

# **Consolidated Annual Report 2024**

## **Stichting Justice Initiative**

**Utrecht, 25 March 2025**

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# 1. Management Report

## 1.1 Objective, mission and vision

### *OUR VISION*

Stichting Justice Initiative (SJI) is a nongovernmental organization dedicated to ensuring justice for victims of gross human rights abuses in the post-Soviet region. We envision this region as one in which human rights are routinely guaranteed by state institutions and respected by non-state actors, victims can obtain an adequate remedy, human rights defenders are free from persecution, and the public recognizes human rights standards as accessible safeguards against arbitrariness and discrimination. We believe that international human rights mechanisms must also serve as effective safeguards, providing vital support for local and national efforts in holding perpetrators accountable.

We seek to be a collaborative and effective human rights movement, joining with local, regional, and international stakeholders to promote shared goals and to create inclusive platforms and partnerships for maximizing rights protection.

### *OUR MISSION*

We are dedicated to the legal protection of victims of human rights violations, including those connected to armed conflicts, counter-terrorism operations, torture, and gender-based violence in the post-Soviet region. Our mission is to ensure accountability for perpetrators of such violations and to provide victims with access to justice, remedy, and reparation. We are committed to utilizing both domestic and international legal mechanisms to advance human rights protections and to work in partnership with other human rights defenders and organizations to create systemic change.

### *OUR OBJECTIVES*

We strive to ensure that victims of human rights abuses have access to effective legal remedies at the national level, while also leveraging international mechanisms—such as the European Court of Human Rights and United Nations human rights bodies—when domestic remedies fall short. Through the legal judgments we obtain, we aim to restore victims' rights and advocate for systemic reforms in law and policy.

We are committed to strengthening the capacity of legal professionals, NGOs, human rights defenders, and other key stakeholders through training, legal consultations, partnerships, and original research and publications on pressing human rights issues.

We aim to increase public awareness of the protections afforded by international human rights standards and address existing gaps in national policy and practice. This includes sharing significant human rights case law, examining the legacies of conflict, and contributing to ongoing discussions on human rights protection for vulnerable groups.

## 1.2 Achieving objectives

In 2024, Stichting Justice Initiative successfully navigated the challenges posed by the rapidly changing political environment in the region. Despite the complexities and difficulties, we were able to adapt effectively, ensuring that our key programmatic direction remained intact. This reporting period was marked by resilience and continued action, as we maintained our commitment to human rights protection and delivered tangible impact across various fronts.

### *Program Highlights*

- **Domestic Legal Redress:** In 2024, our commitment to providing legal redress continued to grow, with a strategic focus on domestic litigation. This shift enabled us to significantly expand our caseload and enhance our ability to represent clients at every stage of legal proceedings, from the initiation of investigations to the highest possible court instances. Our work extended to a broader range of victims, including those affected by gender-based violence, discrimination, torture, forced displacement, and, notably, the rights of prisoners. Each legal victory we achieved contributed to justice and empowerment for marginalized and oppressed communities. Additionally, we built a sustainable network of partner lawyers, further strengthening our ability to provide high-quality legal assistance across the region.
- **International Legal Redress:** As in previous years, we continued to represent victims in the European Court of Human Rights, advocating for justice and accountability at the international level. In addition, we increasingly utilized United Nations mechanisms in cases where the mandate of the European Court of Human Rights did not apply, ensuring that victims' rights were defended across a broader range of legal avenues. These efforts highlight our ongoing commitment to seeking redress and accountability for the disenfranchised, transcending national borders in the pursuit of human rights protection.
- **Social Assistance to Victims:** In 2024, we expanded our program to include comprehensive social assistance for victims of human rights violations, including detainees facing severe physical and psychological challenges, as well as individuals at risk of deportation and displacement. Recognizing the critical need for holistic support, we began offering essential aid, including food, clothing, hygiene products, and basic medicines to individuals in dire conditions.  
Our social assistance also extended to survivors of gender-based violence, where we provided not only legal aid but also psychological support, shelter, and assistance with relocation to safer areas when needed. Additionally, we offered help with basic necessities, including food, housing, and other essential resources, allowing victims to regain stability and begin the process of rebuilding their lives.
- **Human Rights Education and Capacity Building:** In 2024, our efforts expanded beyond legal education to focus on capacity building for professionals working with victims of human rights abuses. Through tailored trainings and workshops, we equipped legal professionals, psychologists, social workers, and educators with effective, trauma-informed strategies for supporting survivors. In addition to addressing immediate legal needs, our capacity-building initiatives now incorporate elements of support for the professionals themselves, including psychological support to combat burnout and stress. We also provided practical guidance on critical topics such as digital security, the use of artificial intelligence in the work of non-governmental organizations, and other key skills for ensuring long-term sustainability and

