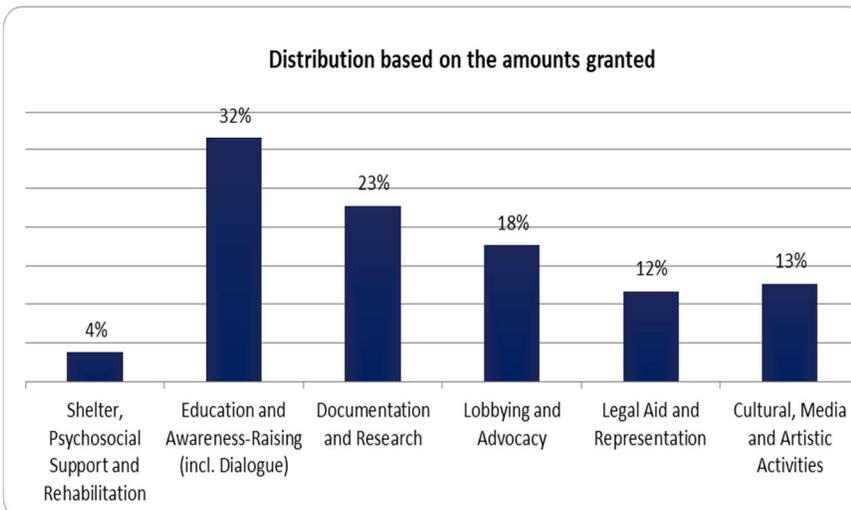
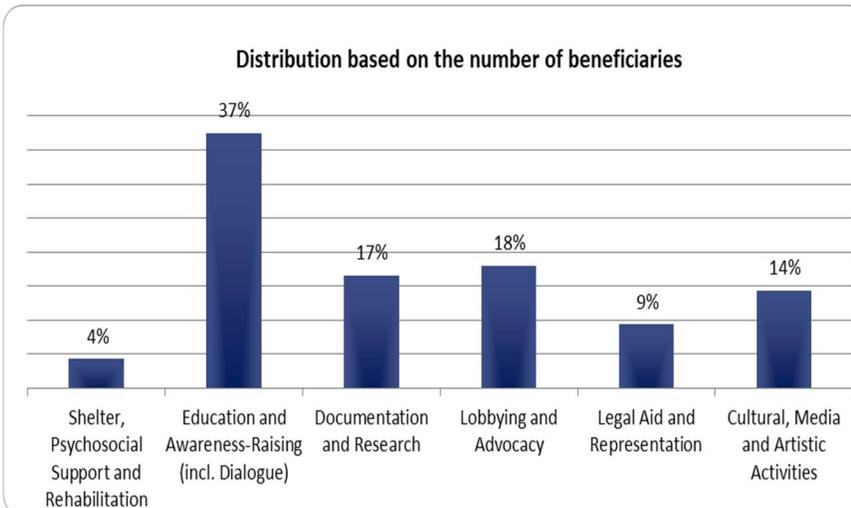
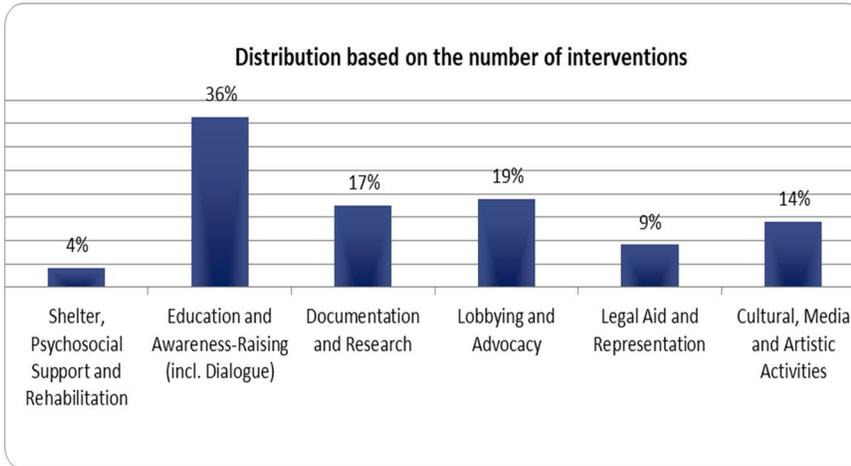


The main thematic focus of the Foundation's beneficiaries remains civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, which are priority issues for the region. As a result, 49% of interventions were related to these issues.

