



2020

ANNUAL REPORT

**GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN
RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT AND
GLOBAL DIALOGUE**



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FOREWORD

We have come to the end of a daunting year, with unprecedented challenges, in all walks of life, professional and personal. The pandemic affected human rights in every domain and dramatically underscored the constant need to safeguard and strengthen the fundamental rights of equality and non-discrimination.

For the Geneva Centre, as for many others, the sanitary measures considerably restricted initially planned projects. However, the Centre rapidly adapted to the new circumstances, found additional paths to fulfil its mission, and in fact stepped up its efforts and activities. The present report provides details of these but allow me to highlight some.

The Geneva Centre closely followed the 43rd, 44th and 45th regular sessions of the Human Rights Council. A total of 77 reports were prepared, including a Summary Table of all draft resolutions. The Centre also produced, for the first time, a consolidated report summarizing more than 60 background reports submitted prior to the 45th session.

As a human rights think-tank, the Geneva Centre published in summer an opinion and a think piece, in which it offered an in-depth socio-economic analysis of the effects of the pandemic on the enjoyment of human rights and identified evolving perspectives in light of the shifting global paradigm. It attended and reported on 57 webinars during the April-June period on a host of issues regarding challenges to human rights. The Centre could also offer an intensive course in human rights to a group of university students.

In its advocacy function, the Centre was particularly active through 2020, putting numerous posts on social media platforms

and producing several short videos regarding human rights. The Centre closely followed the one week General Debate at the UNCA in September and published 54 posts live on important references to human rights by Heads of State and Ministers. Finally, to celebrate Human Rights Day, the Centre organized for the first time an online panel on 10 December entitled "Recovery through Human Rights: Voices from the Field" where 8 highly committed panellists from the world over shared their experiences and best practices in alleviating suffering and offering support to those in need.

All major crises bear the seeds of change. In this respect, the experiences provide lessons learned and an opportunity to change for the better. The Geneva Centre will continue, under the circumstances in 2021, to robustly promote human rights, including through research and publications and national capacity building projects.

Let us fervently mobilize international solidarity to place human rights at the centre of recovery, to ensure the dawn of a more just, tolerant and inclusive society, in celebration of our shared humanity. The Geneva Centre wishes you a safe and successful New Year.

Dr. Umesh Palwankar
Executive Director

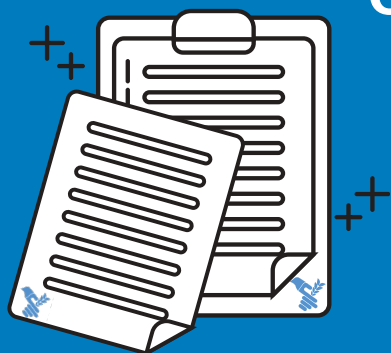



REPORTING ON HUMAN RIGHTS: SERVING OUR COMMUNITY



1. HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

In 2020, the Geneva Centre closely followed the 43rd, 44th and 45th regular sessions of the Human Rights Council. A total of 77 reports were prepared, including reports on Annual Panel Discussions, Interactive Dialogues, and General Debates. A comprehensive Summary Table listing all the Draft Resolutions, their background and voting history was prepared for each session. Interactive infographics and short videos summarizing the outcomes were released at the end of the sessions. The reports produced by the Geneva Centre are available on our website.



**MORE THAN 350 PERSONS JOINED
OUR MAILING LIST, INCLUDING 150
DIPLOMATS FROM GENEVA-BASED
PERMANENT MISSIONS,
REPRESENTATIVES OF
INTERNATIONAL NGOS,
UN AGENCIES, JOURNALISTS
AND ACADEMIA.**



REPORTING ON HUMAN RIGHTS: SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

WHAT OUR PARTNERS SAID ABOUT US

"Reporting is very timely and useful. Thank you!"

Diplomat from the Permanent Mission of Lithuania

"Thanks to your reports we were able to send quick summaries of meetings to capital, which was useful when there was no officer in the room to identify key issues."

Asked to remain anonymous

"Allow me to thank you as well for all your excellent work in the past month. Much appreciated."

