



Asia Justice and Rights





Annual Report 2018



Annual Report 2018

Photo Captions:

On the front cover, Carlos Nunes from Ainaro, Timor-Leste is embraced by his sister after 41 years apart. Carlos was taken by Indonesian soldiers as an 8-year-old in 1977, during the conflict in East Timor. On the back cover, Moses Xavier (second right) reunited with his siblings in Dili, Timor-Leste. Moses was separated from his family as a six-year-old in 1979, and taken to Indonesia by soldiers in 1982. AJAR and partners facilitated the reunion of Carlos, Moses, and seven other "stolen children" with their families during a visit in December 2018 (see p. 26).

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Design by Zulfikar Arief

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Letter from the President

During the past year we have witnessed significant progress in strengthening the movement for truth, justice, and accountability in the Asia Pacific region. The hard-fought elements of positive change, however, stand in contrast to many challenges. Mass executions without trial continue in the Philippines as part of the so-called “war on drugs” that many are now calling a “war on the poor”. In Bangladesh, over a million Rohingya refugees huddle in plastic hovels having fled the horrors committed against them by the Burmese military. The Thai military junta grows more comfortable with the unelected absolute power they now hold. In Indonesia, one of the world’s greatest examples of a religiously tolerant nation falters as irresponsible would-be leaders increasingly use religion for political gain. In many Asian contexts we are witnessing the disturbing global trend of authoritarian leaders waging war on a free press, an independent judiciary, and human rights defenders who constantly and courageously hold them to account for their actions.

Despite those challenges the demand for accountability and justice continues to spread. In May, civil society groups in Malaysia played a vital role in breaking 60 years of one-party rule, followed by the arrest of the former Prime Minister and a number of his cronies. The opening of International Criminal Court preliminary investigations into the Philippines and the forced deportation of the Rohingya into Bangladesh send a strong message that the historical reign of impunity in the region is cracking. Sri Lanka narrowly overcame a constitutional crisis and illegal grab for power during the past year only because the courts, parliament, and civil society were able to draw on the greatly strengthened democratic base developed in the three years since the autocratic regime was ousted. In Indonesia, the Anti-Corruption Commission and Court, despite efforts to dismantle them, have convicted and imprisoned more than 400 senior officials.

The struggle for truth, justice, and accountability is clearly not over. Authoritarian leaders consistently push for a return to “the old ways” using state-sponsored terror, their servants in the courts, and rigged elections to protect the grand theft of their nations’ resources. The difference now is that human rights defenders, civil society organisations, and key government “insiders” shine a light into the darkness where mass crimes and corruption thrive.

Development and prosperity cannot be achieved without accountability that depends on transparency, truth, and justice. Our partners are an integral part of those struggles, not sporadically or parachuting in and out from afar, but every day of the year. On average, AJAR held more than three trainings and workshops every week during the past year, with almost 7,000 participants. The fact that the demand for those opportunities is now far outstripping our ability to deliver them demonstrates that an ever-increasing number of rights defenders want to learn, to analyse, to develop new strategies, and to link with others in the region and internationally. Our staff have been stretched in trying to accommodate this increasing demand, often working long hours through weekends and holidays, and I thank them for their commitment. We also give a special thanks to the hundreds of victims of human rights violations who have attended our activities during the past year, honouring us by sharing their experiences, inspiring and teaching us about courage and hope.

Patrick Burgess

What is Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR)?

AJAR is a non-profit human rights organisation whose core mandate is to prevent and seek just solutions for mass human rights violations in the Asia Pacific region. AJAR's headquarters is in Jakarta, with programs in Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Thailand, the Philippines, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Solomon Islands. AJAR also conducts Asia regional programs and events, provides technical assistance, and contributes to international initiatives on victims' rights, justice, and accountability. AJAR has a strong focus on assisting survivors of serious rights abuses and contributing to gender justice initiatives.

How Do We Achieve Our Goals?

AJAR achieves its goals through:

- trainings, exchanges, and strengthening networks to increase the knowledge and capacity of survivors, human rights defenders, and government officials;
- undertaking research to establish and share the truth concerning mass human rights violations. As part of this work AJAR has developed unique participatory methods where victims are not the 'objects' of researchers, but take an active part in processes that include self-healing and empowerment;
- utilising the results of our research in advocacy to national, regional, and international organisations such as the United Nations;
- increasing popular, broad-based understanding of human rights, justice, tolerance, gender balance, etc. through use of mass media. This has included creating popular television series with human rights themes in Myanmar and Timor-Leste, producing documentaries, recording rights-related music, and social media campaigns.
- contributing to the empowerment of women survivors and human rights defenders so that their voices have an increased impact on policy and practice.

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AJAR's partner in Sri Lanka, Suriya Women's Development Centre, works with women survivors of conflict across all ethnic groups. (Photo credit: Suriya Women's Development Centre)

Highlights of 2018

- Almost 6,800 human rights defenders, victims, and key government counterparts attended 175 AJAR trainings and workshops, increasing their capacity to protect the rights of the vulnerable, and to build accountable and just societies. Capacity building activities for rights defenders were delivered in Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bangladesh, the Solomon Islands, and the Philippines.
- The Transitional Justice Asia Network (TJAN), founded and managed by AJAR, grew to include over 60 experts in nine Asian contexts, and conducted two week-long intensive trainings for experts and 41 activities in the member countries.
- The 20-episode popular television drama series created by AJAR in partnership with the Timor-Leste government and the European Union was repeatedly broadcast on national television and viewed 220,000 times from YouTube. The one-hour thematic segments are being used in trainings for government, schools, universities, prisons, and public defenders.
- The Aceh Truth and Reconciliation Commission established a database for evidence gathered, completed its key policies and procedures, and held its first major public hearing. AJAR has provided technical assistance since the Commission's inception and, in 2018, assisted through 19 capacity building activities.
- AJAR and its Myanmar partners launched the film and accompanying report, "Speaking Truth for Peace: Women's Experiences of War and Impunity in Myanmar", as part of multi-year partnerships focused on strengthening the movement of Myanmar women victims demanding justice and accountability.
- Another group of East Timorese "stolen children", forcibly taken to Indonesia by soldiers during the conflict, were brought home and reunited with their families who had believed they were no longer alive.
- AJAR continued its role as a bridge between grassroots initiatives in the region with relevant organisations in Europe, the USA, and other centres of international policy, including AJAR staff participating as experts on UN and other panels.
- The draft national reparations policy and law of the Solomon Islands were completed, with AJAR's President Patrick Burgess providing technical assistance.
- Participatory research with women in Papuan indigenous communities revealed complex challenges relating to natural resource conflict, violence, and unresolved trauma from rights violations. The research informs an ongoing process of strategic action to address those issues.
- AJAR continued to raise awareness of the link between impunity and a lack of response to mass violations against religious minorities with recruitment of youth from those communities to violent extremist groups.

