

# RAOUL WALLENBERG INSTITUTE

OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN LAW



# 2025

# ANNUAL REPORT

*Advancing Human Rights and Humanitarian Law  
Strengthening Accountability and Justice  
Driving Positive Change*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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1. Message from our Executive Director .....	1
2. Introduction .....	3
3. Our Global Footprint .....	5
4. Partnerships and Strategic Engagement .....	16
5. Delivering Impact Across Thematic Areas .....	17
5.1. Rule of Law and Access to Justice .....	17
5.2 Human Rights and the Environment .....	22
5.3 Business and Human Rights .....	27
5.4 International Humanitarian Law .....	31
5.5 Non-discrimination, Inclusion and Local Governance .....	25
6. Financial Overview .....	39

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# 1. MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2025 has been a year of consolidation and adjustment for the Raoul Wallenberg Institute.

We are operating in a global environment marked by conflict, political fragmentation, and increasing pressure on international cooperation. Multilateral institutions are undergoing significant reform, public funding for human rights and development is becoming more constrained, and political priorities are shifting towards security, trade, and domestic interests. These developments affect not only the context in which we work, but also the role that institutions like RWI are expected to play.

In this environment, the importance of independent, credible, and academically grounded institutions has become more pronounced. RWI occupies a particular position in this landscape. Our strength lies in combining academic depth with practical engagement, supported by long-standing partnerships, field presence, and a track record of working on complex and politically sensitive issues.

Over four decades, the Institute has built a reputation as a trusted partner for governments, international organisations, and civil society. That trust is grounded in consistency, methodological rigour, and an ability to work across institutional, sectoral and political boundaries. In recent years, this role has become more visible, particularly in areas where impartial analysis and convening capacity are in demand.

In 2025, our five thematic areas, Rule of Law and Access to Justice, Human Rights and the Environment, Business and Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law, and Non-Discrimination and Inclusion, continued to guide our work. Across these areas, we expanded partnerships, contributed to policy processes, and strengthened institutional capacity in multiple regions.



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Our engagement in Ukraine advanced significantly, including new programmes supporting human rights infrastructure and EU accession processes. We continued to strengthen cooperation with regional human rights systems in Africa and Asia, developed our work on responsible business conduct and climate and environmental justice, and advanced the ICMD initiative within our International Humanitarian Law portfolio. A key highlight of the year was our 2025 Anna Lindh Lecture, delivered by Hadja Lahbib, EU Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management, who spoke on International Humanitarian Law in a Fragmented World.

At the same time, we initiated an organisational restructuring process to address long-standing financial imbalances and ensure long-term sustainability. This has required difficult decisions, but it is necessary to maintain the Institute's capacity to operate independently and deliver high-quality work.

Despite a challenging environment, we secured important funding and maintained strong partnerships. These outcomes reflect the commitment of our staff and the continued confidence of our partners.

RWI moves forward with a clear sense of purpose. Our task is not only to respond to global developments, but to contribute to shaping them, through knowledge, partnerships, and a steady commitment to the principles that have defined our work for the last four decades.

**Peter Lundberg** | Executive Director

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## 2. INTRODUCTION

This Annual Report presents an overview of RWI's work in 2025, based on progress against the Strategic Framework 2022 to 2026 and the operational plans for the year.

The year has been characterised by a dual focus. On one hand, the Institute has continued to deliver across its thematic areas and country and regional programmes. On the other, it has undertaken internal changes to strengthen its structure, systems, and long-term sustainability.

These developments take place in a broader context of change within the international system. The role of multilateral institutions is evolving, funding models are shifting, and expectations of non-governmental and academic actors are changing. In this environment, organisations that can combine credibility, independence, and operational relevance are increasingly important.

RWI's approach has been shaped by its identity as an academic institute with an applied mandate. The Institute's work is grounded in research and legal expertise, but it is carried out in close collaboration with partners and institutions in different regions. This combination allows RWI to contribute in areas where purely academic or purely operational actors may have limitations.

Throughout 2025, this approach has remained central. The Institute has continued to support institutional reform, contribute to policy development, and provide platforms for dialogue and cooperation across sectors.





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## IN MEMORIAM: LENA OLSSON

As we reflect on the year, we also pause to honour the memory of Lena Olsson, former Senior Librarian of the Raoul Wallenberg Institute, who passed away in 2025.

Lena played a central role in developing the RWI Human Rights Library into a widely recognised resource for research and practice. Her work strengthened access to knowledge for partners, students, and institutions in many parts of the world.

She was also a valued colleague and mentor. Her generosity, professionalism, and commitment to others left a lasting impression across the Institute and among its partners.

Her contribution continues to shape RWI's work. It is reflected in the systems she helped build and in the values that remain central to the Institute.

# 3. OUR GLOBAL FOOTPRINT

In 2025, RWI’s global footprint expanded in both depth and reach. Across regions, the Institute strengthened collaborations and partnerships, scaled engagement in priority contexts, and reinforced its standing as a trusted actor capable of operating across local, national, and international levels.

This footprint reflects a commitment toward regionally anchored programming, systems-level engagement, and diversified partnerships, supported by organisational reforms that have brought decision-making and fundraising closely aligned to the contexts in which RWI operates.



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# EUROPE AND EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

## UKRAINE

Ukraine has emerged as one of RWI's most significant areas of growth and strategic engagement. In 2025, the Institute established a dedicated country presence and significantly expanded its programme portfolio, supported by major funding from Sida and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

RWI's work closely supports Ukraine's EU accession process, particularly in relation to Chapters 23, Judiciary and Fundamental Rights. Through partnerships with the Ministry of Justice, the Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, and legal and academic institutions, RWI contributes to the development of the new National Human Rights Strategy, legal education and reform, and strengthened rule of law, access to justice and anticorruption systems.

This engagement positions RWI as a key partner in sustainable institutional transformation, linking national reforms to European legal and policy frameworks.



# EUROPE AND EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

## TÜRKIYE

As the European Union's largest trading partner, Türkiye is directly affected by the EU's evolving sustainability framework. In 2025, RWI has launched a pilot programme to strengthen Türkiye's engagement with the European Green Deal (EGD), with a particular focus on corporate sustainability, human rights due diligence, and the social dimensions of the green transition.

The programme supports public institutions and companies to better understand and respond to the human rights implications of EU sustainability regulations in the context of EU-Türkiye trade. It combines capacity-building for public officials with direct engagement with Swedish companies operating in Türkiye.

This new partnership builds on RWI's long-standing presence in Türkiye and its global expertise in business and human rights.



# EUROPE AND EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

## ARMENIA

In Armenia, RWI continues to build on a long-standing presence, deepening cooperation with government, the Human Rights Defender's Office, civil society and academic partners.

The programme combines work on justice sector reform, environmental governance, just transition, human rights research and education, and non-discrimination, while also positioning Armenia as a forward-looking partner in global processes, notably in preparation for hosting the Biodiversity COP (COP17), in 2026.

