

COURAGEOUS VOICES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

Strategy for The Rafto Foundation for Human Rights 2022–2024

The Rafto Foundation for human rights seeks to promote human rights and human dignity. In remembrance of the spirit of Thorolf Rafto, we work to raise awareness of circumstances where human rights and democracy are under threat. We strive to support and amplify courageous voices that defend human rights, and to motivate the younger generation to support human rights and democracy. We believe that citizen's engagement can make a difference.

We provide recognition and protection for human rights defenders by presenting the annual Rafto Prize and supporting the work of Rafto Laureates. The objective of the Rafto Prize is to raise awareness and shed light on human rights violations. We will challenge authorities to make human rights a reality for everyone. We challenge the business community to take on responsibility to promote and respect human rights, particularly when operating in areas with a pronounced risk of human rights violations. Through our educational initiatives, we will promote support for human rights and democratic engagement.

The Rafto Foundation promotes knowledge about human rights and democracy. In this work, we acknowledge dilemmas and find that the best solutions are based on a complex understanding of reality. Such an understanding must be based on robust documentation and cover many perspectives. For this reason, creating arenas for dialogue, cooperation and sharing of knowledge is an important part of our work.

Thorolf Rafto, supported dissidents and persecuted citizens in Eastern Europe. He made a generation of students in Bergen aware of the business community's responsibility to safeguard human rights. The offices of the Rafto Foundation are located in the Human Rights city of Bergen and the organisation has a regional presence as a Peace and Human Rights centre in Western Norway. The Rafto Foundation aims to encourage protection for human rights and democratic participation both nationally and internationally, engaging with a global network of human rights defenders. We will build on our history and further develop our capacities in the years ahead.

Human rights under pressure

The Rafto Foundation is entering a new strategy period in a time where authoritarian regimes and ideologies pose increasing threats to human rights, democratic institutions, and independent judicial systems. We observe an increase in legislations curtailing freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, freedom of association, and freedom of movement. Both states and non-state actors use smear campaigns, death threats, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, and violence to silence human rights defenders and shrink the space and influence of civil society. Women human rights defenders, activists who challenge the business community, and minorities are at particular risk. LGBTIQ activists, indigenous peoples,

environmental activists, and ethnic and religious minorities demand recognition and rights, while being persecuted and threatened to silence.

Digital monitoring, manipulation, and distortion of communications are new tools employed by authoritarian powers reaching far beyond national borders. Hateful ideologies and declining support for democratic institutions and independent media are threatening established democracies.

Increasing economic inequality and ideological polarization can be observed in almost all societies. There is an increasing threat from the climate crisis and loss of biodiversity. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated how global health challenges can put pressure on democratic institutions and human rights. Altogether these challenges may produce dramatic future threats to human rights and democracy which we need to better prepare for.

Empowering the courageous voices

Despite the very visible trends testing our commitment to human rights and democratic institutions across the world we also see new organisations coming into play and a new generation of citizens standing up for human rights and democracy. However, many among those positioned at the forefront of the emergent challenges to human rights, all too often pay a high price for their involvement.

The protection of human rights and democracy require vigilant citizens who see this work as a continuous process, who are able to muster the courage to take a critical approach to power, and respond spontaneously when human dignity is violated and liberties denied. The emerging new movements expand our understanding of human rights. Where states and international institutions fail, cities and local communities may lead the way. Digitalisation enables cooperation and mobilisation across national borders. New legislations are making the business community accountable for securing and respecting human rights. The Rafto Foundation aims to learn from, and contribute to, this work.

Statement of purpose for the Rafto Foundation:

The foundational purpose of the Rafto Foundation, is to promote human rights, with special emphasis on the protection of intellectual, political and economic freedom, in the spirit of Thorolf Rafto. The work of the foundation shall be guided by the tradition of humanism, without

geographic constraint, to promote and respect human dignity. The Rafto Foundation shall award the Thorolf Rafto Memorial Prize (the Rafto Prize). The Rafto Foundation's work shall provide assistance to the Rafto Laureates, offer human rights education, and encourage respect for human rights in other ways.

Strategic goals 2022–2024:

- The Rafto Foundation aims to strengthen the Rafto Prize as a tool to secure recognition of human rights defenders and raise awareness of their work. We will work to increase our support of the Rafto Laureates and human rights defenders at risk, and reinforce our efforts to provide support to women human rights defenders and human rights defenders who challenge the business community.
- The Rafto Foundation seeks to challenge authorities and businesses on their responsibility for human rights. In the work to promote human rights, we shall strive to develop collaboration with other human rights organisations and experts at the local, national, and international level.
- As a national Peace and Human Rights Centre, the Rafto Foundation shall provide democracy and human rights education. We aim to be an important and relevant resource for pupils and teachers at lower and upper secondary schools throughout Western Norway, and to promote engagement on the current and future challenges for human rights. We seek to be a driving force in strengthening education in democratic citizenship, sustainability, and human rights in Norway.

The Rafto Foundation's work is organised as core activities and support functions.

