



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



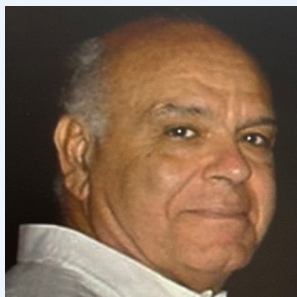
# ACTIVITY REPORT

## 2023

We asked our 2023 local partners to describe EMHRF in three words.  
The above Word Cloud shows their responses.

The implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders' (EMHRF's) activities and the publication of this report have been made possible thanks to the partnerships with and contributions received from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (the Danish-Arab Partnership Programme DAPP), the European Commission, the Ford Foundation, the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the National Endowment for Democracy, the Open Society Foundations, the Sigrid Rausing Trust, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and the UN Women's Peace & Humanitarian Fund.

The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of EMHRF and does not reflect in any way the positions of the above-mentioned partners.



On 1 January 2024, one of EMHRF's founders and a pillar of the Tunisian human rights movement, Khémaïs Chamhari, passed away.

Khémaïs Chamhari led the consultations and study that culminated in the creation of EMHRF in 2004 and served on its Board until December 2023. Having endured periods of detention, constant surveillance and defamation, exile and arbitrary dismissal because of his activism, he was a passionate advocate for the cause of human rights defenders. Until his final months in 2023, he was constantly mobilising national, regional and international solidarity networks and actions in support of defenders in the South-Mediterranean region and beyond. His expertise, charisma and empathy have set the tone for the EMHRF Board's discussions and decisions over the past twenty years.

This report reflects his vision and resolute dedication to supporting human rights defenders. His vision, steadfastness, and courage will continue to guide the Foundation's work.

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# 1. Introduction



*Helped us to survive a very difficult and stressful period of incitement against us*

At a time when armed conflicts of unprecedented intensity resurface and universal human rights standards are being questioned globally, authoritarianism, xenophobic and anti-gender narratives and forces have made a vigorous comeback in the South-Mediterranean region.

Testifying to the fundamental role that human rights defenders have played in recent years and continue to play in promoting and defending respect for universal rights and values, they have been at the forefront of those targeted by the region's oppressive governments and the latter's supporters. To delegitimise them, defenders have been more widely criminalised and smear campaigns carried out against them. Defenders also face new highs in terms of violence incurred against them, the very violence against which they fight. This phenomenon is not new, rather a continuation of oppression and, in some countries, a significant intensification of the threats to their human rights agency.



*Support when it's most needed and no-one else will give it*

To confront this increase in systematic threats against defenders, EMHRF, which is led by civil society representatives and experts in the affairs of the Middle East and North Africa and acts to support local defenders in the region, took the strategic direction to strengthen its actions. It expanded partnerships and diversified its resources to increase its support to local human rights ecosystems to catalyse their protection, innovation and sustainability.

This led EMHRF in 2023 to make more resources available to human rights defenders, notably in emergency situations, than ever before in a single year.

Complementing this financial support and in recognition that defenders have needs that cannot be met through financial support alone, EMHRF also enhanced its capacity to accompany defenders in a tailored manner.

The main areas of EMHRF support reflect the demands and priorities of local defenders in 2023:

## EMHRF Support in 2023

### Grants:

→ 201 urgent and operational grants (+36% on 2022)

### Amount:

→ €3.6m (+39%)

### Recipients:

→ 233 human rights defenders and initiatives (+41%)

**59%** of EMHRF's grants focussed on **protecting threatened defenders and organisations.**

**26%** focussed on **advancing justice and accountability.**

**15%** focussed on **promoting participatory democracy and gender equality.**

EMHRF's support helped individual defenders, grassroots movements and associations to adapt, pioneer ideas, and continue fighting for human rights. This report attests to their resilience, bravery, creativity, and enduring impact in these most difficult times and contexts.