Despite funding uncertainties linked to shifting donor priorities, RWI has maintained strong engagement with EU institutions, UN agencies, and bilateral partners, while expanding its fundraising pipeline and strategic communications capacity.



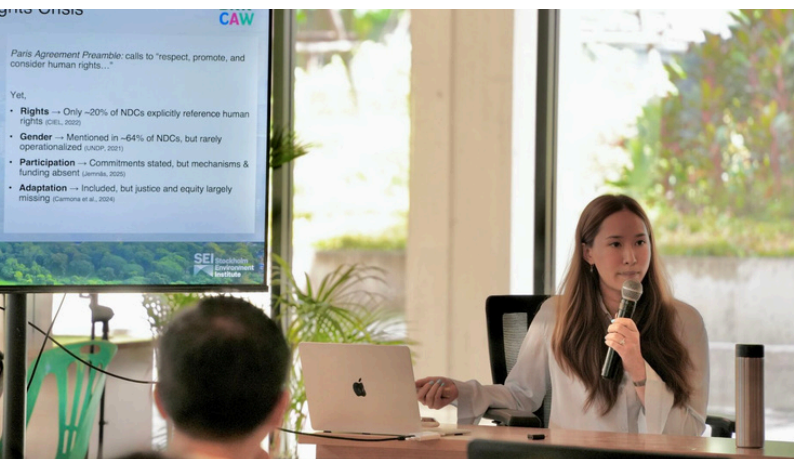
# ASIA AND PACIFIC

## REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

RWI's presence in Asia-Pacific has deepened, with operations now anchored through offices in Bangkok, Jakarta, and Phnom Penh. The relocation of senior leadership and the designation of Jakarta as the Regional Hub have enhanced coordination, visibility, and responsiveness across the region.

The Institute plays an active role in regional processes, particularly through its consultative relationship with the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR). RWI has supported AICHR in advancing the ASEAN Declaration on the Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy, and Sustainable Environment, while also advising on thematic priorities such as human rights cities, climate change and human mobility, and responsible business conduct. Through participation in major regional forums and collaboration with partners such as UNEP, UN ESCAP, ICJ, and ASEAN sectoral bodies, RWI contributes to shaping emerging frameworks and practices in the region.

Simultaneously, the withdrawal of Sida's regional strategy introduces structural challenges, requiring RWI to diversify partnerships and funding sources to sustain its presence beyond 2026. Current support from the United Kingdom (FCDO), Australia, and Norway complements Sida's funding, enabling RWI to maintain momentum while preparing for the next phase of the Regional Asia Pacific Programme (RAPP 3).



# Country-Level Engagement

## **INDONESIA, CAMBODIA, THE PHILIPPINES, THAILAND, AND MALAYSIA**

RWI has strengthened collaboration with academic institutions, civil society, and public actors—particularly in access to environmental justice. Case-based learning methodologies have been integrated into university curricula, including responsible business conduct case studies in Cambodia and forthcoming studies on Indonesia’s critical mineral industry.

### **PHILIPPINES**

RWI and ICJ supported the revision and submission of the Rules of Procedure for Environmental Cases (RPEC) to the Supreme Court. Building on this, RWI is developing a Regional Guidebook on RPEC, with judges from Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines contributing.

### **THAILAND**

RWI is closely engaged with AICHR Thailand in developing a baseline study on procedural environmental rights, which will inform the drafting of a Regional Plan of Action to operationalize the ASEAN Environmental Rights Declaration. In parallel, RWI supports the Bangkok Human Rights City Project, working with the Bangkok Metropolitan Authority to embed human rights principles into local governance, with a focus on air pollution.

## **PHILIPPINES, INDIA, NEPAL, SRI LANKA, PAKISTAN, AND THE MALDIVES**

RWI’s Climate Mobility and Human Rights Monitoring Toolkit, based on the FIRE Framework, is being deployed by National Human Rights Institutions, while faculty from regional universities are integrating rights-based climate mobility into curricula.

Across the region, RWI is increasingly recognised as a bridge-builder between regional institutions, national actors, and international partners.



## OUR GLOBAL FOOTPRINT

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# AFRICA

## REGIONAL AFRICA PROGRAMME

RWI's work in Africa is characterised by strong engagement with regional institutions and mechanisms. Collaboration with the African Union and networks such as the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI) has strengthened the Institute's role in advancing implementation of human rights decisions and integrating human rights into continental policy processes.

High-level partnerships—such as with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung—have expanded RWI's influence in areas such as trade and human rights, while also opening new opportunities for growth in business and human rights programming.

The programme's visibility and credibility have been reinforced through participation in regional forums and contributions to policy dialogue on climate governance, justice systems, and economic integration.

## OUR GLOBAL FOOTPRINT

# Country-Level Engagement

### ZIMBABWE

In Zimbabwe, RWI continues to support national institutions across the justice sector, including independent commissions but also correctional services and the National Prosecuting Authority.

An EU-funded programme has been concluded in 2025 demonstrated strong results in strengthening institutional capacity and public visibility of the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC), while renewed partnerships—such as with the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service—highlight continued demand for RWI's expertise.

However, the planned phase-out of Swedish bilateral development cooperation presents a significant funding challenge, requiring active exploration of alternative funding sources to sustain engagement.

### ETHIOPIA

In Ethiopia, RWI's work has focused on cooperation with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, specifically supporting e-learning, resource centre management, and detention monitoring. While progress in Ethiopia has been affected by regulatory constraints on international organisations, engagement remains ongoing.

### KENYA

In Kenya, RWI's work has focused on criminal justice, specifically supporting correctional policy and ensuring that training programmes are delivered in accordance with international human rights law and standards.



# AFGHANISTAN AND FRAGILE CONTEXTS

RWI's Afghanistan Programme remains one of the Institute's most distinctive and high-impact engagements.

Operating under extremely restrictive conditions, RWI continues to support Afghan civil society, researchers, and rights holders through education, research, and engagement with international accountability mechanisms. Strategic partnerships with UN actors, international organisations, and academic institutions have reinforced the programme's credibility and global relevance.

The programme also plays a critical convening role, facilitating dialogue between Afghan stakeholders and international actors on issues such as humanitarian access, accountability, and inclusion.

Despite a challenging funding landscape, where many donors have shifted to humanitarian-centred assistance, RWI continues to pursue new partnerships to ensure continuity of this work.



# EMERGING AND FUTURE ENGAGEMENTS

In addition to established programmes, RWI has actively explored new areas of engagement in response to evolving global dynamics.

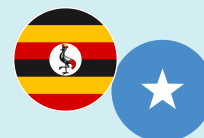
## Syria

A scoping mission to Damascus initiated dialogue with government institutions, civil society, and international actors, laying the groundwork for potential future programming.



## Somalia & Uganda

Concept notes have been developed to support institution-building and rule of law initiatives



## Colombia

A new programme on just and sustainable green transition, supported by the Swedish Postkodlotteriet, will launch in 2026, expanding RWI's footprint into Latin America



## Moldova

Engagement linked to regional programmes and potential future cooperation took place.