AJAR's Achievements in Numbers



175 trainings and capacity building workshops for human rights defenders, victims, and key contributors to change were completed (an average of more than three implemented every week of the year). The duration of activities was from two to eight days, with an average of three days.



6,763 individuals participated in the trainings and workshops.



62% of these participants were **women**.



48 publications were produced, including research papers, manuals for trainers, tools for use in rights education, and compilations of the stories of survivors of serious human rights violations.

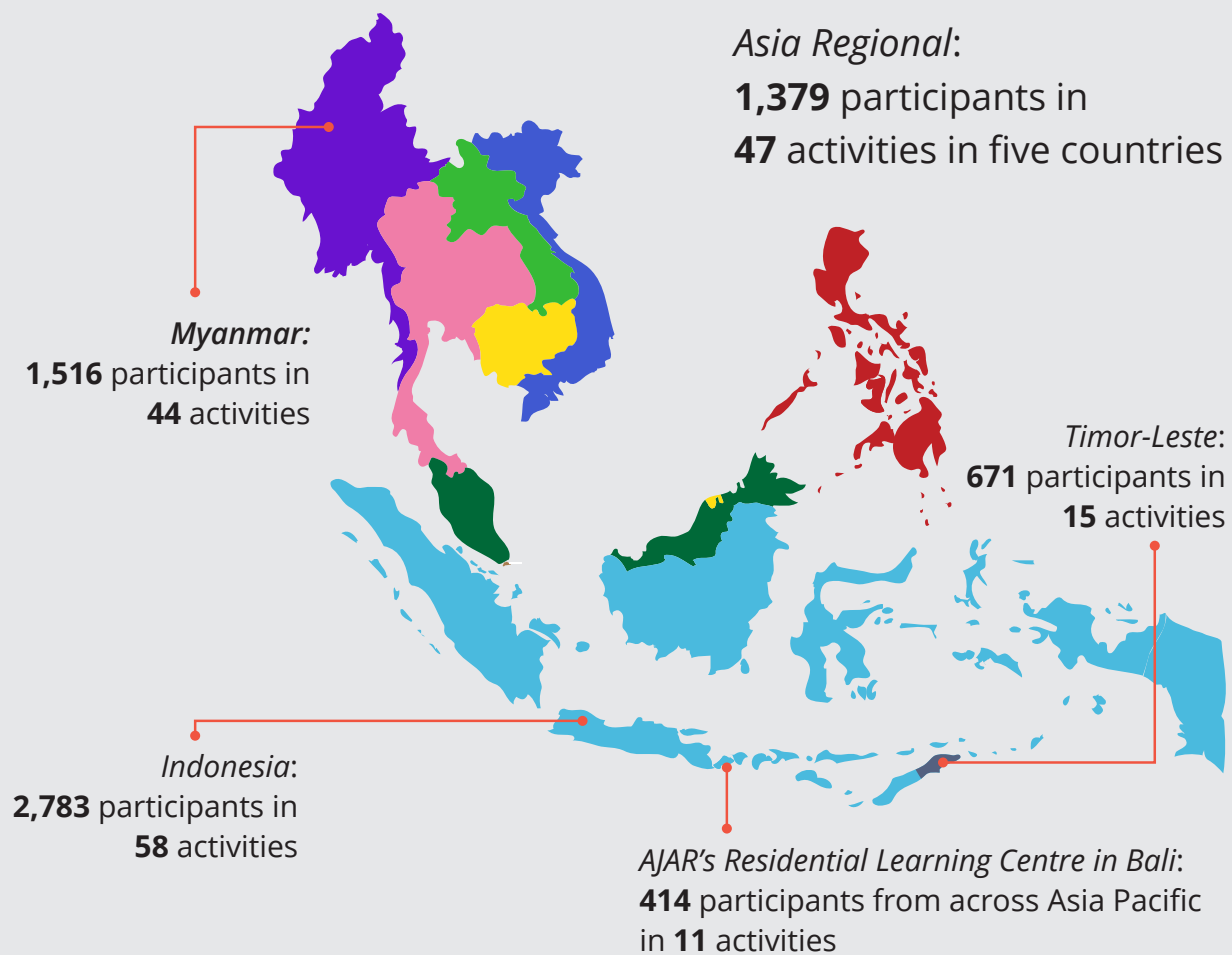


6 ten-minute videos on different aspects of transitional justice in Asia were produced and made available through YouTube and other sites. They were also distributed in hard copy for use in training and education across the region.



20 episodes of the popular television drama series Waves of Justice (Laloran Justisa) were broadcast and used for trainings and education in Timor-Leste, accompanied by the training manual based on the series.

Geographical Breakdown of Capacity Building Trainings and Workshops



Working Together on Accountability in Contexts of Impunity: The Transitional Justice Asia Network (TJAN)



TJAN's regional workshop on "Two Decades of Transitional Justice in Asia" in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, 26-27 March 2018

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Many international justice advocates are surprised to learn of the wide range of formal and informal transitional justice initiatives being conducted across the Asia Pacific region. Three years ago, AJAR established TJAN to strengthen transitional justice (TJ) expertise in the region, linking key practitioners who are involved in relevant initiatives, developing best practices, and sharing information across borders and from the region to international forums. AJAR continues to manage TJAN, bringing together key members for shared learning experiences and supporting strategic national and local initiatives. Participants in TJAN are drawn from civil society organisations in nine countries: Thailand, the Philippines, Timor-Leste, Myanmar, South Korea, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. In 2018 TJAN conducted two intensive learning processes, supported 41 initiatives in member contexts, and produced six video films on different TJ themes in the Asia Pacific region.

In early 2018, AJAR and TJAN conducted a five-day intensive training on methods of truth seeking that brought together 40 regional and international experts in Aceh, Indonesia. In addition to sharing lessons learned and developing regional collaborative strategies on accountability, participants visited the Aceh Truth and Reconciliation Commission that is currently implementing its truth-seeking mandate.

I have learnt about applying TJ in different contexts, the need for more tools and, importantly, about advocacy work. What I liked most was learning about the Aceh TRC's operation. It is such a powerful success, with efforts coming from many organisations and also from victims.