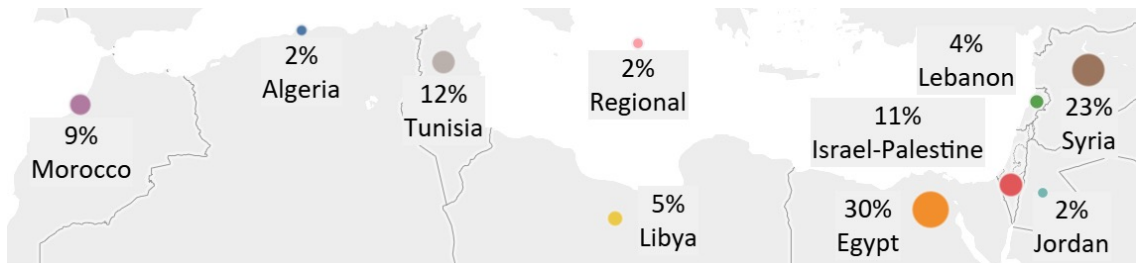
To protect its actions and those of its grantee partners in these deteriorating conditions while maintaining quality and efficiency, institutional consolidation remained a main focus in 2023. EMHRF strengthened its management of risks and took measures to safeguard staff wellbeing. As part of its gradual transition to a new leadership reflecting the emergence of a new generation of activists in its region of focus, the Board established internal rules of procedure and invited new members to join it.

## 2. Financial Support to Human Rights Defenders and Organisations

EMHRF anticipates and responds as flexibly as possible to the needs expressed by defenders and associations. To this end, it uses two open grant-making mechanisms – one emergency response and the other core/operational support – to allocate support in the form of financial grants and provide tailored accompaniment to each grant recipient.

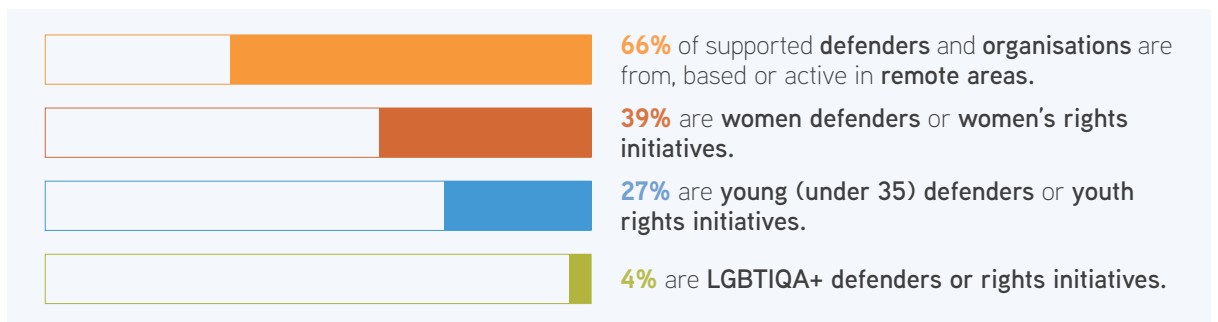
In 2023, EMHRF received and assessed 1,027 inquiries and applications, predominantly from Egypt, Israel-Palestine, and Syria. In response, the EMHRF Board allocated grants in support of 129 individual human rights defenders and 104 human rights initiatives, amounting to €3.6m in total (+39% in comparison to 2022). Highlighting the scale of crises and emergencies that defenders faced in the region, EMHRF scaled up its emergency response mechanism by 62% compared to 2022.

In terms of **geographical focus**, EMHRF’s support to Palestinian and Israeli (+144%), Syrian (+78%), and Tunisian (+68%) defenders has significantly increased in 2023 compared to the year before. Egyptian human rights actors also continue to represent a significant share of EMHRF’s financial support.



Percentage of financial support allocated in 2023 per country

Moreover, EMHRF continued to follow through on its commitment to **support those most often marginalised**.



### 2.1. Emergency Support

2023 saw a significant rise in urgent requests for support – following already unprecedented increases in the last years - highlighting the necessity to safeguard an enabling environment for civil society and human rights activism in the region.

To protect human rights ecosystems in contexts that swiftly change, and in which needs increase, EMHRF demonstrated its flexibility, rapidity and tailored adaptability. It provided **emergency protection support** to 129 individual defenders and 30 initiatives at risk of death, arrest or collapse or facing direct challenges to their agency.

**Emergency Support in Figures**

- 117 urgent grants (€0.9m)
- Recipients:**
- 129 individual defenders
- 30 initiatives



**Urgent grants helped defenders, movements and associations** from across the region to **protect themselves from threats, feel respite** and **regain some sense of normalcy** in their lives.

