

*protecting people whose lives are endangered by unacceptable discrimination*

*v i v e r e*

***"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."***

**(Ralph Waldo Emerson)**

Annual Activity Report 2024

Since its creation in 1999 *Vivere* has been made up solely of volunteers. With no expensive outgoings on fundraising, marketing or rent, we have been able to keep our costs down to under 2%. This has only been possible thanks to your support.

## Dear Friends,

As I write this, the world feels more unsettled than ever. Since January 2025, several of the countries where we work have been experiencing deeply troubling upheavals: in Syria, it remains unclear whether the situation is improving or worsening. In eastern DR Congo, the situation is definitely getting worse<sup>1</sup> — as it is in Ukraine, where the ongoing ravages of war continue to add to an already devastating toll. In Colombia, a state of emergency was declared in January following clashes between guerrilla groups, which left over one hundred people dead and displaced twenty thousand others in less than a week.

At the same time, the drastic cuts to U.S. humanitarian aid budgets under the Trump administration — coupled with the abrupt shutdown of agencies that had been providing critical relief to suffering communities — have suddenly worsened numerous already dire situations, many of them in regions where we are actively engaged. Several European countries, including Switzerland, have also reduced their international cooperation spending, albeit to a lesser extent. The global outlook for solidarity between nations is growing darker. The cost of this shift will be borne by the most vulnerable and the most oppressed.

Our team remains on constant alert: the safety of our local partners and their families demands ongoing vigilance and the capacity to respond swiftly in case of emergency. In zones of conflict, human rights defenders, independent journalists, and even committed artists often face severe repression — and in the worst cases, they are silenced permanently. We are increasingly concerned for the lives of the courageous individuals who have been connected to Vivere for many years. At the same time, the continuation of several of the projects described in this report has become uncertain, as have the ongoing care and advocacy for those who rely on them.

Carrying out our mission often feels like steering through a storm. In the past three months — more than ever — we've had to remain fully present and ready to act.

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<sup>1</sup> In March 2025 we initiated an inquiry to find out the exact extent of the horrendous punishments meted out by the-backed Rwandan rebel group 'M23, following a complaint made to the prosecutor of the ICC.

The events of this year have led Vivere to get involved in three further areas, in addition to the countries and projects that we have been working in for several years:

1. Since February 2022 the war in Ukraine has caused terrible devastation and the loss of many thousands of lives. This has forced the exodus of nearly sixteen million civilians who have either been displaced internally or to other countries. Thanks to the spontaneous generosity of members of the public sympathetic to our movement, we have been providing medical help and food assistance to several hundred of the most vulnerable Ukrainians both in Ukraine and in four neighboring countries<sup>2</sup> since March. This continues to be the case at the time of going to press, although donations have plummeted which causes us concern for how we are going to be able to provide a bare minimum of aid.
2. In 2024 we identified seven Ukrainians who had been the victims of war crimes in the East of the country and have been providing 18 Ukrainian victims with legal aid. This would not have been possible without the courage of our friend Gennady G, a locally based lawyer, and his willingness to follow this through, working in conjunction with local prosecutors. We have had no prior experience in this type of crime until now.<sup>3</sup>
3. Further to a decision made by the committee at the end of 2021, we have consolidated and extended our work in the legal defense of adults accused of blasphemy who are facing the death penalty. At the end of 2024 we were supporting 17 adults accused of blasphemy, the majority of whom are muslim women and one transgender person.

This document sets out a summary of our projects, finances, future plans and management team. If you would like any more information on any subject, please do not hesitate to ask.

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<sup>2</sup>Poland, Moldavia, Montenegro and Transnistria

<sup>3</sup> A War Crime, as defined in Article 8 of The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) outlines all acts deemed to violate the laws of war. These acts are considered to be of sufficient seriousness to be classed as different types of crime: assassination, mistreatment, or deportation for forced labour or any other reason, deportation of civilians into occupied territory, destruction of towns or villages for no reason, or militarily unjustifiable destruction. Such crimes constitute a grave violation of the Geneva Convention. The United Nations, since its creation in 1945 at the end of the Second World War, has been particularly vigilant on this.

## I PROJECTS

	Assistance to victims of atrocities and repression. Better justice	Assistance to abandoned elderly people	Fight against impunity	Assistance to single mothers in grave need	Nutritional Assistance	Fight against human trafficking and assistance to victims	Communication and associative life
<b>Burundi</b>	p.9			p.9			
<b>Colombia</b>					p. 19		
<b>Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)</b>	p. 11	p. 11	p. 11				
<b>Persian Gulf</b>						p. 30	
<b>Moldova &amp; Pridnestrovia</b>	p.24		p.24			p. 24	
<b>Worldwide: abolition of death penalty and life imprisonment of children</b>	p. 32						
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	p.29		p.29			p. 29	
<b>Pakistan</b>	p. 33					p. 33	
<b>Switzerland</b>							p. 37
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II FINANCE p. 39

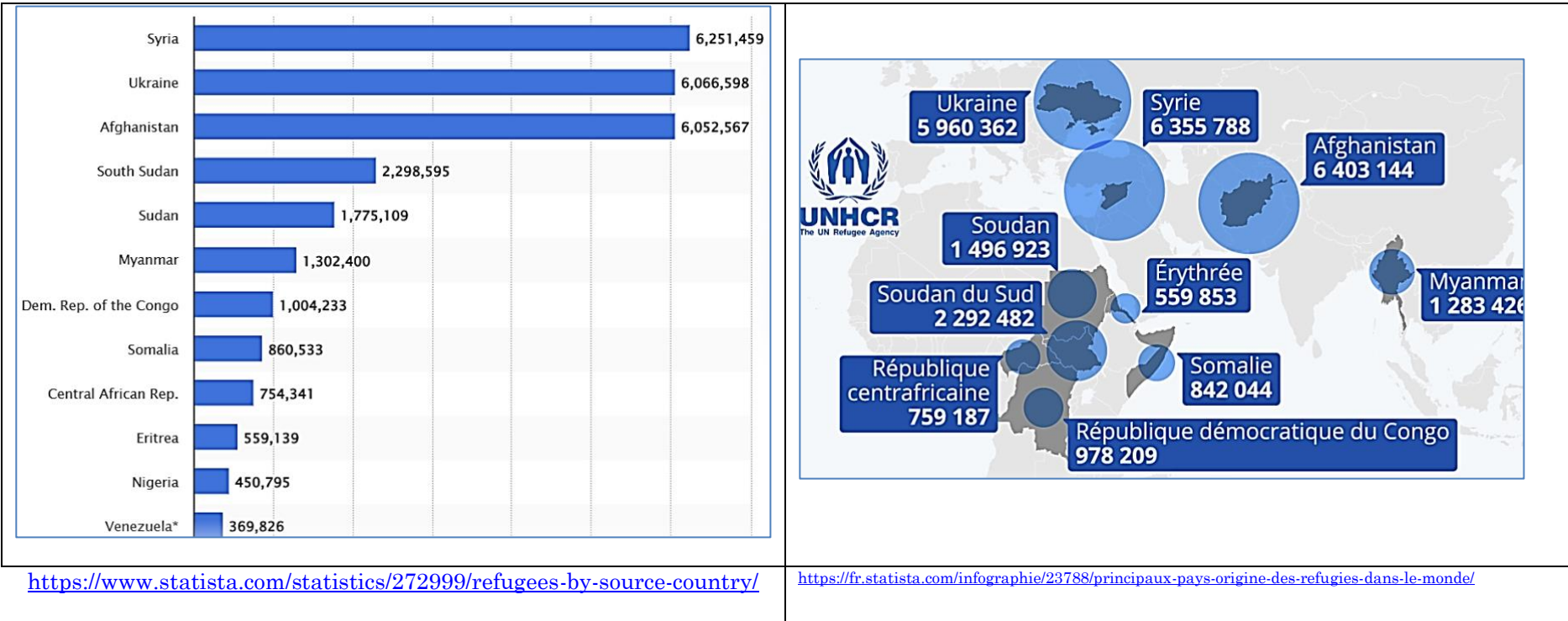
III TEAM p. 41

IV FUTURE p. 41

# People around the world living in situations of internal displacement due to armed conflict:

The world report on the number of people internally displaced this year shows the magnitude of the problem<sup>4</sup> which impacted more than 75,9 million people in 66 countries and territories. More than half of these internally displaced people were children and young people.

Vivere, teaming up with local partners, is working in the countries which in 2024 counted the most number of displaced people and refugees: Syria, Columbia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Unfortunately, 2022 saw Ukraine being added to this list with nearly 4 million displaced people (5) (more than 6 million as refugees in other countries<sup>5</sup>)



<sup>4</sup> [https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/2023-05/IDMC\\_GRID\\_2023\\_Global\\_Report\\_on\\_Internal\\_Displacement\\_HQ.pdf](https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/2023-05/IDMC_GRID_2023_Global_Report_on_Internal_Displacement_HQ.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Some 7.5 million Ukrainian refugees have been displaced across Europe. The World Health Organization (WHO), classes this situation as one of the eight most serious health crisis in the world

## Helping people accused of blasphemy who risk the death penalty

Confronted with realities on the ground in contexts of extreme intolerance, Vivere has strengthened its support to people, minors and adults, who are accused - rightly or wrongly, it doesn't really matter - of having committed blasphemy <sup>6</sup>. In some countries <sup>7</sup>, the penal code and/or customary laws can lead to the gallows, stoning or other forms of the most ferocious killings.

This is unbearable.

For obvious security reasons, we will not name the country concerned here. Our friends living there have recently made us aware of a case of a 42yr old man who is said to have claimed that he had been visited by the Prophet Mohammed and Moses in a dream who declared that he was a prophet. He was immediately imprisoned for blasphemy.