- Fareeda Panjoor, Thailand

The second AJAR-TJAN programme in 2018 was a seven-day intensive workshop on prosecution of international crimes held at the “Peace Village”, AJAR’s residential human rights learning centre in Bali. The event brought expert lawyers with direct experience at the International Criminal Court (ICC); the Khmer Rouge Tribunal; the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia; and the Sierra Leone, South Africa, and Timor-Leste trials to interact and exchange knowledge with practitioners from nine Asian country contexts.

The experts shared their deep knowledge of the experiences, successes, and failures of all those contexts, drawing out a range of lessons learned and best practices. The workshop also focused on building understanding of the current ICC preliminary investigations into the mass crimes committed in the Philippines and during the forced deportation of the Rohingya from Myanmar into Bangladesh. Other areas of focus included the new UN General Assembly International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism on Syria, and a similar body established by the UNHRC—Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM)—that will collect evidence in preparation for future prosecutions. Participants analysed recent examples of the use of national Universal Jurisdiction laws to arrest those implicated in mass crimes in other countries. Importantly, regional and international linkages were strengthened with a commitment to work together, share information, and participate in common advocacy initiatives on accountability.



Video Series: Asian Experts on Justice and Accountability

This year TJAN launched the Transitional Justice in Asia series of six videos that focused on different aspects of transitional justice in Asian contexts: What is Transitional Justice?, Truth Seeking, Prosecutions, Reparations, Institutional Reform, and Gender Justice. The series presents instructive material through the eyes of Asian women and men who care passionately about justice and have dedicated their lives in pursuit of it. Copies of the video series have been provided to practitioners for use in training and education across civil society, victims’ groups, government agencies, schools, and universities across the region. The video series has also been made available for all on YouTube.



Women in Myanmar light candles to remember survivors of the past conflict at the Gathering of Survivors, 13 November 2018.

Myanmar: Connecting Survivors, Moving Forward Together

“ *I became a political activist because I love the truth...I am speaking out today so that future generations don't have to experience violations.*

**- Daw Thet Thet Lwin, former political prisoner,
speaking at the International Day to the Right to Truth gathering
organised by AJAR and its local partners in Yangon, 24 March 2018**

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Recent experiences in Myanmar have clearly showed the disastrous results of an approach that ignores the issues of impunity, accountability, and justice for mass crimes. The strategy of silence on those issues during the transition led the Burmese military to believe that further crimes in Kachin, Shan, and Rakhine States also would not cause any significant problems for them. While heightened armed conflict, violations, and political tensions presented challenges for civil society working on human rights, AJAR and its partners continued to speak out to demand justice and accountability, while also strengthening the capacity of women survivors to participate in the country's future.

To mark the International Day for the Right to the Truth (24 March), AJAR, in collaboration with the Karen Women's Organisation, Ta'ang Women's Organisation, and Vimutti Women Organisation, launched a film and report called "Speaking Truth for Peace: Women's Experiences of War and Impunity in Myanmar". Survivors from different ethnic and religious backgrounds came together in a call for the end of conflict, for women's participation in the peace process, and for the right to investigate human rights violations across the country. On the International Day in Support of Torture Survivors (June 26), survivors and local groups spoke out about the urgent need for acknowledgment and rehabilitation for victims of torture. In a joint statement to mark the day, AJAR and civil society groups called for the ratification of the UN Convention against Torture.



After signing the convention, the UN will wait to see if the government will implement it. After signing, the government needs to show the public the provisions included in the convention; then it must conduct awareness training for civil servants like police and soldiers. It also has to help rehabilitate torture victims.

**- Daw Lway Poe Ngeal, Women's League of Burma,
speaking at the International Day to Support Victims of Torture, 26 June 2018**

As part of the strategy to build a multi-ethnic survivor-led movement for justice, AJAR brought together Kachin, Ta'ang, Karen, and Bamar women in a series of three workshops. The events provided an opportunity for the women to share experiences and lessons from the conflict areas, and learn simple methods of protection and self-care. The sessions also explored differences and similarities between the different ethnic groups, and the benefits of a strong collective voice to oppose the ongoing violations and seek accountability. AJAR, along with key partners involved in its multi-year programme documenting the stories of women survivors, conducted training for new facilitators on participatory research skills. AJAR's team also conducted field visits to partner organisations working in conflict areas to further support these facilitators in their work with trauma survivors, giving targeted support to Kasi Kaja, a self-help group established by survivors in Kachin State. At the end of the year, AJAR's fourth Gathering of Survivors brought together 44 survivors from four ethnic groups. Sharing their stories, songs, and dances, the Gathering also provided space for survivors to discuss practical ways to set up survivor groups in their own areas.



AJAR's partner, the Network for Human Rights Documentation – Burma (ND-Burma) released the newest report of the Reparations Working Group, "You cannot ignore us: Victims of human rights violations from 1970-2017 outline their desires for justice" in October 2018. Based on interviews with over 170 victims, the Working Group recommended the establishment of a national reparations programme to focus on guarantees of non-recurrence, symbolic acknowledgement, compensation for financial hardship, and restitution of property loss. A survivor of torture from Kachin State said, "I want to see government soldiers understand the value of a human being's life. I want them to respect other people. I want them to respect human rights."

“Waves of Justice”: Television Drama for Human Rights Education



AJAR Timor-Leste's Director, Jose Luis de Oliveira, facilitates a discussion on human rights using the *Waves of Justice* series at the Gleno prison upon the invitation of the Timor-Leste Public Defenders' Office, 23 August 2018.

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The 20-episode popular television drama *Laloran Justisa* (Waves of Justice¹) created by AJAR in partnership with the Timor-Leste's Provedor for Human Rights and Justice (PDHJ) and funded by the European Union (EU) was repeatedly broadcast on national television networks in Timor-Leste in 2017-18. The series, produced in collaboration with a local Timorese organisation, creates a world in which a small human rights NGO assists local villagers as they struggle with different challenges in their community including domestic violence, arrest and criminal trial, fair elections, land-grabbing, corruption, and environmental protection. These rights issues are mixed with drama, family tensions, love triangles, football, and music, providing an entertaining format to reach a broad audience. In addition to the national TV broadcasts, the episodes were downloaded from YouTube more than 220,000 times in 2018.

The format of the series is based on a similar programme, “The Sun, the Moon and the Truth”, (SMT) created and written by AJAR and local partners for the Myanmar context. More than 7 million people have viewed the first series of the SMT.² A second series, based on original scripts written by AJAR that were developed and produced by a Myanmar civil society coalition, was launched in late 2018 and is currently being broadcast across the country.

AJAR's format for these popular edutainment TV series sought to promote participatory learning through stimulating discussion in families, schools, and communities. In addition, the episodes are written according to thematic issues so that they can be used in training and education. For example, in Myanmar all new recruits at the police academy are required to watch and discuss the episode dealing with domestic violence.

