Annual Report from the Board 2019

NRC NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

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Cover photo: Ingebjørg Kårstad/NRC

CAMEROON/Far North. In 2019, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) continued expanding in Central and West Africa in response to the escalating crises in that region, particularly in the Central Sahel and Lake Chad regions. This includes start-up of activities in Niger and Burkina Faso and a significant scale up of programmes in Cameroon. The cover photo is from a local fish farming project NRC supported as part of their food security activities in the Far North region of Cameroon.

NRC NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

NRC's mandate and organisational set-up

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is an independent humanitarian organisation working to protect the rights of displaced and vulnerable people during crises. NRC provides assistance to meet immediate humanitarian needs, prevent further displacement and contribute to durable solutions. NRC is Norway's largest international humanitarian organisation and widely recognised as a leading field-based displacement agency within the international humanitarian community. NRC is a rights-based organisation and is committed to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality.

In 2019, NRC worked in both new and protracted crises across 33 countries. Their main activity is the delivery of humanitarian aid through programme activities in the field. NRC specialises in six areas of expertise, or "core competencies": shelter and settlements; livelihoods and food security; information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA); education; camp management; and water, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WASH).

NRC advocates towards decision-makers in order to obtain full respect for the rights of displaced and vulnerable people. It advocates at local, national, regional and global levels, basing messages and strategies on first-hand experience and specialised expertise.

NRC's Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) in Geneva is a global leader in monitoring, reporting on and advocating for people displaced within their own country.

NORCAP is NRC's global provider of expertise to the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding sectors. It builds partnerships with international organisations and national actors to protect lives, rights and livelihoods. NORCAP provides expert personnel and collaborates with partners to identify needs and to establish common goals and projects. It helps strengthen partner capacity and improve coordination and collaboration.

NRC's country programmes are managed and coordinated by four regional offices. The regional office for the Middle East is based in Amman, the East Africa and Yemen office in Nairobi, the Central and West Africa office in Dakar and the Asia, Europe and Latin-America office in Oslo.

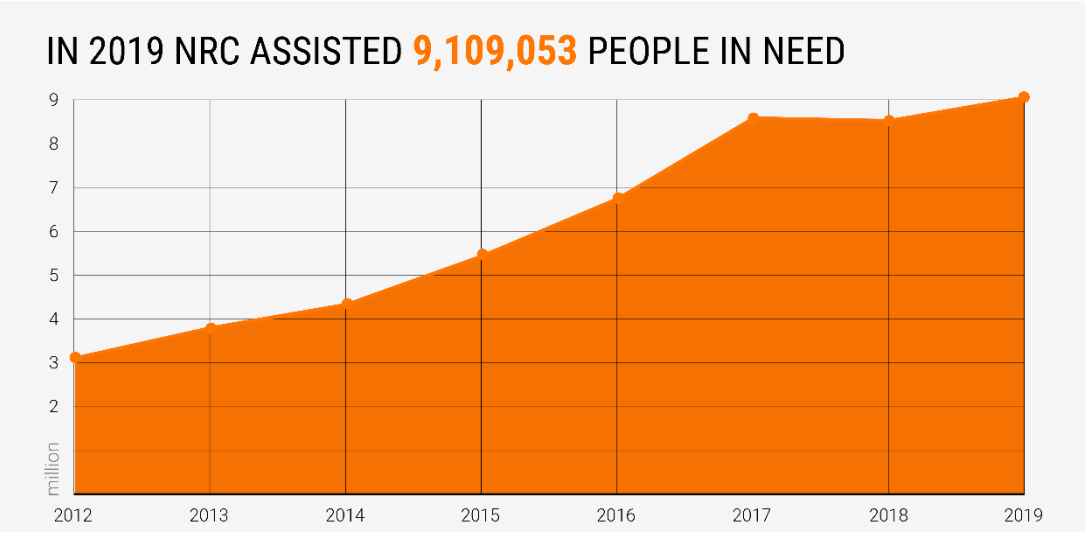
During 2019, NRC also had representation offices in Brussels, Geneva, Berlin and Washington DC, as well as liaison functions in London and Addis Ababa (to the African Union). These representation offices have been established to ensure close and ongoing dialogue with decision-makers and partners around the world. During the first half of 2019, the previous Gulf representation office in Dubai was closed and the liaison function for the Gulf moved to the regional office in Amman. The liaison office to the African Union was also closed in 2019.

NRC's head office is located in Oslo, from where NRC participates actively in Norwegian public discussions, engaging in a broad range of information, advocacy and fundraising efforts targeting decision-makers, civil society and the public at large.

At the end of 2019, approximately 15,500 people worked with and for displaced people on behalf of NRC. Of these, NRC employed a total of 7,050 staff members (including NORCAP experts). Most of the staff are hired nationally (6,300) to work for one of NRC's country programmes, and a small number are based at the head office in Oslo or at the representation offices.

Programme activities

NRC assisted more than nine million people in need across 33 countries in 2019. This was a 6.7 percent increase compared to 2018. The distribution of the people assisted changed across the regions in 2019, with a continued reduction in the Middle East, and an increase in the three other regions.



The decline in the Middle East region is mainly a result of the government-initiated closure of camps in Iraq towards the end of 2018 and during 2019. The continued shift from large-scale emergency response in the region to longer-term livelihoods and economic development programming also contributed to this reduction.

NRC established a light presence in Tripoli and Benghazi in Libya in 2018, managed by the Middle East regional office. In 2019, NRC established a country office in Libya, and scaled up its programming for internally displaced people (IDPs), returnees, host communities as well as vulnerable non-Libyan communities. In 2020, NRC will continue with IDP-centred programming in education, shelter, and information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA). The organisation will also continue exploring opportunities for programmes addressing mixed migration.

The increase in the number of people served in the East Africa and Yemen region was mainly the result of increased outreach in Yemen. In Yemen, NRC adopted innovative programming solutions (e.g. use of mass media channels to reach beneficiaries with ICLA

and WASH messages and a large increase in the use of multi-purpose cash as a programme modality) leading to a substantial growth in the number of people served. Across the region there was also an increase in WASH programmes, particularly in Djibouti, South Sudan, Uganda and Yemen. These programmes have a larger population reach, thus contributing to the overall growth in the region.

In 2019, NRC started exploring the re-establishment of a presence in Sudan after the change of government in Khartoum. NRC was expelled from Sudan in 2009 together with a number of other international organisations. NRC will set up a light presence in the country in 2020.

