

# Turning Local Evidence into Policy Reform

*A Decade of HURIA's Research, Knowledge  
Leadership, and Advocacy Impact in Kenya*

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# Foreword

Over the past decade, the demand for accountable governance, protection of human rights, and responsible management of natural and social resources has intensified across Kenya. Civil society organisations have played a critical role in shaping these debates by documenting lived experiences, generating evidence, and engaging policymakers to advance reforms. This report reflects on the journey of Human Rights Agenda (HURIA) in contributing to this broader movement for justice and accountability.

Since its establishment, HURIA has sought to bridge the gap between community realities and national policy processes. Through systematic research, documentation, and knowledge production, the organisation has worked to ensure that the voices and experiences of communities, particularly those historically marginalised in governance processes inform policy discussions and institutional decision-making. Over time, this approach has evolved into a model of evidence-based advocacy that combines grassroots documentation with strategic engagement with policymakers, civil society partners, and the private sector.

This report chronicles a decade of HURIA's efforts to generate credible knowledge and translate it into meaningful policy engagement. It highlights how research and documentation have informed advocacy on issues such as civic space and democratic participation, security governance and counterterrorism legislation, environmental justice, and corporate accountability in the extractive sector. These themes reflect some of the most pressing governance challenges facing Kenya today.

**“** *Evidence matters. When communities are able to document their experiences and engage institutions with credible information, it becomes possible to shape policies that better reflect the realities on the ground.*

The report also presents three case studies that illustrate how locally grounded evidence can influence policy debates and institutional practices. From community research on environmental pollution and extractive sector governance, to engagement with the mining industry on responsible business conduct, and advocacy on the human rights implications of counterterrorism laws, these examples demonstrate the practical value of research as a tool for reform.

Importantly, this work would not have been possible without the contributions of communities, researchers, activists, and partners who have supported HURIA's mission over the years. Their commitment to documenting injustices, amplifying community voices, and advocating for policy change has been central to the progress captured in this report.

While important gains have been made, significant challenges remain. Restrictions on civic space, governance deficits, environmental pressures, and emerging security concerns continue to test the resilience of democratic institutions and the protection of fundamental rights. Addressing these challenges requires sustained commitment to transparency, accountability, and inclusive policy processes.

As this report shows, evidence matters. When communities are able to document their experiences and engage institutions with credible information, it becomes possible to shape policies that better reflect the realities on the ground. HURIA's experience over the past decade demonstrates the transformative potential of knowledge-driven advocacy in advancing justice, strengthening governance, and protecting human rights.

It is our hope that the reflections and lessons contained in this report will contribute to ongoing conversations on the role of civil society in knowledge generation and policy reform in Kenya and beyond.



**Executive Director**  
Human Rights Agenda (HURIA)

# Acknowledgement

HURIA wishes to acknowledge the communities, civil society partners, academic institutions, and development partners whose collaboration and support have made this work possible. We recognise the courage of individuals and families who shared their experiences and contributed to our research initiatives. Their voices form the foundation of this report.

We also extend our gratitude to the parliamentary committees, oversight institutions, and government stakeholders who engaged with our advocacy, demonstrating a commitment to dialogue and reform.

Finally, we acknowledge the financial and technical support provided by our partners, without which this decade of evidence-based advocacy would not have been possible.

# Acronyms & Abbreviations

<b>BTL</b>	Base Titanium Limited
<b>CBO</b>	Community-Based Organisation
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>CVE</b>	Countering Violent Extremism
<b>EIA</b>	Environmental Impact Assessment
<b>EMCA</b>	Environmental Management and Coordination Act
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>HURIA</b>	Human Rights Agenda
<b>KNCHR</b>	Kenya National Commission on Human Rights
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>NEMA</b>	National Environment Management Authority
<b>P/CVE</b>	Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
<b>POTA</b>	Prevention of Terrorism Act
<b>SGBV</b>	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
<b>UNSCR</b>	United Nations Security Council Resolution
<b>WPS</b>	Women, Peace and Security

# Executive Summary

Over the past decade, Human Rights Agenda (HURIA) has emerged as a leading civil society organisation in Kenya advancing **evidence-based governance reform through research, documentation, and policy advocacy**. This report documents how the organisation has systematically generated community-grounded evidence and translated it into national policy engagement, legislative advocacy, and institutional accountability initiatives.

