ASIA JUSTICE AND RIGHTS

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



People trapped in cycles of war and political violence experience mass human rights violations that can break their countries, communities, and themselves

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Cover image: Pro-democracy protesters raise up her three-finger salute and hold up a placards during march to Germany embassy in Bangkok. © Chaiwat Subprasom/SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images

Letter from the President

Accountability, Justice, and Rights

he year 2020 has been a time of looking inward. Many of us spent more time alone than ever, providing a painful reminder that we do better living, working, and playing together. We were separated from loved ones, work colleagues, and routines. Governments focused on domestic concerns like closing borders, while trying to save lives and keep economies afloat. While attention was focused elsewhere, corrupt and cruel governments in Asia and the Pacific took the opportunity to steal resources, and lock up those who dared question and criticize, rolling back human rights protections that took decades to put in place.

The worst situations often provide opportunities for the best human qualities to shine. Across the globe, millions of health workers risked their lives to help strangers survive. Human rights defenders and victims of violations continued to speak truth to power, expose mass violations, and empower the vulnerable to speak out. Our teams found innovative ways to work, as the word 'zoom' found new meaning. Although we could not meet in person, demands for our trainings and education programs increased dramatically. Our usual five-day courses, designed for 50 participants or so, were met with hundreds of applicants. It seems that in darkness and isolation, people are hungry for knowledge, and knowledge is power. As situations in countries across the region deteriorated, and the international community looked elsewhere, people searched for lessons on more effective ways to defend human rights. Sadly, donor support for courageous local organizations diminished, and AJAR worked hard to help them survive.

Patterns emerged as the pandemic took hold. Parliaments approved huge budgets for pandemic responses, with only loose accountability arrangements in place. Emergency powers were quickly passed, suspending protections for human rights and, in some countries, generals, responsible for past mass atrocities were recalled and appointed to lead pandemic responses, leading to increased militarization. Human rights defenders and journalists who monitored and criticized government actions were arrested and detained,

often using new laws regulating electronic media. There were many examples of police using COVID protection powers to target those fighting for justice and environmental protection.

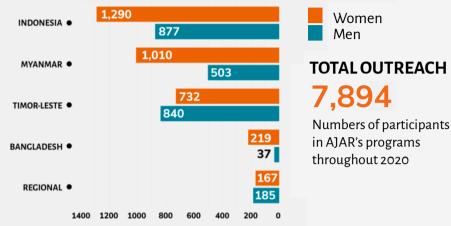
Following the US example of challenging election results, the Burmese generals declared their own free and fair elections fraudulent. As I write, the same generals being investigated by the International Criminal Court for the rape, torture, and mass killings of the Rohingya have taken control of the country. Our friends and colleagues are threatened, arrested, tortured, and killed for peacefully demanding that election results be respected. They are claiming their rights to freedom, safety, and democracy, and are being killed for voicing those demands.

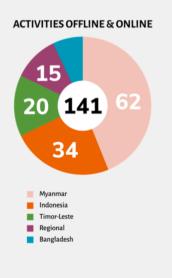
The events of the past year, and the ongoing catastrophe in Myanmar, confirm AJAR's mission and give us new energy. It is clearer than ever that accountability is the foundation for a free society, and when impunity reigns and truth is manipulated, there are massive costs over the long-term. Despite lockdowns and travel bans, AJAR teams in Indonesia, Timor-Leste, and Bangladesh, with partners in Myanmar, continue to work with local communities to support vulnerable victims, and programs across the region have kept us busier than ever. The past year has forced us to work in new, smarter, and more impactful ways. We are honored to work alongside brave human rights defenders who refuse to stand down in the face of injustice, even at the barrel of a gun. They remain our foundation, their courage and humility our constant inspiration.

Patrick Burgess President



Year 2020 in numbers









AJAR Toolkits for promoting accountability and tolerance

AJAR uses a variety of innovative methods and approaches to promote accountability and tolerance, including :



Dog AIAR's teams trained staff at the Aceh TRC on objective methodologies for documenting violations. Thousands of victims in five Asian countries have participated in AJAR's participatory action research in which they increase their knowledge, link with other survivors and record their stories.



Instructive video AJAR and the TJAN network produced and used seven, ten-minute videos on different aspects of transitional justice, utilised in trainings in ten Asian contexts and available on-line

respective communities using YouTube and other platforms.

Digital narratives Short digital films of survivors' stories have been shared with



Theatre Survivors in Indonesia, Timor-Leste and Myanmar use theatre as a way to tell their stories and express their emotions.

Podcas A series of podcast about land-grabbing in Papua was produced in cooperation with national radio station in Indonesia, KBR Prime. The podcast is available on major

audio-listening platform.

Animation AJAR produced 2 short animated documentaries, Kontasai and 8:45, based on interviews with survivors in Indonesia and Timor-Leste. Both shorts are planned to be screened in schools and festivals for the public to watch.



Music Songwriting competitions on rights themes in Timor-Leste, as part of the TV series program, with winners performing at a concert, receiving musical instruments and being included on a CD released with the TV series.



Plain language materials Summarising long, complex documents making them accessible thereby increasing the impact. For example, writing and producing an illustrated short version of the Solomon Islands TRC Report. Plain language materials relating to international justice mechanisms for the mass violations in Myanmar were produced in English and Burmese and placed online.



Film

AJAR has produced documentary films, such as the new

Generation '99, telling the story of Timor-Leste's vibrant

music and art scene through the songwriters and artists'

experiences during the periods of mass violations.

Television Series TV series like The Sun the Moon and The Truth in Myanmar and Laloran Justisa in Timor-Leste, use family dramas, love triangles, football, music and comedy to convey important messages on specific issues. The Myanmar National Police Academy and the Timor-Leste Prison Service have used these tel evision series for training purpose



Travellingexhibitions Rohingya women survivors embroidered cloth panels of their stories which were sewn into quilts and exhibited in London, with plans for New York and other sites. Timor-Leste mobile exhibition focuses on the historical Marabia massacres and has travelled across the country, inviting those who attended to interact, write stories or add pictures to the panels.