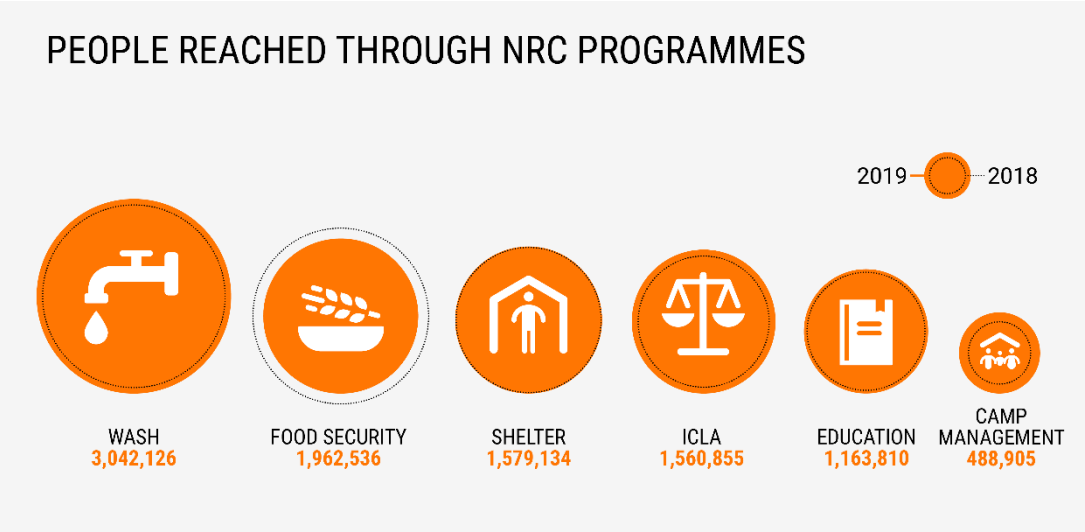
NRC continued expanding in Central and West Africa in response to the escalating crises in that region, particularly in the Central Sahel and Lake Chad regions. This includes start-up of activities in Niger and Burkina Faso and a significant scale up of programmes in Cameroon. In addition, the situation in the Central African Republic worsened in 2019 with severe flooding in the capital Bangui towards the end of the year. NRC increased its capacity in the country to respond to the emergency.

In terms of new developments in the Asia, Europe and Latin-America region in 2019, NRC established a country office in Bangladesh that will allow it to better respond to the Rohingya refugee situation. Close to one million Rohingya refugees currently reside in Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh, the majority having fled extreme violence in Myanmar. NRC has been working in the country through a local partner since 2017 and finally obtained legal registration in late 2018.

NRC also set up a country office in Venezuela. Activities were previously managed from the Colombia country office and mainly focused on assisting Colombian refugees in Venezuela and their host communities. As programmes were expanded to include vulnerable Venezuelans as a new target group, NRC established WASH, education and livelihoods and food security activities, in addition to the existing ICLA programmes. NRC has throughout the year actively advocated for increased humanitarian space in Venezuela, aiming to increase the Venezuelan government's acceptance of humanitarian action and actors.

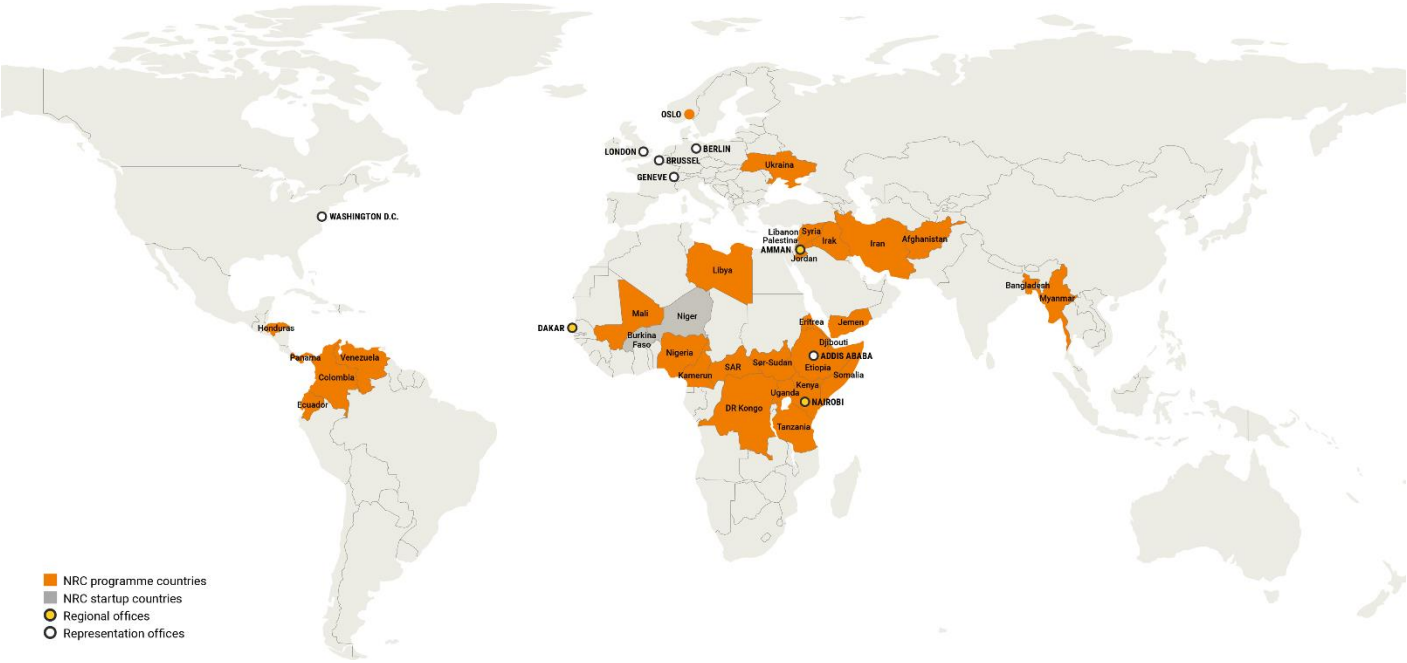
In Central America, NRC has had programmes in Honduras since 2014 and currently also works in El Salvador through a hosting agreement with World Vision. In 2019, NRC expanded its work to Guatemala and Mexico through partner organisations. NRC has focused its programmes on responding to the protection needs of the internally displaced population, as well as refugees and vulnerable migrants and deportees. NRC is one of very few organisations with displacement experience working in the region. The violence in the countries is continuing to escalate and the lack of respect for the rights of asylum seekers by the US is increasing protection needs both in Mexico and in the countries further south. NRC will continue expanding its work in this region in 2020.