As a matter of principle, we are opposed to the death penalty <sup>8</sup>, and we are all the more repulsed by this outdated indictment of someone whose discernment and ability to defend himself are impaired by a mental illness. In a difficult and dangerous context because of the hysteria of many extremists in the area, our lawyer friends courageously volunteered to defend the accused in court.

The experience we have gained in the last four years in defending seventeen people accused of blasphemy facing the death penalty may mean that we will have to strengthen this aspect of our work in the near future to save lives. Readers of this report who are able to assist us in this specific action (documentation, methodology, financial resources, other) are thanked in advance

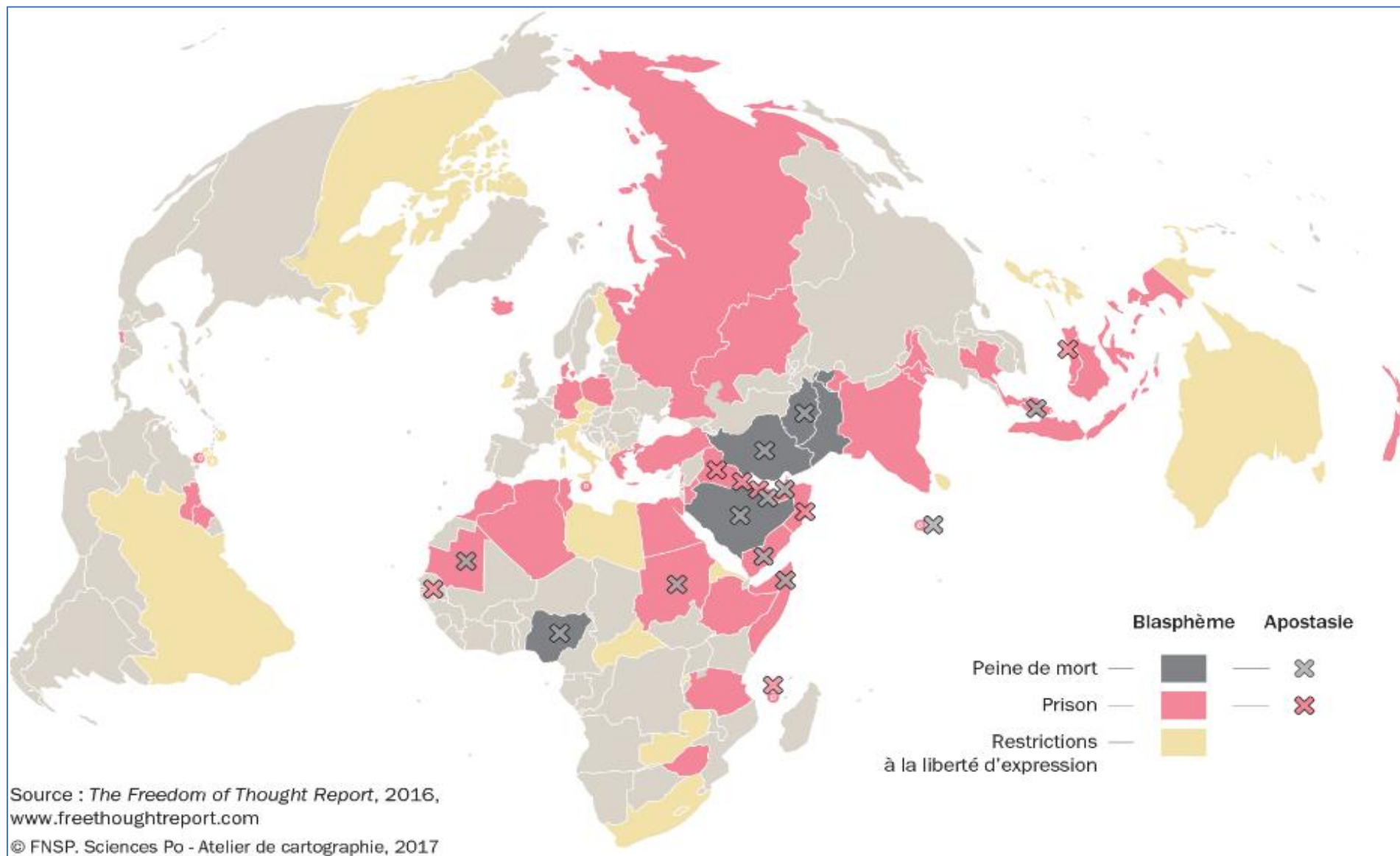
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<sup>6</sup> Larousse : Parole ou discours qui outrage la divinité, la religion ou ce qui est considéré comme respectable ou sacré. (Le blasphème est à distinguer du sacrilège : le premier consiste en paroles, le second en actes.)

<sup>7</sup> In dark grey on the following map

<sup>8</sup> Vivere has been a member of the 'World Coalition against the Death Penalty' since 2016

## Penalties in countries with anti-blasphemy legislation



## The various forms of support that Vivere provides to its partners in the countries of work

Always with the exclusive objective of rescuing, assisting and protecting victims of violence in all its forms, here is a simple summary of what our movement implements with its partners in the field. In a way, it is 'tailor-made' according to the specific needs expressed by our colleagues acting in the field and that we verify & support by regular missions on the spot<sup>9</sup>.

Form of support	Examples among others
1. Financial	In almost all cases, with some exceptions, however
2. Action design/strategy	Fight against human trafficking: six countries concerned
3. Approaches to civil or military authorities	South Kivu, with partner UCPDHO
4. Monitoring and evaluation tools, guidelines, etc.	Gulf Region with partner Crises Center
5. Fundraising with other donors 10	D.R. Congo: several partners supported
6. Availability of legal, technical or other documentation to support an action	Pakistan, for lawyers active in the legal defense of minors facing the death penalty
7. Promotion / liaison with other partners in the North or South	Syria, in favor of the local team 'Vivere-Syria'
8. Alerts to be disseminated and/or relayed at the international level	Amnesty International, Belgian section
9. Joint press conferences	Ukraine with partner 'Avenir'
10. Safeguarding threatened activists	DR Congo with partner ACMEJ and Protection-Solidarity

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<sup>9</sup> In 2024 the following missions were carried out: , Moldova & Ukraine and Transnistria in May, Pakistan and the Persian Gulf in June, Syria in July, Burundi and DR Congo in October and then Transnistria again at the end of October.

<sup>10</sup> Some institutions do not directly subsidize field organizations but only through a Swiss entity that agrees to give a moral guarantee in support of the request coming from the field. On a few occasions in the past we have rendered a similar service to our partners (Uzbekistan, Ukraine, DRC in particular), by acting as intermediary / guarantor with funding agencies. For us it represents of course additional working hours because we only guarantee requests verified as serious and properly documented. But it is a valuable service, and appreciated by the partners.



## Burundi

### Situation

- 27834 km2, 11 865 821 inhabitants in 2020 (426 inhabitants/km2), 45% of whom are under 15 years old.
  - 90% of the economy is agricultural.
  - 75% of Burundi's population will be living below the poverty line in 2020 (World Bank estimate).
- Economically poor country among the poorest.
- Strong patriarchal society.
  - Inter-ethnic massacres (1969, 1988), genocide (1972-1973), civil war (1993-2005)
  - Hundreds of thousands of deaths and massive displacement of population within the country and to countries bordering Burundi.
  - Since 2005, the war is over. But its consequences are numerous and palpable on all levels.



### Target population identified with our partner SFBSP-Burundi 'Association for Women's Rights' Particularly vulnerable female sex workers (SW)

- victims of police violence for illegal prostitution
- imprisoned without trial
- victims of violence from clients not wanting to pay
- victims of violence from any citizen wanting to punish sex workers citing morality and tradition

Objectives	Outcomes 2024
Request from sex workers (SWs): financial support to develop income-generating micro-projects that can enable SWs to "change their lives".	<p>Testimony of a former sex worker: 'I am a widow and live alone with my children. I have been able to stop working in the sex trade because now, with the help of SFBSP and Vivere, I can pay for my children's schooling, my rent and other expenses.'</p> <p>A 4<sup>th</sup> group of 10 SW has been selected to take part in the project in 2025.</p> <p>This year, we have also been working to facilitate 20 children in obtaining official civil status. This gives them the right to free health care, school registration, and fundamental rights previously denied them because they are illegitimate ('father unknown').</p>



*In Burundi, to be denounced by your husband is to bear the seal of shame. Vona found herself without a roof over her head, without money, without a field to grow crops: she was totally destitute. All she had left was her children who she had to feed. So she turned to prostitution. Prostitution is illegal in Burundi. By turning to prostitution, Vona has been exposed to: violence and being beaten to death with 'defence of morals' being used as an excuse; clients torturing her, rape, sexually transmitted diseases, imprisonment, sometimes "for life" because these cases are rarely judged and the women can languish indefinitely in prison.*

At a 'general assembly' held in Bujumbura by our partner on the 15 October 2024, the sex workers evaluated the 3 years that the project has been running and worked with us to develop criteria for refocusing the project in 2025 and select the ten new beneficiaries from their group. These ten people will receive training and equipment to enable each of them to start a professional activity, aiming at a return to a decent life.



## Democratic Republic of Congo, South and North Kivu

### Situation

In our opinion, the main factors of destabilization preventing a durable peace in the Kivu region are:

- Numerous discredited leaders who have escaped justice and acted with impunity despite incredible corruption and involvement in blood crimes.
- Arms sales to illegal gangs & militias
- Greed for mineral and natural resources of the region, which are regularly looted by ruthless national and foreign forces
- The separatist politics of any number of factions spurred on by the afore-mentioned factors.
- The porous borders allowing foreign armed gangs to wreak havoc on Congolese soil
- The so-called effectiveness, often insignificant, of the presence of 17,000 MONUSCO peacekeepers, which is a result of the failure of the United Nations in this part of the country.