Social media: AJAR conducts a range of programs that utilise social media such as the Voice program for young human rights defenders in Indonesia



YouTube videos

AJAR has produced a range of YouTube short videos that

provide survivors with an opportunity to tell their stories,

which also acts as a healing process.

Comic booklets Summaries of materials, human rights com tions etc. are presented in comic book format in local languages.



with accompanying illustration-accessible in English,

Burmese and Rohingya-English.







Mobile Phone Application AJAR is currently producing a mobile app that features Universal Declaration of Human Rights in simle language

BANGLADESH

Bangladesh

As part of the 'Justice for All' program, AJAR and its partners are supporting Rohingya women survivors in the refugee camps in Cox's Bazaar, building solidarity to strengthen a multi-ethnic movement for justice. Since March 2019, Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR) and the Liberation War Museum (LWM) of Bangladesh have been conducting participatory action research with more than 80 women in the Rohingya Refugee Camps in Cox's Bazaar. Adapting AJAR's tool developed as part of Unlearning Impunity Series, we created a process to share stories and to heal, while building solidarity and peer support among women survivors

Indonesia

A)AR with its partners has been working with Papuan women and their allies to fight impunity, take steps to reduce gender-based violence and promote acknowledgment of the truth about human rights violations. Moreover, together with the team in other regions, we assist collective efforts to search for Timor-Leste's stolen children creating a civil society-led process of truth-seeking around this issue in Indonesia, working with existing human rights mechanisms. These initiatives build-on donors' support in AJAR previous project, while consolidating ongoing efforts led by survivors, especially women, by creating intergenerational dialogues within communities on the root causes of human rights violations.

Myanmar

Although major developments since 2018 have taken place regarding international justice and accountability mechanisms for Myanmar, there is still relatively limited understanding of these mechanisms among civil society, and even less awareness among the broader public. AJAR, along with its partners, has for the past ten years worked on developing and implementing innovative transitional justice programs in Asia, including Myanmar, aimed at addressing gross human rights violations by strengthening civil society capacity for documentation, increasing practical knowledge of transitional justice tools, and by building the general public's awareness and resolve for accountability and reform, as a way to strengthen democracy and peace in Myanmar.

Where We Work

Timor Leste

AJAR in Timor-Leste, as an organisation working in the field of transitional justice, not only seeks to advocate for state policies to deal with the legacy of past issues to build a new humanist and democratic society, but also sees a need to prepare young people who will be the future leaders to have an understanding of past human rights issues and have a clear vision of democratic and humanist society. We have learned that engaging young people in human rights education, followed by concrete action in their communities is a critical way to ensure that Timor-Leste's hard earned lessons from the past are not forgetten.

Jakarta

AJAR Learning Centre Bali

Asia Justice Coalition

Asia Justice Coalition (AJC) is founded by AJAR, Burma Human Rights Network, Centre for Peace and Justice (BRAC University). Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK. The Centre for Policy Alternatives, Fortify Rights, The Global Justice Centre, and The Global Centre for Responsibility to Protect with the secretariat hosted by Amnesty International. A focus of the AJC is seeking justice for the horrific crimes committed against the Rohingya by the Burmese military in 2017, including the killing of some 10,000 people, and the torture and aggravated rape of hundreds of women, leading to the forced displacement of more than 700,000 people.



Global Initiative for Justice. Truth & Reconciliation Coalition

As a member of the Global Initiative for Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation, AJAR and partners worked to identify best practices for supporting women survivors of sexual violence, and children born of rape, in Timor-Leste, Nepal, Bosnia Herzegovina, and South Africa.

AJAR continued hosting the Transitional Justice Asia Network or TJAN — a regional network established

four years ago, with the goal of increasing the capacity of Asia experts to fight for truth, justice, and human

rights. This year, TJAN members from nine countries (Indonesia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Phillippines, Thailand,

Timor-Leste, Bangladesh, Nepal, and South Korea) participated in a series of online trainings and



REGIONAL INITIATIVES

- 1 Making the Right to Truth tangible Support for the Aceh TRC and Centro Nacional Chega Timor Leste
- 2 A Roundtable on the Rohingya People Crisis
- 3 Peace Processes and Transitional Justice
- 4 Best Practices of Non-judicial Search Mechanisms in Latin America & Asia 5 Reintegration and Transitional Justice
- 6 Strengthening Locally-Driven Initiatives to Strengthen Accountability for Mass Violations
- 7 Strengthening locally-driven initiatives and networks to pursue accountability for mass violations

INDONESIA

- 1 Making Right to Truth Tangible: Support for Aceh Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- 2 Breaking the Circle of Violence through Community-based Learning
- 3 Building victims' resilience in the time of Corona
- 4 Strengthening Indigenous Women's Participation
- 5 Harnessing Understanding, Mobilizing Action Through Youth (HUMANITY) 6 Defending Rights during the Pandemic
- 7 Strengthening Aceh's Formal Truth-seeking Mechanism
- 8 Survivor's Participant in Informal Transitional Justice Processes in Indonesia
- 9 Strengthening Capacity and Knowledge of Human Rights Defender on Human Rights and Transitional Justice in Indonesia

BANGLADESH

- 1 Bangladesh Documentation Initiative, Phase II
- 2 Strengthening Participation by Rohingya Communities
- in Transitional Justice Approaches
- 3 Promoting Justice for, and Understanding of, Sexual and Cender-Based Violence and other Rights in Bangladesh, focusing on the Rohingya Refugees.

Ethiopia and Sudan

TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

ASIA NETWORK

During a year of restricted travel, AJAR provided scores of speeches and presentations including inputs to the development of transitional justice mechanisms in Ethiopia and training inputs to government and civil society gatherings in Sudan.

discussions

Nepal

Established in 2001, Advocacy Forum-Nepal is a leading nonprofit, non-governmental organisation working to promote the rule of law and uphold international human rights standards in Nepal. The organisation has a nationwide coverage and focuses on establishing and supporting workable accountability mechanisms - all at the forefront of human rights advocacy, actively confronting the deeply entrenched culture of impunity in the country. As part of TJAN, AF-Nepal has been working with the network and AJAR since 2019 to strengthen initiative in pursuing accountability for mass violations in Asia-Pacific.