In terms of the number of people reached through NRC programmes in 2019, there was a large decrease in livelihoods and food security beneficiaries compared to 2018.



This is mostly due to a return to normal levels of assistance in South Sudan. Scale-ups in Yemen account for a significant proportion of increases seen in WASH and ICLA programming, with WASH activities also expanding in Latin America. Camp management activities also increased their reach, alongside education, whilst shelter remained stable.

Country offices are also reporting more programmes outside the usual core competencies, including multi-purpose cash and several new protection activities that NRC is piloting.



NRC's Global Strategy 2018-2020

In October 2019, the NRC Board of Directors approved a one-year extension of NRC's Global Strategy until the end of 2021. The strategy has four main ambitions:

1) Be a leading displacement agency in hard-to-reach areas.

2) Be a champion for durable solutions.

3) Becoming a leader in using data and technology to deliver better.

4) Be a great organisation to work for.

Be a leading displacement agency in hard-to-reach areas

The ambition for NRC to be a leading displacement organisation in hard-to-reach areas includes being able to meet the basic needs of those it serves through quality and sustained programming and testing out new approaches and methodologies that approaches programming in hard-to-reach areas through an innovation lens.

In 2019, one of the focus areas was the development of tools and research to better set the direction for the NRC Hard-to-reach Roadmap (2018-2021) developed in 2018.

NRC developed guidance for country offices so that they can map their areas of operation against an agreed definition of what makes an area hard to reach. This will provide the organisation with a better overview over its activities and programmes in hard-to-reach areas, which is key for the design of context specific interventions. NRC's programme experts carried out visits to Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo), Iran, Libya, Mali, Myanmar, Niger and Somalia to help create plans, strategies and context specific tools. These will enable the country offices to improve how they work in hard-to-reach areas.

Between September 2018 and May 2019, NRC's Syria response office undertook an evaluation of its implementation in hard-to-reach areas. The aim was to advance in-country learning, develop NRC's understanding of working in such areas and contribute to the strengthening of organisation-wide approaches and learning. The evaluation highlighted the importance of good programming practices that should be applied across all NRC programmes, not only in hard-to-reach areas. The report findings reinforced the direction outlined in the Hard-to-reach Roadmap and provided valuable evidence to support ongoing areas of investment.

Since 2018, more than 920 frontline humanitarians have completed NRC's local language training on humanitarian negotiations. NRC has also created an online course on humanitarian access to provide resources to aid workers who operate in hard-to-reach areas. More than 250 people have completed the e-learning course in over 25 countries, the majority working in complex emergencies, including in Afghanistan, Colombia, Iran, Myanmar, Palestine, Syria and Yemen.

Going forward, the aim is for relevant country offices to complete a hard-to-reach assessment of their operations. Establishing a baseline will enable NRC to determine

whether the areas the organisation works in correspond to areas considered the hardest to reach. Further down the line, the ambition is that NRC country offices start to prioritise interventions in hard-to-reach areas over interventions in other areas of a country.

Be a champion for durable solutions

In 2019, NRC further clarified what championing durable solutions means for the organisation through the development of a roadmap focused on: 1) stepping up our advocacy response at country, regional and global level to be a powerful voice for durable solutions; 2) developing programmatic responses that are more intentionally focused on removing barriers to durable solutions; and 3) increasing multi-year and flexible funding for NRC's durable solutions-focused programmes.

The main programme development area in 2019 in relation to durable solutions was livelihoods and economic inclusion. Work commenced on developing and piloting several approaches building on existing programmatic strengths, such as expanding NRC's niche expertise in ICLA to include the "right to work", as well as focusing more on helping youth move from education to work life.

NRC's programmes continued to remove barriers to durable solutions in a variety of contexts. For example, the ICLA programme in the Central African Republic provided support on housing, land and property restitution for refugee returnees. In Cameroon and Colombia, NRC developed and implemented integrated approaches to support return and local integration. New approaches were also piloted, including to transitional housing solutions for returnees in Somalia, and to counselling on legal issues for refugees in Jordan considering return.

NRC published an internal Durable Solutions Funding Guide to support the organisation's engagement with traditional and non-traditional donors on durable solutions. NRC's Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Uganda country offices and the Middle East regional office were among those receiving funding for durable solutions-focused projects.

NRC also continued working in close collaboration with its partners to promote durable solutions. As an active member of the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat in East Africa, the Durable Solutions Platform in the Middle East and the Asia Displacement Solutions Platform, NRC played a central role in research, programme support, and advocacy around durable solutions. NRC, in partnership with the International Rescue Committee and Danish Refugee Council, also published the "Unprepared for (Re)Integration" report, which outlined lessons learned from Afghanistan, Somalia and Syria on refugee returns.

Moving forward, key priorities for the durable solutions ambition include improved mapping of durable solutions projects, initiatives and advocacy interventions; further clarifying how each core competency can contribute to durable solutions; strengthening the link between durable solutions-focused programming and advocacy; increasing funding for durable solutions programming; and enhancing external communication on NRC's role in durable solutions.

Becoming a leader in using data and technology to deliver better

In 2019, significant investments were made to develop digital systems supporting key business functions and processes. The new human resource management system (NRC People), the grants management system (NRC Cycles) and the incident reporting system (NRC Protect) all have the potential to improve work processes and generate organisational efficiencies. Through new partnerships with private sector companies including SAP, Pluralsight, Microsoft and Salesforce, NRC is accelerating its digital transformation. In 2019, all NRC applications were moved to cloud, which enabled the adoption of more advanced software.

Within three of the organisation's core competencies, namely ICLA, education and shelter, significant digital developments took place in 2019. This included a digital ID project developed in cooperation with three other Norwegian NGOs. Many displaced and vulnerable people do not have identification documents. The causes for not having an official proof of identity varies. Some may have lost documents during a natural disaster or when fleeing from conflict, while others have never owned an ID. Lack of registration makes people "invisible" and hampers effective humanitarian assistance. By introducing a digital ID, control and ownership of personal identification is given back to the individual and this improves the collaboration between NGOs and the people they serve. In addition, NRC has developed a Smart Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM). This initiative has digitised parts of NRC's emergency response processes and improved the tracking and analysis of information gathered from communication with communities. This has led to improved assessments and more appropriate responses to needs.