The core activities are organised around three main areas:

1. Awarding of the Rafto Prize
2. Support of human rights defenders and work to hold authorities and the business community accountable for protection of human rights
3. Democracy and human rights education

The support functions are organised under three areas:

1. Organisation and voluntary work
2. Communication
3. Financing and other practical prerequisites

Priority target groups for communication work:

AWARDING THE RAFTO PRIZE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Environments that are important to the Laureates- International human rights environments- The media- The general public in Norway and internationally	SUPPORT OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS & HOLD AUTHORITIES AND BUSINESSES ACCOUNTABLE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Norwegian and international human rights environments- Authorities and the business community- The media- Researchers	EDUCATION: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Pupils, teachers and teacher education students in Western Norway- Policy research practices- The media- Researchers
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Strategic goals for the core activities

The Rafto Foundation will promote human rights and democracy by:

1. Awarding of the Rafto Prize

- The Rafto Prize acknowledges the work of human rights defenders and increases the visibility of human rights defenders' working under pressure.
- The Rafto Prize shall raise awareness and enlighten the general public about human rights issues.
- The Rafto Prize aims to challenge institutions responsible for the protection of human rights.
- The Rafto Prize aims to contribute to secure attention to the work of the Laureates among stakeholders the international human rights community, and Norwegian and international public authorities.
- The Rafto Prize seeks to contribute to generate international engagement for the work of the Laureates. At the local level, the foundation shall mobilise the Human Rights city of Bergen to take part in the prize events.
- The Rafto Foundation shall work to secure a wide range of nominations for the Rafto Prize and ensure that the Foundation has a broadly composed, independent, engaged, and competent prize committee.

2. Support of human rights defenders and work to hold authorities and the business community accountable for the protection of human rights

- The Rafto Foundation shall, where relevant and desired by the Laureates, support the Laureates for a period after the presentation of the award by supporting their work and contributing to raise awareness
- In the long term, the Rafto Foundation sets out to provide opportunities for collaboration, emergency assistance and the development of a support network for the Laureates and specific groups of human rights defenders. The Foundation shall
- contribute to create spaces for the Laureates to meet decision-makers and other organisations able to promote their work.
- The Rafto Foundation aims to contribute to develop a network for human rights defenders who are particularly vulnerable, including women human rights defenders.
- The Rafto Foundation will provide assistance and collaborate with human rights defenders who challenge businesses.
- The Rafto Foundation aims to challenge, inform, and hold account authorities and businesses accountable to enhance compliance with human rights obligations.

1) Democracy and human rights education

- As a national Peace and Human Rights Centre in Western Norway, in the Human Rights city of Bergen, the Rafto Foundation shall provide education to lower and upper secondary schools and teacher education institutions in the region.
- The Rafto Foundation aims to be a driving force in strengthening the quality of education in democratic citizenship, sustainability, and human rights in Norway.
- The Rafto Foundation aims to provide spaces for engagement, free formation of opinions, and critical thinking among pupils, and increase their strength as agents of change.
- The Rafto Foundation's education initiatives will be inspired by international human rights work, the work of the Rafto Laureates and the pupils' own experiences with and perspectives on human rights challenges in and outside Norway.
- The Rafto Foundation aims to build bridges between research and classroom practices, take a critical approach to its own educational practices, and encourage researchers to explore aspects of democracy and human rights education.

Strategic goals for the support activities

1. Organisation and voluntary work:

- The Rafto Foundation will provide a good and attractive workplace for a results- and learning oriented organisation where initiative, quality, and creativity are valued.
- The Rafto Foundation shall facilitate and develop voluntary engagement through its own volunteer groups and in collaboration with the Friends of the Rafto Foundation.
- The Rafto Foundation aims to be a transparent and reliable organisation with good administrative procedures and systems. The Rafto Foundation shall provide orderly employment conditions for staff and interns.
- As a human rights organisation, the Rafto Foundation will strive to secure a diverse recruitment of staff and other contributors, and pay attention to responsible business conduct in the organisation's own value chains.
- Collaboration with the Rafto Prize Fund and the Egil Rafto House Foundation shall be maintained and developed.

2. Communication:

- The Rafto Foundation seeks to assume a distinct position in the public sphere in relevant human rights cases both in Norway and abroad.
- The Rafto Foundation shall spread knowledge of and encourage engagement in its network of human rights defenders and their cases.
- The Rafto Foundation aims to increase the visibility of its role as a Peace and Human Rights Centre in Norway.
- The Rafto Foundation sets out to explore the possibility of developing new channels for communication, analysis, and storytelling about human rights and democracy.

3. Financing and framework conditions:

- The Rafto Foundation shall strive to ensure broad and predictable funding, including by strengthening access to private and institutional funds.
- The Rafto Foundation will make efforts to upgrade and expand the Rafto House as a venue for human rights work.

- The Rafto Foundation aims to have formalised collaboration with the higher education sector and other relevant centres of expertise.
- The Rafto Foundation sets out to reinforce the Human Rights city of Bergen as a platform for our work and our local collaboration.
- The Rafto Foundation will continue to develop the collaboration with the Peace and Human Rights Centres in Norway.
- The Rafto Foundation will encourage the development of collaborations between human rights organisations and other contributors to human rights work where relevant, in order to promoting common objectives locally, nationally and internationally.