Philippines

As part of TJAN, the Alternative Law Groups or ALG brings a core legal perspective to the network at both the national and regional levels. ALG is a coalition of twenty legal resource nongovernmental organizations that adhere to the principles and values of alternative or developmental law. Amongst other things, ALC has supported memorialization activities for victims of extrajudicial killings during the war on drugs, as well as advocacy efforts for reparations in Bangsamoro.

Solomon Islands

In February 2020, the Solomon Islands parliament approved the new policy on the Commission for Conflict Prevention and Victims' Rights. AJAR participated in a year long process of consultation, technical support, and drafting in support of the policy.

South Korea

Transitional Justice Asia Network (TJAN)

The May 18 Memorial Foundation in South Korea is a non-profit organization established on August 30, 1994 by the surviving victims of the 1980 Gwangju Democratic Uprising, the victims families, and the citizens of Gwangiu. The May 18 Memorial Foundation started its first engagement with Transitional Justice Asia Network in 2020, with formal involvement ongoing in 2021.

Sri Lanka

The Suriya Women's Development Centre is based and operates outside the capital, Colombo, in the eastern post-conflict areas of the country. Its work focuses on violations committed against women. Suriva uses participatory tools to document atrocities. while using the act of story-telling to help with the healing process for trauma suffered by women survivors of atrocities.

Syria

Since 2011, Syrian NGOs have been focusing on issues concerning transitional justice and accountability, planning their work based on a future full of democratic transition following the resolution of the conflict and the fall of the authoritarian regime of Bashar al-Assad. AJAR, together with Syrian victims' groups and victims' groups from Asia (Nepal, Indonesia, Sri Lanka) have been collaborating to exchange their lessons learned and experiences on their work on transitional justice and about learn from each other tactics and strategy for mobilization, advocacy and more.

Thailand

and is also a member of TJAN. It works on justice and the protection, promotion and monitoring of human rights in Thailand. Particular emphasis is placed on marginalised people, including ethnic minority groups, stateless people, migrant workers, and the victims of conflict. Much of its work focuses on the 'deep south', in the remote conflict areas, working for peace and reconciliation.



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MYANMAR

- 1 Healing Wounds for Justice and Peace project
- 2 Strengthening Survivors of Human Rights Violations project
- 3 Truth & Memory Project
- 4 Building Knowledge about Transitional and International Justice

TIMOR-LESTE

- 1 Human Rights Education and Exchange for Young People
- 2 Making Truth Tangible
- 3 Promoting a Generation of Young Leaders
- 4 Empowering Vulnerable Women's Economic in three municipalities
- 5 Human Rights and Social Justice Education 6 Strengthen and support Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)
- 7 Production of Video Series on Minority Rights and Media Freedom

Regional Initiatives

The Cross-Cultural Foundation or CrCF is a national organization,

1 2020 in a nutshell

HIGHLIGHTS

AJAR's work supporting human rights defenders and victims' organizations in contexts of recurrent mass violations were more important than ever, with growing militarization and increased attacks on democracies across the region. Although travel was restricted, established 'circles of learning and advocacy' continued in six countries, with electronic inputs from peers and experts from across the globe, and demand for AJAR's trainings increased dramatically. For example, five-day fulltime trainings focusing on effective ways to defend human rights transformed into six-week part-time courses. In countries like Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste, hundreds of human rights defenders applied to follow courses that usually only accepted 30 participants.

AJAR's goal is to build just and accountable societies in places where thousands have been victims of mass killings, rape, torture, and other serious violations. Experience shows populations do not necessarily experience mass violations only once, but repeatedly in recurrent cycles of violence, and even during periods of peace, the root causes of corruption, impunity, and a lack of accountability remain unaddressed. In every case of recurrent violations, victims and human rights defenders continue to struggle for a better future. However, the scale of the challenges requires gradually building social movements able to push back against abusive authoritarian governments.

Individuals and organizations working to build movements often have life-long commitments to truth, equality, and justice, but their knowledge and capacity are limited. AJAR's core mandate is to help human rights defenders, victims, and related organizations to be more effective in fighting for their rights.

This goal is achieved through a four-step theory of change:

- Increasing awareness and understanding of populations in general, and key interest groups on human rights in particular, on issues of accountability and impunity, enabling them to better understand their rights, and demand they are respected;
- Developing capacity of human rights defenders, victims, and related organizations, to more effectively fight for truth, justice, and human rights;
- Linking like-minded individuals and organizations both regionally and globally, contributing to developing movements for positive change;
- 4. Providing technical expertise to grass roots organizations to contribute to legal and policy changes at the national level, and with multilateral organizations, such as ASEAN, the United Nations, and the European Union.

AJAR's core mandate is to help human rights defenders, victims, and related organizations be more effective in fighting for their rights NNUAL REPORT 2020

Examples of this work over the past year include:

Promoting awareness and understanding

- A year-long participatory research study with 100 indigenous women in remote areas of Papua, examined challenges and documenting strategies they faced in their fight against largescale acquisition of traditional forests and land.
- Research, including interviews with hundreds of victims of serious human rights violations, examined the challenges faced by the pandemic in Indonesia and Timor-Leste. The research, combined with practical assistance, helped victims develop coping mechanisms to survive.
- A five-week 'festival of human rights' focused on increasing knowledge and commitment to protect human rights among the youth of Asia. The festival showcased the culmination of two years' work, which was transformed into 30 digital products and nine online events, including discussions, music, and film, involving 1200 participants from Indonesia and other Asian countries. More than 2 million people viewed this social media campaign.
- The 'school of human rights and social justice' for young students in Timor-Leste continued. This year more than 100 university students attended activities, building their commitment to fight against the recurrence of past violations.
- As part of its long-term empowerment of women survivors living in refugee camps in Bangladesh, AJAR supported activities embroidering cloth panels representing survivor stories, which were sewn together into a 'quilt of memory and hope.' After events in Dhaka and Jakarta, an online exhibition displayed the quilt, with quotes from the survivors, and a short video explaining its significance
- In Myanmar, in commemoration of the International Day in Support of Torture
 Survivors, a social media campaign using animation to highlight torture, was created and broadcast. A social media panel discussion with human rights defenders garnered over 19,000 views.
- Campaigns on the Right to Truth featuring micro-videos by local actors from nine countries across Asia, marking 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women, engaged more than 20,000 netizens.