The organisation has recruited dedicated resources to support the digital transformation within ICLA and education, as well as to explore innovative sustainability models for NRC's housing security platform. Most of these initiatives originated from the internal NRC Innovation Fund.

The Innovation Fund was set up in 2017. The aim was for it to be a driver of grassroot innovation projects in the organisation. At the end of 2018 and beginning of 2019, a review of the fund was conducted. Based on this review, a new setup of the fund and a new strategy was approved. In the new set up, the projects receive a small amount of funding for the three first months, and then a reduced number of projects will get funding for another six months. Two promising projects will then get funding for another year to start producing the final solution.

In 2020, NRC will focus on consolidating the work done within ICLA, education and shelter to create a common data model and framework to ensure sustainability. Going forward, NRC expects that several new innovative technology initiatives will emerge from the Innovation Fund.

Be a great organisation to work for

NRC has developed a framework defining what it means for NRC to be a great organisation to work for and how to get there. NRC will focus on five areas:

1) attracting and recruiting staff; 2) engaging staff; 3) developing staff; 4) providing appropriate staff care; and 5) retaining staff. Ninety-two per cent of NRC staff say they would recommend NRC as a good organisation to work for, but there is still significant room to improve in the areas identified.

In 2019, NRC focused on the development of an induction package for new staff and launched its new career pages. NRC also initiated a pilot on psycho-social peer support in the South Sudan country office, which will be further developed in 2020. To increase internal mobility and establish a more fair and equal taxation scheme across the various country offices, HR developed a new taxation model for international staff. In 2019, NRC also decided to set up a shared service centre for recruitment in Nairobi to ensure an efficient recruitment setup across the organisation. The centre will be operational from mid-2020. Another major investment area in 2019 was the development of the new human resource management system, which will be rolled out in 2020.

Going forward, NRC will continue to strengthen its work when it comes to attracting new talent and developing existing staff. The induction package will be translated and rolled out to all countries in 2020 and health guidelines and standards will be developed.

NORCAP

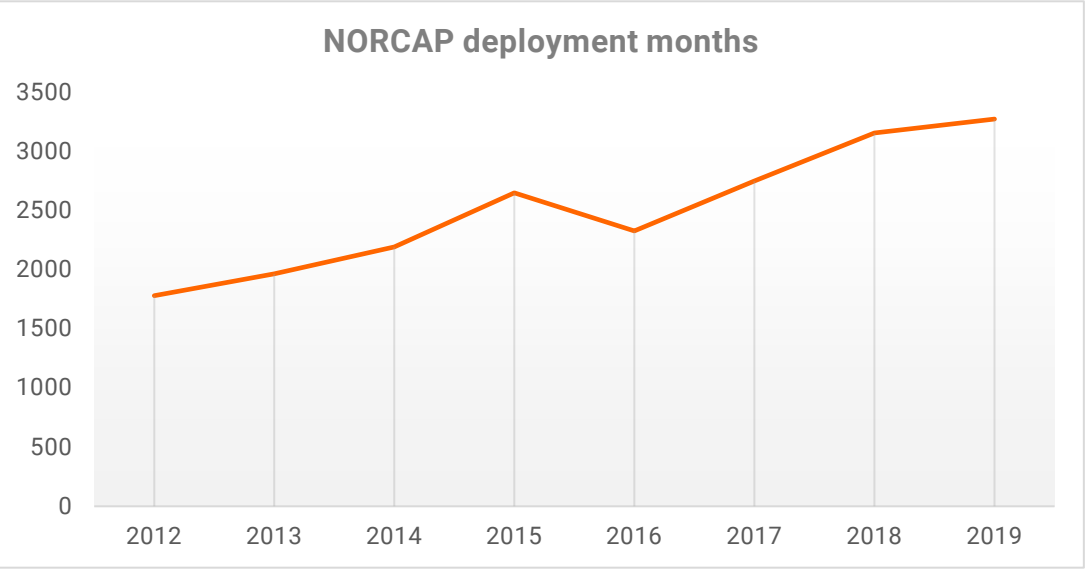
In 2019, NORCAP has remained committed to its strategic objectives of bringing more effective ways of working to the field; improving coordination and collaboration across humanitarian, development and peace building sectors; and strengthening capacity building of international and national partners.

NORCAP's transition from traditional standby capacity work to increasingly engaging with international organisations and national actors as strategic partners, especially within the department's growth and investment areas (gender-based violence, education, cash, and climate and clean energy), has led to significant progress when it comes to securing funds from both new and established donors.

Participation in global fora such as cluster and sub-cluster meetings have not only strengthened existing relations, but also displayed NORCAP as an advocate with the ability to influence the direction and priorities of humanitarian, development and peace building efforts.

NORCAP works both strategically and operationally to improve quality across the humanitarian, development and peace building sectors by providing experts for global and headquarter based roles. In 2019, these positions have increasingly focused on sustainability and 'greening' of humanitarian operations, urban responses, and cash and market-based programming.

During 2019, NORCAP provided 3,280 person-months of expertise to its partners.



In Bangladesh, 32 NORCAP experts provided support to the Rohingya refugee response. The experts worked to strengthen the collaboration between the humanitarian agencies and the government institution responsible for the response. NORCAP also maintained its role as a world leading provider of expertise when a crisis hits, being among the first responders to ensure that vital posts are covered, for example during the Cyclone Idai response in the spring of 2019.

NORCAP continued its efforts to promote humanitarian protection through deployments and projects. Another key focus was building capacity with local partners for improved preparedness, response and resilience in humanitarian contexts as well as strengthening the links between humanitarian, peace and development efforts.

Throughout 2019, NORCAP has worked to improve its internal data collection systems, tools and practices to increase its ability to provide more effective and evidence-based responses to forced displacement and crises.

Advocating for the rights of displaced people

NRC advocacy in 2019, both private and public, resulted in significant changes to policy and practice that had a direct positive impact on the lives of thousands of displaced people.

The global advocacy work is guided by the organisation's global strategy, with a particular focus on protection, humanitarian response in hard-to-reach areas, durable solutions and neglected crises. NRC draws on its operational and frontline experience to inform its advocacy efforts.

On protection, NRC highlighted the impact of violence on displaced people in Afghanistan, Yemen, Palestine and Syria among others.