¹ See the one-minute trailer of the TV series at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HthDXNfMVzo>

² See the one-minute trailer of the series “The Sun, the Moon and the Truth” at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kkMyQe9l5DE>

In 2018, AJAR and PDHJ held workshops focused on how to use the episodes of the series to educate in four regions of Timor-Leste. Participants included government agencies, police, and civil society organisations. Timorese public defenders are now routinely using the episodes to educate on rights and criminal process following arrest. Trainings based on “Waves of Justice” were also conducted with LGBT and land rights groups.

An independent external evaluation of the project required by the EU (the donor) concluded:

“ *The response to Laloran Justisa has been overwhelmingly positive, from all stakeholders and audience members alike. It is seen as an effective and significant contribution to raising rights awareness—both through the dissemination that took place during the project itself, and through the trainings that would enable stakeholders to use the material in their own programming. It was also seen as an important cultural statement for Timor, reflecting society’s and individuals’ own reality and language.* ”

At the end of the two and a half year programme, the EU requested a Brussels-based auditor to conduct an independent financial audit. The auditor found, after checking all systems and expenses, that every single expense of the large programme had been fully accounted for according to the EU’s stringent financial requirements.



AJAR with its partner, ACbit, organised school activities based on the “Waves of Justice” series in 2017-2018, with 4300 students in 13 districts. Of the 1200 that answered a survey after watching the criminal justice episodes, 99% said that they had learned for the first time about the role of judges and public defenders, and 84% learned for the first time about the principle of being presumed innocent until proven guilty.

“

Putting aside academic jargon about the particulars of human rights, civil and political rights, economic and social rights—yes, people don't know about all these international conventions, but they know they have the right to speak, they have the right to better housing, better education, and so on. Films on human rights...simply confirm...the instinct of an individual: “Yes, the film is right...” And maybe the film shows them a better way to fight for their rights.

- Former President José Ramos Horta, Nobel Laureate, commenting on the “Waves of Justice” TV series

Teaching Histories of Mass Violations, Teaching Justice and Truth

Over the past five years, more than 30,000 participants have attended AJAR's trainings, and the demand is growing each year. We continue to develop innovative methodologies of teaching human rights and related issues. Trainings include a significant variety of activities, rely on group work to produce new insights and strategies, and are carefully structured to achieve a high level of impact. AJAR's Learning Unit is a dedicated department of AJAR led by training and human rights experts focused on ensuring that all educational activities are innovative and participatory, using the latest technologies, and methods. The Learning Unit also leads the monitoring and evaluation of the organisation's activities to ensure that the lessons learned are captured and used to benefit a constant process of improvement and positive change.

This year, in addition to the more than 100 trainings and workshops conducted in five Asian countries, AJAR also offered over 60 trainings at its Bali “Peace Village” learning centre. These trainings focused on different topics such as transitional justice, gender justice, prosecutions of international crimes, and effective tools for youth human rights defenders. Participants came from non-government organisations, academic institutions, government agencies, and community organisations based in Indonesia, Timor-Leste, the Philippines, Thailand, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Australia, New Zealand, Bangladesh, Cambodia, and other countries.



Participants at AJAR's training on prosecutions of international crimes present their reflections on the challenges and opportunities ahead, Bali, Indonesia, 24 November 2018.

Indigenous Women in Papua Speak Out



I am drawing my own body. What I have experienced, what I have felt, what has been painful, what has been joyful, I am drawing here.

- A Papuan woman survivor of conflict explains a map she had drawn of her own body. AJAR has been developing participatory tools to help indigenous women articulate their issues, build solidarity, and take action for change at a community level.



Maria Ndiken (right), one of the first women heads of village in Merauke, Papua, and Beatrix Gebze (left), a training facilitator, pose at the launch of AJAR's new publication, "I Have a Story: Challenges and Strengths of Papuan Women in Their Words", 6 November 2018.

AJAR continued its work with the Papuan Women's Working Group, a collection of five local organisations that support marginalised indigenous women in Papua, including victims of violence. Eighty-six women and men in four districts participated in grassroots participatory action research designed to better understand how indigenous women survive violence and face discrimination in their communities. Through this process, women spoke about land grabbing, the impact of alcoholism in their communities, violence and unresolved trauma, and difficulties in accessing basic services. The women also shared stories about their strength and resilience, and exchanged strategies that reflected their resolve to survive.

Some positive signs of change have emerged from these processes. In Merauke, village leaders who participated in the action research facilitated local discussion to address issues raised by women. Two women elected as the head of their villages in this area of Papua, a highly unusual event, provided further inspiration for the group, showing that women can also become leaders and have a strong and informed voice in decisions in their community.

“

I am the head of my village...Initially, the community could not accept that I was elected to this position...I chose an all-women team...Now, the community is happy because we work openly. There is transparency in how we manage our village funds.

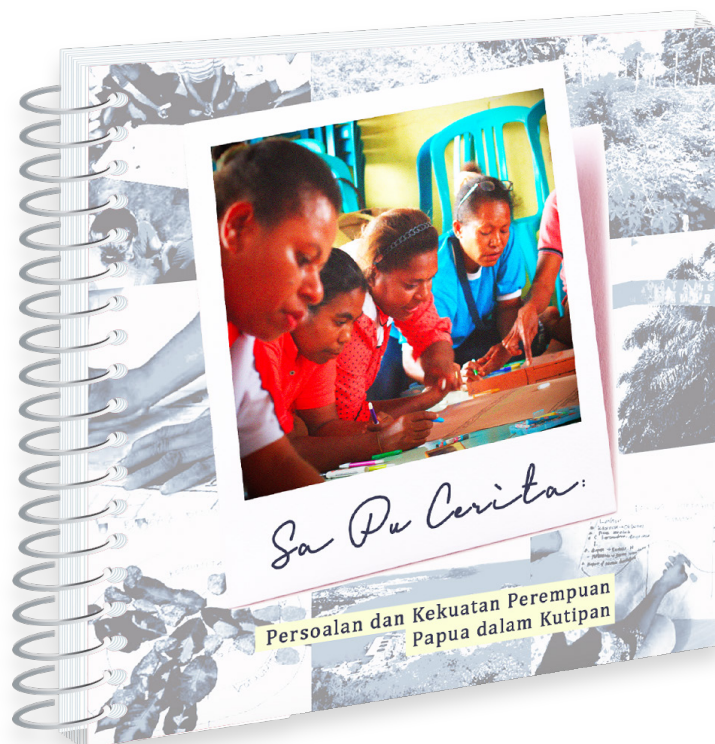
- Maria Ndiken, Village Head in Merauke

AJAR also conducted four trainings for new community facilitators throughout the year, with more than 85 men and women participants. Some of the workshop participants had also participated in the action research, as reflected by their confidence in speaking out about their issues.