AJAR's International Accountability Mechanisms for Myanmar Series — available in English, Burmese, Bangla, and Karen language

Developing capacity

In the past five years, over 20,000 people have attended events organized by AJAR and partners. In 2020, trainings, discussions, and workshops included:

- Online trainings on transitional justice with more than 200 human rights defenders, lawyers, and youth from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and Sri Lanka.
- Working in the world's largest refugee camp of over one million Rohingya in Bangladesh, AJAR continued empowering a group of 90 Rohingya women using participatory approaches and, with the Liberation War Museum, developed remote-learning classes, covering human rights and the pandemic, refugee rights, international justice, and self-care.
- In Myanmar, AJAR created plain language materials on international justice mechanisms, including International Criminal Court and International Court of Justice cases involving Myanmar. Materials were provided in English and Burmese, and were used for a range of trainings both inside Myanmar, and in Rohingya refugee camps.



Strengthening linkages and increasing social capital of human rights defenders

- AJAR continued hosting the Transitional Justice Asia Network or TJAN. TJAN is a regional network established five years ago, with the goal of increasing capacity of Asia experts to fight for truth, justice, and human rights. This year, TJAN members from nine countries participated in a series of online trainings and discussions. The learning processes focused on the threat of authoritarianism, strategies to protect rights during the pandemic, and the use of electronic media and 'micro-videos' to increase understanding of the root causes of mass violations.
- AJAR is one of six leading human rights organizations that founded the Asia Justice Coalition or AJC, and is a member of the steering committee, with the secretariat hosted by Amnesty International. A focus of the AJC is seeking justice for the horrific crimes committed against the Rohingya by the Burmese military in 2017, including the killing of some 10,000 people, and the torture and aggravated rape of hundreds of women, leading to the forced displacement of more than 700,000 people. Activities

included support to lawyers conducting the Rohingya case in the International Court of Justice, and bringing voices of victims to high level UN and other forums.

- AJAR continued support to the network of Indonesian university academics working on human rights issues, particularly through providing trainings on transitional justice and human rights.
- By linking the Aceh Truth and Reconciliation Commission with Timor-Leste's Centro Nacional Chega! or CNC, AJAR facilitated exchanges of knowledge and strategies on truth-seeking, reconciliation, and designing urgent reparations programs. Young people from Papua, and other parts of Indonesia and Timor-Leste, visited the Aceh TRC to deepen their understanding of the work of truth commissions.
- As a member of the Clobal Initiative for Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation, AJAR and partners worked to identify best practices for supporting women survivors of sexual violence, and children born of rape, in Timor-Leste, Nepal, Bosnia Herzegovina, and South Africa. Comparative studies on searching mechanisms in Latin America and Timor-Leste, and peace processes in Aceh and El Salvador were developed.

Contributing technical assistance, along with policy and legal inputs

- In February 2020, the Solomon Islands parliament approved the new policy on the Commission for Conflict Prevention and Victims' Rights. AJAR participated in a year long process of consultation, technical support, and drafting in support of the policy. This is part of a strategy to cautiously expand activities to include the Pacific.
- AJAR continued providing technical assistance to the Aceh Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the region's first sub-national truth commission. Many contexts are liaising with AJAR and Aceh's TRC, drawing on lessons and considering similar models to break cycles of violence. There are many sub-national situations, particularly involving victims from ethnoreligious minorities, with a desire to examine and address past mass violations. This desire to uncover the truth is not necessarily shared by national security forces and governments. Although AJAR is based in Asia, it is increasingly receiving requests to assist with and share south-south lessons from other regions. This year experts contributed technical assistance, drafted policy inputs,

- and provided presentations to senior government officials and civil society involved in transitions to peace in both Sudan and Ethiopia.
- AJAR contributed to regional and national links to UN bodies, including providing advice to the International Criminal Court on the Rohingya case, and collaborative advocacy to international bodies on the situation in Myanmar, the Philippines, and Indonesia. Inputs, along with victims' testimonies, were provided to UN events on reparations, focusing on empowering Timor-Leste's stolen children.
- During a year of restricted travel, AJAR provided scores of speeches and presentations, including keynote addresses to a global transitional justice conference in Seoul, and a UN conference on victims' rights in Geneva, as well as inputs to the development of transitional justice mechanisms in Ethiopia, training inputs to government and civil society gatherings in Sudan, and presentations on links between justice and violent extremism in Sri Lanka.

2 Responding to the pandemic

We, Rohingya women, did not know about preventive measures for corona, but AJAR talked about them. We meet four or five days each week, and young girls come to learn about the pandemic and pass on lessons to their communities

- KHUSIDA FROM CAMP 1

11 March 2021 marked a year since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. AJAR, like the rest of the world, scrambled to adjust to new ways of working, including social distancing and working from home. The pandemic forced a rethink on how to continue delivering effective programs. It meant, for the most part, that programs needed to be delivered virtually or remotely. This proved particularly challenging to an organization used to bringing people together, meeting in person, and working in close proximity with individuals and communities, relying greatly on high levels of active participation, with vibrant human interaction.

In order to operate effectively in a fast-changing environment, AJAR undertook a rapid assessment of the dramatically changed circumstances, and implemented a plan that required redirecting resources, migrating to online platforms, retraining team members, and re-equipping offices with appropriate resources and dedicated technical equipment for remote learning.



AJAR conducted online course on human rights and transitional justice for youth changemakers in Bangladesh using online meeting platform.