These efforts reflect RWI's ability to identify and respond to emerging opportunities, particularly in transition and post-conflict contexts.

## OUR GLOBAL FOOTPRINT

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### CONVENING ACROSS SECTORS AND LEVELS

A defining feature of RWI's global footprint is its ability to convene diverse actors across sectors and levels of governance. In 2025, this was reflected in a series of high-level dialogues and public engagements, most notably the Anna Lindh Lecture, which brought together policymakers, diplomats, academics, and civil society in Lund.

The 2025 lecture, delivered by the European Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management Hadja Lahbib, focused on strengthening compliance with international humanitarian law in a fragmented global context. The event drew a broad international audience and was complemented by a high-level roundtable with ambassadors, UN actors, and humanitarian experts, reinforcing RWI's role as a platform for strategic dialogue on pressing global challenges.

Such convenings illustrate RWI's capacity not only to contribute knowledge, but to shape conversations at the intersection of policy, law, and practice, particularly in areas where independent and trusted platforms are needed.

### A DIVERSIFIED AND EXPANDING PARTNERSHIP ECOSYSTEM

Across all regions, RWI has strengthened and diversified its partnerships—an essential component of its global footprint.

In 2025, the Institute secured support from a broader range of actors, including new bilateral donors (Luxembourg, Ireland, Norway, the United Kingdom, Australia), multilateral institutions (EU DG ECHO), and private-sector partners.

Partnerships with academic institutions, civil society organisations, and regional bodies have deepened, reinforcing RWI's ability to operate as a connector across sectors and levels of governance.

### POSITIONED FOR STRATEGIC GROWTH

RWI's global footprint in 2025 reflects an institution that is:

- Regionally anchored, with stronger leadership and presence on the ground
- Globally connected, engaging with international policy and governance processes
- Operational in complex environments, including conflict-affected and politically constrained contexts
- Increasingly diversified, in both partnerships and funding sources

As the global human rights landscape continues to evolve, this footprint provides a strong foundation for future growth—enabling RWI to scale its impact, deepen its partnerships, and contribute to long-term, systems-level change.



*Hadja Lahbib - Anna Lindh Lecture 2025*

# 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

RWI's work is grounded in strategic partnerships across governments, international organisations, academia, civil society, and the private sector. These relationships enable the Institute to combine academic rigour with practical engagement, working across national, regional, and global levels to support institutional reform, policy development, and knowledge exchange. As an independent and trusted actor, RWI contributes in contexts where both technical expertise and institutional credibility are essential.

In 2025, this network allowed RWI to operate across sectors and systems, supporting national human rights institutions, ministries, universities, and legal and policy communities. The Institute's role extends beyond programme delivery to facilitating dialogue, providing analysis, and connecting actors who would not otherwise engage, particularly in complex or politically sensitive environments.

As the global partnership landscape evolves, with more constrained funding and higher expectations of impact, RWI is increasingly focused on long-term, strategic collaboration. Its approach emphasises institutional development, alignment with broader policy processes, and flexible engagement. At the same time, RWI continues to serve as a platform for collaboration, convening policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to exchange knowledge and advance evidence-based approaches to human rights.

## OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

RWI's work is made possible through the support and collaboration from the following partners and donors:



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## **5. DELIVERING IMPACT ACROSS THEMATIC AREAS**



### **5.1 RULE OF LAW AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE**

# 5.1 RULE OF LAW AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The Rule of Law and Access to Justice thematic area remained RWI's most extensive portfolio in 2025, spanning support to national human rights institutions, justice sector reforms, legal education, detention monitoring, parliamentary oversight, and access-to-remedy initiatives across multiple regions.

The year was characterised by deeper institutional partnerships, stronger regional anchoring, and tangible contributions to systems-level change, particularly in contexts undergoing political transition, conflict, or major governance reforms. Given the breadth of activities, the following highlights key developments across regions.

## AFGHANISTAN

Under the Afghanistan Programme, RWI continued to operate in an extremely constrained environment, focusing on supporting civil society and maintaining pathways for accountability.

A series of roundtables, reports, and research initiatives were carried out to inform strategies aimed at promoting and protecting human rights and the rule of law. Training courses on documentation standards and universal jurisdiction strengthened the technical quality of submissions to international accountability mechanisms.

A thematic research conference addressed transitional justice and minority rights, while engagement with UN mechanisms, including contributions to reporting on the situation of women and girls, helped broaden international visibility of violations. Fellows and media workers were also supported in accessing UN and International Criminal Court processes, contributing to strengthened evidence pathways.

## ARMENIA

In Armenia, RWI's long-standing cooperation with state institutions and academic partners deepened, contributing to strengthened human rights governance and sectoral capacity.

Justice sector partners increased their understanding and application of human rights through newly developed materials and ongoing research outputs. Support to the Ministry of Justice advanced the development of a National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Torture, alongside related implementing legislation.

Cooperation with the Human Rights Defender's Office strengthened institutional resilience through the development of a staff handbook and online training course, improved monitoring tools for detention oversight, and expanded engagement on disability rights. Preparatory work for further training activities is ongoing.

Legal education reform remained central. RWI supported the development of clinical legal education, facilitated academic exchanges, and contributed to new curricula, including an anti-corruption course under development with the American University of Armenia. Research capacity was strengthened through conferences and fellowship programmes.

In the area of parliamentary oversight, RWI finalised a tool for assessing draft legislation against international human rights standards, now integrated into broader UNDP-supported programming with Armenia's National Assembly.

## UKRAINE

RWI's work in Ukraine expanded substantially in 2025, including the formal launch of two major programmes funded by Sida and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in May, alongside ongoing initiatives.

The Institute contributed to strengthening engagement by the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights and local actors in promoting rights at the local level. Capacity-building efforts supported Ukrainian together with Moldovan legal professionals in preventing and combating corruption through human rights-based approaches.

Work also focused on improving the protection of internally displaced persons and refugees through strengthened provision of legal assistance and information across Ukraine, Poland, and Sweden. RWI also contributed to increasing the provision of human rights expertise by Ukrainian academics and practitioners.

During the second half of the year, RWI established a Kyiv office and formalised partnerships with national institutions, strengthening its role in supporting Ukraine's reform processes linked to EU accession. The Institute provided expert input to the Ministry of Justice in drafting the National Human Rights Strategy to 2035, including contributions on fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and liberty.

Cooperation with the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights included workshops, study visits, and participation in international forums, strengthening institutional capacity and visibility. Engagement with legal education actors included a nationwide assessment of legal clinics and cooperation with professional associations.

At the subnational level, RWI conducted a pilot study on human rights infrastructure and delivered training to support the role of local authorities in human rights and EU integration processes.

## AFRICA – REGIONAL

RWI's work in Africa focused on strengthening regional human rights systems and improving national implementation.

