Dear friends,

The past year has been a tumultuous one for human rights. Violence in the name of religion or ethnicity intensified in many places around the globe, often with devastating consequences for civilians.

In 2014, we helped mobilize powerful governments to reduce the human cost of religious and ethnic strife. Whether it was getting peacekeepers deployed to stop the slaughter in the Central African Republic, or differentiating fact from propaganda to address atrocities in Iraq, our timely and targeted interventions helped to stop cruelty and save lives.

At the same time, we tackled entrenched problems in countries less immediately associated with human rights violations—like the United States. Last year we prompted many of the largest US tobacco companies to stop using child labor in the fields.

Yet in this time of volatility, much work remains. With a proliferation of crises in Syria, Ukraine, South Sudan, and beyond, we are working to protect vulnerable people caught in harm’s way. We are also combatting intensifying repression in such places as China, Egypt, and Russia—all countries at the forefront of efforts to suppress civil society and popular dissent. And we continue to keep an eye on the practices of Western governments that tout themselves as leaders on human rights but often fall short.

To contend with these challenges, your support remains critical. Thank you for all that you do to champion the human rights cause and uphold our common humanity.

Hassan Elmasry, Board Co-Chair
Joel Motley, Board Co-Chair
Kenneth Roth, Executive Director
“Her suffering touched everyone in the room.”

MAUSI SEGUN, Nigeria researcher, Africa Division, Human Rights Watch, describing her interview with a 19-year-old girl whom the Islamist group Boko Haram had kidnapped and raped in Nigeria.

“He’s pain was so unbearable that he would have done anything to make it stop. Although doctors could have treated his pain with inexpensive medicine, he was left to suffer needlessly. In that moment, I realized that access to palliative care was a fundamental right.”

DIEDERIK LOHMAN, associate director, Health and Human Rights Division, Human Rights Watch, and author most recently of *Care When There Is No Cure*
Protecting vulnerable groups

One of Human Rights Watch’s roles is to amplify the voices of the world’s most vulnerable people. We bring the experiences—of human rights defenders; migrant workers; lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) individuals; people with disabilities; child farmworkers; and many others—to those who can make a difference. Here are some examples of the impact we had in 2014.
PROTECTING CHILD FARMWORKERS

After we investigated and reported on child labor on tobacco farms in the United States, two key groups of tobacco growers publicly opposed hiring children under age 16. The tobacco giant Altria announced a new child labor policy prohibiting its suppliers from hiring children under age 16. Previously the company had allowed its growers to hire children as young as age 12. Members of Congress introduced legislation to prohibit children from working in US tobacco fields, as we recommended.

VOICE OF THE VICTIM

“Twelve-year-old Miguel was hot, thirsty, and exhausted from working in tobacco fields. The whole environment put Miguel at risk—the nicotine, pesticides, heat, long hours, and pressure from employers.”

MARGARET WURTH, researcher, Children’s Rights Division, Human Rights Watch

SECURING A FORCED LABOR TREATY

A new treaty gives hope to some of the world’s most exploited people: those trapped in the slave-like conditions of forced labor. Migrants are at particular risk, often due to their increased vulnerability to deceptive recruitment practices. Armed with our 50 reports from the past decade on forced labor, we participated in treaty negotiations and helped strengthen key protections. In a significant advance, the International Labour Organization adopted new standards that obligate governments to safeguard workers from exploitation. These requirements ensure that all victims, regardless of immigration status, have access to justice in the country where abuses occur.

VOICE OF THE VICTIM

“She [my boss] scraped her fingernails to my neck, and slapped my face. I was bruised on my neck. She sometimes pulled out tufts of my hair.”

TAHIRA S., a former migrant domestic worker in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) interviewed by Human Rights Watch. Our investigation found that some UAE employers subject migrant domestic workers to grueling hours for little or no pay, confiscate their passports, confine them to the house, and deprive them of food.
Human Rights Watch demands respect for the dignity of every person, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation. Last year, the Netherlands reformed its gender recognition law to recognize the rights of transgender people by prohibiting sterilization as a requirement to obtain new identification. Previously, the Netherlands had required transgender individuals to take hormones and undergo surgery before they could have their gender legally recognized on official documents. In taking this step, several Dutch senators directly cited Human Rights Watch’s report on violations against transgender people in the Netherlands. We are now pushing for other European governments to follow suit.

