

# In the face of tyranny

Human Rights  
Data Analysis Group

2025

hrdag.org

The past year unfolded in ways none of us could have fully anticipated. At HRDAG, our work continues to be guided by a shared clarity of purpose, grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Recent events have compelled us to re-examine the risks we are willing to accept in order to remain faithful to those values and our mission. That reexamination culminated in our decision to take a public stand against tyranny, which you will find reflected in the pages that follow.

HRDAG remains a nonpartisan, nonpolitical organization. Our work is grounded in scientific analysis and the rule of law. This is not about opposing a political party or ideology—it is about standing up for human rights.

We encourage every organization working in the human rights space to reflect on your values and assess your tolerance for risk at this moment. We must all ask ourselves:

- *How can we best uphold our mission to defend human rights amid these attacks?*
- *What risks are we willing to bear in pursuit of truth and justice?*
- *Where is our line in the sand—the point at which silence is no longer an option?*

For HRDAG, the answer to these questions is clear.



*Megan*

Megan Price, Executive Director

# We will not be silent.

For decades, HRDAG has researched patterns of genocide, torture, disappearances, and other forms of violence perpetrated by the state, seeking accountability for those who committed human rights violations.

As a U.S.-based nonprofit, we have long relied on the domestic legal protections to safeguard our scientific work and our right to publish our findings. We have not hesitated to share evidence-based analyses, even when they challenged the official position of the U.S. government.

But now, we recognize that the political environment in the United States has shifted. We see other NGOs and academics engaged in human rights work being targeted, discredited, and silenced by those in power.

**We are witnessing violations of human rights inside the U.S. similar to those we have long been documenting overseas.**

**As human rights data analysts, we center our moral understanding on the values of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We believe that “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world” as the Universal Declaration’s preamble states.**

This is our guide, and these are our values. For 34 years, this has meant using our skills as statisticians and programmers to help other people in their campaigns for truth and justice.

**When a doctor sees a sick or injured person, they run toward that person to render assistance. When a firefighter sees fire, they run toward the fire to assist with its control. When a human rights advocate sees a violation of freedom, justice, or peace, we must run toward that injustice. This is an obligation from Art. 28: “Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.”**

**We run toward injustice to stand with the victims and to defend rights in general. Like a doctor who might become infected by their patient, or a firefighter who might be injured while controlling a blaze, we and our partners understand that perpetrators of human rights violations might turn their violence against us.**

**We choose to take this risk, and we do not do so casually. We consult, prepare, and evaluate situations. We weigh the principles at stake, the tactics to advance those principles, and the human rights objectives to be achieved.**

**Sometimes it is necessary to put ourselves in harm’s way. Over the last 34 years, we have understood our role as supporting defenders, while we stay mostly in the background. When our work has been in other countries, we have sometimes shared a small portion**

**of the risk to which our partners are constantly exposed, but we always had the privilege of returning to safety in the United States.**

**This moment is different.**

**Over the last century, U.S. government scientists have conducted some of the most rigorous scientific work in human history; their work has improved human life immeasurably. In recent months, at the Administration’s order, priceless datasets are being deleted, scientists fired, and agencies dismantled.**

**Art. 27(1) states that “Everyone has the right ... to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.” We interpret the Administration’s vandalism as a direct assault on the human right to knowledge, and this is an attack on who we are.**

**We are watching the U.S. government make threats and attempts to control or destroy universities, foundations, nonprofits, and the International Criminal Court. These institutions are how humankind exercises freedom, pursues justice, and seeks peace.**

**We have chosen to say this now because we know that “disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind” and we know the history that led nations to proclaim the Declaration “as a common standard of achievement of all peoples and all nations.” Faced with hostile actions against human rights and to our own work, we restate that human rights are**

**the center of our professional identities and our personal values. We will seek actions that reaffirm our rights to speech, to association, to science, and to solidarity with those defending these rights.**

**We will redouble our efforts to use statistics and technology to document violations of human rights and to hold accountable those who violate these rights. We choose to run toward injustice; this is our calling and our commitment.**

**This is our world, and we will not be silent.**

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**Strength in community and the power of data**

We published this statement in the fall of 2025 and invited partners and colleagues to join a conversation about the threats we see facing our community and to draw strength in our collective commitment to this work.

In that conversation, HRDAG director of research Dr. Patrick Ball emphasized the importance of data preservation. As he explained, **any future accounting for the harms unfolding in the U.S. today will require evidence.** Protecting that evidence demands deliberate and sustained action, including secure data stewardship with backups held across multiple locations and jurisdictions, beyond the reach of any single government. By safeguarding the data we collect today, we ensure that attempts to erase the record cannot succeed—and that the work of truth, accountability, and justice can continue.

## We thank this year's generous supporters

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## HRDAG by the numbers

HRDAG's fiscal year is July 1–June 31	2024-25	2023-2024
Beginning cash balance	\$ 202,144	\$ 317,361
<b>Income</b>		
Foundation grants	\$ 1,278,170	\$ 848,823
Revenue from contracts	42,250	122,435
Direct public support	63,432	157,475
<b>Total income</b>	<b>\$ 1,383,851</b>	<b>\$ 1,128,732</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Salaries and consultants	\$ 928,155	\$ 1,021,441
Travel and conferences	32,312	23,891
Rent, utilities, and technology	55,204	59,937
Supplies and other direct costs	12,018	9,870
Administration <sup>1</sup>	124,405	101,130
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,152,094</b>	<b>\$ 1,216,270</b>
Ending cash balance <sup>2</sup>	<b>\$ 435,901</b>	<b>\$ 229,822</b>

<sup>1</sup> HRDAG operates as a fiscally sponsored project of Community Partners (communitypartners.org), a nonprofit organization that helps community leaders build and sustain effective programs that benefit the public good. Administrative fees to Community Partners support their back-office services and the legal framework that allows HRDAG to focus on our mission.

<sup>2</sup> We strive to close every fiscal year with a non-zero cash balance. A portion of this balance constitutes our reserves which we maintain year-to-year for financial stability and programmatic agility. The majority of this non-zero cash balance is meant to be spent over a specific period of time and/or on a specific project. The size of this balance varies year-to-year, depending on when grant funds are received.

## The HRDAG Team

Our current team (as shown, left to right) includes executive director Dr Megan Price; data scientist Tarak Shah; operations coordinator Suzanne Nathans; statistician Maria Gargiulo; director of research Dr. Patrick Ball; and data processor Michelle Dukich (not pictured); as well as dedicated consultants, interns, and fellows.



While we are based in San Francisco, our partners are located in various states and countries around the world. We are supported by an active advisory board composed of Cynthia Conti-Cook, Elizabeth Eagen, Alex Hanna, and Paul Wesson.

The Human Rights Data Analysis Group works closely with human and civil rights advocates to analyze and understand data. We build scientifically defensible, evidence-based arguments that have been the foundation of statistical claims made by truth commissions, UN missions, NGOs, and war crimes prosecutors in more than 30 countries.

Our U.S. work uses advanced scientific models to process and analyze documents describing police violence and other misconduct. We provide technical support to partners' on-the-ground efforts for institutional accountability in the Bay Area, Chicago, Louisiana, Puerto Rico, and beyond.

photo: Ingrid Festervoll Meilien

# “Human rights have universal power to move people to action.”



**Volker Türk**  
United Nations High Commissioner  
for Human Rights

## HRDAG

Data scientists  
for justice

## 34

years and  
counting

HRDAG gratefully acknowledges our major funders, including:



MacArthur  
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