*With your help I found myself, I found my safety, I found me*

The urgent grants sought to help defenders and initiatives that faced precarious situations either as a result of disasters such as the deadly earthquakes that hit Syria and Türkiye or wars of an unprecedented scale such as the Gaza war (36% of allocated urgent grants) or faced such conditions as a result of physical, verbal, and judicial attacks and harassment (53%) or periods of arbitrary detention and torture because of their actions in favour of human rights (11%).



*You literally saved my life*

Specifically, defenders used urgent grants to cover basic needs including (mental) healthcare, to relocate to safer locations, to access legal assistance, or to further, such as through participating in training courses, their security and their personal and professional development.

With EMHRF support, the overwhelming majority of the recipient defenders took steps that resulted in them gaining respite and helped them to pursue their activism and cause.

*“The grant that I received was a lifeline, it was very important and decisive in determining my fate. This is due to the rapid response; I received it at a time when I was exposed to great danger.” An Egyptian human rights lawyer and grant recipient.*

*“The timely response and needs-based support prevented disruption and loss of gains from years of work. It allowed us to sustain services to vulnerable groups. [We] appreciate EMHRF’s efficiency, understanding of grantee challenges and its accommodation of urgent needs swiftly through the emergency grant mechanism.” A Tunisian initiative and grant recipient.*



*Intelligent, caring support that is attentive to our needs*

Here below are some **illustrative examples** of the threats defenders faced and how EMHRF urgent support helped them.

*In February 2023, **devastating earthquakes hit Syria and Türkiye** directly affecting areas with the highest concentration levels of displaced Syrians. Defenders were among those affected, including organisations that have lost members, premises, equipment, and documentation. In response, EMHRF set up an exceptional emergency response mechanism and allocated over €260k in support of 35 directly affected **Syrian defenders and initiatives** within the first three months following the initial shocks. This contributed to the speedy relocation of defenders and resumption of their activities - documentation and reporting on violations, provision of psychosocial support to victims, women’s rights advocacy, as well as campaigning on the issue of the missing and disappeared.*

***Dozens of Tunisian defenders have been subjected to unprecedented reprisals** due to their human rights work, in particular defenders of the independence of the judiciary and the right to a fair trial, queer activists, journalists and human rights defenders. With the timely support, the latter moved to safer locations, and accessed medical and psychological care. As a result, they have maintained their ability to defend their rights and those of other persecuted defenders, political activists, journalists, and trade unionists.*



Amid an increase in targeted attacks against them and their activism at the hands of government entities, media organisations, politicians as well as societal forces, **threatened pro-LGBTIQA+ and feminist initiatives in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria**, with rapid EMHRF support, took steps to enhance their safety and sustain their activity including implementing security measures and registering entities abroad. One initiative, for example, that promotes the rights of the LGBTIQA+ community, strengthened its potential to create and provide safe physical spaces for queer activists and artists from the region by holding abroad its first ever physical event.

With timely EMHRF support and tailored accompaniment, **eleven Algerian defenders stood against arbitrary charges** made against them. They have accessed quality legal representation, covered essential needs or managed to sustain themselves in enforced exile. With EMHRF's assistance, two of them secured permanent resettlement in Europe and North America from where they plan to pursue their human rights activism.

Following the 7 October attacks and hostage-taking in Israel by Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups, Israel launched against Gaza massive air and then ground assaults unparalleled in their intensity and resulting in tens of thousands of civilian casualties.. The vast majority of the population of Gaza was displaced over the subsequent months, many time after time, as Israel inflicted massive damage and widescale destruction on residential buildings, educational institutions (schools and universities), health facilities and other civilian infrastructure. As the Occupying Power, Israel illegally restricted the entry of food, water, fuel and medical supplies which resulted in malnutrition and starvation in different parts of Gaza. Meanwhile, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, witnessed high levels of violence at the hands of settlers and Israeli security forces, including intensified efforts to drive Palestinians off their lands. In this context, defenders have become victims of the violence and abuses against which they fight. In the last three months of the year, EMHRF stepped up its **support to Palestinian and Israeli defenders and initiatives in the face of these unprecedented threats**. It provided emergency support to over 60 Palestinian defenders and supported eight Palestinian and Israeli initiatives. The support covered the defenders' basic needs and their relocation to safer areas. It aimed to reduce their vulnerability at a time when their work and advocacy for human rights and justice are most needed and their agency is undermined by unprecedented violence and new restrictions on funding.