In Thailand, a military junta overthrew the elected civilian government. We became a leading voice against secret military detentions and enforced disappearances. One case we publicized was that of political activist Kritsuda Khunasen. The junta had targeted her for assisting victims of violence during a previous military crackdown. The military freed her soon after we spoke directly with junta leaders.

Kritsuda reported having been tortured in custody. Two days after we demanded an investigation, the military government set up a group—which officials informally called the “counter-HRW unit”—to manage international criticisms of its rights record. Its first task was to address Kritsuda’s case.

“They put a plastic bag over my head and wrapped a piece of cloth around it to suffocate me. I felt as if I was dead before they let me breathe again.”

Kritsuda Khunasen, an activist apprehended and secretly detained by the Thai military, whom Human Rights Watch helped to free.
OVERCOMING EVERYDAY HURDLES FACING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

In Russia, we investigated how people with disabilities are largely cut off from society. Public buildings and transportation are often inaccessible, making daily activities like going to work or the doctor difficult. Echoing our recommendations, the government ordered employers to adapt workplaces to the needs of people with disabilities and is considering making public spaces, such as buses and polling stations, barrier-free. These steps are helping people with disabilities in Russia to live life like everyone else.

The flight attendant told NATALIA PRISETSKAYA when she tried to board an airplane at a Moscow airport.

“You’re disabled, you cannot fly.”

Victor Bodunov photographed with his mother, Valentina. In 2011, Victor finished his training as a print shop technician and hoped to find a job very soon. He is very active in Best Buddies Russia, a volunteer movement that creates one-to-one friendships for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. © 2011 Platon for Human Rights Watch

Yulia Simonova is co-program director of the inclusive education program at Perspektiva in Russia, holding training sessions on disability issues, inclusive education workshops, and disabilities awareness classes. © 2011 Platon for Human Rights Watch
It has been a tumultuous year for human rights. Violence in the name of religion or ethnicity intensified worldwide in 2014, often affecting areas where different communities have lived together for centuries. These conflicts were not inevitable. Within and between many countries, political differences have increasingly been framed in communal terms. That pitted religious or ethnic groups against one another, endangering civilians and basic freedoms.

At this volatile time, Human Rights Watch persevered on the front lines, addressing root causes of these conflicts, demanding human rights for all, and saving lives.
WE WIDEN THE LENS AND DEEPEN THE STORY

Human Rights Watch’s facts are concrete and specific. Our thorough and impartial investigations expose abuses committed in the name of religion or ethnicity. We analyze a situation in often forensic detail. At the same time, we widen the focus to assess broader policies that fuel sectarian tensions. This combination enables us—united, horrific, seemingly hopeless violence—to point the way toward reducing communal violence and curtailing rights abuses.

WE FIGURE OUT WHO IS RESPONSIBLE, EVEN IN DIFFICULT ENVIRONMENTS

Our research is a catalyst for action. Beyond documenting abuses, we establish who is responsible. Some states like Iraq and Syria may be disintegrating, with non-state armed groups seizing control of territory. But even in these difficult environments, we show how abuses are coordinated, directed, and supported. In doing so, we identify the targets who must be pressured to rein in abuses.

WE INTERVENE AS EVENTS UNFOLD

Our interventions are timely. We collect information from the front line as abuses occur and inject it into policy debates as they are happening. Militant and extremist groups are increasingly using social media to justify their conduct. Governments, in turn, often disseminate their own propaganda. Our role is to serve as a source of independent, impartial reporting and analysis, which we rapidly disseminate online. Our briefings to policymakers, journalists, and other influential actors enable them to hone their response to the crimes that we uncover.

WE TARGET GOVERNMENT POLICIES THAT POLITICIZE DIFFERENCES

We highlight the role of governments in fomenting divisions along religious or ethnic lines for political purposes. Many governments turn a blind eye to sectarian incitement to violence or hate against minorities. Sometimes governments manipulate these divisions to their advantage. To reverse this complicity, we insist that governments address problems, including terrorism, without resorting to oppression and discrimination.