Diplomat from the Permanent Mission of Croatia



"Thank you so much for providing easy and quick access to the HRC debates and resolutions! It's really helpful. The idea is really excellent!!"

Expert from the Committee on the Rights of the Child

"Your report is helpful in our collation of documentation and our own reporting processes."

UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of IDPs

"Reporting is excellent and super helpful. Big thanks to all!"

Diplomat from the Permanent Mission of Malta

"Just a quick and simple: THANK YOU. These reports are huge support for my work."

Diplomat from the Permanent Mission of Chile

"The reports are helpful and useful and I am sharing them with my colleagues regularly."

Member of the Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression



"Thank you so much for your feedback, they are very helpful to us small missions. Keep up the good work!"

Diplomat from the Permanent Mission of Eswatini

"Thank you for the facilitation which is a great assistance to small missions."

Diplomat from the Permanent Mission of Malaysia

"These documents have helped us, among other things, in monitoring the work and preparing our own summary documents for internal use."

Diplomat from the Permanent Mission of Togo

REPORTING ON HUMAN RIGHTS: SERVING OUR COMMUNITY



2. WEBINAR REPORTING INITIATIVE

Our initiative:

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Geneva Centre decided to launch a new initiative: the extensive coverage of international webinars. Each week, our team drew up a list of the webinars programmed by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), International-Organizations, Think-tanks, and Academic institutions, on topics related to COVID-19 and its human rights, economic, social, and political implications. For each webinar, a short report was produced and released on the same day. We shared our reports with our world-wide audience through social media distribution and through a mailing list composed of United Nations officials, journalists, NGO representatives and academics, with more than 150 subscribers in total.

MAJORITY OF THE WEBINARS WE COVERED WERE RELATED TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. OUR INITIATIVE ALLOWED PEOPLE TO GET INFORMED ON CRITICAL ISSUES LINKED TO THE PANDEMIC, SUCH AS IMPLICATIONS FOR WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS, RIGHT TO PRIVACY OR EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT.

WHAT OUR PARTNERS SAID ABOUT US

"Thank you so much for sharing the summary report by the Geneva Centre, as well as for your amplification with the Centre's community and readership, and also on social media."

Member of the Brookings Institution

"This is fantastic! I am very grateful for your reports. We are incredibly appreciative of the work your team are doing and the wonderful niche you are filling to support organisations during this time."

Member of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy

"Many thanks for this valuable information at this time of isolation."