Furthermore, in view of the central role of women and youth in societies and in establishing foundations for democracy, the Foundation made it a priority to strengthen youth and women's rights, their participation and leadership, which represented 32% of its interventions in 2018.

Note: Some interventions may have been allocated to more than one category, as appropriate, in order to generate a comprehensive and relevant overview of all the thematic areas covered by the NGOs' beneficiaries.

4.3. Activities

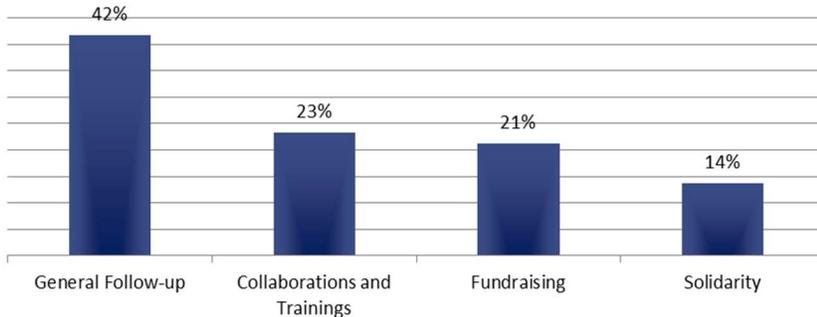


Complementary activities in the field of education, dialogue and advocacy, that are key to giving impetus to human rights reforms and transformation, represent the most significant share of activities (55%) implemented by the Foundation's recipients. These are also encouraged by cultural and artistic activities, as alternatives to conventional tools, to reach a broader and younger audience. Festival, street theatre, games, music and popular arts are examples of innovative ways adopted by 14% of the beneficiaries to disseminate the values of democracy, citizenship, justice and respect for human rights.

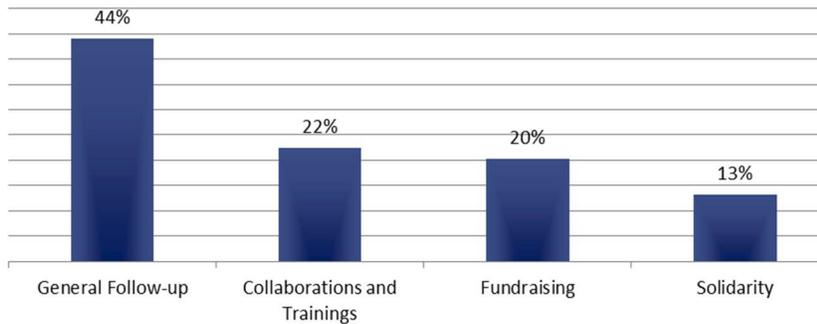
In a region with different national dynamics, a significant part of the activities carried out by the Foundation's partners also aimed at documenting violations, providing assistance, and pursuing justice and redress for the victims. These activities, which are taking place in particularly hostile environments, made up 31% of all activities carried out by the Foundation's partners.