Objectives	Outcomes 2024
<p>1 Intensify the fight against impunity by allowing the military prosecutor's office to sit "in the bush" in order to investigate and grant judgement in cases of indictment of soldiers or militiamen suspected of crimes against citizens, (murder, rape or sexual violence, torture, physical abuse, other inhumane and degrading acts).</p> <p>- Local partners in South Kivu: Military tribunal and UCPDHO</p> <p>- In North Kivu: Association Protection and Solidarity</p>	<p>Three mobile courts were held in Kavimvira in January, Lubarika in January and then in Idjwi in October during which nine crimes were judged. The 41 operations<sup>11</sup> held since 2006 aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- bring to trial suspects of blood crimes or other serious offences</li> <li>- give food for thought to criminals still at large, as well as those who would be tempted to commit future abuses</li> <li>- prove to the population of the territories of Fizi and Uvira that justice is finally at hand and to spread awareness of the man-made suffering that has been endured.</li> </ul> <p>On 7 October in Goma, we proceeded with the fourth compensation of ten victims whose right to compensation had been violated. The following page explains the meaning of this innovative operation.</p> <p>In North Kivu Vivere supports two lines of work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School rehabilitation of 10 underage rape victims on the one hand, and</li> <li>- Legal defense of 15 victims of sexual violence on the other hand</li> </ul>
<p>2 Monitoring and alerts on blood crimes, medical assistance to victims.</p> <p>Long-term assistance to elderly people in total deprivation.</p> <p>Local Partner: ACMEJ * (see page 14)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-12 civilian victims of assaults by armed men received medical attention.</li> <li>-1 activist threatened with death by the militia they denounced were taken to safety.</li> <li>-Vivere is providing communication and transportation support to the ACMEJ, which conducts surveys over vast areas of the territory.</li> <li>-9 abandoned and homeless elderly people are now protected in Katogota</li> </ul>
<p>3 Support for young girls who have dropped out of school as a result of war.</p> <p>Local partner: FEDA, Kazimia</p>	<p>Payment of school fees (primary and secondary) for 11 orphan teenage girls, including several teenage mothers. Two other students are supported in a vocational school in Baraka.</p>

<sup>11</sup> A capitalisation document was drawn up by Lea Ruiz, with a transversal analysis of all these operations. Available upon request.

## Democratic Republic of Congo, South and North Kivu (suite)

*Excerpts from our speech at the 4th compensation operation for ten victims whose right to compensation had been violated (Goma on 7/10/2024):*

We have been thinking of ways to develop this project for more than three years-or rather, more than sixteen years since the first Mobile Court was held in Baraka from the 22 - 25 December 2006, presided over by Lieutenant Magistrat Modeste KILANDALA.

These Courts ruled on a total of 206 complaints brought before the Tribunal. Two hundred and six defendants for blood crimes (assassination, murder or homicide), rape of adult women and minor girls, criminal violence, armed robbery, extortion and other offences punishable by law, appeared before the Tribunal. How many of them could have escaped prosecution if the courageous actors of the Tribunal and those of civil society, if the valiant lawyers, if the courageous victims called to the bar, if this group of brave citizens had not mobilised, against all odds, to ensure that justice was done?

The 41 Mobile Courts took place for the most part in the bush, with the most basic logistics, without 'per diems' or generous benefits, and without any comfort for the participants, sometimes in high-risk military zones. It took courage for each and every one of those who took part. This collective courage in the itinerancy of the Tribunal allowed the hearings to be held in the open air, in the presence of a large audience, as close as possible to the localities where the crimes had been committed, in full view of the inhabitants who were able to witness them and who had had to suffer the fear of the ill-intentioned man-at-arms. It should also be noted that in the interests of fairness, Vivere and our partners have systematically provided lawyers for both the victims/civil parties and the defendants so that the right to a defence could be properly guaranteed.

These trials have involved more than two hundred victims, including those who survived the attacks. Those who were murdered or shot were represented by their respective families.

To our knowledge, none of the victims recognised as such by the Tribunal received any compensation for the harm they suffered, not one dollar, not one franc. One thing that is certainly precious is that the judges recognise the status of victim to the person who suffered a criminal attack. This recognition can be of singular importance for his or her honour, dignity and reputation, even if it is purely moral. But something else is the absence of financial or material reparation. The victim's life has been robbed, his or her destiny has been altered, and his or her physical and mental capacities may have been severely weakened. Some victims of sexual violence have been denounced and ostracized from their community; their children have certainly suffered permanently. As for the child born of a rape, who will protect him or her, respect him or her, and ensure that he or she has a life worthy of the name? The same questions apply to the orphans of a father or mother who have fallen victim to a murderer. The person responsible for this sudden misery is sentenced to compensate his victim, but more often than not he will escape this obligation. The court decision could not be executed in full. The victim will be left behind indefinitely. This is intolerable, or at least it should be.

This process that we follow is not exemplary in any way, either in terms of those who benefit or the amount of aid they receive. It in no way exonerates the convicts, it does not lessen prejudice, it does not absolve people of their responsibilities. If the State or International Community



provided some kind of recourse to the victims of the cruel crimes committed by soldiers or uniformed representatives of law and order, then we would not need to do this.

Today's process is aimed at ten people for whom the court have ruled in their favour, but who still have received no compensation. While saluting their courage, Vivere and our partners can only offer the bare minimum to help them get through this ordeal.

Finally, today's process is a reminder that in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo, tens of thousands of victims of crimes recorded by the military and civil courts are still suffering from the total absence of financial or material reparation, which they may feel is a denial of justice.

"Let everyone know and wake up! "

Vivere



Victim compensated in the form of the work tool she has chosen (photo has been published with her consent)

## Democratic Republic of Congo, South and North Kivu (continued)

\* Small presentation note of our partner "Association Against Evil and for the Supervision of Youth and Human Rights" (ACMEJ):

Most people of ACMEJ are very brave, it is in the genes of this small organization. This is one of the reasons why *Vivere's* support has been continuously ensured since December 2005. In summary:

- Renewal with \$ 500 of a permanent fund for the emergency care of poor civilians who have been victims of violence by armed men.
- Assistance for the fuel of two motorcycles (one of which was purchased from our funds) carrying the investigators.
- Occasionally: financing special projects such as the one assisting 50 orphans of the Mutarule massacre for a year. We also participate in the individual rehabilitation of seriously injured civilians who are left with a severe handicap.
- Assistance to widows & children of murdered ACMEJ activists (Toto Kaligito, Akili Bigaya and last year Aimable Masumbuko Birindwa).
- Phones and laptops, cameras: every year Mike brings them some second-hand ones among those given free to *Vivere*.
- Once a year: a small sum to participate towards the running costs of the ACMEJ, or as incentive bonus to activists who are all volunteers.
- Methodological support for management (accounting, drafting projects, setting measurable indicators, etc.)

Although ACMEJ is definitely brave and persistent, it is also quite simple (in the sense of not being manipulative) when it comes to ingratiating themselves with humanitarian elites and donors. This is why ACMEJ remains and will probably remain a very small grassroots organization. One of the kind *Vivere* particularly appreciates, who picks up the wounded on the ground and makes sure that he/she will be treated, who, in the face of evil, will investigate crimes and denounce them publicly.

(photos *Vivere*)



ACMEJ activists investigating in a village which suffered a massacre



Mother & daughter, injured during an assault, treated by ACMEJ



Eric Muvomo, Coordinator of ACMEJ



## Democratic R. Congo, South and North Kivu

(photos © Vivere)



*A protected elderly person in South Kivu*



*Orphans of Kazimia whose school réinsertion is ensured*



*Mobile Court in Idjwi 2024*

# Syria

## Situation

*“The destruction endured by the Syrian people is so vast and so deadly that it has few equivalents in modern history,” declared the UN Secretary-General in a statement released in March 2022. “There must be no impunity.”<sup>12</sup> In 2024, the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator reiterated that Syria remained one of the world’s largest humanitarian crises, with 17 million people — more than 70% of the population — in need of assistance. Over seven million people remain internally displaced, millions more live as refugees, and nearly 13 million face acute food insecurity.*

*In October 2024, the UNHCR reported that Syrians were fleeing bombings in Lebanon — returning to the very country they once fled. More than 250,000 individuals have crossed back into Syria since the escalation of conflict in Lebanon began. Seventy percent of them are Syrians who had previously sought refuge in Lebanon.<sup>13</sup>*

*On December 8, during a live national broadcast on Syrian television, opposition forces claimed to have brought an end to the regime of President Bashar al-Assad and announced the release of political prisoners<sup>14</sup>. Amnesty International called on the opposition to break with the violence of the past. “After more than 50 years of brutality and repression, the Syrian people finally have a chance to live without fear and with respect for their rights,” stated Secretary General Agnès Callamard.<sup>15</sup> The organization’s Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa added: “... after decades of violent oppression, injustice, and impunity, Syrians are seeing a glimmer of hope for justice.”<sup>16</sup>*

*The UN Special Envoy for Syria expressed cautious optimism, noting that the country now has a genuine opportunity to move toward peace, economic stability, inclusive growth, accountability, and justice. However, he also warned that many remain deeply concerned about the future: “I fear that if the situation is not properly managed — both by Syrians and the international community — a further deterioration remains possible.”<sup>17</sup>*

*Human Rights Watch reported similar concerns: fear remains palpable, particularly among minority communities and those at risk of reprisals. Many people feel a profound sense of uncertainty about what lies ahead<sup>18</sup>*

*In the midst of this extreme situation, a small local team of volunteers — who we knew and worked with before the war, lost contact with but then later reconnected with in 2014 — continues to carry out their vital work as far as they are able (For safety reasons, we must limit details about the individuals involved and the locations where this work is carried out.)*