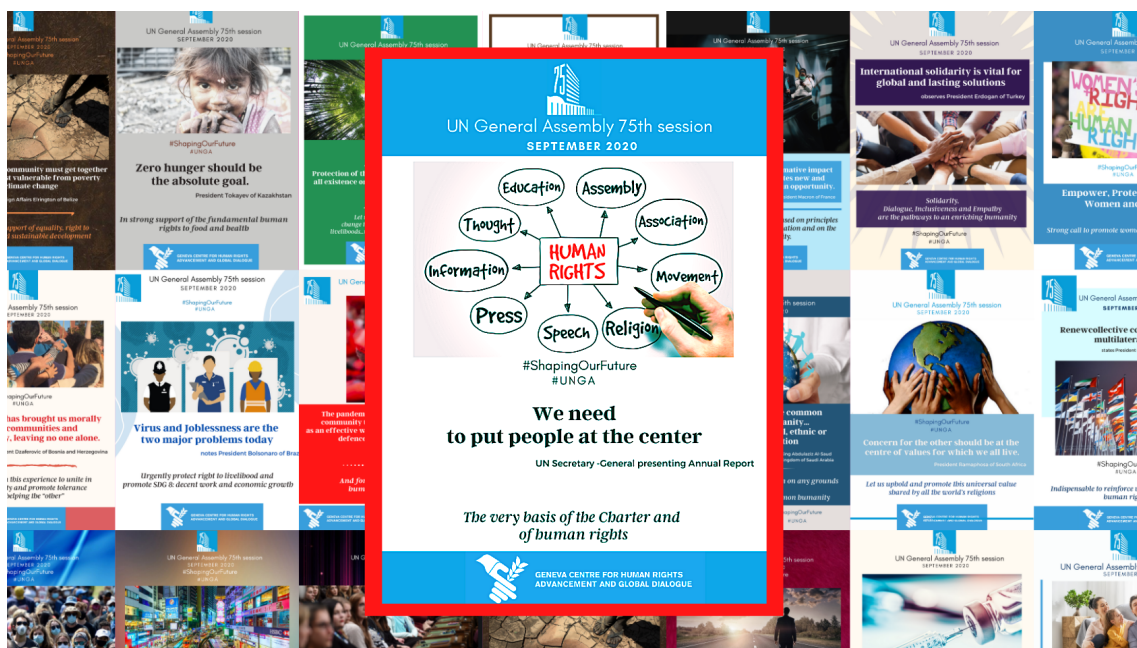
Member of the Inter-African Committee



REPORTING ON HUMAN RIGHTS: SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

3. UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

In September, the Geneva Centre decided for the first time, to cover the General Debate which marked the beginning of the UN General Assembly session, at which Heads of State or Foreign Ministers took the floor. We followed it live and shared posts in real time, even as the dignitaries were still speaking. A total of 54 social media posts in relation to the UN General Assembly General Debate were produced and shared by the Geneva Centre. Each social media post was unique, and contained a quote of a world leader, in relation to human rights, followed by a message from the Centre in relation to the quote.



The Geneva Centre also followed the work of the Third Committee's (Committee on Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues) during the 75th UN General Assembly session, and produced a detailed 50-page summary of more than 80 interactive debates, and thematic and country-specific discussions with representatives of Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures mandate holders and UN Agencies.

Examples of human rights issues covered during the debates include advancement of women rights, rights of migrants, refugees and IDPs, children rights, racism and racial discrimination, freedom of religion and belief, right to development, right to education, rights of indigenous peoples, right to self-determination, international solidarity, the impact of COVID-19 on human rights, human rights and climate change, freedom of opinion and expression, cultural rights, among others.

RAISING HUMAN RIGHTS AWARENESS

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



1. PUBLISHING THINK-PIECES

As a think-tank, following the onset of the pandemic, the Centre took measure of the flurry of activities, policy decisions, counter-decisions, press and other reports, analyses within and outside webinars, related in particular to the effects on the protection and respect of human rights, publishing two pieces.



June 2020 - Human Rights and the Covid-19 crisis: impacts, challenges, opportunities

In order to have a more complete picture and steer clear of initial ideological polemics, political, economic and other controversies, we waited, took stock and published an opinion piece in June to share our ideas regarding the unprecedented situation.

August 2020 - Evolving perspectives in human rights

A more substantial think-piece was released in August, dealing with seven dimensions of the transformative changes in the world brought about by, and needed to address the aftermaths of this unique world crisis, in order to pursue fulfilment of fundamental human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals.

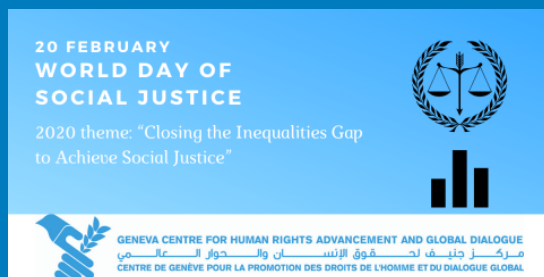


Our analyses thus offer a vision for the future and outline a policy road map. Both our think-pieces are available on our website.

RAISING HUMAN RIGHTS AWARENESS

2. ISSUING STATEMENTS

To raise awareness about human rights, the Geneva Centre regularly issues statements on the occasions of international commemorative days linked to human rights. In 2020, the Geneva Centre issued 5 statements:



20 February - World Day of Social Justice

"In a period marked by a steep rise in xenophobia, racism and intolerance, social justice must constitute an underlying principle for peaceful and prosperous coexistence within and among nations".

8 March - International Women's Day, oral statement at the Human Rights Council

"As we celebrate the International Women's Day, the time has come to definitively end the silent, but persistent injustice and discrimination that women have been subjected to for years."