4.4. Follow-Up

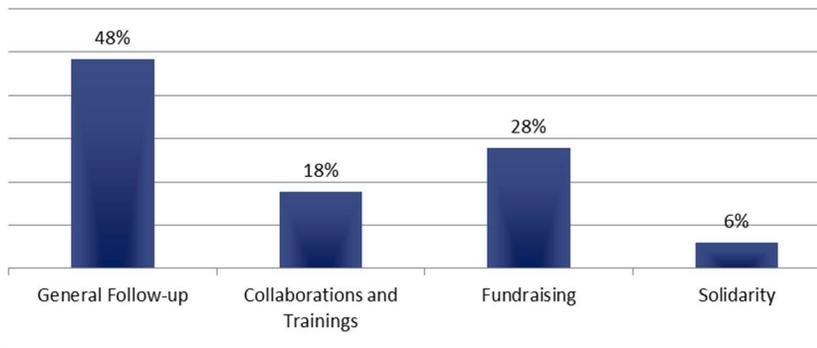
Distribution based on the number of interventions



Distribution based on the number of beneficiaries



Distribution based on the amount granted



In addition to providing funds, one of the Foundation's main objectives is to help vulnerable defenders and NGOs to pursue their mission in the long term. In pursuit of this, the Foundation specifically followed up on 58% of its financial interventions. In particular, it acted as an intermediary for its partners to strengthen their collaborations, and to access trainings, tailored coaching and funding.

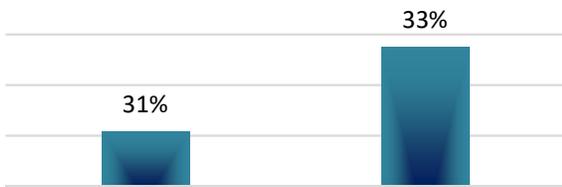
This type of follow-up is especially important for endangered and emerging initiatives as it enables them to share information, learn from other experiences, and build new synergies and movements that reduce their isolation and enlarge their base of support.

In 35% of cases, the NGOs benefiting from these specific follow-up actions have secured funds from other institutions.

4.5. Women and Youth

Women and young people are key beneficiaries of the Foundation’s interventions because of their central roles in societies and democratisation processes. Protecting their rights and strengthening their leadership are of vital importance in a regional environment where they are underrepresented in both political and associative decision-making processes. Women and young people thus respectively made up 32% and 46% of the beneficiaries, and the Foundation allocated funding to groups and NGOs based on sufficient representation of women in their leadership.

Distribution based on the number of interventions



NGO activity on women's rights (compared with support to all NGOs)

Women HRDs (compared with support to all HRDs)

Distribution based on the number of interventions



NGO activity on youth and children's rights (compared with support to all NGOs)

Young HRDs (compared with support to all HRDs)

Distribution based on the number of beneficiaries



NGO activity on women's rights (compared with support to all NGOs)

Women HRDs (compared with support to all HRDs)

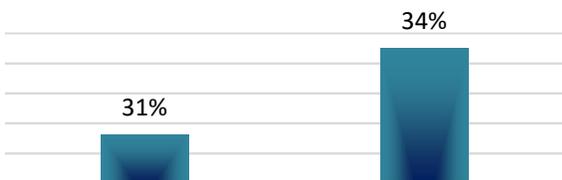
Distribution based on the number of beneficiaries



NGO activity on youth and children's rights (compared with support to all NGOs)

Young HRDs (compared with support to all HRDs)

Distribution based on the amounts granted



NGO activity on women's rights (compared with support to all NGOs)

Women HRDs (compared with support to all HRDs)

Distribution based on the amounts granted

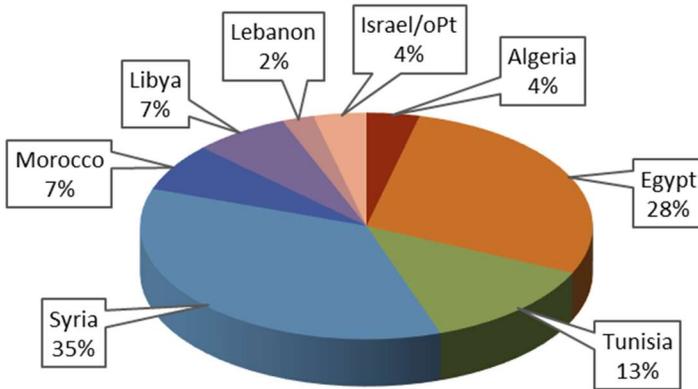


NGO activity on youth and children's rights (compared with support to all NGOs)