“

This [participatory] method is, in fact, the one that we prefer using in Merauke (Papua) and other areas when we work with grassroots communities as it helps us to mingle with them. When we use other methods, the impression is like we are the smart ones while they are the ordinary. Using this method, they themselves share the stories of their lives in their communities.

- Beatrix Gebze, Facilitator



"I Have a Story: Challenges and Strengths of Papuan Women in Their Words", a mini photo book, highlights the main findings of the Papuan women's participatory research, and includes quotes from women participants, is an effective way to raise awareness about issues faced by indigenous women in Papua.

Conveying Grassroots Issues to International Human Rights Policymakers



Following an expert meeting on reparations in Geneva in December 2018, AJAR's Director, Galuh Wandita, presents a copy of "Stolen: A Journey Home in Photographs and Memories", an AJAR publication on East Timorese children forcibly removed from their families during the past conflict, to Fabian Salvioli, UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Guarantees of Non-recurrence.

Throughout 2018, AJAR engaged with individuals and bodies who influence international decisions about human rights. During his visit to Jakarta, Indonesia in February 2018, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid bin Ra'ad Al Hussein, invited civil society groups to discuss the implementation of human rights. AJAR submitted a joint letter with KontraS, an Indonesian civil society organisation dedicated to issues of accountability for human rights violations in Indonesia. Similarly, in April 2018, AJAR and the Papuan Women's Group (PWG) provided a written submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food. During a face-to-face meeting, a representative from PWG spoke about how the lack of secure natural resources and traditional lands impedes women's empowerment, and makes indigenous women vulnerable to continued violence and discrimination.

AJAR senior staff also informed international policy by participating in a range of high-level meetings and events in Europe, North America, and Asia where they provided presentations relating to human rights, accountability, and justice in Asia Pacific contexts and regional trends affecting those issues. An AJAR representative attended a session of a Working Group on Transitional Justice and SDG16+ (Sustainable Development Goals) that provides guidance to the Task Force on Justice in advance of the UN's 2019 high-level political forum on sustainable development. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Guarantees of Non-recurrence invited AJAR's Director, Galuh Wandita, to a small meeting of global experts on "Reparations in Practice" held in Geneva in December 2018. As the sole participant from Asia, Galuh highlighted the absence of reparations policies in many post-conflict settings and the urgent need for innovative approaches in the region.

AJAR also ensured that international officials heard from civil society regarding the development of the new Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar established by the UN Human Rights Council in September. To support the investigation, AJAR submitted recommendations to the UN that focused on learning lessons from past mechanisms, and integrating the rights and needs of victims and witnesses in the Asia region.

Bangladesh: Linking the Past with Current Challenges



AJAR and LWM's joint workshop on peace and reconciliation in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, 20 December 2018. (Photo credit: LWM)

A great deal of transitional justice work has taken place in Bangladesh in response to the genocide and other mass crimes committed by the Pakistani army and local collaborators during the struggle for independence in 1971 that claimed an estimated 3 million lives with up to 300,000 women raped.

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AJAR partners with two closely connected organisations in Bangladesh that work on victims' rights and the prevention of future crimes: (1) The Liberation War Museum (LWM), an NGO that has worked on behalf of victims since 1971, is dedicated to "victims of mindless atrocities and destruction committed in the name of religion, ethnicity, and sovereignty...[linking] history with pressing social and humanitarian issues", and (2) the Centre for the Study of Genocide in Dhaka. The LWM is now a member of the Transitional Justice Asia Network (TJAN) bringing its extraordinary experience to a broader audience. For example, in one of their long-standing programmes, more than 50,000 school children have written the stories of their grandparents' experiences during the conflict period, with the testimonies bound into books at each school involved.

In 2018, AJAR staff accompanied their Bangladeshi partners to document the gender-based violations against the Rohingya in the camps near Cox's Bazar. The collaboration also included two trainings for young lawyers and human rights defenders in Dhaka that focused on Asian lessons of transitional justice, accountability, victims' rights, and gender justice.

In December 2018, AJAR and LWM hosted a workshop in Cox's Bazar focused on peace, justice, and reconciliation in the Asia Pacific region. This workshop brought together a wide range of actors working on different aspects of the Rohingya refugee response that included women's and children's rights, humanitarian assistance, environmental protection, and legal aid, along with senior government officials and religious leaders. National and local civil society participants discussed their experiences and sought solutions to the many challenges presented by over a million Rohingya refugees who have fled from violence in Rakhine State, Myanmar. AJAR has been invited to provide an ongoing series of capacity-building and learning activities. Together with LWM, AJAR will continue to engage in efforts to better understand the impact of atrocities against the Rohingya and find ways to work with members of this community in the long-term struggle to fulfill the rights of victims.

Healing and Gender Justice: Participants' Views



AJAR's Director, Galuh Wandita, enhances her closing remarks with visual metaphor in AJAR's Gender Justice Training of Trainers, Bali, Indonesia, 31 August 2018.

“The training was so practical and such good practice for survivors. [The activities] were easy to do and inexpensive; a relaxing situation that had a very healing effect.

- Training participant

“Very participatory, all participants were equally engaged in the process.

- Training participant

Participants of AJAR's Training of Trainers on Gender Justice received instruction on how to use the manual *Stone and Flower* that sets out seven innovative methodologies for working with victims of gender-based violations. These methods use symbols and drawings, and foster interpersonal interactions and group relationships to create a healing environment. One of the tools, “stone and flower”, helps victims share both positive experiences (flowers) and the harder things they have faced (stones). Another tool, “memory box”, invites participants to share their memories by collecting items that represent past experiences. The body mapping exercise asks each victim to draw the sites of pain and joy on a full-sized paper outline of her or his own body and then to explain the drawing. In many post-conflict and transitional contexts, women victims are sidelined from processes to rebuild their society. These activities also increase the knowledge of the survivors in relation to justice and rights, and how those concepts relate to their personal experience. Participants report that they feel empowered to form and sustain groups with other survivors and use this stronger base to more confidently and effectively participate in justice and social issues.



The “stone and flower” exercise invites a deeper understanding of justice at personal, family, and community levels.

