

## “GOJUST-Human Rights” Project

### CONTEXT

The Philippines has a **solid constitutional and legal framework for the protection and promotion of Human Rights**. The courts and the Commission on Human Rights Commission (CHR) are entrusted with the protection of the rights of individuals as well as the exercise of holding the government and its officials accountable for any violation thereof. In addition, the Philippines is a signatory to the main conventions and international agreements on Human Rights. Congress has also enacted several laws that extend these constitutional rights or enforce the government's commitment under international law. However, the work in **promoting and protecting Human Rights in the country is complex because of the challenges that the Justice System still facing as identified in the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022**.

The CHR has identified the persistence in the country over the last decades of violations of different kinds of rights: forced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, armed violence, etc. These rights violations especially affect the most vulnerable population: ethnic minorities, internally displaced persons due to conflicts, women, children and people with special needs.

In this context, **AECID has given priority in successive Country Partnership Frameworks (MAP) to initiatives aimed at the promotion and protection of Human Rights** in the country, mainly through several initiatives that started in 2011 with the project entitled "FORTALEZA: Strengthening of the Philippine Commission on Human Rights". The results obtained with this intervention and the solid relationship between AECID and the CHR led to the signing of a Delegated Cooperation agreement between the EU and AECID for the implementation of the “GOJUST Human Rights” Project.



### PROJECT INFORMATION

**DAC/CRS code:** 15160

**Sector of operation:**

- Human Rights

**Managing agency:**

- AECID

**Executing partners:**

- Commission on Human Rights Commission (CHR).
- Regional Human Rights Commission in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (RHRC).
- Civil Society Organizations (OSC)

**Duration:**

- 56 months (February 2016-September 2020).

**Area of intervention:**

- Filipinas (todo el país).

**Total budget:** 7.000.000 €

- AECID: 2.000.000 €
- European Union: 5.000.000 €

### “GOJUST - Human Rights” Project

The “GOJUST - Human Rights” project constitutes the fourth component of a comprehensive program financed by the European Union entitled “GOJUST. Strengthening of Governance in the Judicial Sector”, whose specific component on human rights is managed by AECID through a delegation and co-financing agreement.

AECID's main partner in this project is the **Commission on Human Rights (CHR)**, but the **Regional Human Rights Commission (RHRC) of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)** also participates as implementing partner, since it caters to an area with special incidence of violence and human rights violations. The objective of the project is to strengthen the capacities of both institutions to carry out their respective mandates, as well as support to multiple civil society organizations (CSOs) to strengthen their role in the defense of human rights and in the fight against impunity for human rights violations, as plaintiffs of justice and guarantors of accountability and support for victims.

The most outstanding results in each of the four components of the project are presented below.

## Component 1: Strengthen operational technical capacity of the Commission on Human Rights

- Adoption of a comprehensive approach to institutional strengthening, by systematizing information management and mainstreaming human rights and gender-based approach based, as well as transitional justice.
- Establishment of a system of multisectoral support centers for victims of human rights violations.
- Establishment of the National Mechanism for Prevention against Torture (MNP), as an interim mechanism for compliance to the Optional Protocol for the Convention Against Torture.
- Construction of 3 regional offices and a center for innovation and management of information and knowledge on human rights.

## Component 2: Strengthen operational and technical capacity of the Regional Human Rights Commission

- Training of virtually all RHRC personnel in areas such as case investigation, trial advocacy trial and a human rights-based approach.
- Collaboration with Civil Society Organizations active in the region in defense of human rights, and establishment of the Bangsamoro Human Rights Network, which has eighteen CSOs committed to this cause.
- Advocacy for the inclusion of human rights in the Bangsamoro Organic Law and the creation of the Human Rights Commission of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

## Component 3: Reinforce human rights promotion and protection role of CSOs

- Expansion and strengthening of the support network in the defense and promotion of human rights by signing more than 50 collaboration agreements between CHR and various CSOs.
- Partnerships to manage support and referral centers for victims of human rights violations.
- Partnerships on general areas such as documentation for the investigation of human rights violations, as well as in special situations such as the health crisis caused by covid-19.

## Component 4: Strengthen human rights monitoring and data management through the Human Rights Observatory

- Establishment of a Human Rights Observatory consisting of 4 areas of specialization: Gender, Indigenous Peoples, Migrant Workers and Climate Justice.
- Production of highly specialized documents and knowledge products such as: National Human Rights Report 2017-2019, National Inquiry on Climate Change, etc.
- Establishment of an online system for access to information and documentation on human rights.

## Supporting victims of human rights violations through collaboration with CSOs



The generally volatile situation in Central Mindanao was severely deteriorated in 2018 as a result of the violent takeover of the city of Marawi, Lanao del Sur, by the Maute group of Islamist fighters and the subsequent army siege. Insurgents have been active in the area for several years, allegedly maintaining links with the Islamic State (ISIS) and other extremist Muslim factions in Southeast Asia.



Following the attack and subsequent declaration of martial law, the RHRC has provided legal assistance to the victims of the siege, reaching more than 22,000 residents of Marawi, including many internally displaced persons. The GOJUST - Human Rights project is very actively supporting the collaboration between the RHRC and various CSOs to provide this type of support to victims of human rights violations.