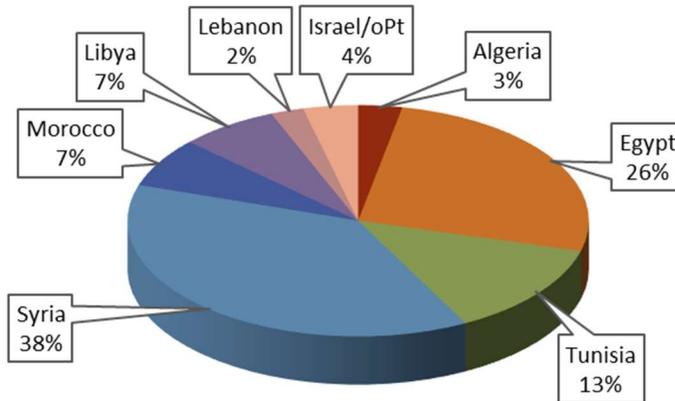
Young HRDs (compared with support to all HRDs)

4.6. Countries

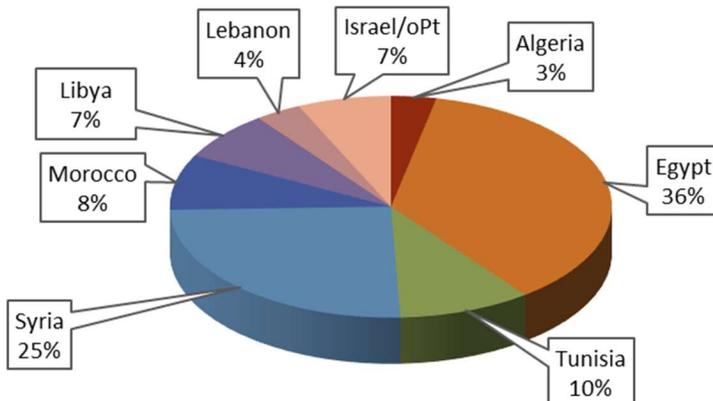
Geographic distribution of the interventions



Geographic distribution of the beneficiaries



Geographic distribution of the amounts allocated



As in recent years, the protracted war in Syria and the gradual suppression of independent civil society action in Egypt were a significant focus in 2018. In particular, support actions to Egyptian defenders and NGOs rose by 60% compared to 2017. Against a background of impunity, the Foundation's interventions focused on protecting defenders, helping them to document violations and assist victims, principally defenders themselves.

In addition, the Foundation did not overlook the protection needs of defenders in other hostile environments including Libya, Algeria, Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, which made up 15% of the Foundation's interventions in 2018.

Lastly, the decentralization, legislative and institutional reform processes underway in Tunisia and Morocco call for increased commitment and funding for local associations in order to address regional disparities and prevent democratic backsliding. 20% of the Foundation's interventions consequently focused on strengthening the operational capacities of civil society actors, notably those who are acting in remote areas in these countries.

5. Organisational Issues

5.1. Consultation of the Council of Representatives

The Board met with its [Council of Representatives](#) that consists of EuroMed Rights members (comprising 80 civil society organisations from the Euro-Mediterranean region) in Brussels on 23 June 2018. The meeting aimed at discussing major actions undertaken by the Foundation during the period 2015-2017 and its future directions.

On the whole, the Foundation was repeatedly praised for its work in the region. The main questions raised by the representatives were on the Board's co-optation procedures, the means developed by the Foundation to transfer funds securely to the region and its work in the field of influencing funding policies.

5.2. Financial Partnerships

Nine donors and private foundations entrusted the Foundation and contributed to its activity with approximately EUR 2,6 million in 2018.²⁰ The Foundation signed a new partnership with the Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency (SDC) in July 2018. However, efforts to explore possibilities of partnering with the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs were unsuccessful.

- Core support amounting to EUR 1.1 million (44%) was notably granted by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA),²¹ the Sigrid Rausing Trust (SRT) and the Open Society Foundations (OSF).
- Project support amounting to EUR 1.5 million (56%) was granted by the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DAPP),²² the Swiss Development Cooperation Agency (SDC), the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF).