Operating primarily in Kenya's coastal region while contributing to national policy debates, HURIA has developed a diverse research portfolio addressing critical governance and human rights challenges. These include civic space and democratic participation, counterterrorism and security sector accountability, enforced disappearances, land and natural resource governance, gender justice, and access to justice. Through field investigations, legal analysis, and participatory community engagement, the organisation has produced a substantial body of knowledge that informs public discourse and reform initiatives. A central theme of the report is the **translation of evidence into policy influence**.

HURIA's work demonstrates that rigorous research, when combined with strategic advocacy and institutional engagement, can shape governance reforms and strengthen accountability mechanisms.

The report highlights three case studies illustrating this evidence-to-policy pathway.

The first case study examines HURIA's work on **environmental justice and extractive sector governance**. Beginning with community complaints of pollution in Kilifi County, the organisation conducted research documenting environmental harm and regulatory gaps affecting communities living near industrial and mining operations.

## Environmental Justice & Extractive Sector

Non-compliant mining company in Chasimba area shut down by Cabinet Secretary following HURIA-supported community advocacy. 2,000+ individuals reached directly.

## Corporate Accountability at Base Resources

Base Resources won 3 Responsible Resourcing Awards at African Mining Indaba 2024 — including overall Excellence in Best Practices — citing HURIA's contributions.

## Enforced Disappearances Legislative Reform

Kenya moves toward criminalising enforced disappearances as a distinct offence. UPR submission 2025. Senate Standing Committee engagement. Draft bill under parliamentary consideration.

10+

Years of systematic community documentation & policy engagement

20

Verified enforced disappearance cases documented in Kwale County

90

Environmental champions trained across 3 coastal counties

3

Responsible Resourcing Awards won at African Mining Indaba 2024

5

Strategic thematic domains driving HURIA's research agenda

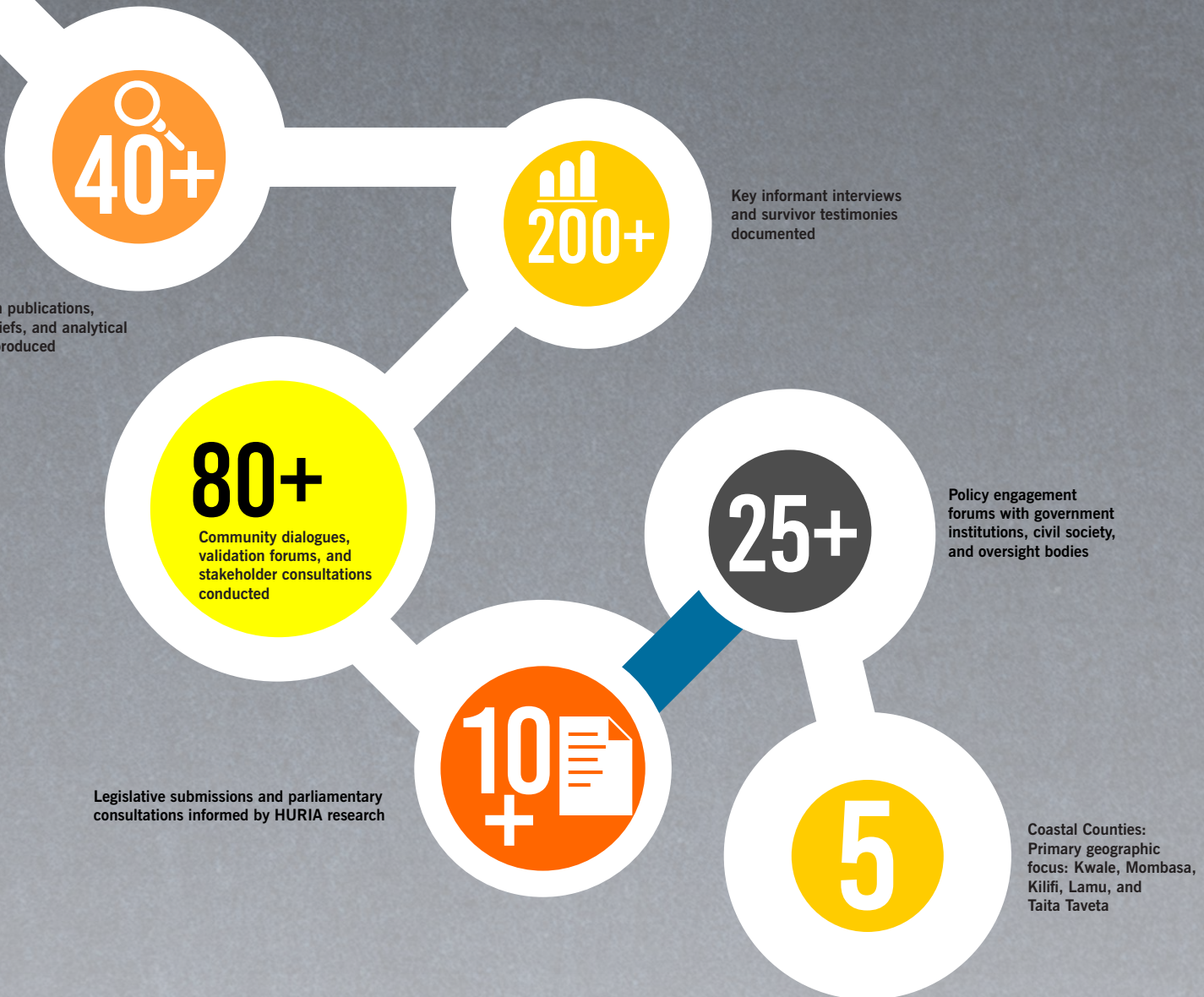
The resulting evidence informed policy dialogues with parliamentary committees and government regulators, while also empowering local communities to monitor environmental compliance and advocate for stronger protections.