21 March - International Day for the Elimination of racial discrimination

"the Covid-19 pandemic will never be solved with fear and discrimination. When people are attacked, physically, verbally or on social media because of their race or ethnicity, all of society is diminished"

12 November - Freedom of expression and religion

"Tolerance, Inter-cultural and religious Dialogue, and Inclusiveness, are the indispensable pathways to egalitarian, peaceful and prosperous societies."



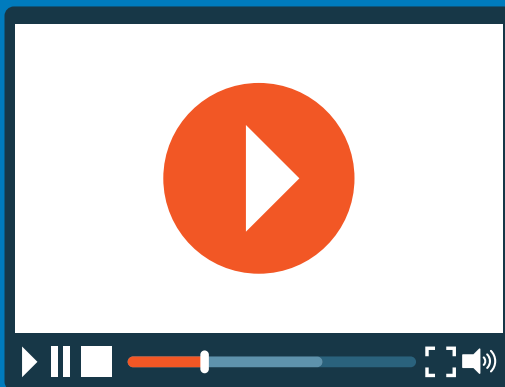
10 December - Human Rights Day

"The concept of non-discrimination lies at the heart of human rights. Discrimination feeds mistrust, marginalization, fear, leading to violence, and furthermore saps the economy by reducing productivity."

RAISING HUMAN RIGHTS AWARENESS

3. PRODUCING VIDEOS

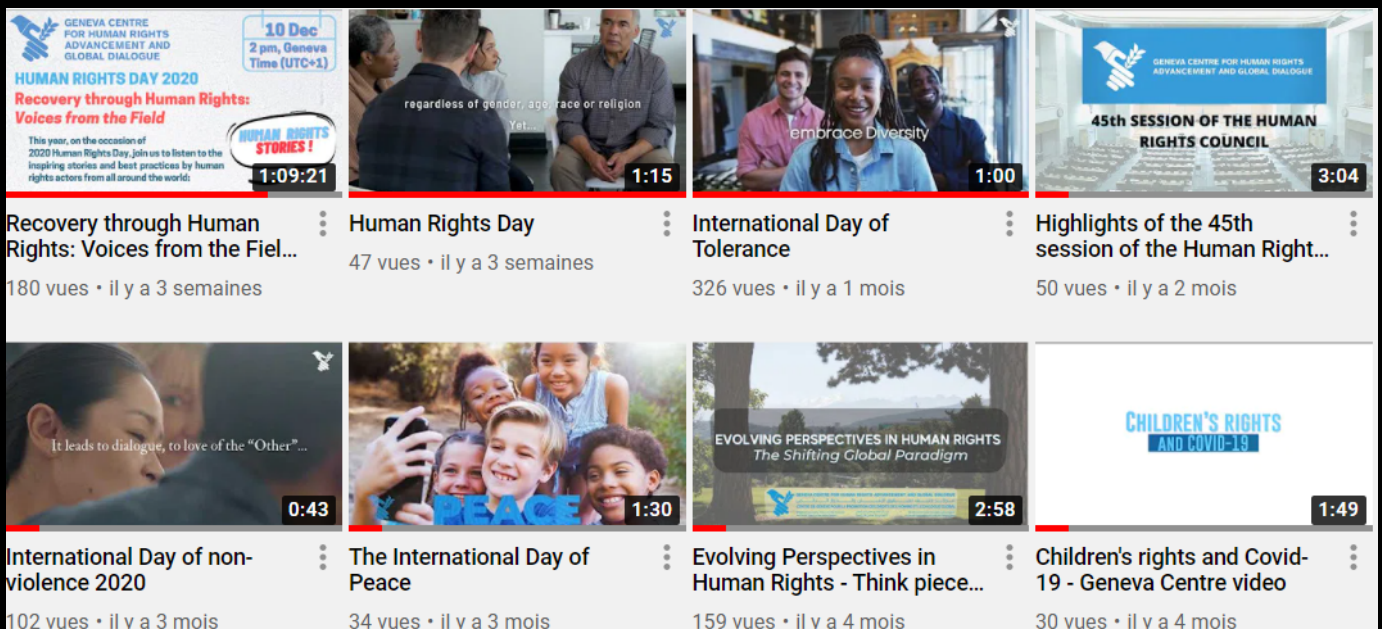
In 2020, the Geneva Centre decided to regularly produce videos in order to raise awareness by spreading the word on specific human rights related issues. The videos, ranging from 20 seconds to 3 minutes, cover a wide range of topics linked to human rights such as women's rights, children's rights, impact of Covid-19 on human rights, UN international days, as well as summary of important conferences such as the Human Rights Council.