<sup>12</sup> <https://news.un.org/fr/story/2022/03/1116162>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/fr/actualites/articles-et-reportages/les-syriens-fuient-les-bombardements-au-liban-pour-se-refugier>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/8/opposition-fighters-take-syrian-capital-damascus>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/latest/news/2024/12/syria-historic-opportunity-to-end-and-redress-decades-of-grave-human-rights-violations-under-president-assad-must-be-seized/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/latest/news/2024/12/syria-preserve-evidence-of-mass->

<sup>17</sup> <https://news.un.org/fr/story/2024/12/1151506>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/fr/news/2025/02/11/lettre-aux-etats-membres-de-lue-dans-la-perspective-de-la-conference-internationale>



Syria (continued)

Objectives	Outcomes 2024
<p>1. <b>Nutritional support for infants</b> whose mothers, due to lack of resources, are unable to breastfeed or can do so only minimally.</p> <p>2. Contribution toward the team’s communication and transportation costs.</p>	<p>The daily lives of families supported by Vivere-Syria team remain extremely fragile in this context of violence and insecurity. The soaring cost of food continues to have a major impact; many families survive only thanks to funds sent by relatives living abroad. Added to this is the lack of accessible and stable housing, particularly for displaced families who have no social or family networks to rely on. The arrival of new internally displaced people, along with the gradual return of families originally from the area, has only intensified the already critical housing crisis. The city was three-quarters destroyed during the years of war. Running water and electricity are only intermittently available.</p> <p>At the beginning of 2024, one US dollar was worth 14,500 Syrian pounds (LS). Monthly support per child or family has increased from 30,000 to 150,000 LS (about 11 USD), due to ongoing currency devaluation and thanks to the support of the Sentinelles Foundation. Though modest, this amount is considered vital by the families, providing a minimum level of nutritional security for their children. Many fathers, now working as porters, earn less than 300,000 LS per month.</p> <p>In 2024, 216 children received milk supplements — 184 of them for the first time. In total, 440 acts of support were provided to these children and their families <sup>19</sup>. Since the beginning of our involvement and up to December 31, 2024, this work has enabled us to support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 1800 newborns with vital needs (1857 as of the end of March 2025).</li><li>- 92 young mothers who had difficult childbirths,</li><li>- 13 women who were unjustly imprisoned and later released</li><li>- And to strengthen the logistics of our team on the ground — whose courage remains undiminished</li></ul>



<sup>19</sup> On average 35 babies each month: 2/5 new cases, 3/5 continued support from the previous month

## Syria (continued)

During a visit to the country last July, we had the opportunity to gather one evening with the volunteers of the “Vivere-Syria” team. Despite the dangers and uncertainties inherent in any movement within this conflict zone, these brave individuals continue, day after day — and often even at night — to reach out to families in need of our support. They travel long distances, overcoming many obstacles, to check on living conditions, identify newborns in need of nutritional supplements, and deliver essential aid.

Muslims of various denominations and Christians work side by side in this group — in solidarity, and with trust. May tomorrow’s Syria be rebuilt with the same spirit of harmony among its communities.



# Colombia

## Situation

The peace agreement that ended more than half a century of armed conflict — a war that left hundreds of thousands dead or missing and millions internally displaced — was signed in 2016. However, the process continues to face major challenges, including a reshaping of the landscape of violence at the territorial level, with the emergence of new armed groups and the entrenchment of others that threaten the sustainability of peace. Human rights defenders and other activists continue to face threats and the risk of violence (Human Rights Watch.<sup>20</sup>

In January 2024, the UN Secretary-General's report acknowledged Colombia's determination to consolidate peace and noted a reduction in armed clashes and civilian casualties. It also called for the urgent implementation of key security mechanisms.<sup>21</sup> The UN Security Council welcomed the Colombian government's measures to broaden the reach of peace and to continue the full implementation of the agreement, and it praised President Petro's participation in the National Commission on Security Guarantees. Nevertheless, it also expressed deep concern about ongoing violence and insecurity affecting the population — particularly in rural areas — manifested in targeted killings of former combatants, leaders of Indigenous movements, and civil society figures, including women...<sup>22</sup>

Despite these setbacks, "Colombia and Colombians have not given up on peace," the Minister of Foreign Affairs affirmed before the Security Council, highlighting recent progress, including the launch of a rapid action plan for implementing the final agreement...<sup>23</sup>

The government has also undertaken land redistribution efforts benefiting farming families, aimed at reducing land inequality and promoting rural justice (Ministry of Agriculture, 2024). These initiatives are considered essential for Colombia's economic and social development (National Government, 2024).

In Magangué (Bolívar), Atucsara continues its work with displaced populations. This is one of the regions hardest hit by armed conflict — a place that has received many of the forcibly displaced and bears a long-standing debt in terms of reparations to victims. The new municipal administration, elected in 2023, has focused its efforts on improving basic infrastructure, especially roads and public services. Combating corruption and ensuring transparent resource management are top priorities.

The local economy is gradually recovering and adapting to the climate and social challenges facing the region. Agriculture and fishing — its main economic drivers — have been severely affected by floods, reducing productivity and impacting the incomes of many families. The city also faces challenges such as socio-economic inequality, the informal economy, and limited access to essential services. In response, the community has increased its involvement in social movements, with young people playing a leading role in initiatives to address issues like unemployment and violence. Nevertheless, insecurity — driven by illicit activities and the presence of armed groups — continues to undermine the quality of life (El Heraldó). Vivere has supported the work of Atucsara since 1994 This project, led with the collaboration of partner organization CATLEYA — aims to foster autonomy and sustainable development in these communities.



<sup>20</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/fr/ameriques/colombie>

<sup>21</sup> <https://news.un.org/es/story/2024/01/1527012> <https://news.un.org/es/story/2024/02/1527982>

<sup>22</sup> <https://press.un.org/fr/2024/sc15858.doc.htm>

<sup>23</sup> <https://press.un.org/fr/2024/sc15858.doc.htm>



# Colombie (continued)

Objectives	Outcome 2024
<p><b>Food security and educational support</b> for children in Piñalito and Santa Lucía, Magangué, Bolívar.</p> <p><b>Communities of Piñalito and Santa Lucía (Magangué)</b></p> <p><b>Partner: Atucsara</b>  <a href="https://atucsara.org">https://atucsara.org</a></p>	<p>As part of Atucsara’s broader project in the communities of Magangué, Vivere’s support provides children with nutritional with food supplements during their educational support sessions. A needs assessment conducted in the communities of Santa Lucía and Piñalito helped identify the children most in need of educational and nutritional assistance. The demand exceeded initial expectations (15 children per community), resulting in 25 participants in Santa Lucía and 17 in Piñalito. Activities are held in spaces provided by the community or by grassroots promoters, and snacks are prepared and distributed with the support of women from both communities.</p> <p>Santa Lucía has been severely affected by riverbank erosion along the Magdalena River, which has destroyed over 200 homes in recent months in the commune. This natural disaster has left many families not only without homes but also without but also without the tools they need to work, worsening the region’s economic and social hardship sometimes even forcing them to leave the area. Residents now face the difficult task of rebuilding their lives and livelihoods.</p> <p>This situation has impacted school attendance for some children, who have had to remain at home to support their families. Other parents have chosen to send their children to the educational support sessions viewing them as safe spaces away from potential danger.</p> <p>In Piñalito, several children have shown low motivation to learn, prioritizing work to help support their households. To address this, the team organized activities in informal settings, such as the schoolyard, which helped build links eithbuild trust with the children and gradually sparked their interest in learning.</p> <p>Despite the challenges, the project has strengthened over time. Monthly follow-ups with the beneficiaries showed progress — based progress on comparisons of school reports before and after inclusion in the program — as well as improvements in the children's in overall well-being. In terms of results, 60% of the students improved their reading and writing skills, while 50% made progress in improved in basic maths. Moreover, average participation in sessions has remained at 90%, reflecting the strong commitment of both the children and their families. The daily snack has proven essential, given the food insecurity many children face at home. The impact is also seen in project has resulted in the creation of a safe and supportive space for vulnerable families, reaffirming its program’s importance in promoting education and community well-being.</p>
	 

@ Atucsara

Santa Lucia

## Field of work: Prevention of and fight against human trafficking, assistance to victims

### Situation 2024

In 2019, the International Labour Organization estimates that some 40.3 million people were victims of modern slavery. The billions of revenues generated by this human exploitation fuel, among other things, armed conflict and finance violent extremism.

The UN estimates that human trafficking brings in some US\$150.2 billion a year to the mafias involved.<sup>24</sup>

### Objectives

Legal instruments are not lacking however to block the road to human trafficking:

1. United Nations Conventions and Declarations, including Articles 5 and 6 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
2. Articles 4 and 5 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights
3. Articles 1 and 2 of the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, 1949
4. Articles 34 and 35 of the 1989 International Convention on the Rights of the Child
5. The Additional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children<sup>25</sup>, Palermo Protocol of 15 November 2000
6. Strategic Objective D.3 of the Platform for Action and the Beijing Declaration of 1995
7. The Council of Europe recommendations in this field, in particular Recommendation No. R (2000) 11 7 on combating trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation, Recommendation No. R (2002) 5 8 on the protection of women against violence and Recommendation 1545 (2002) 9 on a Campaign against Trafficking in Women,
8. The IOM Brussels Declaration on the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Human Beings, especially its points 7 and 8,10
9. OSCE Ministers' Decision No. 1, meeting in Vienna in 2000, to strengthen the OSCE's efforts to combat trafficking in human beings
10. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union 12, and in particular Articles 5, 4, 21 and 23
11. European Council Framework Decision of 19 July 2002 on combating trafficking in human beings

As explained in the following pages *Vivere* is at work in three countries-source of traffic: Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Moldova -including Transnistria, and two destination countries in the Persian Gulf region- we do not designate them here for security reasons<sup>26</sup>

As detailed in the following pages we act with the goals of:

- Strengthening the legal prohibition of trafficking in human beings
- Reinforcing the sanctions against all the backers and accomplices of the traffic
- Protecting and assisting victims of trafficking, both in the country where they were deported and in the country of origin where they are repatriated
- Strengthening preventive activities, especially through education and awareness-raising of young people and orphans potentially targeted by trafficking

<sup>24</sup> Source: P. Bessler, 'Forced Labour and Human Trafficking: Estimating the Profits', ILO Working Paper (Geneva)

<sup>25</sup> This convention has 189 States parties!