Progress was achieved in enhancing monitoring and follow-up on decisions from regional bodies. This included the establishment of a stakeholders' platform alongside the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, supporting the adoption of the Court's Implementation Framework by African Union policy organs.

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The inaugural Bar-Bench Forum for the East African Court of Justice and the East Africa Law Society contributed to calls for procedural reforms and improved monitoring mechanisms.

Bar associations, historically absent from implementation advocacy across the continent, adopted the Abidjan Declaration. This marked the first-ever collective commitment to monitor and follow up on human rights decisions through designated national focal persons and a continental Monitoring Committee.

Further developments included the establishment of Implementation Focal Points within 26 national human rights institutions, strengthening their capacity to monitor and advocate for compliance with regional decisions. RWI also facilitated dialogue between the African Commission and the African Court to improve complementarity.

Engagements across the correctional sector included collaboration with the African Commission's Special Rapporteur on Prisons, Conditions of Detention and Policing in Africa and 14 heads of Correctional Services in Africa to discuss penal reforms and the implementation of international human rights standards in prisons.

## **ETHIOPIA**

Cooperation with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) resulted in the development and delivery of a blended learning course on advanced detention monitoring. This strengthened institutional capacity to oversee detention conditions and apply international standards.

Work also contributed to increased knowledge of best practices in establishing human rights resource centres as well as a digital library strengthening the EHRC's institutional capacity and expanding its human rights education.

## **KENYA**

In Kenya, RWI supported the Kenya Prisons Service (KPS) through the development and facilitation of training modules on emergency procedures and the management of high-risk offenders using the Risk, Needs and Responsivity (RNR) model. The training also included a Training of Trainers programme and additional sessions targeting senior managers within the Service. RWI also worked with KPS to develop a standardised inspection tool for use by the Compliance Department to assess prison and offender management compliance with the Nelson Mandela and Bangkok Rules.

## **ZIMBABWE**

RWI's work in Zimbabwe strengthened multiple components of the justice system. The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission increased its capacity in engaging with Parliament, monitoring legislative processes, and assessing local authorities' service delivery. Through RWI's support, the Commission received expert recommendations on its case management system, contributing to improved efficiency and effectiveness and the Commission also approved an updated Gender Policy supported by RWI.

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Cooperation with the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service contributed to increased knowledge and skills among non-commissioned officers on the application of international prison standards and the development of a parole system.

Engagement with academic institutions strengthened legal education through mentorship, advisory support, and the development of clinical legal education. Legal aid clinics at the academic institutions also enhanced access to justice in communities with support from RWI.

## **OTHER DEVELOPMENTS**

During the year, external factors affected programme implementation. Changes in United States foreign assistance policy resulted in the cancellation of three planned projects and the temporary suspension of another in Kenya, which later resumed.

Coincidentally, RWI developed and submitted concept notes for future programmes in Syria, Somalia, Uganda, and Ukraine, reflecting continued demand for its expertise.

RWI also contributed to global normative work, including advisory support to the development of UN Model Strategies on Reducing Reoffending, and submitted a report on fundamental rights and the rule of law in Sweden to the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights.

In August, a scoping mission to Syria explored potential cooperation with national institutions, universities, and international actors. In November, RWI was commissioned by the Swedish Institute for Human Rights to conduct a comparative analysis of Swedish prison law in relation to international standards.

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

RWI's work in rule of law and access to justice will continue to focus on strengthening institutions, supporting implementation of legal frameworks, and responding to complex governance challenges.

The experience from 2025 demonstrates both the scale of demand for this work and the importance of sustained, long-term engagement.



# 5.2 HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

# 5.2 HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The Human Rights and Environment thematic area continued to grow in visibility and strategic relevance in 2025. The portfolio combines research, capacity-building, and policy engagement to address the human rights dimensions of climate change, biodiversity loss, environmental governance, and human mobility.

The year was characterised by expanded regional engagement, major research outputs, and increased participation in global and regional climate processes. The work highlighted the importance of sustained partnerships and flexible funding to maintain momentum in a rapidly evolving field.

### ASIA-PACIFIC: CLIMATE, MOBILITY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

A course module and student workbook on climate change, mobility, and gender-based rights were finalised, supporting integration into higher education curricula across partner universities in the Philippines, Viet Nam, and Bangladesh. Complementing this, RWI developed a practical monitoring toolkit based on its FIRE Framework, now deployed by National Human Rights Institutions in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and the Maldives.

In partnership with UNEP and UN ESCAP, RWI delivered a blended learning course for prosecutors, lawyers, and NHRI staff. The in-person component in Bangkok, including exchanges with the Supreme Administrative Court of Thailand, strengthened participants' ability to apply environmental and human rights standards in adjudication and enforcement. Building on positive feedback, RWI will roll out MOOCs and tailored BLCs for NHRIs in 2026, with a deep dive into the ASEAN Environmental Rights Declaration.

RWI and the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) supported the revision and submission of the Rules of Procedure for Environmental Cases (RPEC) to the Supreme Court of the Philippines. This process laid the foundation for a Regional Guidebook on RPEC, currently under consultation with judges, academics, CSOs, and NHRIs. The Guidebook has attracted strong interest and will be presented at the Council of ASEAN Chief Justices (CACJ) meeting in Bangkok in July 2026, alongside a UNEP–RWI side event on environmental justice.

Building on this foundation, RWI delivered a blended learning programme for prosecutors, lawyers, and national human rights institutions in partnership with UNEP and ESCAP. The in-person component in Bangkok, including exchanges with the Supreme Administrative Court of Thailand, supported justice actors in applying environmental and human rights standards in adjudication and enforcement.

Further capacity-building and knowledge-sharing were reinforced through a regional expert roundtable in December 2025, consolidating RWI's role as a convenor at the intersection of environmental governance and human rights.

## **ARMENIA AND GEORGIA: RIGHTS-BASED CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND PARTICIPATION**

In Armenia and Georgia, RWI concluded the Swedish Institute-supported programme on Rights-Based Climate Adaptation, delivered in collaboration with Lund University.

The programme strengthened institutional capacity to integrate human rights and gender equality into climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction policies. Participants produced country reports addressing:

- The right to water in the context of climate adaptation in Armenia
- The right to adequate housing in climate resilience and disaster risk reduction in Georgia

In Armenia, additional work focused on public participation in environmental decision-making. Model guidelines were developed to support compliance with human rights standards and contribute to a just green energy transition. These guidelines were presented at COP30 and are now being disseminated through national and regional outreach.

RWI also initiated cooperation with the Ministry of Environment as Armenia prepares to host COP17 in 2026, positioning the Institute as a technical partner in upcoming processes.

## **AFRICA: REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT**

RWI contributed to strengthening the role of human rights institutions in climate governance across Africa.

Through cooperation with the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions, the Institute supported engagement in the Africa Climate Summit and Africa Climate Week. This work contributed to integrating human rights, procedural justice, and historical accountability into regional climate discussions.