effectiveness. This holistic approach ensures that both victims and those supporting them are better equipped to cope with the challenges they face, ultimately contributing to the sustainability of human rights efforts in the region.

- **Awareness Raising:** Elevating the discourse on human rights violations remained a cornerstone of our awareness raising efforts in 2024. Our activities were multifaceted, encompassing both media engagement and international advocacy. We worked closely with local and international media outlets and activists to amplify the voices of victims, shed light on critical human rights issues, and rally support for systemic change. At the same time, we actively participated in shadow reports, made submissions to UN bodies, including communications with UN Special Rapporteurs, Committees, and monitoring groups, aiming to raise international attention to the most pressing violations. Through these combined efforts, we sought to mobilize global solidarity, catalyse meaningful action, and encourage the international community to address impunity and push for systemic reforms.
- **Field Research:** Complementing our advocacy efforts with empirical insights, in 2024 we conducted targeted field researches to uncover underreported or overlooked human rights issues within the region. Our investigations focused on a variety of critical topics, including public responses to ongoing conflicts and how individuals within affected societies cope with the psychological and social repercussions of such events. We also explored the emotional and psychological impact on the families of victims of enforced disappearances, as well as the deeply rooted practice of forced marriages in traditional societies. Our primary goal was to prompt dialogue within society and we worked closely with media partners to disseminate the findings of our research, not only raising public awareness but also providing valuable information for professionals and specialists working in related fields.

### *Achievements*

**Legal Impact:** We significantly expanded our legal assistance efforts, providing critical legal support to victims of human rights violations. Our approach focused on offering comprehensive support, from initial legal consultations to representation in both domestic courts and international human rights bodies, ensuring that justice was pursued at every level. Through collaborations with our local partner organizations, we provided over 700 consultations, empowering victims—particularly women—with essential legal knowledge and guidance on how to navigate their cases. A key focus was on child custody disputes, especially where mothers were victims of gender-based violence (GBV). In total, we achieved positive outcomes in 17 GBV cases. In other areas of human rights violations, particularly prisoners' rights and prohibitions on torture, we worked on a total of 78 legal cases, with 16 cases resulting in positive outcomes.

**Social Support for Victims:** Recognizing the vital link between legal redress and social stability, we strengthened our social assistance programs to support victims of violence and discrimination. This included providing psychological care, safe housing, and practical assistance to individuals in need or those recovering from trauma. In total, our social support program reached over 100 victims in 2024.

**Advocacy and International Engagement:** Through regular submissions of alternative reports, thematic studies, and recommendations to various UN bodies, Special Rapporteurs, and human rights committees, we addressed a broad range of critical issues, from gender-based violence (GBV) to

enforced disappearances, illegal detention, and torture. Our advocacy efforts have positioned SJI as a trusted partner in the field. Our findings and recommendations, submitted both independently and in collaboration with other NGOs, have been acknowledged in the Universal Periodic Review, observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, and in several reports by UN Special Rapporteurs and working groups. By amplifying the voices of those affected, we worked to mobilize global support for essential policy reforms

**Capacity Building:** In the reporting period, we conducted four training sessions for legal practitioners and specialists supporting victims of violence. A total of 77 professionals were trained on best practices for litigating such cases, addressing the psychological aspects of working with victims, and other essential skills. These training efforts were part of our broader commitment to building the capacity of current professionals and our partners to address emerging issues and developments in the field. Our comprehensive human rights education program ensured that participants gained new knowledge, expertise, and approaches to effectively support victims and advance human rights protection.