Having a legal identity is a precondition to receiving basic services in many contexts, but also an important protection measure. In Iraq, an estimated 45,000 displaced children in camps are missing civil documentation. In 2019, NRC successfully raised the challenges faced by undocumented children and adults through two public reports (Barriers from Birth and Paperless People) and systematic private advocacy in Iraq and with donor countries. This led the donor community, political and security actors within western governments, and the government of Iraq to recognise the importance of addressing this issue. Iraqi authorities issued a national directive to accelerate the issuance of civil documents and a federal court overturned security instructions that prevented the issuance of civil documents for family members of people perceived to be affiliated with extremist groups. More work is needed, however, to ensure that these directives are implemented.

In Geneva, NRC led collective advocacy efforts on the part of international non-governmental organisations to foster greater participation, inclusiveness, and accountability in the Global Protection Cluster (GPC), As a result, the new Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) includes, for the first time, national NGOs and field cluster representatives. In December 2019, NRC was elected as the co-chair of the newly re-established SAG. NRC also played a leading role in the drafting and adoption of the new GPC strategic framework 2020-2024 to be launched in February 2020 and actively supported the development of the 2020-2021 GPC workplan.

On hard-to-reach areas, NRC led advocacy efforts in Nigeria to push back and mitigate the impact of shrinking humanitarian space. In collaboration with other agencies, NRC mobilised the international community to successfully secure the reopening of the offices of two international NGOs that the military had closed. NRC also led efforts to highlight the potential negative impact of a new NGO law and other impediments to principled humanitarian action.

Globally, NRC continued to highlight the impact of excessive counterterrorism measures on principled humanitarian action. In 2019, some of the most notable achievements were the inclusion of language intended to safeguard humanitarian activities in UN Security Council Resolution 2462 on financing terrorism, the preservation of the humanitarian exemption in the Somalia sanctions regime and the inclusion of a humanitarian exemption in the UK counterterrorism and border security bill.

On durable solutions, NRC highlighted the need for children to access education, for example in Afghanistan, Honduras and El Salvador. In Mali, the organisation continued to negotiate the re-opening of schools in the north and centre regions, where schools are often closed as a result of attacks on “western education” by armed groups. Third-party negotiations through traditional and religious leaders, who in turn convinced armed groups to let children go back to school, led to the re-opening of more than 25 out of 93 schools in one of the communes in Central Mali.

NRC also continued its work on displacement in the context of climate change and disasters, including support for the Platform on Disaster Displacement. After several years of work to ensure disaster displacement is considered in relevant frameworks, global, regional and national policy documents and decisions now acknowledge and include references to disaster displacement at an unprecedented rate.

On neglected crises, NRC published its annual list to draw attention to the world's most politically neglected and underfunded displacement crises, calling for increased support and political action to address these. In 2019, Cameroon topped the list. NRC's neglected crisis list received widespread international media attention and continued to be referenced throughout the year.

NRC's offices in Brussels, Washington DC, Berlin, Geneva and London engaged in advocacy efforts to increase attention to and promote action on protection crises and underfunded humanitarian operations. Venezuela was a priority country for all offices during 2019. These efforts contributed to the US decision to fund humanitarian activities inside the country, the UK authorities' decision to fund humanitarian action in Venezuela for the first time, and increased interest from the German government.

In 2019, significant progress was also made on the NRC-led Money Where It Counts initiative, which seeks to make the humanitarian sector more efficient by introducing sector-wide improvements and harmonisation of cost classification and charging, as well as financial budgeting and reporting. In key meetings, peer organisations and donors expressed great interest in the initiative, which is moving into the pilot phase in 2020. UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, has committed to be part of the pilot. The initiative has the potential to save millions of work hours in the sector.

Finance and revenue base

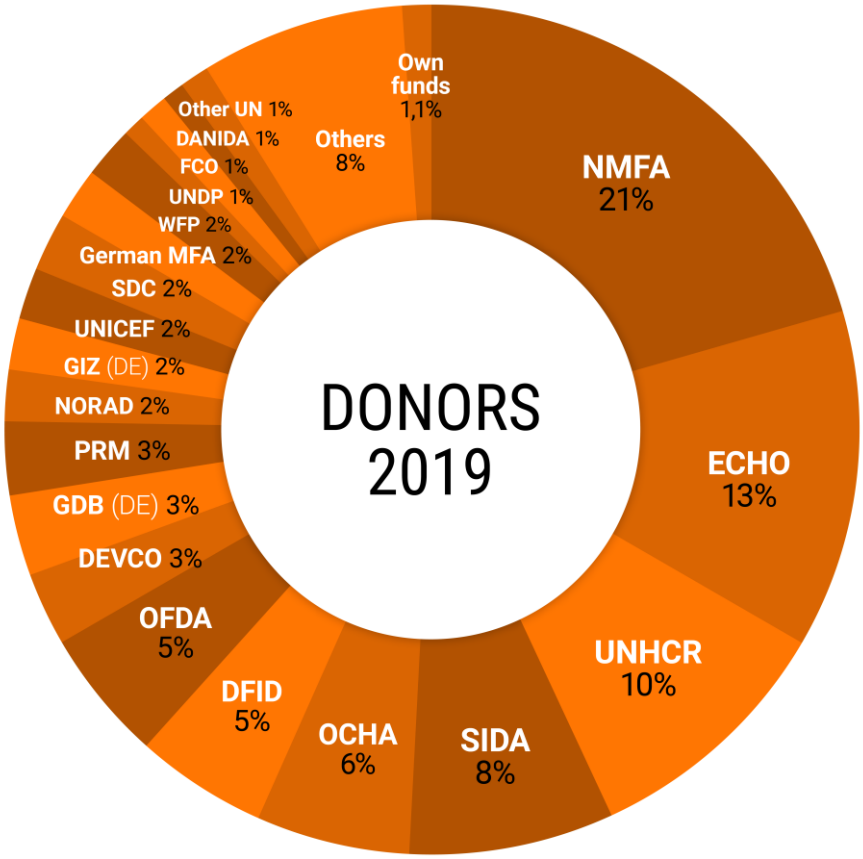
NRC's financial income continued to grow in 2019. Total income in 2019 ended at NOK 4.65 billion, an increase of 11 per cent compared to 2018. This was partly driven by the reduced value of the Norwegian krone (NOK) versus other large currencies like the euro (EUR) and the American dollar (USD).

The annual accounts show a positive net result of NOK 12 million. This is almost NOK 30 million above the budget for the year. The financial status of NRC can be described as consistently healthy.