WE MAP STEPS TO ADDRESS ROOT CAUSES OF VIOLENCE

We show how serious abuses committed along religious or ethnic divides are rooted in particular policies that need to be addressed to deter future horrors. We identify the policies that must be changed and the pressure that will be required. Whether it is reforming the police or implementing guarantees of minority rights, we map out the concrete steps that specific actors should take. Even seemingly pariah-like non-state armed groups can be influenced if the right pressure is applied.

WE DEMAND JUSTICE FOR CRIMES COMMITTED IN THE NAME OF RELIGION OR ETHNICITY

Incidents of sectarian violence are deeply destructive of often long-standing communities. Human Rights Watch demands that people who commit murder, rape, and arson should not escape justice because they consider their motives to be righteous.

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CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY IN THE HEART OF AFRICA

On January 14, 2014 in a small and otherwise forgotten town of northwest Central African Republic (CAR), an armed militia harboring hatred towards Muslims stopped a fleeing truck full of women and children. Knowing she was about to die, Fatimatu Yamsa handed her 7-month-old baby to a Christian woman next to her. The militias hacked the mother to death with machetes, but the baby was saved. Two other Muslim women and their four children were massacred with Yamsa on the steps of the village mosque.
"WE ARE TRAPPED BETWEEN THE ANTI-BALAKA AND THE SELEKA. WE CANNOT BREATHE."
Witness interviewed by Human Rights Watch, September 2014

A Muslim mob attacks a Christian man, wearing a red and yellow shirt, in a revenge attack for the killing of one of their community members. The man escaped. January 23, 2014.
© 2014 Marcus Bleasdale/VII for Human Rights Watch

Demanding that no one be forgotten
Located in the heart of Africa, CAR has been overwhelmed by bloodshed. Violence there was largely overlooked by the world. With most international media absent, we had to get the word out ourselves.

In over a dozen fact-finding missions, Human Rights Watch traveled thousands of miles into remote parts of the country. We reported on killings and destruction as they spiraled out of control. We supplemented our traditional frontline reporting with visual storytelling, social media, and satellite imagery.

Our work catapulted the plight of Yamsa and other civilians to the front page of prominent news outlets and to the desks of key policymakers. By highlighting the scale of the violence and human suffering, we turned this awareness into action to stop the killings.

Power grabs that manipulated religious difference
The roots of the CAR conflict run deep, built on decades of misrule since independence from France in 1960. Violence had frequently been used to secure political power, with amnesties for the most heinous crimes feeding cycles of renewed slaughter. Profound corruption and poor governance left the population marginalized, desperate, and angry. In the absence of effective state institutions, armed groups proliferated and wrought havoc.

Amid this instability, a power grab in March 2013 proved deadly for civilians. A coalition of mostly Muslim rebels from northern CAR seized power in a coup. They were supported by mercenaries from neighboring countries, who were lured by opportunities to pillage and exploit natural resources like gold and timber. Called the Seleka, the rebels killed civilians and burned down entire villages.

In response armed fighters known as the anti-balaka emerged and gained power. On a brutal rampage of vengeance, they slaughtered Muslim civilians and others. Despite the country’s long history of different communities living together harmoniously, religion became a fault line upon which violence erupted. Ordinary people were trapped in the middle, with devastating consequences.

Ordinary people caught in the vortex of mass violence
Human Rights Watch has reported on CAR for nearly a decade. That expertise enabled us to react immediately during the country’s rapid descent into chaos. Just days after the March 2013 coup, we deployed a research team to CAR. We were on the ground in September 2013 when the anti-balaka militias rose up, publishing the first definitive account of the revenge violence that same month.

Taking place in remote and inaccessible places, the tit-for-tat retaliatory killings between communities went largely unreported until we traveled through hazardous terrain and spotlighted atrocities there. During missions accompanied by a renowned photojournalist, we issued a steady stream of information on daily developments, often using social media or illustrating our findings with photographs, and translating our materials into French and Arabic.