<sup>26</sup> At the request of and with the support from two institutions that co-financed this program, all related activities were evaluated by an external organization, 'Strategos', from January to May 2019. The conclusions were mostly positive, and useful recommendations are gradually being implemented.



## Combating Impunity

Summary of legal proceedings initiated in respective courts to prosecute human traffickers and their accomplices

	Partner Organisation	Number of trials	Number of victims involved
Ukraine	Avenir	16	64
Ukraine	Lawyer Gennady Gerasimenko	44	200
Uzbekistan	Istiqbolli Avlod	98	283
Transnistria	Women's Initiative	2	2
Belarussia	Via CC	3	3
Kyrgyzstan	Via CC	1	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>164 trials (including 7 in 2024)</b>	<b>553 victims (including 16 in 2024)</b>

According to a report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) <sup>27</sup>, many countries are failing to punish human traffickers who are involved in a wide range of criminal activities from sexual exploitation to organ harvesting. Trafficking remains largely unpunished throughout the world. While it involves men, women and children, 70% of the victims are female. "Traffickers are hardly likely to be brought to justice," the document adds. It calls for increased international cooperation to prosecute criminal networks.

Compiling data up to the year 2016, the report notes that by that date there have never been so many countries in situations of armed conflict in the last 30 years. The existence of armed conflict "increases the risk of human trafficking". Conflicts are often accompanied by the failure of the authorities, forced displacement of populations, the breakdown of family structures and economic insecurity.

Trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation is by far the most common, accounting for 59% of identified victims in 2016. Forced labour is the second most common form of trafficking, accounting for a third of the victims covered by the data. Refugee camps are prime locations for traffickers who recruit victims "with false promises of money and/or transport to safer places.

<sup>27</sup> Le Monde : <https://www.24heures.ch/monde/traite-humaine-reste-largement-impunie/story/11408316>

## Moldova and Pridnestrovia <sup>28</sup>

### Situation 2024

The socio-economical context of Moldova is one of the most depressed in Europe. The war in the east of neighbouring Ukraine has worsened insecurity and instability, aggravating attempts at expatriation at any cost. At the same time, the fragmentation of the country after the 1992 war<sup>29</sup> leaves both Moldova and Pridnestrovia with constant tensions at their borders, deep fractures within the population and antagonisms that hinder human development on both sides.

Poverty has driven the economically active population to seek employment opportunities abroad. Every year thousands of people leave Moldova for a few years or for temporary work. Around 23.5 % of GDP comes from money transfers from migrants abroad. As a result of this migration, thousands of children find themselves deprived of parental affection and adequate supervision. One of the dangers for young people leaving the country in search of a job, especially for illegal emigrants, is to be caught by human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, sexual exploitation, or for forced begging.

Alcoholism and domestic violence wreak havoc. Abuse suffered by women and children contributes to pushing the most vulnerable into the nets of traffickers.

On top of this, the war which broke out in Ukraine in February 2022 has forced hundreds of thousands of refugees to flee to Moldavia and tens of thousands to Pridnestrovia.



Objectives	Outcomes 2024
Emergency assistance, socio-professional reintegration, psychological and / or legal assistance to victims of trafficking Local partners: Women's Initiative in Pridnestrovia	Pridnestrovia: our partner reports 40 victims, or potential victims, who were assisted during the year. victims are supported in the medium term.
Soutien à des personnes âgées & à des victimes de violence domestique. Partenaire local : Compasiune au centre de la Moldavie	Project re-started in 2024 ensuring support to 72 vulnerable people.
Providing assistance to the most vulnerable Ukranian refugees. Same partner organisation as the one mentioned above.	122 refugees helped in Pridnestrovia

<sup>28</sup> Pridnestrovia, officially the Dniester Moldavian Republic, is a non-internationally recognized State with a slavic-speaking majority and a communist government that seceded from Moldova in 1991 during its independence from the Soviet Union (in which the Dniester Moldavian Republic wished to remain).

<sup>29</sup> War which has caused 3,500 deaths and as many wounded



## Moldavie et Pridnestrovia (continued)



*Victims and psychologists sessions of de-traumatization*



Pridnestrovia

Photo of Olga (not her real name) and her son supported by our team in

# Ukraine

## Situation au 31-12-2024

18 March 2014                      Incorporation of Crimea to Russia  
6 April 2014                      Beginning of Donbass War  
24 February 2022                Russian army invaded several regions in the north, south and east of the country

Adding to the general precariousness and unemployment already prevailing before the beginning of the events, this war - which jeopardizes the social economy of the whole country - forces more than 17 million of additional people to seek to migrate, exposing themselves to the risks of being abused and exploited by the traffickers' mafias.

The regions controlled by the self-proclaimed republics of Lugansk and Donetsk are particularly vulnerable to repression and crime.

The media has been providing daily coverage of this conflict, the consequences of which are simply terrifying. See the article : The dreadful cost of one year of war in Ukraine <sup>30</sup>.



Objectives	Outcomes 2024
<p>Direct assistance to trafficking victims</p> <p>. Fight against impunity by prosecuting recruiters &amp; traffickers in the courts of Ukraine</p> <p>. Prevention of trafficking with orphans and vulnerable families.</p> <p>. Assistance aux réfugiés et aux déplacés par la guerre.</p> <p>. Défense légale de victimes de crimes de guerre.</p> <p>. Partners: Avenir Association in the west of the country (Jytomyr), in Montenegro and Polonia, and our independent lawyer Gennady Gerasimenko in the east (Kharkiv).</p>	<p>Combined with the results of previous years we achieved the following:</p> <p>. 64 trafficking victims received legal assistance during 16 trials held in the Zhytomyr region.</p> <p>. 200 victims received legal assistance during 44 trials held in the East</p> <p>In almost all the trials we obtained the conviction of criminals with significant deprivation of liberty sentences.</p> <p>In 2024, 8 victims of trafficking were repatriated from the country of exploitation.</p> <p>. The ass. Avenir organised dozens of trafficking prevention sessions during which several thousand citizens received information to protect them from the risk of being trafficked.</p> <p>At the end of the year, Vivere decided to support Avenir for the sixth time in its project, Avenir in its program 'Prevention of trafficking by assisting families at risk due to lack of resources, presence of orphans, etc.' In total, 556 young people and adults have been helped by this project this year.</p> <p>. Approximately 15 displaced people have been helped in Kharkiv. The association 'Avenir' has also provided various types of assistance to 345 refugees in the area around Krakow, Poland 330 refugees in Bar, Montenegro.</p> <p>- 18 victims of war crimes have also been supported through legal proceedings</p>

<sup>30</sup> <https://unric.org/fr/onu-et-la-guerre-en-ukraine-les-principales-informations/>

## Ukraine (continued)



Gennady talking to a repatriated trafficking victim



Victims of trafficking supported in their legal action



Enquêteurs de la brigade 'crimes de guerre'



Displaced people who have fled the fighting, receiving assistance



Ukraine (continued)  
Assisted refugees in Poland



And in Pridnestrovia

Assisted refugees in Montenegro



(@ Vivere



# Uzbekistan

**Situation**

*"The human rights situation remains a concern in Uzbekistan. Progress has been made since 2008 in some areas, including the abolition of the death penalty, the introduction of habeas corpus in legislation, and 2013 marked a significant improvement in child labour during the cotton harvest. In 2013, Uzbekistan committed to implement 145 of the 183 recommendations made to the country by the universal periodic review done within the framework of the Human Rights Committee in Geneva: the EU continues to voice its concerns and expectations, including the release of all human rights defenders and prisoners of conscience held in detention, the free activities of NGOs, the guarantee of freedom of expression and religion and freedom of the media. "* (excerpt from 'France Diplomatie')

Facing high unemployment and a minimalist wage policy, thousands of Uzbeks seek to migrate to find a job.  
This year 11,5 % of the victims of trafficking that we repatriate from the Persian Gulf are from Uzbekistan.



Objectives	Outcomes 2024
<div><div>. Support the follow-up service given to victims once they have returned to their country</div><div>. Legal assistance to victims who have the courage to lodge a complaint against the perpetrator of the crime.</div><div>- Local partner: Istiqbolli Avlod Association</div></div>	<div><div>. 28 Uzbek victims were repatriated during the year.</div><div>. Psychological support to victims at the stages of identification, repatriation, inquiry and trial: 14 victims have benefited from this new way of providing support. Countries where exploitation took place: Turkey, India, Malaysia, Uzbekistan, Emirates.</div></div>



Victim and her baby

# Persian Gulf

**Situation**

Several countries in this region are experiencing economic booms. This wealth encourages the greed of human traffickers who make these countries a favourite destination; moreover, they are a 'game of smoke and mirrors' for many of the candidates for migration.

Providing assistance to victims of human trafficking has many difficulties, but also two potential dangers:

- To be directly confronted with mafias who make exorbitant profits from this modern slavery. These people are ruthless killers.
- To arouse the wrath of the national authorities where exploitation is practiced, as they strive to present themselves to the world as irreproachable in this respect. Only one dignitary would need to be upset by being confronted with the harsh realities we are dealing with, and in a few moments we would be targeted, expelled, and a brutal end would be brought to our work.

This all goes to explain why we must deal with the authorities in the countries concerned and our partners with the utmost discretion if we are to be successful in our aim of liberating victims and repatriating them safely.