Truth Standing its Ground: Supporting the Aceh Truth and Reconciliation Commission



The Aceh TRC's first public hearing in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, 28 November 2018

20 “In the name of God, I swear what I say is the truth and nothing more.” A woman spoke with confidence as she began her testimony at the first public hearing of Aceh’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), held on 27-28 November 2018. The woman slowly and emotionally told the story of how she was detained without charge on suspicion that she supported the independence movement. She was tortured, made to walk on her knees on gravel, beaten, electrocuted, and cut with a knife. The audience that filled the massive Governor’s House in Banda, the capital of Aceh, Indonesia, gasped and at times looked down or away, unable to bear the details of her story. Finally, after many years, thousands of victims in Aceh have a chance to tell an official body what happened to them.

2018 was a milestone for Aceh’s TRC that was established in 2016 to fulfill a key commitment of the 2005 Helsinki peace accord. Mandated to investigate mass violations committed during the conflict of 1976-2005, the Commission has adopted a policy to work in close partnership with civil society groups, thereby building trust and confidence in the community. In 2018, the Commission documented more than 700 statements from victims, established a database for evidence gathered, completed its key policies and procedures, and held its first public hearing. AJAR’s series of workshops to support preparations for the public hearing included sessions with victims before and after the hearings, technical assistance for communications and media support, and input on best practices for organising a public hearing. AJAR also facilitated visits and exchanges with experts on investigations, truth seeking, gender, reparations, and reconciliation. A number of in-house training sessions were also conducted to help increase capacity and knowledge of TRC staff and Commissioners.

As the woman provided more of her story at the public hearing she held up her hand showing the scars caused by knife cuts inflicted during her torture. She reflected on her experience and her current life, making a plea for peace.

“

I was made to sign a letter that said I would never make a problem about what happened to me. That is beyond what I can do; I leave it in God's hands...Until now I cannot use my hand well. If I wash clothes, my hand loses its feeling. My hope is that what I experienced never happens again. Guard this peace. When conflict happens, it is the weak who must pay the price.

Don't Bury the Truth Speak! Even If Not With Words

From 1989–98, the Indonesian military took over a large private home known as Rumoh Geudong in Aceh, turning it into a military post and detention centre that victims report was routinely used as a torture site. On 12 July 2018, local human rights civil society organisations, PASKA Aceh and KontraS Aceh, unveiled a monument to remember the site and what took place there, to honour the victims, and to strengthen the resolve of “never again”. PASKA Aceh’s Director, Farida Haryani, commented on the monument’s inscription: *Don't Bury the Truth; Speak! Even If Not With Words*: “The inscription reflects the strength and patience of those victims of torture. Survivors wait for justice, but justice never comes...Yet they do not forget what happened to them in the past...” AJAR is continuing its multi-year programme focused on developing documentation skills of local organisations including PASKA Aceh. This has empowered those organisations to become official partners of the Aceh TRC, assisting the Commission in documenting victims’ statements.

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The Chairperson of the Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights, the Regent of Pidie District, Commissioners of the Aceh TRC, along with victims’ representatives and local authorities attend the unveiling of the Rumoh Geudong monument, Aceh, Indonesia, 12 July 2018.

Sri Lanka: Weathering a Crisis, Investing in Local Capacity

Suriya Women's Development Centre, a close partner of AJAR and an active member of the Transitional Justice Asia Network, is playing a key role in the debate on transitional justice taking place in Sri Lanka. In January 2018, Suriya, with AJAR's support, brought together communities from the Northeast and the South to share their experiences of war and efforts for peace. For the first time nationally, military widows heard about the plight of families of the disappeared, and Sinhala women from the South were reunited with family members who had been displaced to Batticaloa in the Northeast during the war years. Women leaders also shared their experiences of standing for local government elections. Though the emotions were heavy and it was difficult to listen to each other's grief, the women learned how to communicate across language barriers and how to build strong bonds of friendship to continue pushing for justice.

In May 2018, 50 women from different ethnic groups in the Northern Province came together to discuss how to strengthen reconciliation. They visited an important Buddhist temple in the area, planted a tree in the temple compound, and visited the widows, exchanging stories about their lives and their histories. The young women from Suriya performed a play about women's experiences of the war. Although it was difficult for some women to accept the truth shared by other women, using theatre enabled a conversation about their war experiences. This event also included an exchange between Muslim and Tamil women, and the participation of a progressive Buddhist monk who acknowledged their experiences of war. Using materials created throughout the year, the women also gathered to create a memory garden. Suriya, inspired by AJAR's participatory methods, has found new ways that allow women to share about bitter and difficult histories of the war, but also about peace, through stories, songs, and poetry that refer to nature, fruits, food, and festivals.

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Community work with survivors of war in Northern Sri Lanka, facilitated by Suriya Women's Development Centre. (Photo credit: Suriya Women's Development Centre)

Building a Future of Greater Justice: Supporting Youth Human Rights Defenders

In 2018, AJAR continued to build its focus on empowering youth human rights defenders in the Asia Pacific region, including specific events with youth in Timor-Leste, Indonesia, and Bangladesh. In Timor-Leste, AJAR opened a Human Rights, Social Justice, and Leadership School for 65 students from all 13 municipalities who had demonstrated outstanding interest, skills, and leadership. The five-month course covers human rights, peaceful activism, meaningful engagement with social issues, and advocacy through social media and community action. The students have learned from senior Timorese mentors. They also designed and, during the Christmas break, implemented community projects in their home villages. This initiative seeks to forge a young generation of leaders who can steer the country towards a stable and democratic future. Human Rights School student, Julia da Silva, said:

"I want a just and equitable Timor-Leste, especially for disabled people, because in the absence of justice, they are exposed to violence. I also wish to see Timor-Leste as a country that hosts LGBT people in their communities."

Indonesian Youth Learn about Truth, Justice, Peace

AJAR conducted a workshop on transitional justice for university students and young human rights advocates in Aceh in August 2018 in cooperation with the Ar-Raniry Islamic State University, Syah Kuala University, and the Aceh TRC. Experienced practitioners shared their experiences working on the transition in Aceh and other contexts. More than 40 young participants were asked to use the new knowledge to explore the dilemmas of seeking peace while pursuing justice in their own post-conflict context, to examine Aceh's history of mass violence, and consider the challenges of building sustainable peace.

A Young Woman Stands Up for Change: Kania Mamonto



Photo credit: Christoph Liebentritt for Amnesty International Austria

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AJAR's young staff member, Kania Mamonto (26), was invited to two global forums for young human rights defenders in 2018, one in Nairobi and one in Austria. She shared her experiences with youth from Brazil, Chile, Peru, Morocco, South Africa, Philippines, and Kenya, all of whom are engaged in the pressing issues of the world.