As journalists and policymakers turned to us for the latest news, we exposed how Muslim communities—which once made up 15 percent of the county’s population—were being decimated by vicious sectarian attacks. These real-time accounts of mass slaughter became a powerful spur to action.
What a war crime looks like from space

Human Rights Watch deployed our most comprehensive satellite imagery analysis project to date. We surveyed hundreds of towns and documented destruction of tens of thousands of homes. By exposing the magnitude of the violence, we made the case for a large-scale peacekeeping and diplomatic intervention to protect at-risk civilians.

We also used this evidence to confront the perpetrators. One Seleka commander claimed his troops had damaged only four homes. In a face-to-face encounter, we used satellite imagery to show him that in fact the troops had torched 200 homes, and that we had the evidence to hold him accountable for these crimes.

“All those red dots are the houses you’ve burned.”
Peter Bouckaert, director, Emergencies Program, Human Rights Watch, in a face-to-face meeting with a Seleka colonel.
Looking ahead:

A Voice of Hope

Human Rights Watch is pushing for accountability in CAR so that confidence is restored in the government and people cease resorting to sectarian violence to solve their problems. In this increasingly divided country, people lack access to impartial justice, and brutal revenge killings continue. Human Rights Watch is working to stem these cycles of violence by encouraging judicial investigations and prosecutions. We remain a voice of hope, demanding that the grinding, daily suffering of CAR civilians be heard and addressed.

In part due to our work, France and the African Union moved quickly to deploy peacekeeping troops to prevent the further slaughter of civilians. The UN Security Council authorized and deployed its own peacekeeping mission, and adopted sanctions against alleged perpetrators. The United States contributed more than $100 million to these efforts.

Our work helped to spur the International Criminal Court to open a new investigation to bring those responsible for atrocities to justice. African and international leaders have now brokered a ceasefire agreement between the warring factions.

Our credible, accessible information on the shocking brutality in CAR overcame international indifference and propelled action.

Impact: with humanitarian groups, Lewis stayed at the church for the next 48 hours negotiating for peacekeepers to come help. The peacekeepers’ arrival stopped a massacre from happening.

“I WATCHED AS SELÉKA REBELS SURROUNDED A CHURCH COMPOUND HOLDING 3,000 CIVILIANS. THE SELÉKA COLONEL DELIVERED A CHILLING MESSAGE TO SHOOT THEM AND BURN THE MISSION IF THEY REMAINED THERE AT 8 AM THE NEXT DAY.”

Lewis Mudge, researcher, Africa Division, Human Rights Watch and author of “I Can Still Smell the Dead”: The Forgotten Human Rights Crisis in the Central African Republic

Sparking action

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Amid horrific violence in the name of religion, Human Rights Watch focused the world’s attention on the daily effects on ordinary Iraqis. Armed groups targeted men, women, and children for kidnapping and killings based on religious identity. The attacks pitted Sunni and Shia Muslims against one another and endangered the country’s religious and ethnic minorities.
Fertile ground for militancy

In 2003, the ouster of Saddam Hussein ended decades of Sunni domination of political power in Iraq. A Shia-led government, headed for the last eight years by former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, replaced it. Maliki favored Shia political power while neglecting the basic needs and security of all Iraqis. He used the threat of terrorism as an excuse to carry out mass arrests of Sunnis and to exclude Sunnis from positions of authority.

His failure to govern fairly alienated Sunni communities and helped to incubate armed Sunni opposition. The extremist group Islamic State (also known as ISIS) exploited that failure.

In 2014, ISIS seized broad swaths of the country, effectively obliterating a portion of Iraq’s border with Syria. ISIS’s extremist Islamist ideology and shocking brutality terrified civilians, leaving many Sunnis caught between ISIS and the abusive, sectarian rule of Maliki’s Shia-dominated government and allied militia.

Exposing crimes in real time, by all sides

We have been investigating and reporting on human rights conditions in Iraq since the early 1990s. With Iraq on the verge of collapse in 2014, a key role for Human Rights Watch, with researchers on the ground, was to explain the extent and causes of abuses there—and what should be done about them.

With the world’s attention on ISIS crimes, Human Rights Watch’s timely and impartial documentation demonstrated the importance of also focusing on abuses by the Iraqi government and allied militia. We showed how the government ordered security forces under its control to execute Sunni demonstrators and resorted to using indiscriminate weapons such as barrel bombs on Sunni cities. Our reporting revealed the devastating impact of the government’s counterterrorism tactics and showed that ending them was essential to end support for sectarian violence.