Equity with restrictions was reduced by NOK 16 million and other equity was strengthened by NOK 12 million. By the end of the year, total current assets amounted to NOK 2,060 billion, against a short-term liability of NOK 1,628 billion. The debt ratio was 0.79, which is satisfactory. The organisation has no long-term debt and although there are large variations during a year, organisational liquidity is good. Surplus liquidity is invested in money market and bond funds, not in the stock market.

In terms of income, the volume from 2018 to 2019 continued to shift slightly from the Middle East and East Africa and Yemen, the two regions where NRC traditionally have had the highest income, to Central and West Africa, as well as Asia, Europe, and Latin America.

NRC continued to receive substantial support from almost all major institutional donors and to diversify its donor base even further. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA) (21 %), the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) (13 %), UNHCR (10 %) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) (8 %) remained NRC's four largest donors and its most important strategic partners. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) became NRC's fifth largest donor (6 %) followed by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) (5 %) and the Office of U.S Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) (5 %). Funding from US and German donors, and donors with a development focus, continued to grow in 2019.



There are no effects of the Covid-19 crisis on the Annual Activity Accounts for 2019, nor on the asset values. NRC has currently not seen reductions in the expected level of institutional donor funding for 2020. However, NRC faces challenges in implementing its planned activities and expects a lower implementation rate. The challenges are related to reduced access, lockdowns, curfews and travel restrictions. At the same time, NRC is

adapting and scaling up programme activities to respond to the Covid-19 crisis and will monitor the implementation closely going forward.

NRC has been affected by the volatility and drop in the currency exchange rate of NOK versus USD, EUR and other currencies. NRC receives only about 25 per cent of its income in NOK and the rest in other major currencies like USD, EUR, GBP and CHF, while it has major parts of its administration costs tied to the NOK. The drop in the value of the NOK therefore partly compensates for the expected reduced operational income in the 2020 budget.

NORCAP

In 2019, NORCAP continued to increase its crisis funding from the NMFA, totalling approximately NOK 55 million. Crises funding came in addition to the three-year framework agreement between NORCAP and the NMFA. Fundraising efforts for NORCAP's priority areas; cash, climate, education and gender-based violence increased in 2019, also among international institutional donors. This resulted in NORCAP exceeding its budget, reaching a total annual expenditure of more than NOK 399 million.

Private sector fundraising

Contributions from individual and corporate donors are a crucial source of income for the organisation. NRC has an ambition to significantly increase the level of funding from the private sector over the coming years, including through expansion beyond the Norwegian market. NRC started its geographic expansion in late 2017 and is now also reaching out to the general public in Sweden, Austria and Germany.

In 2019, private sector fundraising generated NOK 140 million, up nine per cent from 2018. The main source of income came from regular individual donors. By the end of 2019, NRC had 32,245 regular individual donors in Norway and 11,215 in Sweden. The total growth in regular donors in 2019 was 34 per cent.

Corporate partnerships, foundations and philanthropists contributed NOK 19.5 million in cash donations in 2019. In addition, NRC received pro bono services from the corporate sector at a value of NOK 38 million, approximately NOK 25 million more than in 2018. Corporate pro bono expertise and services make an important contribution to NRC's digital transformation and organisational development, as well as to support innovation within its humanitarian programming.

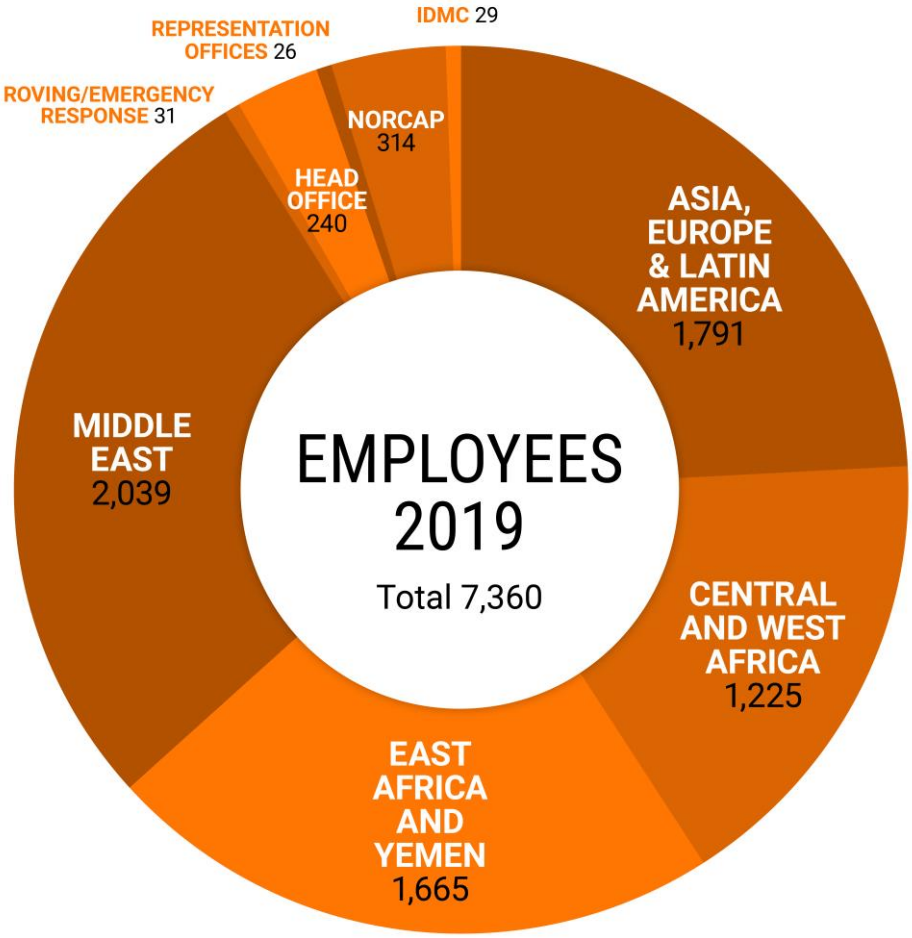
The main current challenge to reaching the ambitious private sector growth strategy is access to suppliers within field marketing. NRC will continue its work to overcome this obstacle when the organisation establishes activities in new countries. Going forward, NRC will also continue to develop digital channels.

Human resources

NRC's Human Resources (HR) policy aims to ensure equal opportunities and rights, and to prevent discrimination based on ethnic origin, nationality, language, gender, sexual orientation, religion or beliefs.