**Research Impact:** Research Impact: Our research activities continued to play a central role in highlighting under-researched human rights issues in the region. Through strategic partnerships with both traditional and social media, we successfully increased public awareness and fostered meaningful discussions on critical topics. Notably, we timed the release of our reports to coincide with key international observance days, such as releasing our comprehensive research on early and forced marriages on June 1st, the International Day for the Protection of Children. Similarly, to mark August 30th, the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, we presented our findings on the long-term impact of enforced disappearances on the lives of victims' relatives. These efforts underscored our commitment to amplifying the voices of those affected and contributing to vital conversations that drive change.

### *Monitoring and evaluation of results*

Monitoring and evaluating the impact of our efforts lies at the heart of our commitment to human rights advocacy. Our methodology encompasses diverse approaches tailored to the nature of our activities, ensuring accountability, transparency, and efficacy in every endeavour.

#### **1. Legal Assistance Work Evaluation:**

- **Regular Meetings:** Our legal team, under the guidance of the Executive Director, convenes regular meetings to assess and enhance our legal assistance initiatives. These gatherings serve as forums for case selection, progress evaluation, and collaborative brainstorming for case refinement.
- **Progress Assessment:** Ongoing cases undergo meticulous scrutiny to gauge their advancement, with a keen focus on identifying areas for improvement. Our team actively discusses strategies to optimize outcomes, ensuring each case receives the attention it deserves.
- **Success Rate Estimation:** Through systematic analysis, we evaluate the success rate of our legal interventions, deriving insights from both triumphs and setbacks. Such introspection enables us to refine our approaches and adapt to evolving challenges.

- Database Integration: To streamline information management, all pertinent data is kept in our internal database. This serves as a resource for tracking progress, benchmarking against predefined indicators, and informing strategic decisions.

## **2. Training and Workshop Evaluation:**

- Our training and workshop initiatives adhere to predefined plans, developed to fulfill our commitments to donors. These plans outline objectives, methodologies, and evaluation criteria, ensuring alignment with overarching goals.
- The efficacy of our training endeavors is gauged through comprehensive feedback mechanisms. Participants are encouraged to provide candid insights through surveys, facilitating a holistic assessment of program impact and relevance.

## **3. Media Engagement Evaluation:**

- Our media engagement initiatives are quantitatively evaluated by tracking the dissemination of articles and media materials pertaining to our work. Metrics encompass the volume and reach of coverage across media outlets and social networks. The breadth and depth of coverage serve as barometers of our impact and influence.

## **4. External Evaluation for Donor-Specific Projects:**

- In projects where external evaluation is stipulated by donors, we engage independent evaluators to assess the efficiency and impact of our endeavors. These evaluations offer invaluable insights, validating our achievements and informing future strategies.

## 1.3 Financial policy

### *Fundraising method used*

Our fundraising strategy primarily revolves around securing grants from diverse donors, encompassing both governmental and non-governmental entities. These grants serve as vital sources of funding, enabling us to sustain and expand our human rights advocacy initiatives. While we also welcome private donations, our focus primarily remains on grant applications, given their pivotal role in supporting our operational needs and programmatic endeavors.

### *Policy regarding the function and size of the reserves*

The purpose of the Reserves policy for SJI is to ensure the stability of the mission, employment, and ongoing operations of the organization. The Reserve is intended to provide an internal source of funds in case of non-renewal of a grant or unanticipated loss of funding. The Reserve may also be used in case of a sudden increase in expenses and for one-time unbudgeted and nonrecurring expenses that will build long-term capacity such as staff development, research and development, or investment in infrastructure. Reserves are not intended to replace a permanent loss of funds or eliminate an ongoing budget gap.

The target minimum Reserve Fund is equal to three months of average operating costs. This amount is based on the assumption that it would take at least three months to identify new sources of funding and/or adjust spending appropriately, in case a source of income is not renewed. The calculation of average monthly operating costs includes all recurring, predictable expenses such as capital purchases, payroll, consultants, administration and educational supplies, and travel.