## 2.2. Operational Support

**Operational grants** enabled **movements and organisations to enhance their capacities and consolidate their sustainability**. Specifically, initiatives used operational grants – which may be in the form of core/seed funds – to initiate and lead actions that address inequalities and injustices.

### Operational Support in Figures

→ 84 operational grants (€2.7m)

#### Recipients:

→ 84 organisations

EMHRF provided **flexible operational support** to 84 local human rights organisations, many of whom are active in remote areas or war zones. These organisations advanced justice and accountability for human rights violations locally and internationally as well as fought for gender justice and equipped marginalised populations to enable them to advocate for their rights.





*Saved a human rights association from extinction*

As a result, supported civil society activities have assisted over 14,000 persons from left behind groups to claim their rights and reduce their exclusion. The activities especially contributed to promoting the rule of law and gender justice and equality in the face of rising authoritarianism and anti-gender rhetoric and forces, and to advancing policy or law reforms when the opportunity arises. Individuals arbitrarily detained have also been released and hundreds more supported in their rehabilitation after their release. Emerging initiatives working on growingly sensitive issues in the region such as LGBTQIA+ rights and refugees and migrants' rights have also expanded and secured support from others.



*The collaboration has been exceptionally positive in our daily work and in shaping our future as an organisation*

***“EMHRF has always been understandable, supportive, and ready to hear and discuss what we are thinking about. The most important thing is that they understand the situation that we are living in.”*** A Palestinian initiative and grant recipient.

***“We believe that EMHRF has a distinctive approach to fostering collaboration built on mutual trust, a dynamic that we value and aim to uphold.”*** A Lebanese initiative and grant recipient.

Here below are **illustrative examples** of EMHRF's seed and core support to human rights organisations. The examples give an insight into how local civil society actors operate, the challenges they face and the results they have achieved.

*In the wake of years of innovative and joint mobilisation and advocacy by Syrian victim and family associations,<sup>1</sup> the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution in June 2023 establishing the **Independent Institution on Missing Persons in Syria** and emphasising the need to apply a victim- and survivor-centred approach and ensure the participation and representation of victims, survivors and the missing persons' families.*



*I rebuilt myself and my organisation again at a difficult time when women-led organisations do not find any significant financial support to build large and real institutions in society.*

*In the context of the **reform of the Family Code in Morocco** twenty years on since the last reforms, a new and innovative initiative brought together civil society actors and movements working towards upholding equal rights for men and women. It created a space where testimonies and contributions from different backgrounds, generations and perspectives were debated, and recommendations formulated for the committee responsible for drafting the proposed amendments to the Family Code. The “Assises du féminisme” was held in Rabat with the participation of over 200 activists and experts in December 2023 and the ensuing recommendations were shared with the committee. The initiative also set up a new independent, feminist media to continue the discussions and enrich the debate on gender equality.*

*A **refugee-led association in Lebanon documented cases of arbitrary arrest and forced deportation of Syrian refugees** and issued a critical report on the issue of refoulement at a time when anti-refugee sentiment is at a high point. Its findings and recommendations were widely reported in local and regional media outlets.*

<sup>1</sup> Among the over a hundred Syrian human rights initiatives that EMHRF has provided with seed and flexible support in the last ten years are over a dozen Syrian victim and family associations. In 2023, EMHRF supported eight such associations.

Amid the government's growing distortion of democracy and rule of law in the country, an independent media initiative maintained its **media coverage of the on-going prosecutions in Tunisia of political opponents, journalists, lawyers and arbitrarily dismissed judges** as well as demonstrations and opposition rallies. Emerging and well-established initiatives also published reports and conducted advocacy internationally on documented violations and used videos to raise awareness on the conditions of detention in Tunisian prisons and explain the provisions of law that criminalizes "insulting" the Head of State (article 67 of the penal code) as well as the threats posed by Decree Law no. 54 on cybercrime.

The human rights situation in Libya deteriorated with serious and systematic human rights violations continuing with impunity and the escalated clampdown on civic space with revival of a Gaddafi-era law on civic organisations. Positively, and as a result of a Libyan initiative's legal claims, **local Libyan courts revoked three executive decrees that strictly limit the ability of creating and operating civil society organisations**, namely decrees 286/2019, 7/2023 and 312/2023. The initiative submitted another legal challenge in relation to a further repressive resolution (5/2023) with the claim still on-going. Despite these victories, the lack of new legislation leaves the door open for the enforcement of the draconian Gaddafi-era law on civic organisations (law no. 19 of 2001) and further executive encroachments. The initiative, underscoring its belief in ensuring a fair trial for all in Libya, also provided pro-bono legal support to 67 survivors of human rights violations and expanded its Observatory for Public Freedoms, that monitors repressive policies and laws in Libya and their implementation.