At the end of 2019, some 15,500 people worked for or with NRC to deliver humanitarian assistance. Some 7,050 were employees, including almost 6,300 national staff. Some 8,400 were incentive, daily or other types of workers, typically displaced people or members of the local community.

A breakdown of regular employees by region/office is presented in the chart below:



Numbers as of 31 December 2019. Excludes incentive, daily and other types of workers.

Nationality, gender distribution and immigrant backgrounds

NRC's 478 employees on international contracts represented 83 different nationalities. The two largest groups were employees from the United Kingdom and Kenya, followed by France, Italy and the United States. Out of the employees at the head office in Oslo, 36 per cent had non-Norwegian citizenship.

The distribution of gender at the head office in Oslo was 65 per cent women and 35 per cent men at the end of 2019; the managers at head office was comprised of 54 per cent women and 46 per cent men. Gender distribution among senior management at head office was 60 per cent women and 40 per cent men, and in the Board of Directors, there were six men and five women. Among staff in advisory roles and line managers, men and women at head office were at approximately even salary levels.

At the regional and country office level, gender distribution was 55 per cent male and 45 per cent female among international staff. There were 65 per cent men and 35 per cent women among national staff.

At the representation offices, the national staff gender distribution was 30 per cent male and 70 per cent female. Within expert deployments, the gender distribution among experts deployed was 50/50 men and female. In IDMC, the gender distribution was 62 per cent women and 38 per cent men.

One of NRC's strategic objectives for 2018-2021 is to strive for gender balance at all levels of management. At the country and regional office level, NRC struggles to secure a good gender balance in some senior positions. In 2018, a female staff survey was conducted to collect more data and get a better overview over key improvement areas. Findings from the survey was used to develop specific targets and required actions on gender which have been included in the country offices' annual plans.

Over the last years, there has been a positive trend when it comes to the proportion of female staff in management positions at country level, especially among country directors. By the end of 2019, 50 per cent of the country directors were female, compared to 19 per cent in 2017.

In 2020, NRC will continue the work to improve its recruitment practices to ensure that more women are recruited to country and regional offices.

Duty of care

For NRC to reach its ambitions and ensure quality assistance, staff need to feel safe and supported. In 2017 and 2018, NRC developed its duty of care standards and a toolbox including presentations, leaflets, posters and eLearning. In 2019, NRC has continued to focus on duty of care as this is an area that requires continuous attention and development.

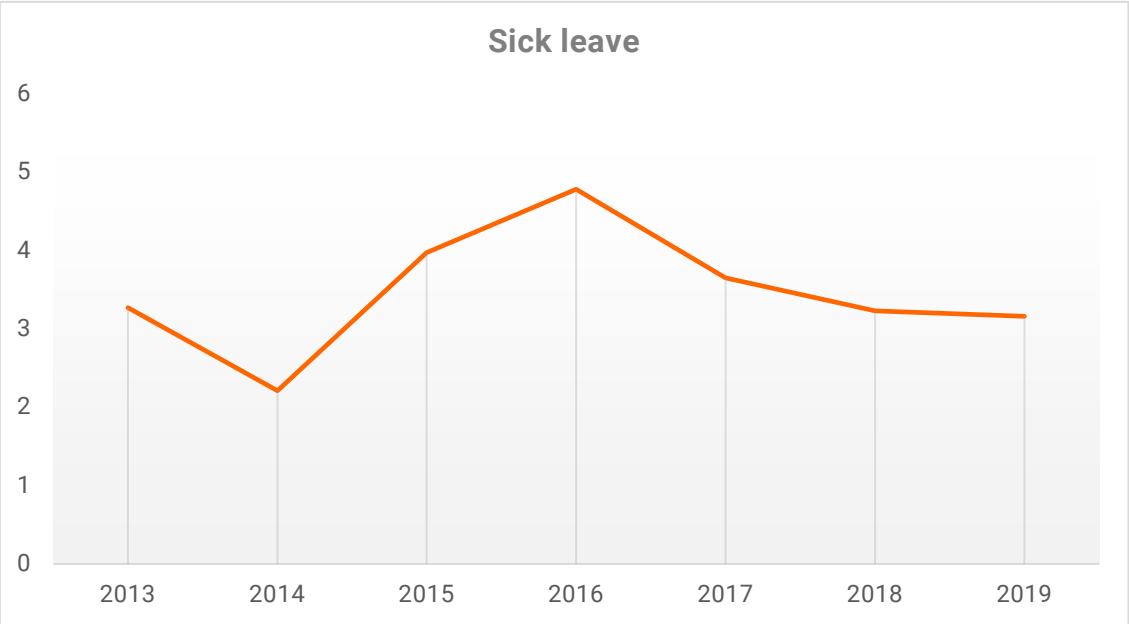
One key goal in 2019 was to continue to raise awareness around duty of care. This has been done through extensive management trainings, in addition to specific duty of care trainings in several country offices. NRC has also included duty of care in the new induction training package.

In 2019, NRC developed a two-year awareness campaign focusing on core principles related to health, safety and security (HSS), and duty of care. Topics include protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), anti-corruption, staff care, IT security and data protection. The campaign, to be launched in February 2020, will be rolled out in different modules throughout the year.

During 2019, NRC developed a training package for peer support and trainings on stress management that has been tested in several regional offices, country offices as well as at the head office. In addition, the HR unit has started working on a minimum health standard package for staff working in high risk areas. This work will continue in 2020.

Sick leave

In 2019, the sick leave rate at the head office in Oslo was 3.16 per cent, compared to 3.23 per cent in 2018. NRC followed up on the commitments in the Norwegian government's Letter of Intent regarding a more inclusive working life (the IA Agreement) to facilitate an inclusive work environment for its staff.



Health, safety and security (HSS)

The revised Health, Safety and Security risk management policy was approved in 2019. In this policy, NRC has strengthened the procedures and guidelines for duty of care, health, safety and security risk assessments, incident reporting and investigations. In addition, NRC's systems for monitoring and auditing have been improved.

NRC's compliance reporting when it comes to health, safety and security issues has improved steadily over the last two years. By the end of 2019, the global compliance score was 89 per cent, well above the minimum target of 80 per cent. A substantial reduction of staff turnover in country offices has led to a significant increase in the overall compliance to global health, safety and security standards. Other contributing factors were more timely security risk assessments and greater investment in risk mitigation measures.