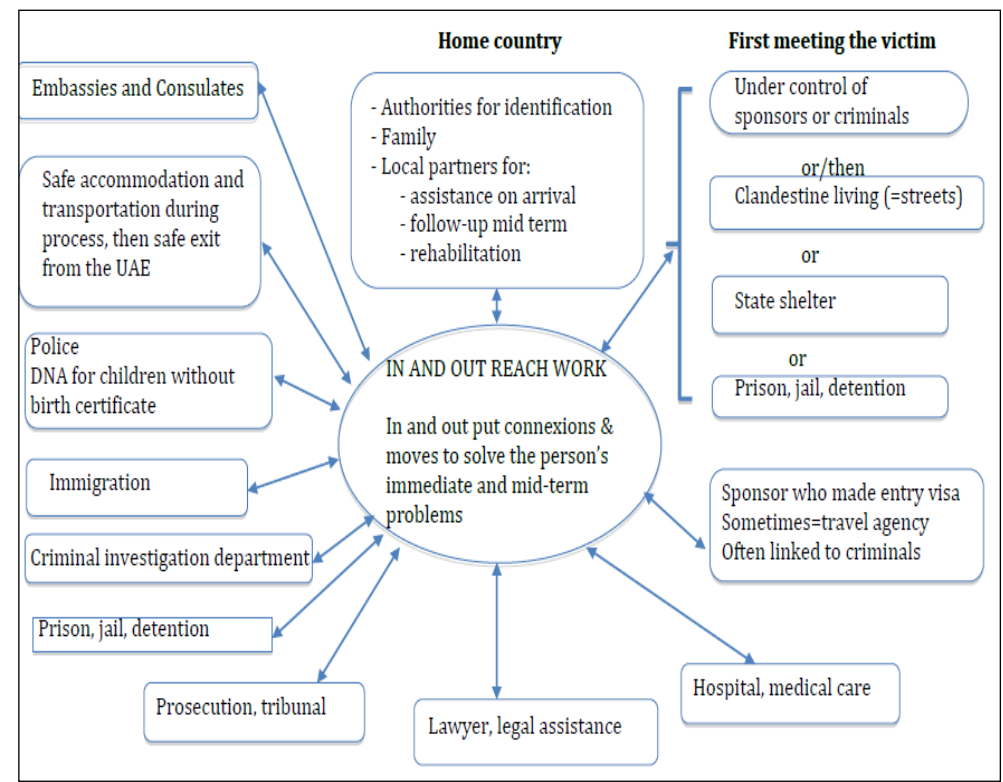


Objectives	Outcomes 2024
<p>. Reduce the threats and torments suffered by trafficked victims in the country of exploitation by repatriating them to their country of origin</p> <p>. Provide victims with assistance tailored to their problems: medical, legal, social. Both in the country of operation and once returned to their country of origin.</p> <p>. Strengthen an effective synergy with friendly organizations in the countries of origin so that a follow-up service is ensured for each repatriated victim.</p> <p>Local partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- our team constituted in 'Crisis center'</li><li>- regional delegations of the International Organization of Migration in the countries of origin.</li></ul>	<p>Since 2008, a small team of 4 people has been established on-site which works continuously to detect and help victims where they are hidden or in hiding.</p> <p>In 2024, this action provided direct and decisive relief to 243 victims from 31 different countries who were repatriated within an average period of less than two months after the first identification. Sexual exploitation remains the majority among the victims</p> <p>Most of the consulates in the CIS and African countries concerned have been very cooperative with us, facilitating the administrative procedures required for legal repatriation.</p> <p>The diagram on the next page shows the methodology we developed with the on-site team.</p>



# Persian Gulf

Intervention diagram for the identification, release, repatriation and follow-up service provided to victims of human beings trafficking



Victims of human trafficking awaiting repatriation  
(photo Istiqbolli Avlod)



## Campaign for the abolition of the death penalty and life imprisonment applicable to minors

### Situation

Initiated in May 2016, the campaign first established its goals and limitations:

1 - Obtain the abolition of the death penalty and life imprisonment for minors (at the time of the facts). The 13 states concerned by the death penalty (in their laws or practices) and the 68 states concerned by life imprisonment, have received a letter from *Vivere* asking them to validate or not, the information in our possession on their legislation. We received three answers. But the most important was to notify them of the existence of our movement and of its objective.

2 - Establish an international network of skills and references to support a relevant argument, specific for minors prosecuted or convicted, to develop the dissemination of these arguments in the international agenda. In addition, *Vivere* became a member of:

- the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty
- the 'Child Justice Advocacy Group' network which brings together international NGOs specializing in juvenile justice which, by integrating *Vivere*, have placed the abolition of the death penalty as a primary objective.

3 - Take into account individual situations likely to be supported on the legal level, but also by an international mobilization, in agreement with our partners on-site.

One of us went to Pakistan in April 2019 to adjust the foundations of the collaboration begun 2 years earlier. The on-site mission has been repeated every year since then.

Countries likely to apply the death penalty to children under 18



**Objective:** by 31 December 2022, the 13 countries whose legislation still provides for the death penalty and the 68 countries providing for life imprisonment for children in conflict with the law (under 18 at the time of the crime), have abolished related articles in their respective criminal laws, and have taken measures and provisions to verify their application throughout their jurisdiction. <sup>31</sup>

**Outcomes:** *Vivere* launched an international petition <sup>32</sup> addressed to the Human Rights Council to argue that the death penalty is still applicable for minors in a dozen countries. The latter, however, have ratified the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* which stipulates (Article 37) its absolute prohibition. By 31 December, the petition had acquired 13'737 signatures. *Vivere's* argument (available on this site) has been sent to numerous interlocutors and disseminated to several specialized institutions in the field of juvenile justice at the international level. In order to initiate programs in Iran and Nigeria identical to the one we are conducting in Pakistan (see next page), contacts have been made with individuals or associations specialised in the field of human rights. On all sides, the information we receive excludes us from currently making contact with people or NGOs on the spot in Iran, or even based abroad, for reasons of personal safety, given the geopolitical and repressive situation of the authorities in place. The contacts made in Nigeria have not yet been successful, given the guarantees that we demand from our partners. This action is taking place in Pakistan thanks to the financial contribution of the Fédération Vaudoise de Coopération (Fedevaco <sup>33</sup> since 2019), within the framework of a three-year agreement, for a sum of around CHF 40'000/year (€ 36'000). We would like to thank Fedevaco for this vital support for this program.

<sup>31</sup> The size and the modest resources of *Vivere* are obviously not enough to carry out, alone, an action of this scale. We call on the expertise and militant forces of as many organizations and qualified people as possible to share this fight.

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.change.org/p/conseil-des-droits-de-l-homme-des-nations-unies-abolition-de-la-peine-de-mort-applicable-aux-mineurs>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.fedevaco.ch/>

An overview of our actions in the country: interview with Bernard Boëton [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_l8I-uI3IF0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_l8I-uI3IF0)



# Pakistan

## Situation :

Pakistan is experiencing recurring political, military, and economic instability. To this are added deadly floods in 2022 and 2024, as well as extreme pollution peaks (Lahore). Human rights violations are regularly denounced.<sup>34</sup> The country is facing a wave of terrorist attacks<sup>35</sup>.

The country is ranked 129th out of 142 countries in the **2024 Rule of Law Index** by the **World Justice Project** (140th in terms of personal and property security)<sup>36</sup>. The **UN Human Rights Committee** examined Pakistan's human rights record in October in a context of “widespread violations,” according to **Amnesty International**.<sup>37</sup> The Speaker of the Punjab Assembly presented progress since 2017, but Committee experts raised concerns regarding restrictions on freedom of association, limitations imposed on the registration and activities of international NGOs. They also questioned the implementation of the **Juvenile Justice System Act (JJSA 2018)**, the death penalty for minors, the escalation of blasphemy-related violence across the country, and the use of blasphemy laws—coercive and vaguely worded to the detriment of the accused. In this climate, practicing as a lawyer remains dangerous: violence even occurs within courtrooms, where two lawyers were killed by a member of the elite forces<sup>38</sup>. Despite this, lawyers continue to mobilize in defense of human rights. Regarding the general situation of minors in conflict with the law, a significant part of our project is dedicated to advocating for compliance with the **JJSA 2018**. This law provides, among other things, for the exclusion of minors from detention in ordinary prisons.

The surveys that were carried out in the prisons in Sindh and Punjab found and counted the number of juveniles risking the DP (Death Penalty) or Life Imprisonment (LI)-serve as evidence to show that the law was being abused.

The **Human Rights Watch (HRW)** investigation<sup>39</sup> describes widespread deficiencies and a range of violations of prisoners' rights, symptomatic of a failing criminal justice system. These findings confirm those obtained during the surveys carried out as part of the project: prison overcrowding, breaches of the law, and unjustifiable delays in proceedings before formal charges are made. Due to these delays, many individuals remain in prison for years, even if they are eventually acquitted. These failings are especially serious in the context of juvenile justice.