An emerging youth-led Egyptian association, based in Europe, produced **evidence-based research on the continued export in recent years of small and light weapons to Egypt and their use in internal repression and human rights abuses** in the country. The research was praised by prominent experts. At the respective invitation of Italian MPs and of the Standing Rapporteur of the European Parliament on Egypt the initiative presented the report in both the Italian and European parliaments.

Amid mounting anti-gender narratives and targeted repression, emerging women's rights initiatives utilised social media in innovative ways to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights and to support survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) tackling topics such as marital rape, female genital mutilation as well as religious and sexual freedoms. One Egyptian initiative reached almost a million followers by the end of the year and developed a partnership with a major multinational technology conglomerate. The partnership enables it to act quickly in **support of SGBV survivors and remove harmful content from the conglomerate's platforms**. Another initiative developed an online holistic feminist school that targets different age groups from early childhood through adulthood with easy-to-digest, context-specific education on concepts such as gender, body, sex, and sexuality.

An **Algerian women-led initiative - one of the few remaining civil society actors promoting the right to freedom of expression still operating in the country - ran workshops for youth in documentary filmmaking in remote areas.** Documentary films represent an alternative space for young people from the Hirak protest movement, especially young women, to express themselves and preserve the memory of their struggles and demands.

In October 2023 **a new movement for abortion rights and access in the Mediterranean held its launch event.** Initiated by a Tunisian feminist association that promotes research and advocacy in relation to women's general and reproductive health in Africa, the Maghreb and the Middle East, this regional movement of health professionals, experts and human rights activists aims to secure safe abortion access in the South-Mediterranean. At its launch event "Breaking the Silence: Abortion in the Arab World" over a hundred members developed its strategy to strengthen a local response to demands for abortion rights and access as a fundamental human right, and to mobilise women's experiences in advocating for the right to abortion and access to abortion care in the region. In 2024 the movement plans to carry out events in the region with local organisations, journalists, and lawyers on self-managed abortion and feminist approaches to the defence and provision of abortion care as well as conduct research on the opportunities and obstacles to the right of access to abortion in the region and to strengthen collaboration and networking between feminist organisations and human rights defenders. To further the movement and its collaborations, EMHRF advised it on possible partners in the region and introduced it to other donors.

### 3. Tailored Accompaniment of Human Rights Defenders and Organisations

Defenders and associations who seek support from EMHRF have needs that cannot be met through financial support alone. Over the years, EMHRF has built up knowledge, skills, and networks that can help defenders and their associations meet some of their needs. Thus, EMHRF accompanies grant recipients with care as part of its support to strengthen their safety, their operational capacity and their human rights activism in the long term.

The ways in which this accompaniment takes shape differ dependent on individual circumstances and EMHRF adapts its methods to the changing needs of the defenders and the contexts in which they operate. In 2023, the ways this accompaniment took shape included:

#### 3.1. Referrals in Support of Long-term Protection

To strengthen the safety of at-risk human rights defenders and help them obtain long-term protection, including through international protection mechanisms, EMHRF provides support to substantiate their claims, situation and the threats they are subjected to. Consistent with its collaborative approach, EMHRF coordinates closely with other organisations whose mandate is to provide assistance in their international protection claims, rehabilitation services or to undertake advocacy and solidarity actions.

*In recent years, EMHRF has witnessed that, more and more, defenders forced into exile in other countries in the region for safety reasons continue to face threats. These threats manifest in risks of arbitrary arrests, including of their family members, and refoulement to their home countries - where they face heavy arbitrary penalties, verbal, physical and judicial harassment as well as discriminatory treatment. As an example of referrals made, EMHRF applied on behalf of a dozen defenders to Canada's permanent resettlement programme for exiled at-risk defenders and accompanied them through the assessment and resettlement process.*

#### 3.2. Practical Advice on Funding Opportunities

EMHRF provides advice on fundraising, makes recommendations, and facilitates contact between supported defenders and initiatives and other organisations that can contribute to supporting their work in the long-term. Over the years, EMHRF has built up a strong network and close working relationships with other organisations, foundations and donors. In 2023, EMHRF assisted defenders and initiatives to obtain additional resources from dozens of these funders in Europe and North America.