A global security training strategy was approved by NRC's Senior Management Group in 2019. Going forward, NRC will maintain the high level of trainings for international staff and continue to strengthen trainings for national staff. In 2019, NRC has conducted 23 Hostile Environment Individual Security Trainings (HEIST) for 453 national staff, while 253 people participated in eight Hostile Environment Awareness Trainings (HEAT). In addition, 32 crisis management trainings with 128 participants were conducted.

Incidents

In total, NRC recorded 701 incidents related to its field operations in 2019. 677 NRC staff were involved in an incident. Out of these, 520 were national staff and 157 international staff. This is significantly lower than in 2018 where 1,074 staff were involved in an incident.

Of the incidents reported in 2019, 61 per cent were crime related (theft, harassment or fraud), 17 per cent authority related (arrests/detention of staff, interrogation, or surveillance from authorities) and 11 per cent conflict related (staff close to cross-fire, mortar attacks, improvised explosives device (IED) attacks or bombings).

In terms of impact, two per cent of the incidents were critical, including four incidents that resulted in fatalities. This included two traffic accidents involving NRC vehicles. In 2020, NRC will continue to strengthen its focus on road safety and driver training. Furthermore, 16 per cent of the incidents were severe and the rest had a moderate or low impact on NRC's programmes. In total, the incidents caused 18 days of delays in programmes globally. In addition, authorities forced NRC to close its programmes two times and programmes were suspended three times. Around half of the cases were reported in the Middle East region.

The new incident reporting system (NRC Protect) was successfully launched in 2019. In 2020, migration of all data from 2008 onwards will continue together with further improvements to the system. When this work is completed, NRC will have a better overview over all incidents across the organisation.

Risk management

A Risk Management section was established at the head office in 2019. This was done to strengthen NRC's work around risk management and compliance and bring together internal resources including legal, anti-corruption, protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and data protection in one section.

In 2019, the focus has been on developing a comprehensive risk management framework for NRC which includes clearer guidance on risk identification and assessments, assigning risk ownership and setting up a central online risk register tool. In December 2019, 70 per cent of country offices were using the tool to record risks and risk management activities. A risk management dashboard has been developed to facilitate data analysis from risk registers and to support management teams' decision-making.

In 2020, the focus will be to further develop and improve the framework and the risk management dashboard. This includes defining escalation criteria and introducing mandatory risk monitoring to capture change and assess the effectiveness of control and mitigation measures. Existing risk assessment activities and methodologies within NRC will also be further aligned. Priority will be given to finalise the role mandate of the risk and compliance function across the organisation and to recruit dedicated risk and compliance staff in all regions and later at country level.

Environmental impact

Most of the countries that are expected to be worst affected by climate change are also affected by conflict. This combined impact is driving displacement, a trend that is expected to accelerate in the coming years. NRC is increasing its efforts to help the people it serves in adapting to climate change while also putting measures in place to mitigate its impact. This includes improving access to clean energy sources for displaced people and host communities, as well as reducing the environmental impact of NRC's own operations.

NRC has pioneered the development and use of the Nexus Environmental Assessment Tool (NEAT+). NEAT+ enables environmental project-level screening in humanitarian contexts and is combining environmental data with site specific and activity-based questions. It then automatically analyses and flags priority environmental risks.

Using the tool as a starting point, NRC's programmes are becoming increasingly green in their response. For the last three years, NRC has been working in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya on a "Waste-to-Value" project, which converts latrine waste to fuel briquettes that are sold in the local market. This creates livelihoods and reduces impact on limited and dwindling firewood resources.

In Jordan, where 96 per cent of the energy is imported and 2.7 million Syrian refugees are hosted, NRC is training local government counterparts in the use of solar energy. Furthermore, NRC is installing solar panel systems in schools and solar water heaters in houses rented to Syrian refugees.

In Ethiopia, NRC works with a renewable energy investment company to build solar power plants for refugees living in some of the most environmentally fragile parts of the country.

NRC believes humanitarian environmental impact is no longer solely a question of programme implementation, but also one of modality selection. The use of cash in all of NRC's operations and particularly in its shelter and settlement response helps increase efficiencies, reduce waste and tap into a more sustainable service delivery model.

NRC is also contributing to the greening of the humanitarian sector through NORCAP, which is providing technical expertise to the whole sector. In 2019, NORCAP had 13 energy experts working with key humanitarian agencies (UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration and the World Food Programme) to green their operations, increase energy access for refugees and other vulnerable populations, and strengthen the collaboration and coordination in the sector through the Global Plan of Action (GPA) for Sustainable Energy Solutions in Situations of Displacement.

At the Global Refugee Forum in December 2020, NRC pledged to "work towards making ourselves, the communities we serve and the wider humanitarian sector carbon neutral."

In 2020, NRC will conduct a benchmarking of its environmental impact and develop a strategy for how NRC can deliver and advocate for sustainable programmes and operations.

Board of Directors

The following people constituted the Board in 2019:

- Harald Norvik (Chairman of the Board)
- Hege Marie Norheim (Deputy Chair)
- Kiran Aziz
- Lisa Ann Cooper
- Josephine Goube
- Walter Kälin
- Sturla Stålsett
- Claus Sørensen
- Anne Huser (Board member elected by staff)
- Jeremy Francis (Board member elected by staff)
- Muktar Adan Abdi (Board member elected by staff) (from October 2019)

The Board conducted five regular Board meetings and two Board seminars, discussing 60 agenda items throughout the year. Members of the Board visited the Jordan country office in March.

The Board Audit and Risk Committee met three times in 2019. The committee assists the Board and management by providing independent oversight, advice and guidance on the adequacy of the organisation's:

- Risk management.
- Internal controls and frameworks for compliance and safeguarding.
- Internal audit activity, external auditors, and other providers of assurance.
- Financial statements and public accountability reporting.

Board meetings and seminars in 2019 focused on, among other issues, audit and risk, organisational development, strategic direction and the impact of NRC programmes. The Board evaluation in 2019 confirmed that the relationship between the Board and the administration is good and constructive.

The Board confirms that the conditions for continued operations are fulfilled.

The Board thanks NRC’s employees for their dedication and hard work and looks forward to continued cooperation in 2020.

Oslo, 12 May 2020

Harald Norvik

Chairman of the Board

Jan Egeland

Secretary General

Hege Norheim

Deputy Chair

Walter Kälin

Board member

Kiran Aziz

Board member

Sturla Stålsett

Board member

Joséphine Goube

Board member

Claus Sørensen

Board member

Lisa Cooper

Board member

William Carter

Board member elected by staff

Anne Huser

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NRC

NORWEGIAN
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