In Zimbabwe, collaboration with national partners supported research and knowledge development on the intersection of human rights and environmental issues. Activities included research workshops, a national symposium, and a summer school for law students, strengthening the integration of environmental rights into legal education and practice.

## **AFGHANISTAN: CLIMATE, RIGHTS, AND FRAGILITY**

RWI's work in Afghanistan addressed the human rights implications of climate change in a highly constrained environment.

Research explored how restrictions on civil and political rights affect disaster risk reduction and climate mitigation efforts. Fellows contributed to international dialogue, including a webinar with the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Toxics.

RWI also engaged with international partners to explore future collaboration on climate resilience and disaster risk reduction, although operational and funding constraints remain significant.

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## GLOBAL AND CROSS-REGIONAL INITIATIVES

Several major research and cross-regional initiatives advanced during the year.

The four-year Safeguarding Biodiversity and Human Rights through Law and Regulation Bio-Trade project was completed in December 2025. The project produced interdisciplinary research on how law, policy, and trade affect biodiversity and human rights across multiple regions, identifying structural drivers of ecosystem degradation and proposing legal innovations.

The Defend-Bio programme continued to strengthen legal and policy frameworks for protecting environmental defenders across regions. Activities included international exchanges, training, contributions to UN processes, and preparation of an amicus brief to the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.

The Global China and Just Transitions course was launched as a publicly accessible resource, supporting stakeholders in understanding the human rights implications of global investment and climate transitions.

New initiatives included the AdjuDisplace research project on environmental displacement, and the launch of the Climate Mobility Case Database in May 2025, consolidating case-based knowledge on climate-related mobility.

RWI also contributed to the development of a Massive Open Online Course for the European Commission, including a module on environmental protection under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

### LOOKING AHEAD

The Human Rights and Environment portfolio continues to develop in response to both evolving global priorities and growing demand for rights-based approaches to environmental challenges.

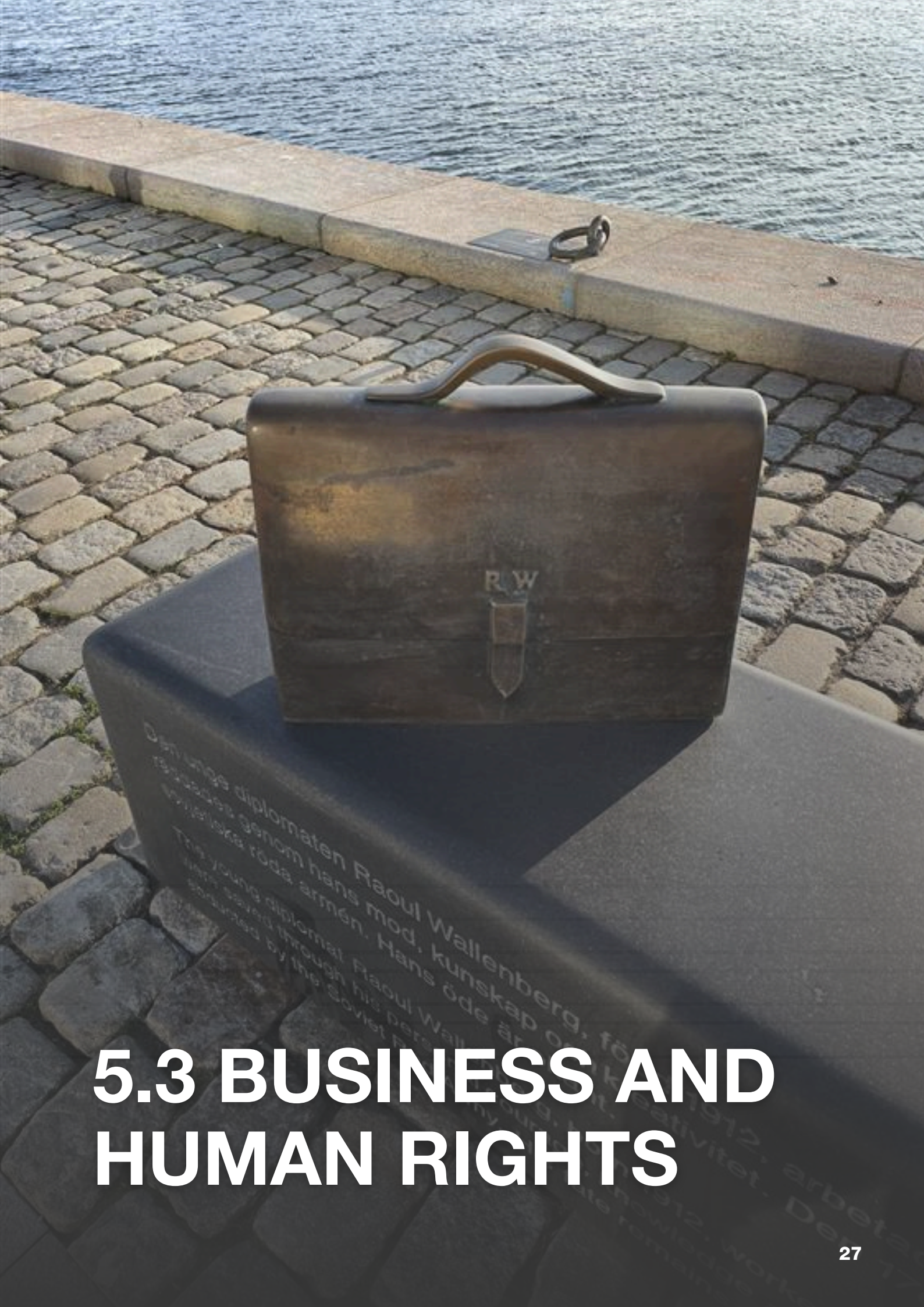
Across regions, there is increasing recognition of the need to integrate human rights into climate adaptation, environmental governance, and sustainable development. RWI's work in 2025 has laid important foundations for this, particularly through strengthened institutional partnerships, expanded training initiatives, and the development of practical tools for justice actors and policymakers.

Building on this momentum, the Institute will continue to support institutional capacity in addressing climate and environmental issues, with a focus on enabling public authorities, national human rights institutions, and legal professionals to apply rights-based approaches in their work. Research and knowledge development will remain central, with ongoing efforts to generate and disseminate evidence that can inform policy and practice.

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Simultaneously, RWI will deepen its engagement in global and regional processes, including climate governance forums, where the integration of human rights considerations is becoming increasingly important. This engagement is complemented by growing opportunities to link environmental work with other thematic areas, particularly business and human rights and rule of law, reflecting the interconnected nature of these challenges.

Taken together, these developments position RWI to continue contributing to more coherent and rights-based approaches to environmental governance, while building on its role as a partner to institutions working at the intersection of law, policy, and environmental change.



Den unge diplomaten Raoul Wallenberg, född 1912, blev känd för sin humanitära verksamhet under andra världskriget. Han räddade genom hans mod, kunskap och diplomatiska röda armen. Hans öde är fortfarande okänt.