*In autumn 2023, an international association focussed on minority rights and a fellow framework partner of the European Union in the Civil Society Facility for the Mediterranean opened calls for proposals for core and advocacy grants. EMHRF shared the opportunity widely and directly referred tens of current and former civil society partners to the international association. As a result, a collective of Sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco secured support for its rights-based advocacy and a Lebanese association that empowers marginalised women, children, and people with disabilities secured a grant to provide capacity building training to other associations.*

### 3.3. Connecting Defenders and Enhancing Collaboration and Capacity Building

With a view to enhancing knowledge, skills, and experience, particularly for a younger generation of civil society actors, EMHRF assists and provides support to defenders to access training, peer mentoring and fellowship opportunities, and thus expand their support network with actors in line with their missions.

*To ensure that an in-production film can benefit from the experience of Tunisian women's rights activists and movements, EMHRF connected a Tunisian cultural initiative who is producing a film recounting intra-familial child sexual abuse to the author of a pioneering book on domestic sexual abuse, and a leading Tunisian women's rights organisation. As a result, screenings of the film will be coupled with discussion sessions held in partnership with women's rights organisations across Tunisia.*

### 3.4. Fostering Concerted Approaches to Support Civil Society

A further function of EMHRF's tailored accompaniment is to support concerted approaches to assist civil society actors who face significant constraints in sustaining their activity. EMHRF is a member of various networks and groupings such as, among others, the Human Rights Funders Network, Ariadne, the EU's Human Rights Defenders Mechanism and the Journalists in Distress Network. EMHRF also coordinated closely and acted in concert with regional partners, notably EuroMed Rights and the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, particularly in relation to mobilising sustainable support for Algerian and Egyptian defenders.

*In 2023, EMHRF became a civil society framework partner in the Civil Society Facility for the Mediterranean of the European Union. As part of this role, EMHRF with the other civil society framework partners called on the EU to respect its commitments and the credibility its dialogue with civil society following the signature of the EU-Tunisia Memorandum of Understanding in July, and the positions of the EU and its Member States to suspend or review their funding to several Palestinian and Israeli human rights organisations in October. EMHRF also took part and ensured the participation of local associations in three national consultations held between local civil society actors and EU Delegations in Morocco, Jordan and Tunisia. Discussions spanned various topics, including Good Governance and Human Rights, Environment, Migration, and Economic Development. In the course of 2024 and to strengthen the basis for constructive dialogue opportunities, EMHRF is actively involved in shaping research and discussions on Human Mobility and Respect for Fundamental Freedoms.*