AJAR together with our partner Papuan Women Working Group (PWG) and KPKC Sinode GKI Tanah helped disseminating information to prepare mama-mama in Papua to protect themselves against COVID-19.

Relieving the suffering of vulnerable communities during the pandemic

Many survivor communities, especially those living in isolated and remote areas, had little or no material support at this time and, crucially, limited or no access to accurate and reliable knowledge and information. AJAR moved swiftly and conducted surveys to understand the impact of the lockdown. At both the individual and community levels, AJAR stepped into the breach, and played an important role in disseminating information and providing other material support. Along with partners in Bangladesh, Myanmar, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste, AJAR familiarized people with ways to keep safe, introducing communities to preventive measures and protocols and, in some cases, providing emergency care packages, including essential foodstuffs, face masks, and hand sanitizers. This humanitarian aid enabled partners to maintain and, in some instances. increase communications with survivors and their families, while at the same time providing information on self-care, as well as reassurance and psychological support.

In addition to providing material support, AJAR worked with local governments and officials, encouraging them to adjust their delivery mechanisms to more effectively respond to the pandemic. This included better targeting of pockets of vulnerability, ensuring that state benefits and hand-outs reached the most vulnerable communities and survivor groups.

Fighting for tolerance and combating extremism in Sri Lanka

In Batticaloa, Sri Lanka, there has been rising communal tensions and violence. AJAR's partner, the Suriya Women's Development Centre, responded to these tensions by working across communities, and mainstreaming anti-extremism. Suriya addressed issues directly, through the Tamil, Muslim, and Sinhala Support Group. Despite the challenges of physically meeting, several public campaigns, including the white cloth campaign led by women's groups from across the country, were mounted in response to increasing communal violence and racism. Racial insensitivity was illustrated by the government's decision to cremate all COVID-related deaths. Human rights groups campaigned against the government's insensitive ethno-centric approach, and the Muslim community appealed for the policy to be reversed, as cremations fly in the face of Muslim ritual burial customs. As a result of pressure from civil society, the policy was finally repealed in February 2021.

Resisting authoritarian trends in the Philippines

The Philippines provides another example of civil society fighting back. AJAR's partner, a fellow member of TJAN, the Alternative Law Group, conducted two webinars analysing new anti-terror laws providing the government with sweeping powers to override human rights protections. The campaign contributed to raising public awareness ahead of the legal challenge to the law in the Supreme Court in February 2021.





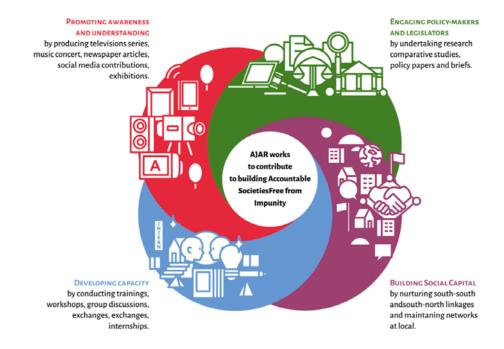
A Rohingya woman sits in her shelter in the refugee camps of Bangladesh, sewing a panel of her memory living in Myanmar. AJAR with the Liberation War Museum (LWM) of Bangladesh conducted a participatory study with women in the Rohingya Refugee Camps.

THEORY OF CHANGE

AJAR is committed to its vision of building just and accountable societies, free from impunity. In 2020, AJAR worked to realize this vision, despite the restrictions of the pandemic, by engaging a wide range of stakeholders, ensuring a broad-based holistic approach. AJAR's theory of change envisages four building blocks – awareness,

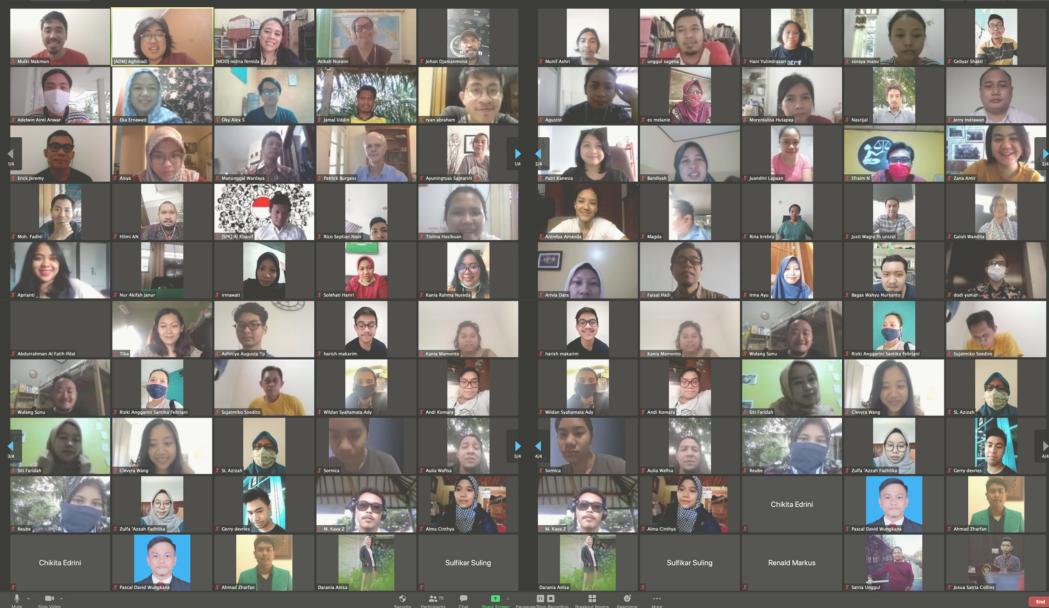
capacity, social capital, and policy – outlined in the diagram below. These blocks do not necessarily have to be sequential, but rather context and need are the main determining factors for what is required and when, and the point of entry or intervention. The approach can best be described by thinking of a specific human rights issue, like violence against women and girls, for example.