IN 2020, THE GENEVA CENTRE PRODUCED 17 VIDEOS. EACH VIDEO WAS SHARED WITH OUR AUDIENCE, POSTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND UPLOADED ON OUR WEBSITE.

21,120
Views

Cumulated, our 17 videos produced in 2020 were viewed 21,120 times on our different social media platforms.



PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS: INVOLVEMENT OF THE GENEVA CENTRE

1. ORAL AND WRITTEN STATEMENTS TO THE UNITED NATIONS

The Centre actively follows and participates in the United Nations meetings of the human rights mechanisms, where it delivers oral statements and engages in advocacy activities.

43rd session of the Human Rights Council - On the occasion of the International Women's day celebrated on the 8th of March, the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue delivered an oral statement during the 43rd session of the UN Human Rights Council.



2020 ECOSOC High Level Segment - The Geneva Centre issued a written statement on *"Joining forces to enhance equal citizenship rights: reducing inequalities within and between countries through strengthening implementation by revitalizing global partnerships"*.



45th session of the Human Rights Council - On the occasion of the Biennial panel discussion on the right to development the Geneva Centre issued a written statement. The theme of the debate was: *"COVID-19 and the right to development: we are all in this together"*.



PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS: INVOLVEMENT OF THE GENEVA CENTRE

2. INVITATION TO SPEAK DURING EVENTS

Interfaith dialogue represents a subject of high importance for the Geneva Centre, which had organized a flagship World Conference on Religions, Creeds, Value Systems and Equal Citizenship Rights in 2018, and continued working on the topic of inter-religious dialogue ever since. In the framework of the 2020 World Interfaith Harmony week, proclaimed by UNGA Resolution A/RES/65/5, the Geneva Centre was invited to speak during two panel discussions. Dr Umesh Palwankar, the Executive Director, represented the Geneva Centre during these fruitful events.

7 February - World Council of Churches event on Interreligious Dialogue

"There is an urgent need to counteract divisive trends and to respond to the proliferation of religious hatred, by instilling a culture of peace and tolerance through education, and by triggering a worldwide process of spiritual convergence based on the shared universal values embodied in all religions".

Dr Umesh Palwankar, Executive Director of the Geneva Centre



WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK



The Official UN Observance in the 1st Week of February



14 February - UNITAR event, 5th Annual Geneva Interfaith Dialogue

"In such wounded times, education, understanding and solidarity, accompanied by love and forgiveness, can alone dispel the darkness of ignorance and hatred and usher an era of compassion, respect and dignity for all."

Dr Umesh Palwankar, Executive Director of the Geneva Centre

PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS: INVOLVEMENT OF THE GENEVA CENTRE

3. 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UN



To mark its 75th anniversary, the UN launched the biggest-ever "*global conversation on the role of global cooperation in building the future we want*". The Geneva Centre participated extensively in the dialogue held throughout the year, projecting its vision of the importance of global efforts and cooperation. In response to the survey submitted to the United Nations Secretary-General, the Geneva Centre issued three main recommendations:

"PROMOTE A VALUE-DRIVEN HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEM"



TOLERANCE

**"REJECT EXTREMISM,
DISCRIMINATION AND
RACISM"**

**"STRENGTHEN EFFORTS
AT THE MULTILATERAL
LEVEL"**



CELEBRATING HUMAN RIGHTS: HOLDING OF A VIRTUAL EVENT

10 DECEMBER VIRTUAL EVENT TO COMMEMORATE HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

On the occasion of the Human Rights Day 2020, the Geneva Centre organized a virtual event entitled "**Recovery through Human Rights: Voices from the Field**". The event gathered 8 panellists from all around the world, who shared their experiences and best practices in promoting and implementing human rights.