## 4. Organisational Matters

### 4.1. Internal Governance

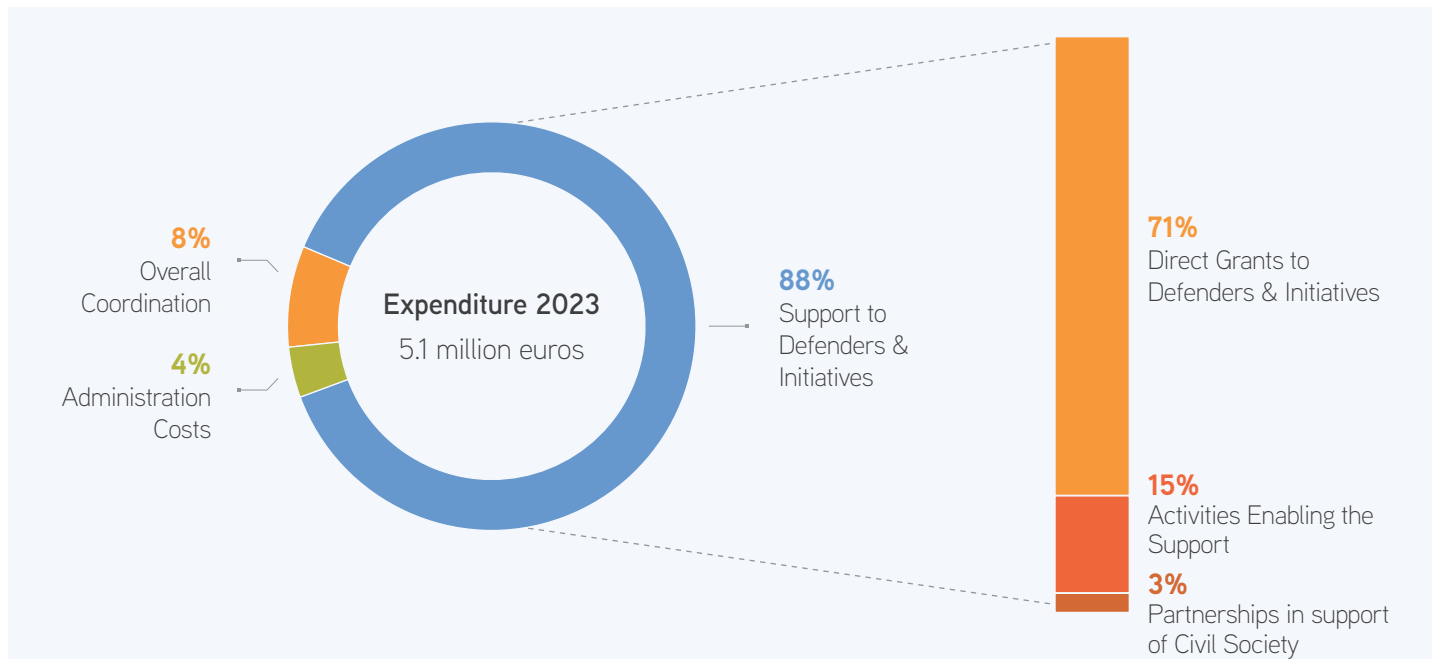
EMHRF is engaged in a gradual transition process to rejuvenate its Board membership. In May 2023, Kamel Jendoubi was elected as President to lead this process while ensuring a transmission of EMHRF's history, institutional memory and experience to new Board members. The Board also adopted internal rules of procedure that further define the criteria for the selection of new Board members and ensure gender parity in its membership. Three new members joined in December 2023, and three others will join the Board in the course of 2024. The renewed Board will be introduced to, and engage with the EMHRF's Council of Representatives, made up of over 80 human rights organisations from the region, in October 2024.

The Board met in May and December and took decisions on requests for support from human rights organisations as part of EMHRF's operational grants mechanism. As part of EMHRF's emergency support mechanism, the Board held consultations and took decisions on a rolling basis throughout the year to support defenders and organisations.

To preserve its effectiveness and efficiency in an increasingly repressive regional context and maintain the quality of its action in support of the local human rights movement, institutional consolidation remained a main focus of the Board in 2023. The Board adopted a policy on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism and also adopted an operating reserve policy. EMHRF further consolidated its secretariat with the adoption of a staff care and well-being policy, including starting a new collaboration with a psychologist who provides group trainings on mental health and wellbeing, as well as the addition of two new positions – a regional follow-up officer and an administrative/compliance officer. Internal policies aimed at creating and maintaining optimal safety and ethics in EMHRF's operations are available on the [website](#).

## 4.2. Financial Results and Partnerships

Overall EMHRF's budget in 2023 increased by 36% compared to 2022. In line with strategic directions taken by the Board, 88% of expenditure was used in support of local human rights defenders and initiatives.<sup>2</sup>



The results have been possible thanks to the trust of ten partners who contributed to EMHRF's budget with €5.12m.<sup>3</sup>

- ▶ Core support<sup>4</sup> amounting to €1.5m was granted by the Ford Foundation, the Open Society Foundations, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Sigrid Rausing Trust.
- ▶ Project support amounting to €3.62m was granted by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Union, the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the National Endowment for Democracy, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the UN Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund.

<sup>2</sup> EMHRF's 2023 financial statement, audited by BDO Denmark, is available on EMHRF's [website](#).

<sup>3</sup> Notably in 2023 EMHRF commenced two new partnerships – one with the European Union as a framework partner (2023-2026) in the Civil Society Facility for the Mediterranean and another with the Ford Foundation who provides core support (2023-2025).