The young diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, born 1912, became known for his humanitarian work during the Second World War. He saved through his personal courage, knowledge and diplomatic red arm. His fate is still unknown.

# 5.3 BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

### 5.3 BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Business and Human Rights thematic area continued to mature in 2025, with programmes across regions increasingly reinforcing one another and contributing to a more coherent body of work. RWI's engagement focuses on the intersection of human rights, trade, sustainability, and economic transformation, with a growing emphasis on practical tools and context-specific approaches.

The year was characterised by expanded regional collaboration, increased academic and policy engagement, and the development of a distinct institutional approach centred on case-based methodologies. These efforts are aligned with evolving global expectations on responsible business conduct, particularly in relation to EU sustainability and due diligence frameworks.

#### ASIA-PACIFIC: BUILDING REGIONAL CAPACITY AND CASE-BASED LEARNING

In the Asia-Pacific region, RWI expanded its work to strengthen knowledge and capacity on business and human rights, with a particular focus on Southeast Asia.

Efforts during the first half of the year focused on developing and disseminating teaching materials and case studies to support academic institutions. In Cambodia, partners committed to institutionalising these materials, contributing to an enabling environment for improved business compliance with EU regulations on human rights, environmental sustainability, and climate change.

Building on this, RWI partnered with academic and civil society institutions in Cambodia and Indonesia to develop locally grounded case-study teaching packages on biofuels, organic rice and critical minerals. These materials aim to strengthen contextual understanding of responsible business conduct in sectors central to the green transition. Furthermore, such materials enable teaching and trainings in law schools and schools of management and facilitate inter-disciplinary exchanges.

A regional workshop held in Jakarta in November brought together partners from Indonesia and Cambodia, alongside experts from Thailand and Viet Nam, to review and refine these materials and explore opportunities for regional uptake.

RWI also submitted a proposal to Sida for a four-year regional programme to strengthen responsible business conduct across Southeast Asia. The proposed initiative targets Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam, aiming to equip governments, academia, and business schools with tools to align with evolving EU standards. The proposal has received interest and support from Swedish Embassies in the region, and a scoping mission planned for 2026 will further refine priorities and partnerships to ensure effective implementation.

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## **TÜRKIYE: LINKING TRADE, SUSTAINABILITY, AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

A new Sida-funded project was launched in Türkiye focusing on the European Green Deal and its implications for corporate sustainability, due diligence, and human rights.

The initiative supports public institutions in understanding and applying EU regulatory frameworks, while also engaging Swedish companies operating in Türkiye to strengthen their preparedness for meeting heightened EU requirements.

The project, implemented over ten months, is designed as a pilot that may be scaled into a longer-term programme. It also reflects a broader strategic alignment between business and human rights, trade, and Swedish foreign policy priorities.

## **UKRAINE: SUPPORTING RESEARCH AND RECOVERY**

RWI's work in Ukraine continued through the Swedish Institute-funded project BHR4Ukraine, which focuses on strengthening the capacity of early-career researchers in the field of business and human rights.

Research conducted under the programme has explored the role of BHR in supporting sustainable and responsible recovery, as well as its relevance to Ukraine's EU integration process. A workshop in Kyiv and an international conference co-hosted with the Ministry of Economy provided platforms for presenting research findings and engaging with policymakers and stakeholders.

In parallel, RWI is developing a pilot initiative to strengthen academic capacity in business and human rights within Ukraine. The project aims to support business schools and law faculties in integrating BHR into their curricula, drawing on methodologies and experiences accumulated in RWI Asia and Türkiye projects. Discussions with Ukrainian universities are ongoing, and potential collaboration with the Council of Europe is being explored.

## **REGIONAL AFRICA: TRADE AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

In Regional Africa, RWI collaborated with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation on a report examining the relationship between intra-African trade and human rights.

The report, titled "State of Play 2025: AfCFTA and Human Rights", provides a mapping and assessment of initiatives advancing economic integration while promoting respect for human rights. Preliminary findings were presented at the Regional BHR Forum in Africa and the report will be launched at an African Union meeting in early 2026.

The study examines to what extent and how stakeholders have mobilized to implement the African Continental Free Trade Area and give effect to human rights. This work reflects a growing focus on the interaction between regional trade frameworks and human rights systems.

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## PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT AND KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT

RWI's engagement with the private sector expanded in 2025, including the signing of a two-year consultancy agreement with Alfa Laval. This collaboration focuses on supporting the company in strengthening compliance with evolving EU due diligence regulations.

Across the thematic area, RWI also produced a range of scholarly outputs, including papers, publications, articles, and podcast episodes. These contribute to an increased understanding of regulations, and their practical impacts across global value chains in a changed trade order.

## EMERGING APPROACHES AND STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

A common thread across RWI's BHR work is the development and application of case-based methodologies. This approach is being adapted across different contexts, including academic settings, public institutions, and corporate environments.

The use of case studies has emerged as a powerful tool for supporting stakeholder collaboration and identifying new leverage points in a radically transformed regulatory and market environment. This methodology is being tested and refined across regions and is expected to form a central part of RWI's future work.

The thematic area also demonstrates strong alignment with broader policy developments, particularly within the European Union. This includes connections to sustainability regulations, trade frameworks, standardization and digitalisation processes, as well as alignment with Swedish priorities related to the green transition and sustainable growth.

### LOOKING AHEAD

RWI's work on business and human rights is increasingly shaped by the convergence of trade, sustainability, and regulatory change. Building on the experience from Türkiye and other countries, the Institute is developing an approach that brings together policy engagement, academic collaboration, and private sector partnerships to support the implementation of evolving EU sustainability and due diligence frameworks. This "Ankara model" points to a scalable way of working that can be adapted across regions and sectors.

Looking ahead, RWI will continue to strengthen its regional programmes, expand collaboration with academic and policy actors, and further develop practical tools and methodologies to support responsible business conduct. Particular emphasis will be placed on strengthening the interface between business and human rights with environmental governance and the AI area, reflecting the increasingly interconnected nature of these areas.

This direction positions the Institute to respond to growing demand for applied, context-specific approaches to responsible business conduct in a changing global landscape.

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International  
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# 5.4 INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

### 5.4 INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

International Humanitarian Law has long been part of RWI's mandate and was re-established in 2025 as a distinct thematic focus area within the Strategic Framework. The revitalisation of this core mandate has centred on the development of the International Humanitarian Law Compliance Monitoring Database (ICMD), while also encompassing legal education, policy engagement, and support to dialogue on humanitarian protection and accountability.

The year was marked by significant progress in the ICMD initiative, alongside targeted contributions to capacity-building and international dialogue, demonstrating RWI's ability to convene diverse actors and contribute to evolving humanitarian governance.

#### ICMD: FROM CONCEPT TO OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The ICMD initiative made decisive progress in 2025, evolving from a conceptual framework into an operationally viable project with growing international support.