The calculation of average monthly expenses excludes one-time or unusual expenses, as well as any planned subgrants or pass-through agreements.

The amount of the Reserve fund target minimum is calculated each year based on the approved annual budget and reported to the Board.

## 1.4 Risks and uncertainties

### *Risk Management and Mitigation Measures*

#### **1. Lack of Political Will**

SJI continues to engage with key international institutions and non-governmental organizations to promote human rights advocacy and strengthen multilateral cooperation. This strategic engagement fosters an environment for supporting vulnerable populations while mitigating potential political resistance

#### **2. Political Instability**

SJI ensures its staff are trained in emergency response procedures to maintain project continuity during periods of instability. Highly sensitive information is securely managed, with access restricted to key personnel located outside areas directly affected by political disruptions, safeguarding both data integrity and confidentiality.

#### **3. Financial Restrictions and Regulatory Challenges**

To address potential financial obstacles and regulatory changes, SJI has adapted its financial structure and processes. External legal advisors offer continued support to navigate complex regulations and facilitate cross-border fund transfers, ensuring compliance with local and international financial requirements.

#### **4. Administrative Interference**

In response to potential administrative interference and security concerns, SJI remains flexible in adjusting its operational presence to ensure staff safety. Risk mitigation measures include strict adherence to local legal frameworks, maintaining discretion about funding sources, and establishing comprehensive protocols for handling external threats or harassment.

#### **Expected Impact on Results and Financial Position:**

While the above risks may affect operational effectiveness, SJI has developed a robust risk management framework to minimize disruptions. Political and regulatory challenges may impact project implementation and financial processes, but the organization remains committed to ensuring continuity and safeguarding the results and financial stability of its programs.



### **Significant Risks and Uncertainties in the Past Financial Year:**

In the past year, SJI encountered significant challenges, including a breach of digital security due to a hacking incident. This incident compromised sensitive organizational data, including staff details and financial arrangements. In response, SJI took immediate action by enhancing security measures, engaging cybersecurity consultants, and implementing additional safeguards to prevent future breaches. These proactive steps ensured the continued protection of sensitive information.

Additionally, an unexpected shortage of funding posed a considerable challenge to the organization's operations. Despite this, SJI successfully mobilized resources and pursued alternative funding avenues to sustain critical staff and program activities. The organization made strategic adjustments to minimize the impact on ongoing programs and ensure that staff remained supported during this challenging period.

### **Improvements to the Risk Management System:**

SJI continuously evaluates its risk management strategies, incorporating lessons learned from past experiences. Enhancements include increased focus on digital security, refined response protocols, and ongoing efforts to strengthen legal and financial structures to adapt to an evolving operational environment. The organization is committed to maintaining resilience and ensuring its ability to operate effectively in challenging contexts.

## **1.5 Organisation and governance**

### *Legal structure of the organization*

The structure is supervised by the Board of Directors, who define the mandate, policy, strategy and approve the budget of the organization. The Executive Director is responsible for all operational activities of the organization. The organization is represented by two entities:

#### **Stichting Justice Initiative (SJI)**

Stichting Justice Initiative is a foundation duly registered in accordance with the laws of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Legally the Foundation is represented by Mr. Egbert Wesselink, the Chair of the Board and Mr. Ole Solvang. The Foundation's address is St. Jacobsstraat 12, 3511BS, Utrecht

#### **Stichting Endowment Fund Justice Initiative (SEFJI)**

Stichting Endowment Fund Justice Initiative is a foundation duly registered in accordance with the laws of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The purpose of the Foundation is providing support for the activities of the Justice Initiative Foundation based in Utrecht, the Netherlands.

Legally the Foundation is represented by Mr. Egbert Wesselink and Mr. Ole Solvang. The Foundation is registered at Godebaldkwartier 74, 3511 DZ Utrecht.

### *Remuneration policy for the statutory board and for staff*

There is no remuneration for the statutory board. The Board members receive reimbursement for travel and accommodation costs to attend the annual staff & Board meeting.