5.3. Information and Communication

The Foundation commissioned a web-developer to design a new website: <http://emhrf.org/> that was launched in June 2018 and it also moved its server to a more secure location.

It also continued to apply the principle of confidentiality regarding most of the information pertaining to its beneficiaries. This policy was adopted and has been implemented in view of the threats faced by the NGOs and individuals applying for funding, beneficiaries and other defenders in contact with the Foundation. However, the Foundation remains transparent through reporting on its activities in this public activity report and to its main financial partners, provided that the confidentiality of information is ensured.

²⁰ Compared to 2017, the operating budget of the Foundation increased by 6%.

²¹ Within this core support, SIDA covers grants related to all the countries in which EMHRF is active, unless these fall outside of the OECD-DAC rules for development assistance.

²² Within this support, DAPP covers grants related to all the countries in which EMHRF is active, unless these fall outside of the OECD-DAC rules for development assistance.

5.4. Internal governance

The [Board](#) has appointed a new member in the Board, Mr. Habib Nassar, a Lebanese national²³ with specific expertise in international justice and accountability in 2018. In addition, Kamel Jendoubi was appointed as Treasurer following Eskil Trolle's retirement from his position and functions earlier in the year.

The Board, composed of 12 members working on a voluntary basis, met twice in 2018, in April and October, to discuss the Foundation's strategy, programmatic and financial directions, and to consider applications from NGOs in the region. Between its meetings, the Board approved all grants awarded for urgent support during the year. The Board was assisted by a Secretariat composed of 7 full-time employees and one part-time consultant, as well as interns,²⁴ IT and accounting services:

Programme team :

- Anne-Sophie Schaeffer (graduate in international public law), full-time Programme Director in France;
- Seif Taha (graduate in political sciences), full-time Regional Coordinator for Mashreq in France;
- Alexandra El Khazen (graduate in international relations), full-time Regional Assistant for Mashreq in France;
- Rami Salhi (graduate in sociology), part-time Regional Consultant for Maghreb in Tunisia;
- Tej El Houda Trad (graduate in business and information technologies), full-time Regional Coordinator for Maghreb in Tunisia;
- Lorand Revault (graduate in international law), full-time Regional Coordinator for Maghreb in Tunisia since April 2018.

Administrative team :

- Améline Jaskowiak (graduate in international economics), full-time Administration and Finances Director in Denmark;
- Julia García Han (graduate in economics), full-time Administration and Finances Officer in Denmark, replaced during her maternity leave by Sherine Hafez and Kérime Nicholls until September 2018.

Moreover, the Board developed internal management measures in 2018, including a risk matrix and management practices and an anti-corruption code of conduct.

Lastly, the EMHRF renewed its partnership with EuroMed Rights that includes, amongst other things, sharing of offices and related costs as well as IT services.²⁵

The Foundation's audit was conducted by *Deloitte* in Copenhagen and is available on the Foundation's [website](#).

²³ Habib Nassar is a lawyer and activist with more than twenty years of experience working with civil society across the MENA region and on human rights and transitional justice issues. He is currently the Director of Policy and Research at Impunity Watch, an international non-profit organisation seeking to promote accountability for past atrocities in countries emerging from a violent past.

²⁴ Caroline Emma Troen (graduate in global development), then Costanza Facci (graduate in international studies and diplomacy) were also recruited as full-time interns in Denmark, and Sana Daly (graduate in communication) and John Esteban Rodriguez (graduate in sociology) as full-time interns in Paris for short periods to assist the Foundation's programme and administrative staff.

²⁵ This arrangement was put in place as of 2005 to minimise the two organisations' administrative costs.

Appendix: Synopsis of Grant Applications

1. Overview of the Number of Grant Applications

In 2018, the Foundation received and reviewed **584** grants applications and inquiries.