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Hearing the experiences of young people from all around the world made me realize that violence is still happening in the world. Young people shared about the violence they face everyday, but not all young people feel scared and confused when dealing with violence. From these meetings I don't feel alone anymore, because I met friends, young people who work together to end impunity. The spirit of the youth convinces me that young people should be involved to initiate the human rights movement based on their contexts and their abilities.

- Kania Mamonto

The Solomon Islands



Patrick Burgess with facilitators, UNDP representatives, government officials and participants at the Reparation Policy Framework consultation in Gizo, Western Province, Solomon Islands (Photo credit: Solomon Star)

In 2018, AJAR extended its work in the Asia Pacific region to include the Solomon Islands, a country of over 900 islands. In previous years, AJAR staff have contributed to the establishment and implementation of the Solomon Islands Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The work of the TRC was focused on investigating the root causes and violations during the conflict known as “the Tensions”. Militia groups took over the national armory of weapons and forced the Minister of Finance, at gunpoint, to sign a cheque made out to them, leading to the total collapse of the government. The conflict finally ended with the intervention of an international peacekeeping force led by Australia and New Zealand. The response to the conflict has included scores of trials resulting in conviction and imprisonment of perpetrators, and establishment of the TRC, but many of the TRC recommendations that relate to preventing recurrence and reparations for victims have yet to be implemented.

AJAR’s President, Patrick Burgess, undertook two missions to the Solomon Islands where, in collaboration with UNDP and the Ministry for Peace and Reconciliation, he provided technical assistance resulting in a national draft policy on reparations for victims. Following up on that work, the Director of the Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation was invited to participate at a seven-day intensive training on transitional justice and prosecutions at AJAR’s learning centre in Bali. Participants from nine other Asia Pacific contexts were fascinated to learn about the experience in the Solomon Islands and about the Pacific Islands’ approaches to traditional reconciliation practices, justice, and accountability.

Timor-Leste's Stolen Children: Healing and Advocacy



After 41 years apart, Carlos was finally reunited with his family—hugging his sisters with open arms. It has been a long journey home for Carlos, who was taken by an Indonesian soldier in 1977 when he was just eight years old. His parents knew that he was taken by a soldier and sent to Indonesia by ship. Assuming their son had died, they dug a grave for him in their village. Now that he's returned, a ceremony is needed to welcome back his spirit. Carlos commented "...I always remembered my family out there, and wondered if I would ever be able to meet them." He and eight other survivors were reunited with their families in December 2018. This was the sixth family reunion organised by AJAR and their partners since 2014.

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The 24-year Indonesian military occupation of East Timor was characterised by mass human rights violations that resulted in the death of at least 100,000 Timorese.³ Between the 1975 invasion and the UN-sponsored ballot for independence in 1999, thousands of Timorese children were forcibly taken from their families and communities to Indonesia by military, religious, and charitable organisations. To this day, parents and siblings still seek their lost loved ones. Since 2014, a Working Group led by AJAR seeks to locate and reunite those who were separated from their families when they were children. This group of civil society organisations and state institutions, including Indonesia's National Human Rights Commission and Timor-Leste's Chega National Centre (CNC), has identified more than 100 stolen children, and reunited more than half of those identified.

The stolen children programme is not only of enormous importance for the healing of the individuals and families. It also helps us to understand the kinds of violations that take place during periods of conflict, which is the first step towards prevention. Unfortunately, the removal of young children is a common phenomena in many global conflicts. AJAR's participation in the growing awareness and solidarity around the issue of stolen children can help remind parties to any form of conflict that they must respect the rights and vulnerability of children, and understand that with few exceptions, children should remain with their parents.

AJAR and its partners continue to advocate for a bilateral Commission for Disappeared Persons to find those still missing from the past conflict in East Timor, recommended by both Timor-Leste's Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation, and the Indonesia-Timor Leste Commission on Truth and Friendship.

³ Report of the Timor-Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR): <http://www.cavr-timorleste.org/updateFiles/english/CONFLICT-RELATED%20DEATHS.pdf>

Fulfilling the Promise of “Never Again” in Timor-Leste



AJAR Timor-Leste hosts an international educators' workshop on "Strengthening the Capacity for Education on History and Violence Prevention" where Vincente Maia of Chega National Centre explains Timor-Leste's history to a group of international educators, Dili, Timor-Leste, 28 June 2018.

"You have opened our eyes. We were asleep, and you have awakened us from a deep slumber." A lecturer from the National University of Timor Lorosa'e reflected after a week-long workshop on how to teach about human rights and mass atrocities, such as those experienced in their own context. Adapting materials from *Chega!*, the final report of Timor-Leste's truth commission (CAVR), and other sources, a group of 20 lecturers working with AJAR and the Chega National Centre (CNC) developed teaching materials that integrated Timor-Leste's rich experience in transitional justice into university-level curricula.

CNC is an independent government institution in Timor-Leste established in 2017 to facilitate implementation of the recommendations of two truth commissions: Timor-Leste's CAVR and the Indonesia-Timor-Leste Commission for Truth and Friendship (CTF). The Centre's mandate is to preserve the memory of Timor-Leste's history for the period of the 1974-99 military occupation by Indonesia, promote human rights through education and training, build solidarity with the survivors of human rights violations, prevent the recurrence of human rights violations, and foster a culture of peace. It took more than a decade of advocacy and lobbying by civil society groups to turn hopes for this institution into a reality. AJAR's Director, Galuh Wandita, sits on CNC's Advisory Board, along with six other prominent international experts.

In 2018, AJAR continued to provide technical assistance to this new institution through facilitation of an internal workshop to develop the annual strategies, and by providing inputs both on the design of a solidarity fund and other forms of assistance for victims of serious violations. Together with its partners, Chega! Association for us (ACbit) and the National Victims Association, AJAR also organised commemorations at massacre sites in Liquiça and Marabia, creating safe spaces for victims to share their stories and engage the young generation in dialogue about human rights, what happened there, and how to ensure it does not happen again in the future.

Past and Present: Strengthening Human Rights Defenders in Thailand



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A university lecturer moderates the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was jointly sponsored by CrCF, Srinakharinwirot University, Amnesty International Thailand, and AJAR, Bangkok, Thailand, 7 December 2018. (Photo credit: CrCF)

AJAR continued to work with the Cross Cultural Foundation (CrCF) to strengthen human rights defenders in Thailand as part of AJAR's South-South learning approach with TJAN. AJAR and TJAN co-hosted a panel discussion on accountability in Asia held at the Southeast Asia Junction meeting space in Bangkok on 11 September 2018. Participants visited a memorial that marks the 6 October 1976 massacre at Thammasat University. They also exchanged experiences with young people who are documenting stories of the 6 October massacre, as well as with a mother seeking justice for her slain daughter, a nurse killed when providing emergency aid during the political violence in 2010 in Bangkok, and a young human rights defender speaking out against military rule.