<u>Building-block one</u> introduces the concept of gender-based violence to the general public, and strengthens their awareness and understanding of violence against women and girls; <u>buildingblock two</u> builds capacity and trains dedicated individuals and organizations to improve their efficiency and effectiveness to challenge the status quo, and to bring about positive and lasting change to social norms; <u>building-block three</u> helps to link those who are working on these issues in their local communities, and with national, regional, and global platforms; lastly, <u>building-block four</u> embeds this change by engaging and influencing policy-makers to regulate and legislate, thereby affecting longterm sustainable change and reducing future incidents of violence against women and girls.



AJAR's four interconnected building blocks of theory of change: promoting awareness and understanding, engaging policy-makers and legislators, developing capacity, and building social capital 🕕 🔮 🛋 Recording... 💵 🔳

03:32:18 🗮 Speaker View 🛟 Exit Full Screen



4 Constituencies for change

AJAR works with a range of individuals and organizations that have the potential to contribute to positive change. These include survivors, human rights defenders, journalists, civil society organizations, government officials, and legislators.

Empowered survivors

A key characteristic of AJAR's institutional identity is its close, continuous relationship with survivors of serious violations. Throughout 2020, AJAR maintained those relationships, providing support to victim organizations, increasing the capacity and effective 'voice' through trainings and workshops, and providing direct assistance. This included livelihood programs with women survivors in the Shan and Kachin conflict areas of Myanmar, that developed skills in production, distribution, and marketing of hand sanitizer and face masks.

In addition, AJAR provided trainings on how to deal with the new challenges to victim organizations in Indonesia, Timor-Leste, and Bangladesh. This year, a number of victim exchanges were facilitated, including between Syrian victim groups and their counterparts in Indonesia, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.



Quilts made after participatory study with women in the Rohingya Refugee Camps, Bangladesh conducted by AJAR with the Liberation War Museum (LWM) Bangladesh



AJAR facilitated its fourth annual Human Rights and Social Justice School for students in Timor-Leste.

Young human rights defenders

Young people will be responsible for mapping and shaping the world of tomorrow and, in a context of ever-increasing change. they need to be equipped with the knowledge and capacity to discern what is true, consider all relevant information, and make sound strategic decisions. It is extremely important that youth living in contexts of ongoing recurrent mass violations are exposed to the truth, rather than propaganda with the purpose of distorting facts, promoted by those responsible for the atrocities. Education on topics like the root causes of recurrent violations, human rights, and transitional justice, is critical for young people, as the effects of mass violations persist for decades.

AJAR has developed a range of training tools designed to appeal to young audiences that have experienced mass violence. In 2020, a two-year program focusing on young human rights defenders in Indonesia with an online "Humanity Youth Festival", a vibrant mix of music, slam poetry, and videos, along with discussions led by experienced global experts, concluded. In Timor-Leste, AJAR facilitated its fourth annual Human Rights and Social Justice School for students. In Bangladesh, trainings and workshops were provided to empower young men and women in the Rohingya camps, as well as online trainings for Bangladeshi law students.



Civil society and community-based organisations

Although international advocacy is important and can lead to strong pressure for change, sustainable improvements can only take place if they are led and supported by those inside the countries where mass violations occur. In contexts of high levels of corruption, nepotism, and impunity, the challenge of holding governments to account falls on civil society organizations. Those individuals and organizations are well placed to lead movements for change, but often need to develop their levels of knowledge through exposure to lessons from other contexts, and the capacity to influence change.

In past years, AJAR conducted an average of three trainings, workshops, or events every week in one of the countries where it works. During the pandemic year, it soon became apparent that empowerment activities would need to be largely conducted online. AJAR developed new participatory methods to make online trainings interesting, using a range of applications that enabled participants to work collaboratively. Participants were encouraged to share experiences and stories, exploring songs and art, to develop participatory and joyful ways of learning and sharing remotely. As a result, demand for AJAR trainings far outstripped its capacity to deliver.

Even intensive six-week human rights and transitional justice trainings were oversubscribed, and many potential participants were turned away. In total, more than 7,800 persons participated in some 140 on and offline this year.

Change-makers within government

Civil society organizations cannot achieve sustainable positive change unless those changes are reflected in the regulations and behavior of government institutions. AJAR works in contexts where dictatorships and authoritarian regimes have left deep scars in government institutions, the courts, and the judiciary, leaving them corrupt, weak and inefficient. In 2020, AJAR and partners included government representatives in trainings in Bangladesh, Timor-Leste, Thailand, and Indonesia.

Innovations 5 Innovacionality for accountability

Scenes and storybeats from the "Foreign Correspondent"'s feature on 'stolen children' of Timor-Leste — as was seen on social media

AJAR's work illustrating its innovative approaches to building the demand for accountability and fighting against impunity include:

The 'stolen children' of Timor-Leste

In 1975 the Indonesian military invasion of Timor-Leste heralded a 24-year period of brutal suppression of the pro-independence movement, causing upwards of 200,000 deaths. During this period, thousands of Timorese children were taken from their homes to Indonesia, to live with military families, and often placed in religious boarding schools. Many Timorese families have for decades been putting flowers on the graves of children they believed had died. With the cooperation and assistance of the governments of Timor-Leste and Indonesia, AJAR has been tracing these "stolen children", identifying and reuniting them with their families. In 2020, AJAR continued tracing victims, and identified 20 new survivors, while continuing to support those already part of the program.

AJAR's "stolen children" program is not only vitally important for survivors and their families, but is helping shine a light on the problem of children abducted during armed conflict, and is developing linkages with Boko Haram atrocities in Nigeria and other parts of Africa, as well as across Asia and Latin America. The message is clear and simple: people involved in armed conflict must obey the rules of war. and not abduct children. The program has received considerable media attention. A 2019 feature program on BBC television, was followed in July 2020 by an Australian feature on "Foreign Correspondent", which was viewed by some 30,000 people. At the end of 2020, one of the "stolen children". Isabelinha de Jesus Pinto. testified to a UN-sponsored event opened by the United Nation's High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet.