The continuation of the project aims to strengthen the promotion and enforcement of the **Juvenile Justice System Act (JJSA 2018)** with the same sense of urgency: the law exists, but it must be implemented in accordance with international standards. Throughout 2024, **Vivere's work in Pakistan** follows the broad objectives set in previous years, respecting Pakistani juvenile justice law (JJSA 2018) and in the spirit of international standards for juvenile justice:

- monitoring individual cases,
- organisation of forums aimed at raising awareness and training legal staff,
- lobbying the public and the authorities to ensure fair legal proceedings and avoid the risk of death sentences or life imprisonment



<sup>34</sup><https://www.amnesty.org/fr/latest/news/2024/09/pakistan-the-new-peaceful-assembly-and-public-order-act-threatens-the-right-to-protest/> <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/pakistan/pakistan-monsoon-2024-flash-update-8-latest-monsoon-developments-and-response-efforts-09-september-2024>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/fr/statements-and-speeches/2024/10/comment-un-human-rights-office-spokesperson-thameen-al-kheetan>

<sup>36</sup><https://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/country/Pakistan>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/latest/news/2024/10/geneva-un-human-rights-committee-to-review-pakistans-human-rights-records-amid-rampant-rights-abuses/>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1840083> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2449917/lawyers-to-observe-strike-against-scs-ruling-on-military-trials>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/report/2023/03/29/nightmare-everyone/health-crisis-pakistans-prisons>

## Pakistan (continued)

The work that Vivere is carrying out in Pakistan has continued to improve and develop thanks to our partners: LAW in the Punjab with Mr Sarmad Ali, MRDO directed by Ms Saira Ahmed, in Sindh province and SANJOG with Ms Hafiza Tayyba Javaid, based in Lahore in the Punjab, via our legal contact and partner, Mr Waheed Ahmad. Since 2022 we have been helped by a new lawyer in the Punjab, Mr RAMIS, who has taken on individual cases.

### Individual Cases

These are mainly young suspects who have been locked up in preventative detention for murder, rape, various types of violence and more rarely , blasphemy etc. They face life imprisonment or the death penalty for these crimes if it is difficult to prove their age, or their age is questionable on the date that the crime was committed. This is despite the law stating that in the event of continued doubt as to the age of the defendant, the defendant should be given the benefit of the doubt (i.e a lighter sentence).

When our lawyers took on their cases, *practically not* one person was being legally represented. Sometimes minors under the age of 14 can be found in prisons, despite the fact that this is completely illegal.

Some minors have been held for a long time, even though by law there is a limit of 6 months detention, after which a minor should be released under caution. In several cases, minors are wrongly accused because of conflict or disputes between adults (easy to do since a minor cannot defend himself). Other cases are ‘sorted out’ by ‘finding a compromise’ between families, which normally means some kind of compensation, financial or otherwise. This kind of compromise can avoid a long and costly trial and is completely acceptable if the case is one of theft of a mobile phone, for example. However, if it is a case of rape by or of a minor, does any ‘compromise’ take into account the rights of the victim -who is unable to defend himself ?...

Potential cases of minors in need of legal aid from Vivere’s partners are identified during prison visits and inquiries carried out in situ. This is relatively easy to do, depending on the place, prison or state in question.

### Forums and Training

67 forums aimed at heightening awareness of the issues around justice for minors, and all those involved- judges, lawyers, prosecutors, social workers etc- have been organised since the start of the program (see previous annual reports). These forums are organised in the ‘Districts’ which are the administrative and judicial bodies at the most local level to the civil population.

### The case for advocacy:

#### At a provincial level:

- Press conferences have just been held to alert the public to the fact that the juvenile legal system is failing and to highlight the work being done by our local partners to try to bring about essential reforms to guarantee the physical and moral well-being of children who are deemed to be in conflict with the law.
- The ‘Charter of Demands’ has been sent to all those involved with and responsible for justice for minors in the two provinces of Punjab and Sindh.
- Lobbying the government on the transparency of any decisions made, especially where no decision has been reached. Letter to the government (Sindh Human Rights Commission) sent by MRDO requesting the release of minors.

#### At a national level:

- Our partners contact parliamentary commissions or members of parliament directly, whenever possible.

However, since Pakistan is a federation, the effective application of all federal laws depends ultimately on the goodwill of each individual state. Our ability to advocate is further complicated by the authorities passing ultimate responsibility onto others.

- Through audiovisual material, videos, TV spots

## Pakistan (continued)

Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces have signaled that they will set up a ‘Juvenile Justice Committee’ which will be in charge of evaluating the Juvenile Justice system and making recommendations to the legislators, but they are still to meet.

The Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) -LAW, publishes a newsletter every month that is set to a variety of people, forums, training workshops, authorities, media and other NGO.

### At an international level:

LAW sends out a newsletter to about 20 international organisations who are involved in Juvenile Justice (including the World Coalition, the Consortium for Street Children in the UK, the CURE International network, based in the USA, the Asia Network against the Death Penalty, the German Coalition against the Death Penalty, the office of the UN Secretary General and Penal Reforms UK. There are between 20 and 180 members in each institution. The newsletter is currently published in 2 languages. The written responses to the newsletter, all of which are recorded provide a lot of food for thought.

UN Council on Human Rights: Our partners helped formulate the texts sent by the civil society to the Council on Human Rights (Geneva) as part of The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) which is concerned with ‘examining each member state of the UN with regards to Human Rights but respecting a fixed and predictable time line’ Report examined in February 2023.

Objectives	Outcomes 2024
<p>To extend the scope of the program to at least 10 young people who risk the bleak prospect of the Death Penalty (DP) or Life Imprisonment (LI)</p> <p>Intensive training for legal professionals</p> <p>(In order to guarantee the frequency of fair trials and to avoid the risk of the DP or LP)</p> <p>Partners: Association L.A.W. (Punjab), MRDO (Sindh), SANJOG (Baluchistan and KPK) and several independent lawyers</p>	<p>The program is being implemented across four provinces—Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)—and includes the monitoring of individual cases, the organization of awareness forums for judicial personnel, and advocacy with the public and authorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Our Pakistani NGO partners—LAW (Legal Awareness Watch) in Punjab, MRDO (Marvi Rural Development Organization) in Sindh, and SANJOG in Baluchistan and KP—have continued to organize awareness and training sessions.</li> <li>- This year, 14 forums were held, including 4 two-day training sessions (3 in Punjab, 3 in Sindh, 3 in Baluchistan, and 5 in KP), with a total of 487 participants (including police officers, judges, lawyers, social workers, media representatives, etc.). Many of them discovered, often for the first time, tools and practices previously unknown to them that help ensure compliance with legal standards and sometimes improve or facilitate their work. Numerous press articles have reported on these sessions.</li> <li>- MRDO and LAW expanded their advocacy efforts through widely broadcast radio and TV programs, press conferences (one held in Sindh and one in Punjab), and information, education, and communication materials (posters displayed in courts, police stations, probation offices, and bar association offices). LAW continues publishing a monthly newsletter, distributed widely within Pakistan and internationally to partners.</li> </ul> <p>A preventive video is being produced by SANJOG and will be released in 2025.</p> <p>After eight months of in-depth preparation with our partner in Punjab, a theatre play was staged and performed in Lahore in May, denouncing common violations of minors' fundamental rights (<a href="#">link to article</a>).</p> <p>Performed in Urdu and subtitled in English, you can watch the 27-minute play at <a href="#">8-7-24.mp4</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A multidisciplinary network aimed at bringing together all professions involved in judicial procedures, along with NGOs, academic experts, and media, was launched by LAW in Punjab. MRDO is scheduled to launch a similar network in 2025.</li> <li>- Regarding individual legal cases, SANJOG has completed a survey of minors detained under charges and conditions that violate their rights in 17 prisons across its two working provinces. A total of 163 minors at risk of life imprisonment or the death penalty were identified: 29 have already been sentenced, while 134 are awaiting trial. These surveys have brought visibility to the situation of imprisoned minors. The three partner lawyers are providing legal defense for individual cases involving minors under the age of 18, prosecuted and imprisoned for alleged serious crimes (mainly murder or violent offenses, with a few rare cases involving blasphemy or terrorism):-</li> </ul>

Me Sarmad Ali has followed 14 minors in Punjab, including 2 identified in 2024. Two cases have been completed, with both minors acquitted—a young girl and a boy. Me Waheed Ahmad has followed 9 cases, including 3 new ones. Me Ramis Sohail is managing one case in Punjab. Despite the slowness of the proceedings (already ongoing for 3 years), the child—12 years old at the time of the alleged offense—is currently on conditional release and able to continue his schooling thanks to the lawyer's efforts

Mineurs incarcérés au Punjab



Juvenile Justice Awareness & Training Forum for lawyers, Sānghar, August 2024



## COMMUNICATION :

**Vivere's work was only mentioned in four articles.** We really aren't getting through to the public and making them aware of the important issues that need to be better known and better understood. We appeal to anyone who has a talent for communication to help us in this.

The brochure we give out that gives a brief overview of our work is still effective for those who are interested but have little time to read about issues in depth. The stock of brochures which was initially printed by friends for free has now been able to be reprinted, thanks to a specific donation. We are however now looking for another solution so that a few hundred copies can be printed free of charge in our two working languages (FRA and ENG). If any of our readers can help in this, please do let us know.

**The Vivere website** - [www.vivere.ch](http://www.vivere.ch) explains our work simply and in detail; it is also extremely useful in terms of providing information for any activists who are interested in getting involved. In 2024 Quy Lam volunteered his services to ensure that the site was efficiently managed and maintained -something which requires considerable time and energy!

**Facebook's page** <https://www.facebook.com/vivere.association>: - thanks to the initiative of Elise Berthelieir has been regularly visited. We ask all FB users to share and promote this page as widely as possible.

**Dissemination of work news** : we sent 13 'Updates' during the year to all people close to the movement, consisting of short summaries on various aspects of our projects, sometimes calling for targeted assistance to resolve a particular need. Having the e-mail address of everyone allows a substantial saving of shipping costs <sup>40</sup>.

**Sales at the Solidarity Christmas Market** 12 to the 14 December 2024: thanks to the efforts of Sian, Quy, Cornelia, Béatrice, Annick, Yves, Fanny, Julie, Valentina, Agnès, Bernard, Claude, Michèle, Corine, Eléna and the usual team, Vivere was able to display and sell handicrafts to the public during this market managed by Fedevaco and Pôle Sud. A considerable profit of frs.3 238 (€ 3396) was made and directed to the new projects in Burundi and Colombia.



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<sup>40</sup> These Newsletters are always sent in "Bcc" so that spammers are not able to catch your address. We have adopted the Mailchimp application so that messages are displayed in a more user-friendly way on mobile phones.