The second case study explores HURIA's collaboration with the mining sector to advance **corporate accountability and responsible business practices**. Through research on modern slavery risks and labour exploitation in the supply chain of Base Titanium Limited, HURIA contributed local expertise to

strengthen corporate human rights due diligence processes. This partnership illustrates how civil society research can influence private sector governance standards while ensuring that community perspectives inform responsible business operations.

The third case study focuses on **security governance, counterterrorism law, and the protection of civic space**. HURIA's documentation of enforced disappearances, misuse of counterterrorism legislation, and restrictions on public protest has informed national debates on balancing security policies with constitutional rights.

# 10+ Years of Evidence Generation



Analysis of cases such as the Shakahola tragedy further highlighted gaps in the application of Kenya's Prevention of Terrorism Act and the need for stronger legal safeguards and judicial oversight.

Across these areas, HURIA's research has contributed to parliamentary consultations, policy submissions, and multi-stakeholder dialogues aimed at strengthening governance frameworks. Evidence generated by the organisation has informed discussions on the criminalisation of enforced disappearances, reforms in counterterrorism legislation, environmental governance in the extractive sector, and the protection of civic freedoms.

Beyond policy influence, HURIA's participatory research approach has also strengthened community agency. By engaging local actors in

documentation processes and producing accessible “popular versions” of research findings, the organisation has enabled communities to better understand their rights and participate more effectively in governance and advocacy processes.

The report concludes that **credible evidence, sustained engagement with policymakers, and strong partnerships with civil society and communities are essential drivers of policy reform**. While challenges remain—including political resistance, limited access to information, and resource constraints—HURIA's experience demonstrates that knowledge-driven advocacy can play a transformative role in advancing accountability and human rights protections.

Looking ahead, HURIA aims to expand its research systems, deepen legislative engagement, and strengthen partnerships that connect community evidence with national and global policy platforms. By continuing to bridge grassroots realities with institutional reform processes, the organisation seeks to ensure that governance frameworks in Kenya respond more effectively to the needs and rights of citizens.