ForeignCorrespondent 🤣 @ForeignOfficial · Jul 7, 2020 These people barely know each other. Separated a lifetime ago, they don't speak the same language or worship the same God. But they're family,



ForeignCorrespondent 📀 @ForeignOfficial - Jul 7, 2020 'The people that we've been able to find, they're the survivors. They're the ones who managed to find a way to be loved or to be fed ... I think thousands didn't survive.' - Galuh Wandita. #F



ForeignCorrespondent 🤣 @ForeignOfficial - Jul 7, 2020

I believe we will see each other again'. After Nina was stolen at gunpoint, her mother prayed for 30 years for their reunion. It's been 10 years now since Nina's family found her, #For



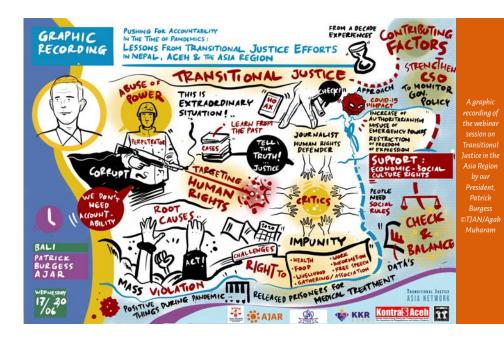
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Empowerment of Rohingya refugees

In Bangladesh, AJAR works with the Liberation War Museum to educate and empower Rohingya refugees to assist them to make informed decisions. As the situation in Myanmar worsens. refugees find themselves living in makeshift shelters in squalid conditions. A million people live on the muddy hills outside Cox's Bazaar. Many are victims of serious human rights violations, and all have lost their homes and possessions. Over the past year, AJAR worked with a select group of 90 women survivors, who regularly meet to develop skills to (i) better comprehend what happened;

(ii) understand international judicial mechanisms designed to deal with violations; and (iii) make informed choices available for their future. The program assists Rohingya women to form support groups and create safe places where they can share experiences. Major issues refugees faced during the year included, violent groups of young men in the camps, drug trafficking, increased influence of religious extremists, and fires that destroyed the makeshift huts of thousands. The Bangladeshi government plans to relocate tens of thousands of refugees to an unstable island off the coast.

Peaceful and 6 tolerant societies



Meetings after meetings, journeys after journeys, that my friends and I experienced in the process of collecting stories of survivors. Hundreds of kilometres stretched between one place and the next, but we were all brought together at one meeting point, a point of truth and humanity. There were age gaps between us as facilitators and survivors but, as always, we are brought together in the spirit of seeking the truth and in the spirit of humanity

- RIZKY LANI PERMATA, YOUTH FACILITATOR FROM THE HUMANITY PROJECT. JAKARTA

Learning Tools



We lived peacefully in Burma, studying in schools and madrasas. Our children used to go to school until, suddenly, we had to come to Bangladesh, as the Burmese military started to torture us and commit genocide. So, our children can't go to school now. But Bangladesh has helped us a lot, and we are living peacefully here. At first, we had a training with AJAR for sixteen or seventeen days. We formed groups of four or five people. We had a chance to learn important things, and now we are trainers passing on knowledge to new teams

- KHUSIDA FROM CAMP 1

This exchange program between Timor-Leste and West Timor youth is an important program because, as a neighboring country, youth have an important role reaching out to their fellow young people, to strengthen the relationship between the two countries, and to ensure peace from one young person to the next. As members of the young generation in these two countries, we have the responsibility to establish peace between our nations, because reality shows that although we live in different countries, we live on the same island, only separated by a land border.

> - Reflections from Carlito da Costa of HAK Foundation, and a participant in the Youth Exchange for Human Rights program

The most common and important causes of mass violations are discrimination and lack of tolerance for minorities. The contexts where AJAR works are home to ethnic minorities, such as the Moro in Mindanao, the Pattani in southern Thailand, and the Shan, Kachin, Karen, and Rohingya in Myanmar, and religious minorities like Christians in Papua, and Hindus and Muslims in Sri Lanka. In these contexts, the unwillingness to accept the notion of equality for all beliefs and religions has contributed to recurrent conflict. It is alarming that religious-based intolerance is on the rise in places like Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

Recognizing the critical importance of tolerance, AJAR has included the issue as a core part of all trainings and workshops, and implemented a number of specific activities focused on

reconciliation. These include an exchange involving young people from both sides of the border between Timor-Leste and Indonesia. The exchange involved workshops on human rights, gender justice, and the rule of law. It provided the opportunity for young people to examine their shared history, cultural similarities, and the ongoing impact of past violations. The project provided opportunities for Timorese, and demonstrated the advantages of meaningful engagement on various social and cultural issues. By applying their new knowledge, young people would have the tools to steer their country towards a stable and democratic future. In Sri Lanka, AJAR delivered a training on the prevention of violent extremism, focusing on perceptions of injustice, and other contributing factors, drawing on lessons learned from Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines.



AJAR organized a three-day training in Kupang dubbed "Youth Exchange for HR: Training on PAR - River of Life and Conflict Tree"

Sustainable environments and climate justice



I'm coming to the end of my life. When I die, who will protect my children's rights to this land? I ask us to do something. Until now, it has only been Feronika Manimbu who actively worked to protect the land, but other women also have their hearts in protecting our rights.

– ANIKE ASENTOWI, KEBAR, PAPUA

AJAR's approach to human rights integrates an awareness of how unchecked exploitation of natural resources affects human survival. AJAR contributes to climate justice by siding with communities that suffer disproportionately from the impact of climate change. The organization supports full engagement in actions to seek urgent solutions capable of protecting homes and environments as part of an integrated strategy to strengthen the foundation of basic human rights.

Dictatorships and armed conflicts are often triggered by the exploitation of natural resources. Indigenous people and ethnic communities struggle for survival in the face of environmental degradation. Corruption, frequently linked to resource exploitation, decreases the potential for successful transitions to democracy. Large corporations, often linked to powerful elites, continue unsustainable development practices that put the planet at risk. Communities are fighting back to protect their lands and forests.