SJI aims to reward employees fairly and transparently for their contribution and to ensure that all employees have equal opportunity to progress their careers and enhance their earning potential irrespective of gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, political affiliation or ethnic background.

#### *The SJI's organisational policies*

The following policies and guidelines are in place:

- Audit and procurement policy
- Reserve policy
- Social assistance policy
- Financial management manual
- Anticorruption policy
- Anti-harassment, intimidation and bullying policy
- Ethical Conduct and Principles
- Conflict of interest policy
- Use of personal data policy
- Security policies (on communication, emergency situation and device use)

### 1.6 Communication with stakeholders

In our human rights work, we carefully identify key stakeholders, recognizing the diverse groups critical to advancing our mission. The primary stakeholders are the victims of human rights violations, who have direct access to our support via online platforms or through referrals from our activist partners. In addition to the victims, our stakeholders also include NGOs, human rights professionals, and the international community, with whom we engage to foster collaboration and share critical insights.

Our approach to these relationships is based on empathy, respect for autonomy, and empowerment. For victims, we prioritize secure and confidential communication, offering legal and social assistance tailored to their needs, always ensuring their consent in all actions taken. We operate with a victim-centered approach, placing their wishes and well-being at the core of our support.

In our collaboration with NGOs and professionals, we emphasize consultation and needs assessment to align our support with their goals. Through capacity-building and networking, we aim to enhance the overall quality of assistance in the region. Additionally, we maintain communication with the international community, including UN bodies and advocacy groups, to raise awareness of the on-the-ground challenges, share recommendations, and engage in global dialogue for human rights protection.

### 1.7 Outlook for 2025

Looking ahead to 2025, our organization remains resolute in its commitment to providing essential legal assistance and capacity-building initiatives for those affected by human rights violations. As we navigate an increasingly complex and volatile political environment, we acknowledge the importance of strategic adaptability to continue our mission effectively.

In the short and medium term, our focus will be on expanding domestic litigation efforts, enhancing our capacity to provide legal redress to victims through national legal frameworks. Simultaneously, we will intensify our international advocacy work, utilizing global mechanisms such as UN treaties to raise awareness, document violations, and push for accountability.

Furthermore, we plan to broaden our awareness-raising activities by strengthening partnerships with traditional media outlets, bloggers, and influencers, ensuring our message reaches a wider audience. Our research initiatives will also be expanded, enabling us to gather more comprehensive data and insights to better inform our advocacy and support efforts.

Through these multifaceted strategies, we are confident in our ability to navigate ongoing challenges while upholding our commitment to advancing human rights at both local and international levels.

## 2. Consolidated Financial Statement 2024

### 2.1 consolidated Statement of financial activities 2024

January – December 2024 (all figures in euro)

INCOME	
Donations	1,083,403
Other Income	74,233
Total Income	1,157,637
EXPENSES	
Equipment and Capital Purchases	3,943
Personnel (incl. taxes and all benefits)	526,888
Outsourcing	194,631
Office and general costs	239,944
Total Expense	965,406
Total Assets, Beginning of Year	254,766
Change in assets (income – expenses)	192,231
Total Assets, End of Year	446,997

## 2.2 Notes to the 2024 Financial Statement

Stichting Justice Initiative (hereinafter referred to as: SJI) is located and has its registered office in Utrecht, St. Jacobsstraat 12 and is registered under number 30176053 in the trade register.

### Financial reporting period

The financial statements cover the year 2024, which ended at the balance sheet date of December 31, 2024.

### Consolidation

The consolidated annual report contains the following entities:

- Stichting Justice Initiative (SJI), Netherlands
- Stichting Endowment Fund Justice Initiative, Netherlands
- Partner organisation, CIS

The consolidation is based on the full consolidation method. In the consolidated financial statements, intra-group debts, receivables and transactions are eliminated. Also, the results on transactions between group members are eliminated to the extent that the results are not realised through transactions with third parties outside the group.

### Functional and presentation currency

The financial statements are presented in euros (EUR), which is the entity's functional currency.

### Going concern

The financial statement have been prepared on the basis of the going concern assumption.

Date of preparation of financial statements: March, 2025.