<sup>4</sup> In line with their policies most of the EMHRF's donors apply restrictions on the geographic usage of core funding. As Israel is not among the DAC list of ODA recipients, EMHRF cannot use Sida-sourced funding in support of Israeli initiatives and since 19 October 2023, EMHRF did not disburse any Sida-sourced funding to Palestinian human rights actors. EMHRF did not use Ford Foundation sourced funding to provide funds, services or support to any person or entity in nor for activities in Egypt, Israel, or in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip. And EMHRF did not use Open Society Foundations-sourced funding to provide funds, services, or support to any person or entity operating, organised, or ordinarily resident in a country or territory that is the target of comprehensive U.S. sanctions.



# Appendix: Overview of Grant Applications

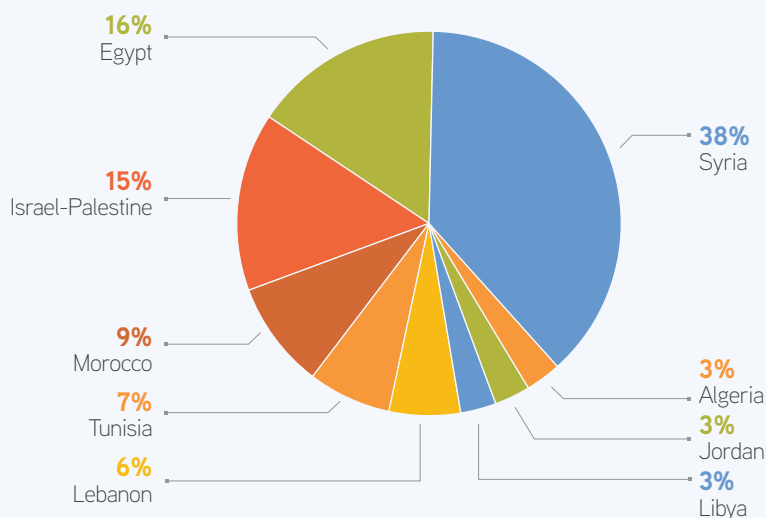
## 1. Number of Applications

EMHRF received and reviewed **1,027** applications and inquiries (a 12% increase compared to 2022).

Applications per Type	2023
Urgent	352
Standard	365
Inquiry	310

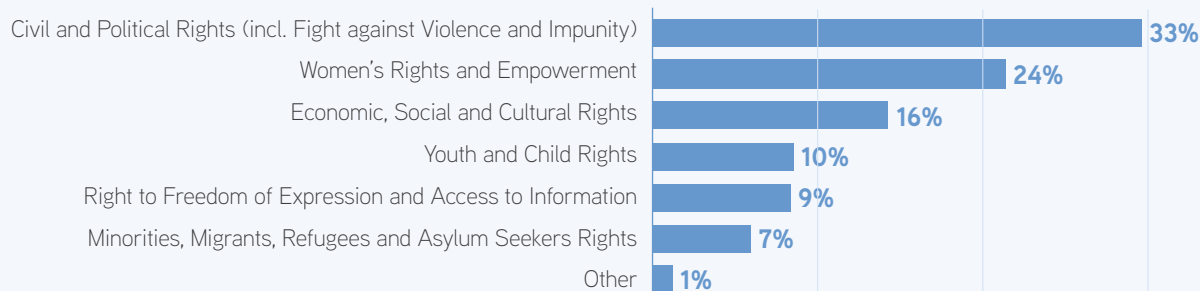
## 2. Geographic Distribution

The applications and inquiries mainly came, as reflected in the chart below, from, in descending order, Syria, Egypt, Israel-Palestine, and Morocco.



## 3. Rights and Population Focus

Human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent. In 2023, the applications received focused primarily on the promotion and defence of civil, political and women’s rights, as reflected in the chart below. It is important to note that most applications touch on different rights areas and serve different populations. This chart is only intended to illustrate the main issues and priorities of their actions.



## 4. Reasons for Rejection

The main reasons which have justified the ineligibility of the applications are:

- ▶ **80%** of the rejected applications did not meet the EMHRF's [criteria for support](#) (i.e. identity as a defender, nature of the proposal, necessity of the request and approach of the applicant) or received negative external recommendations.
- ▶ **16%** proposed actions covered areas outside the EMHRF's mandate.
- ▶ **4%** involved applicants for urgent support who were not facing threats or could access other support mechanisms (for example, journalists with access to support from specific institutions).

In cases where applications fell outside its mandate, EMHRF advised and directed **79%** of the concerned applicants to alternative partners and donors. EMHRF provided this service, in particular, to individual defenders facing urgent risks in regions outside its geographic mandate.