Examples of work on climate justice include a major study in Papua, focused on the experience and challenges faced by women in relation to large-scale land acquisition. The report, entitled "All the Birds are Gone", focuses on patterns of converting traditional forest homes belonging to indigenous communities to palm oil plantations, and other large-scale agribusiness projects. In some cases, the levels of corruption were so high that permits were provided to clear old forest areas to create palm oil plantations but, once the trees were cut and sold, the plantation never materialized, leaving the land a wasteland and its former inhabitants destitute. The final version of the report will be released in March 2021.

8 Planning ahead



Managing Stress During Covid-19: Deep Breathing

ကိုစစ်၁၉ ကာလအတွင်း စိတ်ဖိစီးမှုများအား လျော့ချခြင်း (လေးလေးနက်နက်အသက်ရှူခြင်း)



AJAR presented a series of three videos entitled Managing Stress during the Covid-19 Pandemic that aims to help survivors and others deal with the Covid-19 pandemic

The unprecedented challenges of 2020 will change with the availability of new vaccines, but this will highlight the depth of injustices across the globe, with poorer countries and marginalized groups once again finding themselves at the back of the queue. AJAR will monitor the long-term socialeconomic impacts of the pandemic, and provide assistance to those on the margins of society.

In 2021, AJAR will keep focusing on empowering those struggling to protect human rights against all odds. For the past eight years, AJAR has worked intensively on injustices in Myanmar. The failure of the Burmese military to respect the results of the 2020 democratic elections, creates a major crisis for the whole region. AJAR will work with civil society networks, regional governments, and ASEAN, to ensure accurate information is available in the face of censorship, and continue lobbying for justice and truth as the basis for a free and democratic Myanmar. Work with victims' groups in conflict areas will intensify. The Burmese military have been at war with their own people for 80 years, since independence in 1948. The failure to hold the generals to account for decades of atrocities against thousands of innocent people has sent a message that they can continue with impunity to exploit the nation's resources for themselves, their families, and their cronies. AJAR will do what it takes at the local, regional, and international level, to assist victims and help establish a peaceful and democratic Myanmar. with UN Women, focusing on strategies to stop violence against women and girls, will commence. The project involves empowering more than 20 civil society organizations to more effectively combat violence against women and girls. In Bangladesh, the multi-year work of educating and empowering Rohingya women will continue, expanding to include groups of young women and men. Justice tools and materials relating to the ICC, the ICJ, IIMM, and universal jurisdiction, produced in English and Burmese by AJAR, will be used to increase knowledge on international justice issues for the Rohingya, Bangladeshi interest groups, and a broad audience in Myanmar. In Indonesia, AJAR will contribute to the promotion of tolerance and inclusion, working with civil society networks and government change-makers to combat the rise of extremism. Intensive technical assistance to the Aceh Truth Commission will be provided to reveal and share facts of mass crimes, as a basis for a future based on the rule of law, justice, and accountability.

In Timor-Leste, work on a significant collaboration

The Transitional Justice Manual will be completed and launched in 2021. The manual is a comprehensive guide for civil society and governments seeking ways to break cycles of violence, based on truth, justice, and victims' rights. The manual will be translated into regional languages, beginning with a Thai language version, that will provide a base for transitional justice trainings designed for that country.

In Sri Lanka, work on tolerance and preventing violent extremism will intensify, by collaborating on trainings, training of trainers, and the production of a training manual. The one-hour documentary film "Generation 99", co-produced by AJAR, which tells the story of the struggle against oppression during the Indonesian occupation of Timor-Leste, and the birth of a nation, through the eyes of young songwriters, musicians, and artists, will be launched. A song about the stolen children of Timor-Leste, produced with the help of some of Australia's best-known musicians, will be launched, in both Tetun and English.

At the regional level, solidarity and knowledge sharing will be promoted in the face of rising authoritarianism. After more than a decade of creating learning resources, documenting human rights violations, collecting testimonies of survivors, conducting participatory workshops, and assisting transitional justice mechanisms, AJAR intends to begin creating a more accessible digital archives of its work. This is key to improving southsouth learning and linkages, that will enhance accountability and justice across the region.

The time has come to review outdated trends that created so much waste through the over-extraction of natural resources, the over-consumption of fossil fuels, and the inevitable arrival pandemics. AJAR will keep working with young people, women's groups, indigenous groups, and survivors of human rights violations. The organization is committed to creating pathways for genuine participation, in efforts to ensure justice and accountability are key to forging a common future.

Thank You

DONORS

Governments

- Embassy of Switzerland in Indonesia
- · Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
- · Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands
- · US State Department's Bureau of Human Rights and Labor

Foundation and NGOs

- · American Jewish World Service
- · Australian Volunteer International
- · Bread for the World
- · Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor
- · Foundation for a Just Society
- Fund for Global Human Rights
- Impunity Watch
- International Development Research Centre
- · International Coalition of Sites of Conscience
- Misereor
- Open Society Foundation
- Swiss Task Force Dealing with the Past
- Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
- Tifa Foundation

PARTNERS

Regional

- Aceh Truth and Reconciliation Commission (KKR Aceh), Indonesia
- Advocacy Forum, Nepal
- Alternative Law Groups (ALG), Philippines
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- Center for Study of Violence and Reconciliation, South
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- · Chega! for Us Association (ACbit), Timor-Leste
- Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KontraS) Aceh, Indonesia
- · Cross Cultural Foundation (CrCF), Thailand
- Due Process of Law Foundation
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- Network for Human Rights Documentation–Burma (ND– Burma), Myanmar
- Rights and Security International
- Suriya Women's Development Centre, Sri Lanka
- Syrian Legal Development Programme, Syria
- The 18 May Memorial Foundation, South Korea
- Transitional Justice Asia Network

Indonesia

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- Peace, Justice and the Integrity of Creation Unit, Evangelical Christian Church of Papua (KPKC Gereja Kristen Injili di Tanah Papua)

- · Puan Mahakam, East Kalimantan
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The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the

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