## COMMUNICATION (continued)

**Cards in postal format still available:** a series of cards illustrating our actions in the field. The photos are people's testimonies and the exclusive property of *Vivere*, ©. These cards are shown below; each one is captioned on the back. The series of 10 cards is sold at CHF 20 (€ 15). By buying these beautiful and moving cards, you can really help our projects; thank you in advance for your participation.



**This book of photos on our work in the Democratic Republic of Congo is still available**



**It is well worth noting that communication has cost Vivere next to nothing.** To receive so many free items and services is obviously not without cost for some friends. Vivere therefore would like to express its deepest gratitude to all those who have solicited free services as well as those who have donated their services. This has often been at considerable expense. It's quite simple: we owe them everything, absolutely everything!

## II FINANCES

Auron Cecaj will submit the properly documented 2024 accounts at the general meeting. We are very grateful to MAZARS who compiled these accounts at a reduced rate since they are sympathetic to *Vivere*'s aims, thus enabling us to save on resources.

Jinit Shah, carried out all aspects of accounting voluntarily, and thus free of charge. The importance of this is two-fold; not only does it guarantee work of the highest calibre and professionalism, but it also inspires confidence amongst our donors in what can be a very sensitive area of management.

At the end of the year, *Vivere* had 4 individual members who form the committee, 63 paying subscribers, and 553 donors, about 1/5th of whom have made one or more payments this year. These people are mainly in Switzerland, France, and Spain. We are extremely grateful to all donors and members and the trust they place in this movement. Thanks to you, someone somewhere in the world has stopped suffering, and someone else elsewhere will suffer less.

There are no 'small' donations to *Vivere*, especially since the smallest payments often correspond to a deeply held belief. We hold in the utmost respect the donors who pay CHF 10 or 25, several times during the year, and this affects us deeply.

As long as we continue to operate on a voluntary basis, all of our resources will go to the projects in the field. This principle remains constant. We have received specific donations to cover almost entirely all mission- and administration expenses.

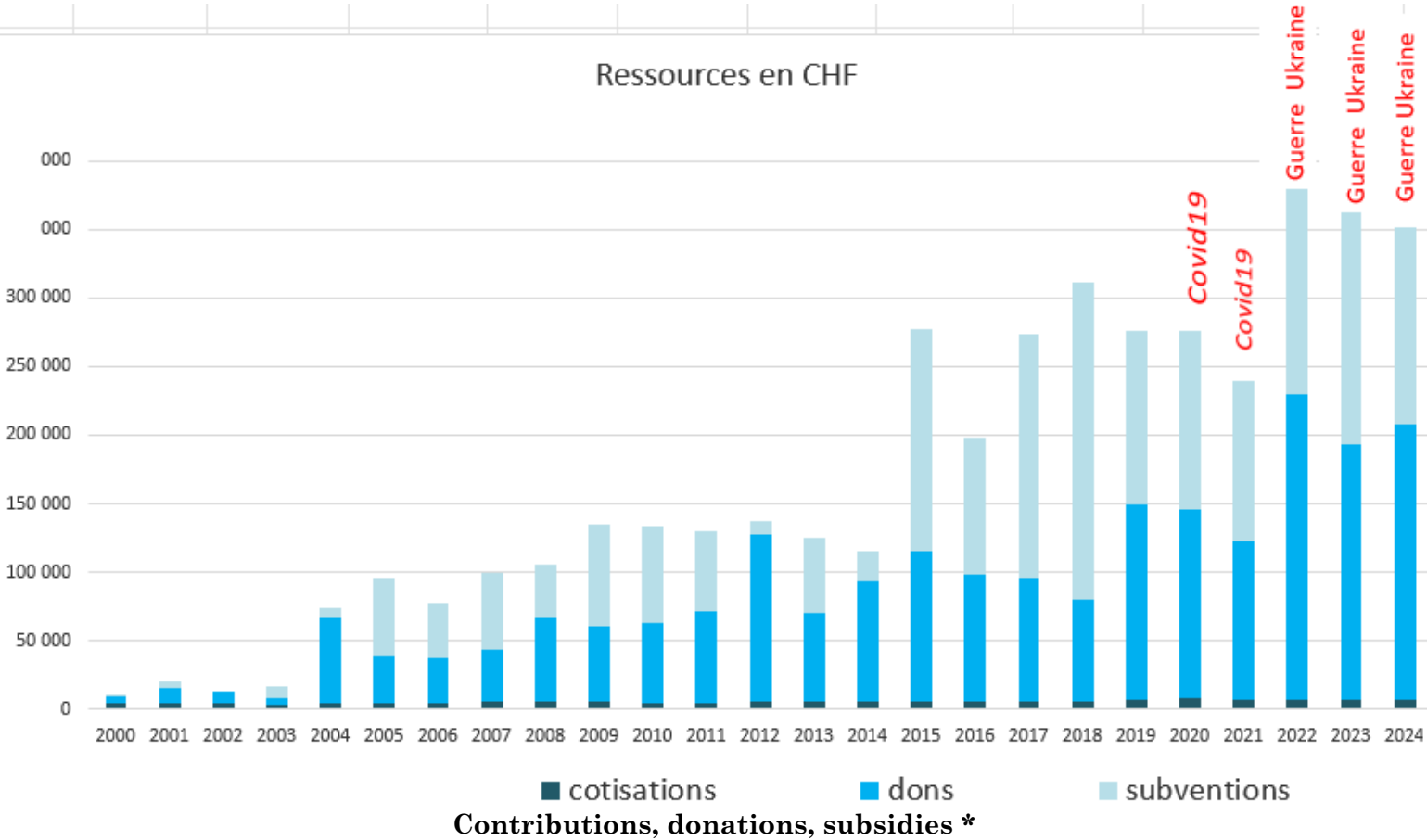
What stands out from the pages above is the exceptional solidarity given to actions in the field by the following friendly organizations: the Sentinelles Foundation, the E. Du Pasquier Foundation, the Maison des Amis, the Anne Frank Foundation, the Pro Victimis Foundation, the Isocrates Foundation, the Fedevaco, SSI-Geneva, the Coromandel Foundation, and the Foundation E and M.T.Glutz of Reding and the association Solidaires sans Frontières (Solidarity without Borders). Such confidence increases the impact of our work tenfold. It is also evidence that the human causes that we support overlap with the beliefs of justice of these organizations. They have a lot more experience than us and we benefit greatly from their wisdom

Ten members or donors have spontaneously decided to make or renew a monthly or quarterly standing order payment in favour of the movement, which makes a valuable contribution both due of course to the amounts concerned but also as a sign of regular encouragement.

Chart as an indication:

Resources

(Situation on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024, in Swiss francs)



Between March and May 2022, we received a huge amount of donations for the victims of the war in Ukraine, to the amount of CHF 42 310. These donations were completely unexpected, and came not only from our sponsor base, but also from very many people whom we had not had contact with before. This spontaneous generosity meant that we could start giving aid to displaced refugees in 4 countries, working with our local partner organisations (see further up in this report). These projects were obviously not foreseen in our budget projections made at the start of the year and would not have been possible without the exceptional support and solidarity of the public. We are concerned that donations, since June 2022 have largely dried up, almost as suddenly as they started, whilst our projects remain vital. As of April 2025 (the date of this report), we call on all our readers: please continue to support the victims of the war in Ukraine who have been displaced and are now refugees.



### III TEAM

n 2024, the Vivere committee met four times <sup>41</sup> formally with frequent consultations in-between. The members of the committee are: Emma Garcia, secretary, Auron Cecaj, treasurer, Lea Ruiz and Mike Hoffman.

Bernard Boëton, in charge of the project 'Abolition of the death penalty applied to minors', and Jinit Shah, chartered accountant, also take part in the meetings of the committee as well as members or relatives who are invited to attend. Annick Kosel manages the program in Burundi.

It should also be noted that we receive many applications from people looking for an inspiring job or an internship. Whilst we very much appreciate their trust, we are unfortunately not in a position to be able to proceed with these. It would be impossible to provide any kind of logistical support or supervision since we do not have a permanent office or member of staff <sup>42</sup>

As documented in this report, 2024 has seen a crucial amount of voluntary donations, making it impossible to thank each and every person who has contributed so much in helping to drive our

organisation forward. However, we do still need our members to get involved with fundraising and sourcing free goods and services.

### IV FUTURE

This small movement must strive to:

1. Attract more people to become members and engage more of its members to take on concrete responsibilities.
2. Increase its fundraising capacity to quickly reach the amounts included in our draft budget designed at our launch, around CHF 500,000/year (€ 464,000). This would make it possible to set up about thirty micro-projects throughout the year by having the equivalent of 1 full-time person in the permanent workforce. This person would coordinate the project under the guidance of the committee.
3. Irrespective of the financial situation: increase communication on the causes & struggles for which *Vivere* was created, support the activists fighting on the front line for justice, get involved with their networks and help them circulate vital information

\*

We hope to read or hear your criticisms, comments and contributions. You have already helped us in our small efforts to restore the right to a dignified life -but we still need you!

21 April 2025

*Lea Ruiz*

*Emma Garcia*

*Auron Cecaj*

*Mike Hoffman*

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Prix des droits de l'homme de la République française, mention spéciale, 2007

membre de la Coalition mondiale contre la peine de mort et de la Fedevaco

association à but non lucratif régie par les articles 60 et suivants du code civil suisse, politiquement et confessionnellement indépendante  
reconnue de pure utilité publique

<sup>41</sup> 18 April, 14 June, 31 October and 5 December. A formal consultation was also held on 26 June to approve the Treasurer's duties

<sup>42</sup> We were however able to have Mathilde Chédaneau- a Masters student in criminal law and criminology at Bordeaux university, work remotely as an intern for 3 months (April to July). Mathilde did some excellent work capitalising on Vivere's projects in Pakistan