**GENEVA CENTRE
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
ADVANCEMENT AND
GLOBAL DIALOGUE**

10 Dec
2 pm, Geneva
Time (UTC+1)

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY 2020

**Recovery through Human Rights:
Voices from the Field**

**This year, on the occasion of
2020 Human Rights Day, join us to listen to the
inspiring stories and best practices by human
rights actors from all around the world:**



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Salwa Mansuri (India) <i>Rohingya Human Rights Initiative</i> • Ms Elly Pradervand (Switzerland) <i>Women's World Summit Foundation</i> • Dr Adil Sajwani (United Arab Emirates) <i>Ministry of Health - United Arab Emirates</i> • Ms Diana Madibekova (United Kingdom) <i>PhD Researcher & Teaching Fellow</i> • Ms Almas Shaikh (India) <i>Centre for Law and Policy Research</i> • Mr Joseph Agina (Kenya) <i>Olkejuado Adult & Continuing Education Association</i> • Ms Casey Myers (United States of America) <i>One Digital World</i> • Pr Samia al-Amoudi (Saudi Arabia) <i>Health Empowerment & Health rights initiative</i> 	<p><i>Stereotypes and prejudices about refugees and migrants</i></p> <p><i>Empowerment of rural women</i></p> <p><i>Addressing the inequality in the healthcare sector in the UAE</i></p> <p><i>Translating academic discussions into real world</i></p> <p><i>COVID-19 and vulnerable communities in India</i></p> <p><i>Impact of COVID-19 on poverty and early marriage in the Maasai community</i></p> <p><i>Equal access to education and Bridging the digital divide</i></p> <p><i>Covid-19 and women's rights in the Gulf region</i></p>
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With Introductory remarks by **H.E. Ambassador Ghazi Jomaa**
Chairman of the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue

Moderator: **Dr. Umesh Palwankar**
Executive Director of the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue

With panellists selected through an online call for participation, this unique event allowed small organizations with direct impact on the ground, to take the floor in front of a world-wide audience. At the end of the event, the Chairman of the Geneva Centre awarded the panellists with a Certificate of Merit issued by the Geneva Centre, commending their efforts to strengthen human rights.

CAPACITY BUILDING: TRAINING THE UPCOMING GENERATION

TRAINING SESSION WITH STUDENTS FROM THE UAE



From 2 to 13 March 2020 a training programme for students of Zayed University, Dubai (UAE) entitled ***"Human rights in a multilateral context"***, was organized by the Geneva Centre. It consisted of an intensive 2-weeks training on Human Rights & International Law, Human Rights Council and UN Human Rights mechanisms, Gender issues, Women's rights and Interfaith dialogue. This included participation in the 43rd session of the Human Rights Council under the guidance of the Centre's staff.



Geneva Centre (GCHRADG) @GCHRADG · Mar 9

Last week, the #GenevaCentre's trainees from Zayed University @Zayed_U (UAE) followed intensive training sessions on a number of #UN human rights mechanisms:

- ◆ #HumanRightsCouncil,
- ◆ #SpecialProcedures, and
- ◆ #TreatyBodies.



FACTS AND FIGURES FROM 2020



742,450

Tweet impressions

In 2020, we produced 732 tweets, which represents more than 2 tweets per day on average.

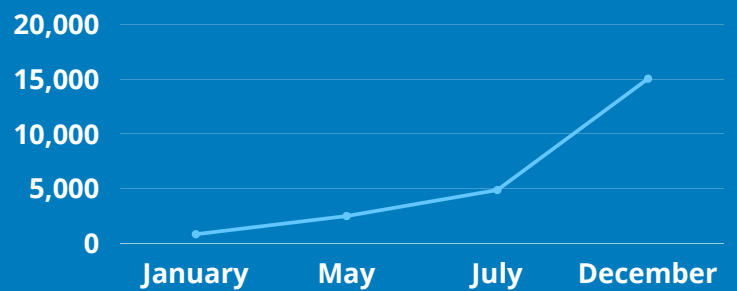
We attained 4582 followers in 2020, an increase of 263 followers through the year.