Building on earlier development, a prototype was completed in partnership with Deloitte Sweden, enabling RWI to present the initiative to a wide range of stakeholders. Engagements in Brussels and Geneva included EU institutions, UN agencies, diplomatic missions, and the ICRC, generating strong interest and validation.

Political engagement also deepened during the year. The EU Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management Hadja Lahbib participated in a dedicated roundtable at RWI in connection with the Anna Lindh Memorial Lecture, bringing together ambassadors, government officials, academics and civil society actors. This contributed to strengthening the initiative's visibility and momentum.

Support from states expanded, with continued backing from New Zealand and Mexico and a formal endorsement from the Colombian Ministry for Foreign Affairs. ICMD also secured its first government financing agreements with Luxembourg and Ireland, providing resources for the next phase of implementation. Discussions with DG ECHO deepened, and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs is reviewing a related application.

Private-sector partnerships further supported development. Deloitte Sweden continued as a pro bono technical partner, and a pro bono agreement was concluded with Mannheimer Swartling, one of the largest business law firms in the Nordic region, as legal advisor.

By the end of 2025, ICMD had secured the funding and partnerships required to initiate expert consultations, technical development, and piloting in 2026. These developments position RWI to contribute to strengthening compliance and accountability within the international humanitarian system.

## ZIMBABWE: STRENGTHENING LEGAL EDUCATION IN IHL

RWI continued to support the development of international humanitarian law education in Southern Africa through its engagement in moot court activities.

In cooperation with the ICRC, RWI supported the national round of the Regional Moot Court Competition on International Humanitarian Law in Harare. The University of Zimbabwe's Faculty of Law won the national round and progressed to the regional competition in Nairobi, where the team reached the finals.

This work contributes to strengthening legal education and supports the development of a new generation of practitioners with expertise in humanitarian law.

## AFGHANISTAN: DIALOGUE ON HUMANITARIAN ACCESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

RWI contributed to strengthening dialogue on humanitarian access, protection, and accountability in Afghanistan.

A roundtable held in Tirana brought together Afghan civil society actors from within the country and the diaspora to address tensions between humanitarian and human rights approaches. The resulting recommendations were further developed and presented to UN agencies and international stakeholders in Geneva, contributing to renewed dialogue on coordinated and principled engagement.

RWI fellows and experts also contributed to discussions with the UN Special Rapporteur on Toxics and Human Rights, including analysis of possible violations linked to toxic remnants of military activities. These engagements support continued attention to humanitarian and protection challenges within international accountability processes.

## OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

In parallel to programme activities, RWI submitted a research funding application to the Swedish Research Council focused on crime prevention, including corruption and related offences.

A concept note titled “Enhancing Justice for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law Violations in Ukraine” was also submitted to the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, reflecting continued efforts to expand engagement in this area.

RWI joined the Humanitarian Coordination Forum in Africa established to facilitate coordinated, principled humanitarian action, and strengthen the African Union's leadership on humanitarian action in Africa

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## **LOOKING AHEAD**

RWI's work on international humanitarian law will continue to build on the progress achieved in 2025.

The ICMD initiative will enter its next phase, with a focus on technical development, piloting, and further strengthening partnerships. In parallel, the Institute will continue to support legal education, facilitate dialogue on humanitarian access and accountability, and explore opportunities to expand its role in policy development and system-level engagement.

Together, these efforts position RWI to contribute to the development of more effective and accountable approaches to humanitarian law in a changing global context.



# 5.5 NON-DISCRIMINATION, INCLUSION, AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

# 5.5 NON-DISCRIMINATION, INCLUSION, AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Non-Discrimination and Inclusion remained a central, cross-cutting area of RWI's work in 2025. The thematic area addresses structural inequalities affecting women, minorities, migrants, persons with disabilities, and other groups facing intersecting forms of vulnerability. In parallel, it is systematically integrated across all of the Institute's thematic and programmatic work.

The year was characterised by expanded research and policy engagement, strengthened regional dialogue, and continued efforts to embed inclusion across institutions and systems, reflecting the growing importance of equality and inclusion in contemporary human rights practice.

### ASIA-PACIFIC: STRENGTHENING REGIONAL DIALOGUE AND CIVIC SPACE

RWI contributed to strengthening civil society participation and regional human rights dialogue in Southeast Asia.

As co-chair of the 4th ASEAN–EU Civil Society Forum in Kuala Lumpur, RWI brought together 52 civil society organisations from across Southeast Asia and Europe. Discussions addressed shrinking civic space, environmental and climate justice, and access to remedy. The resulting joint recommendations, submitted to the EU Delegation and the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, called for stronger recognition of civil society as strategic partners, the institutionalisation of the Forum, and improved access to resources for grassroots organisations.

This work reinforces RWI's role in supporting dialogue between civil society, regional bodies, and international partners.

### AFGHANISTAN: ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC EXCLUSION

Non-discrimination and inclusion remained central to RWI's work in Afghanistan, where systemic exclusion continues to affect women, minorities, and persons with disabilities.

Research conducted by Afghan fellows examined gender inequality, ethnic and religious discrimination, and their intersection with access to education, labour markets, and health services. A separate study on the rights of persons with disabilities is ongoing.

To support longer-term capacity, RWI enabled 20 Afghan women to pursue Master's degrees in Law in Indonesia, contributing to the development of future legal professionals. Fellows also participated in international dialogue, including engagement with UN mechanisms, helping ensure that Afghan perspectives inform global reporting and policy discussions.

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## **ARMENIA: ADVANCING ANTI-DISCRIMINATION IN LAW AND PRACTICE**

In Armenia, RWI strengthened anti-discrimination work across institutional, judicial, and community levels.

A report on the inclusion and integration of Syrian Armenians was completed for UNHCR, providing evidence for policy dialogue and protection planning. Work with the Academy of Justice led to the development of a curriculum on anti-discrimination for judges and prosecutors, alongside intersectional gender reviews of existing training materials.

RWI also supported broader institutional development, including internal work towards a gender-transformative organisational culture within its Armenia office.

## **REGIONAL AFRICA: RESEARCH AND INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING**

RWI contributed to advancing regional scholarship and institutional capacity on equality and inclusion across Africa.

The publication *Women's Rights, Gender Inequality, and Intersectional Vulnerabilities* marked two decades of the Maputo Protocol and provided a critical assessment of gender equality within the African human rights system. Dissemination events in Nairobi, Harare and Lilongwe expanded its reach.

At the institutional level, RWI supported national bodies in strengthening oversight and accountability. In Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission enhanced its capacity to assess local authorities' service delivery and its impact on rights, while the Zimbabwe Gender Commission strengthened its work on monitoring women's rights, including in detention settings, and improved its capacity for reporting under international human rights frameworks.

## **EUROPE: LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION AND RIGHTS-BASED GOVERNANCE**

RWI continued to strengthen the implementation of fundamental rights at the local level in Europe through the EU-funded RightsCities project.