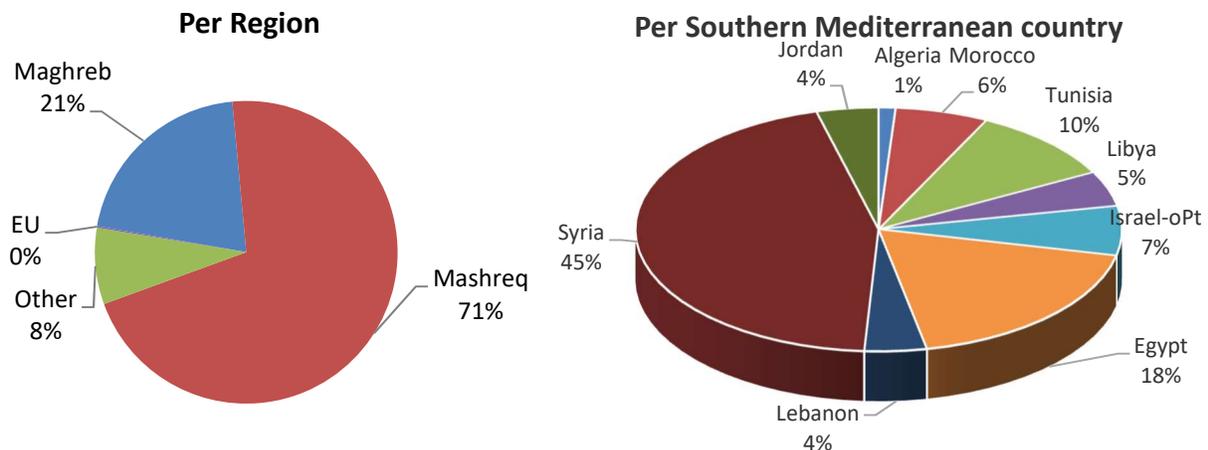
Per status: Applications received		
<i>Granted</i>	132	24%
<i>Under Assessment</i>	43	8%
<i>Rejected</i>	365	68%

Per type: Applications and inquiries received		
<i>Urgent</i>	245	42%
<i>Standard</i>	294	50%
<i>Inquiry</i>	45	8%

The total amount granted by the Foundation in 2018 was **€ 1,800,132.90**.

2. Geographic Distribution

The Foundation received and assessed a total of **534** applications and inquiries originating from the Southern Mediterranean region (representing **91.4%** of all requests received).



3. Reasons for Rejection

Below is a list of the main reasons for which applications were found to be ineligible on the basis of applications received in 2018:

- The activities suggested fell outside the geographical mandate of the Foundation, i.e. Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel. These applications accounted for **7%** of all the proposals rejected.
- The proposal was not in line with the Foundation’s main criteria (i.e. quality as a defender, situation, approach and necessity). These applications accounted for **62%** of all proposals rejected.
- Applications were rejected due to a general lack of information and/or inherent problems with the applicant (including vague project descriptions, negative feedback received from other partners and donors). These applications accounted for **18%** of all rejected proposals.
- Applications otherwise fulfilled all the requirements but were rejected because the applicant had already been funded by either the Foundation or another organization, were not facing immediate threats, were not deemed as a priority in relation to other requests (for example, they were journalists who could receive support from other organizations), and the projects proposed for standard interventions were not innovative. These applications accounted for **9%** of all rejected proposals.
- Applications were rejected for other various reasons. These applications accounted for **4%** of all rejected proposals.

In cases where applications fell outside the Foundation’s mandate, the Secretariat advised and directed a few applicants to alternative donors. This service has, in particular, been provided for cases where individual defenders are facing threatening situations in other regions. Rejected applications redirected to other potential partners and donors accounted for **1%** of all the rejected applications.

4. Average Response Time

The Foundation aims to make sound and swift decisions on applications received. The interval between the reception of the application and the Foundation’s response is illustrated in the chart below:

Total Average Response time	14 days
<i>Inquiry average</i>	3 days
<i>Urgent average</i>	14 days
<i>Standard average</i>	16 days