CrCF and AJAR also celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights held at Srinakharinwirot University, providing space for women human rights defenders to share their experiences and challenges. This forum hosted a student exhibition and speech competition with the theme "Our Rights; Whose Responsibility?" Believing that the active participation of youth is needed to ensure a sustained movement, the anniversary was an opportunity to raise students' awareness of human rights, transitional justice, and peace.

Philippines: Understanding Options for Accountability

AJAR's President, Patrick Burgess, provided technical assistance through UNDP to the government of the Philippines during the early steps of developing their national action plan to prevent violent extremism. As an expert on transitional justice and violent extremism in the Philippines and other Asian contexts, Burgess contributed to a high-level planning meeting involving government, security services, religious leaders, and international experts held in Bangkok in July 2018. A key element of these inputs is that when mass crimes are committed against ethno-religious minorities and there is no effort to address those crimes, youth are likely to be open to recruitment by representatives of violent extremist groups.

AJAR's close partner on justice and accountability issues, the Alternative Law Groups (ALG), is a network of 24 legal non-government organisations in the Philippines. Since 2016, ALG has been part of TJAN, engaging its members in various South-South learning activities around the pursuit of accountability, including multiple trainings and workshops at AJAR's learning centre in Bali. This year, ALG with support from AJAR, held a conference in April and a three-day course on transitional justice in the Philippines. Using its publications on transitional justice as a key resource in its work, ALG is deepening understanding about patterns of violations from the Marcos era to the present day, including impunity for violations in Mindanao and other conflict areas. ALG provides space for key actors to discuss challenges and solutions, operating in a context where social media can be "weaponised" to threaten human rights defenders. Their deep knowledge on legal issues also assists in increasing local and regional knowledge relating to the current ICC case on the Philippines that is at the preliminary investigation stage.

AJAR Takes the Long Path



Unlearning impunity is a concept and method developed by AJAR in the field, breathed into life by survivors and partners in Indonesia, Timor-Leste, and Myanmar. Eight years is not enough time to build awareness and power to raise the right to truth, the right to be protected, the right to heal. But here and there, from the faraway corners of Aceh to Papua in Indonesia, to the distant districts in Timor-Leste, and the conflict zones of Myanmar, AJAR is walking the long path, with survivors and partners, to a fuller justice, not just in words or reports, but in real action, learning together, moving together.

**- Tati Krisnawaty, Indonesian migrant workers and gender justice expert,
AJAR Board Member**

Thank You to Our Partners

We would not be able to carry out this work without the support and cooperation of our partners.

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- Bread for the World
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- The Embassy of Canada in Indonesia
- Foundation for a Just Society
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- Sigrid Rausing Trust
- Tifa Foundation
- United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture
- U.S. State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Affairs (DRL)

We would also like to thank all individuals who gave donations to AJAR this year.

Partners

Regional:

- Amnesty International
- Chega! for Us Association (ACbit), Timor-Leste
- International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), USA
- International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC), USA
- International Commission for Jurists, Switzerland
- Legal Aid Institute (LBH) Aceh, Indonesia
- National Centre for Chega! (CNC), Timor-Leste
- South East Asia (SEA) Junction, Thailand
- Tifa Foundation
- Transitional Justice Asia Network members
- Alternative Law Groups (ALG), Philippines
- Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KontraS), Aceh, Indonesia
- Cross Cultural Foundation (CrCF), Thailand
- Liberation War Museum, Bangladesh
- Network for Human Rights Documentation-Burma (ND-Burma)
- Suriya Women's Development Centre, Sri Lanka
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission (KKR) Aceh, Indonesia

Myanmar:

- Kachin Women's Association Thailand (KWAT)
- Karen Women's Organization (KWO)
- Network for Human Rights Documentation–Burma (ND–Burma)
- Reparations Working Group (RWG)
- Ta'ang Women's Organization (TWO)
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- Advocacy Institute for Women's Care (El-Adpper), Merauke, Papua
- Amnesty International Indonesia
- Belantara Papua Sorong, Papua
- Coalition of Justice and Truth (KKPK)
- Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KontraS), Aceh
- Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KontraS), Jakarta
- Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KontraS), Sulawesi
- Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KontraS), Surabaya
- East Indonesian Women's Network (JPIT), Kupang, West Timor
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- Humi Inane Wamena, Papua
- Indonesian Association of the Family of the Disappeared (IKOHI)
- Indonesian Consortium of Human Rights Lecturers (SEPAHAM)
- Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI)
- Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Institute of Creativity for Humanity (LKK)
- Institute of Human Rights Studies and Advocacy (ELSHAM), Papua
- Legal Aid Association (LBH), Banda Aceh
- Legal Aid Association (LBH), Bandung
- Legal Aid Association (LBH), Jakarta
- National Commission of Human Rights (Komnas HAM)
- National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan)
- Papuan Women's Working Group (PWG)
- Peace and Justice Secretariat, Bishop's Office of Merauke (SKP Keuskupan Agung Merauke), Papua
- Peace, Justice and the Integrity of Creation Unit, Evangelical Christian Church of Papua (KPKC Gereja Kristen Injili di Tanah Papua)
- PUSAKA Foundation, Jakarta
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- Socio-economic Development for Victims of Conflict (PASKA), Aceh
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- Truth and Reconciliation Commission (KKR), Aceh
- University of Jember, Jember
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- Association for Law, Human Rights and Justice (Asosiasaun HAK)
- Belun
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- Psychosocial Recovery and Development East Timor (PRADET)
- Luta Hamutuk
- Timor-Leste Association for People with Disabilities (ADTL)
- Timor-Leste Association for People with Eye Disabilities (AHDMTL)
- Timor-Leste Red Cross (CVTL)
- Timor-Leste Students' Movement
- University of Peace (UNPAZ)
- La'o Hamutuk
- Women's Network (Rede Feto)

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AJAR's Governing Board is responsible for guiding the policy work of AJAR and for the governance of the organization. This includes providing a focused and informed voice on matters of policy in Indonesia and internationally, providing leadership and strategic direction in relation to policy and operations; oversight and monitoring of the policies and operations of AJAR; and making decisions on governance and finance matters in the best interests of AJAR.

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Ifdhal Kasim, lawyer and former chair of Indonesia's national human rights commission (2008-2011)

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