Working with municipalities including Lund, Vienna, Utrecht, Gdańsk, and Sopot, RWI supported capacity-building on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. A self-assessment tool for local human rights governance was finalised and is being implemented by participating cities.

Training activities, including an online course and in-person workshops, strengthened the ability of local government staff to integrate human rights into policy and service delivery.

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## **EU-FRA PARTNERSHIP - SUPPORTING FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION.**

RWI completed or advanced eight reports commissioned by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, addressing topics such as the rights of migrants and asylum seekers, civic space, anti-Muslim hate crimes, and the impact of online content on fundamental rights.

Additional publications and policy papers examined how emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, can be regulated and applied in ways that uphold human rights principles.

These outputs contribute to strengthening evidence-based policymaking and improving understanding of how rights are experienced in practice.

### **CROSS-CUTTING CAPACITY STRENGTHENING**

Across regions, RWI supported initiatives that strengthen inclusive governance and embed non-discrimination principles in institutions.

These include:

- Training programmes for public institutions and oversight bodies
- Capacity-building for legal professionals and academics
- Support to research methodologies and rights-based teaching approaches
- Initiatives addressing the intersection of human rights and technology

In Zimbabwe, programmes such as the Research Academy for Practitioners and the Winter School on Human Rights contributed to building long-term capacity across government agencies, civil society, and academic institutions.

These activities support the broader integration of equality and inclusion across legal, policy, and institutional frameworks.

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

RWI will continue to strengthen its work on non-discrimination and inclusion across regions and thematic areas.

Building on developments in 2025, the Institute will further expand research and policy engagement, deepen collaboration with national and regional partners, and continue integrating inclusion as a core element of its work on rule of law, environmental governance, humanitarian law, and business and human rights.

This approach reflects the central role of equality and inclusion in ensuring that human rights are realised in practice.

## 6. FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The adaptation process, initiated in 2024, continued throughout 2025, with the objective of positioning RWI for long-term stability in a significantly changed funding environment. The year 2025 marked record levels of resource mobilisation, with new partnerships established and significant research funding secured. This reflects the Institute's continued relevance and strong performance. However, this positive development happened in a continuous changing and challenging environment in our field of work, with shifting political priorities and decreased funding in general, which continues to place increasing demands on our adaptability, resilience and strategic focus.

### STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENTS

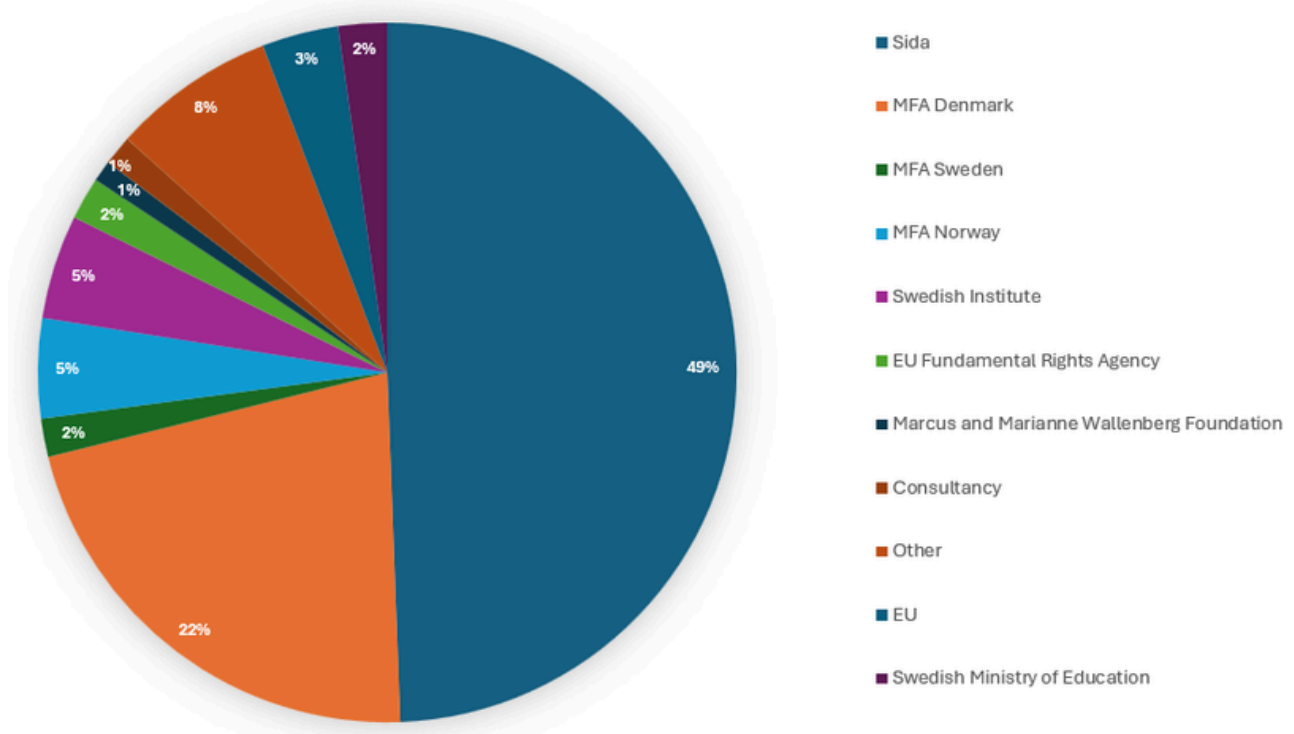
RWI's financial strategy in 2025 focused on three priorities:

- Diversification of revenue sources to reduce reliance on Sida, which accounted for approximately 49% of total income.
- Adaptation to reduced overhead levels and their implications for cost coverage.
- Strengthening internal financial governance, accountability, and efficiency.

### REVENUE COMPOSITION IN 2025

<i>All figures are in TSEK</i>	2025	2024
<b>Income</b>		
Sida	50,346	54,263
Other international projects	7,696	11,648
Marianne and Marcus Wallenberg Foundation	983	2,793
UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights	-	6,954
EU Agency for Fundamental Rights	1,977	1,449
EU	3,546	13,240
Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs	22,087	10,286
Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	4,725	3,584
Other grants received	3,004	1,137
Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs	1,768	-
Swedish Ministry of Education	2,337	-
Swedish Institute	4,856	1,603
Strategic partnerships	-	700
Other income	1,355	4,989
<b>Total income</b>	<b>104,680</b>	<b>112,647</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Direct project costs	52,672	52,181
Other external costs	1,666	15,711
Personnel costs	50,881	49,586
Depreciation Assets	23	55
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>105,242</b>	<b>117,543</b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>-561</b>	<b>-4,873</b>

## RWI income Actual 2025



### LOOKING AHEAD: 2026 AND BEYOND

The measures undertaken during 2025 represent important steps towards a more sustainable financial model. For 2026, RWI will continue its financial adaptation process during 2026, with a focus on:

- Further diversification of funding sources, including multi-donor programme models, private foundations etc.
- Continued efforts to secure core funding for key institutional functions

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