15,050

Followers

Evolution of our LinkedIn followers in 2020



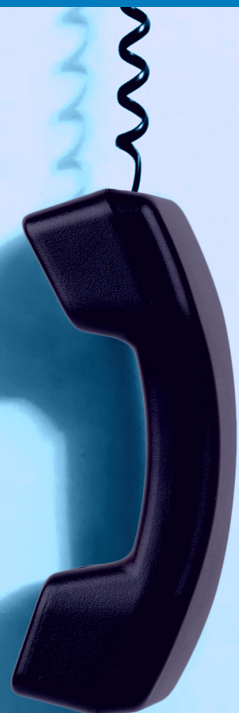
17

Videos produced

In 2020, we produced 17 new videos on human rights related issues.

Our videos aim at raising awareness of human rights, commemorate international days and summarize major international meetings.

communication



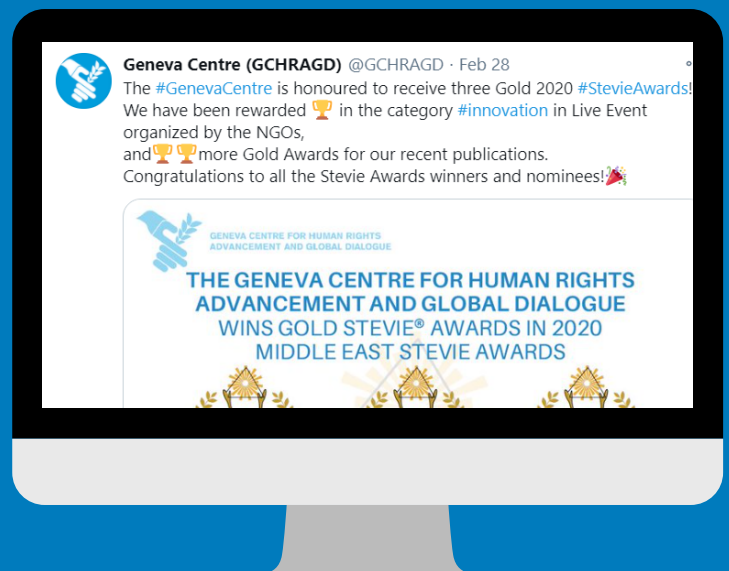
FACTS AND FIGURES FROM 2020

AWARDS WON IN 2020

In 2020, the Geneva Centre was named the winner of three Gold Stevie® Awards in the following categories:

- Innovation in Non-Profit/NGO Events category for its event organized in 2018 at the UN in Geneva: World Conference “Religions, Creeds and Value Systems: Joining Forces to Enhance Equal Citizenship Rights”
- Innovation in Non-Profit/NGO Publications for its publication released in April 2019: The Unprecedented Rise of People on the Move in the 21st Century
- Innovation in Non-Profit/NGO Publications for its publication released in December 2019: Enhancing Access to Justice for Children

The awards recognize innovation in live event and publications conception, development, planning, promotion and execution for non-profit/NGO actors. The Geneva Centre is proud to receive these awards, rewarding its dedicated work in the promotion of human rights and global dialogue. It serves as an incentive to continue our work with greater devotion to the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide.



LOOKING INTO 2021

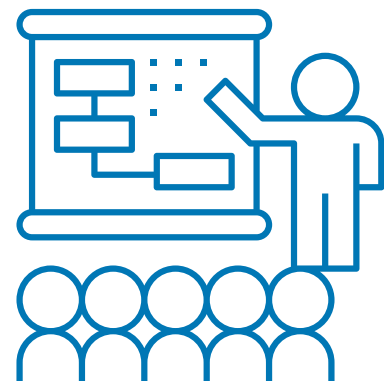
OUR WORK PLAN FOR NEXT YEAR

Continue intensive participation and reporting on Human Rights Council sessions and international conferences; publish research on critical human rights issues.



Organize events on crucial human rights issues, and bring together all stakeholders to propose concrete measures and collaborate on ways forward.

Intensify our capacity building efforts to train and guide both the upcoming generation and the current national authorities towards enhancing protection of human rights



Increase targeted video production and social media posts in order to raise human rights awareness on vital issues at the global level.

Visit us online

<http://www.gchragd.org/>



**GENEVA CENTRE
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ADVANCEMENT AND
GLOBAL DIALOGUE**

Follow us on