We also took the lead in documenting ISIS’s atrocities. Piecing together satellite-imagery and photo analysis, we were the first to establish in September 2014 the location of five execution sites and to confirm the mass execution of at least 560 people, most apparently Iraqi soldiers, captured by ISIS after it took control of Tikrit. In October 2014 we exposed a second ISIS mass execution, this time of some 600 civilian prisoners, mostly Shia, outside the northern city of Mosul. The information we gathered could lay the foundation for an eventual prosecution of those responsible for crimes against humanity.

“I TOOK MY FAMILY OUT TO PROTECT THEM FROM ISIS. I DIDN’T REALIZE THAT THE PEOPLE WHO CAME TO FIGHT ISIS WERE GOING TO BE THE ONES WE WOULD NEED PROTECTION FROM.”

Ahmed, a young business owner, in northern Iraq interviewed by Human Rights Watch

What are barrel bombs?

Typically made of large oil drums, gas cylinders, or water tanks filled with explosives and metal fragments, barrel bombs are unguided weapons—meaning it is nearly impossible to use them accurately to target combatants in populated areas. As a result, barrel bombs often kill civilians. They also destroy buildings like homes, schools, and hospitals.

© 2014 Reuters

A fighter from the extremist group Islamic State (also known as ISIS) holds an ISIS flag in the captured city of Mosul, Iraq, on June 23, 2014.
A priority for the new government

Less than one week after Iraq’s new prime minister, Haider al-Abadi, took office in September 2014, our Baghdad-based researcher Erin Evers met him to press for an end to the abusive sectarianism of his predecessor. Apart from heads of state, she was one of the first individuals to brief him personally. Echoing our calls, he ordered government forces to stop bombing populated areas in their fight against ISIS.

Looking ahead:

Spotlighting government responsibility

Human Rights Watch is piecing together evidence of responsibility for the atrocities civilians in Iraq face daily. Iraq’s defense against ISIS is dominated by untrained Shia militias whose methods frequently include revenge killings of Sunnis. These abuses only serve to strengthen ISIS’s position in Sunni areas. It also demands our impartial voice seeking accountability for those behind atrocities on both sides of this horrific conflict.

The researcher

“Residents are unsure who to fear most. When their daughter goes to market to buy flour, will she be killed by an ISIS car bomb or government rocket fire?”

ERIN EVES, Iraq researcher, Middle East and North Africa Division, Human Rights Watch

Events in Iraq are moving rapidly, and our team continues to be at the forefront of documenting abuses and pressing for effective responses. For the most up to date information, please visit HRW.org.
“AMID EXTREME BRUTALITY, WE MUST USE OUR COLLECTIVE VOICE AND ON-THE-GROUND INVESTIGATIONS TO ENSURE THAT RIGHTS ARE RESPECTED, CRUELTY STOPS, AND JUSTICE IS SERVED.”

KENNETH ROTH, executive director, Human Rights Watch
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<th>STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES UNRESTRICTED TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED UNRESTRICTED TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED</th>
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**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other receivables</td>
<td>761,700</td>
<td>1,019,561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepaid expenses</td>
<td>913,776</td>
<td>730,359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security deposits</td>
<td>250,883</td>
<td>230,528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed assets, net</td>
<td>3,670,626</td>
<td>2,758,605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td>5,249,425</td>
<td>6,220,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts payable and accrued expenses</td>
<td>3,024,493</td>
<td>3,755,395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Account pension expense</td>
<td>561,932</td>
<td>741,599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred</td>
<td>328,847</td>
<td>556,537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred revenue</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities</strong></td>
<td>4,893,843</td>
<td>5,933,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMITMENT AND NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td>21,292,882</td>
<td>25,839,794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporarily restricted</td>
<td>220,600,006</td>
<td>265,267,062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>241,892,808</td>
<td>291,106,856</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES**

*Financial statements for the years ended June 30, 2014 and 2013 were translated into US dollars using exchange rates derived by Human Rights Watch. This method is not in accordance with US GAAP and has not been audited.