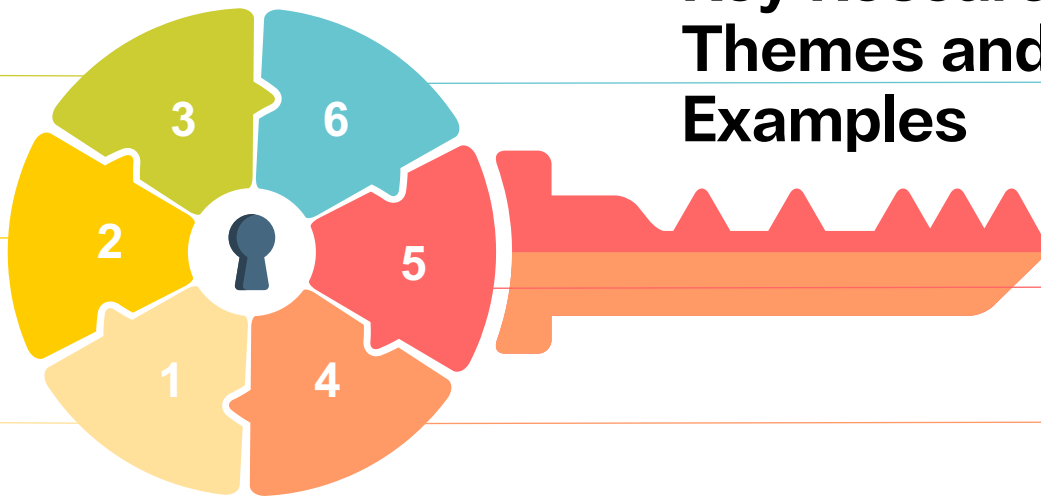
# What We've Produced

Research Output at a Glance (2016–2026)



**40+** TOTAL RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS

# Key Research Themes and Examples



## Security Sector Governance & Counterterrorism

- Documentation of **enforced disappearances** along Kenya's Coast (*Who's Next?* report)
- Analysis of **Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA)** implementation and safeguards
- Contributions to **County Action Plans on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)**

## Justice, Accountability & Rule of Law

- Studies on **access to justice** for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence
- Research on **police recruitment integrity** and **public complaints mechanisms**
- Evaluations of **institutional oversight** and **governance gaps**

## Civic Space & Democratic Governance

- Monitoring laws affecting **freedom of expression, assembly, and association**
- Documentation of **protest restrictions** and **media regulations**
- Policy analysis supporting **democratic participation** and **constitutional rights**

## Land, Natural Resources & Environmental Justice

- Research on **gendered land ownership disparities** in Kwale County
- Studies on **corporate accountability** in extractive industries
- Analysis of **community rights** and **environmental impacts of mining**

## Livelihoods & Community Rights

- Research on **fisheries landing site access** and **registration**
- Documentation of **governance barriers** affecting **coastal livelihoods**

## Policy Influence & Institutional Engagement

HURIA's research has directly informed **legislative, policy, and oversight processes**, including:

- **Parliamentary consultations** on criminalising enforced disappearances
- Policy debates on **counterterrorism reform** and **civil liberties safeguards**
- Development and evaluation of **County CVE Action Plans**
- Engagement with **national oversight institutions, civil society coalitions, and development partners**

# Geographic Focus

## Policy and Governance Impact:

Evidence generated through HURIA's research has contributed to:

Research findings also feed into national-level advocacy and policy reform discussions.

- Parliamentary consultations on the **criminalisation of enforced disappearances in Kenya**

- National debates on **counterterrorism law and the application of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA)**

- Advocacy initiatives addressing **corporate accountability and environmental justice**

- Policy discussions on **civic space protections and democratic freedoms**

- Development and evaluation of **County Action Plans on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)**

Research coverage -  
Kenya's Coastal Counties: Kwale | Mombasa | Kilifi | Lamu | Taita Taveta

# Introduction: Evidence, Accountability and Reform in Kenya

**A**cross many democratic societies, the production and strategic use of evidence has become a central tool for advancing accountability, shaping public policy, and strengthening human rights protections. In Kenya, where governance reforms, security challenges, and democratic transitions continue to interact in complex ways, credible research and community-based documentation have become essential instruments for informing public debate and guiding institutional reform.

Over the past decade, civil society organisations such as HURIA have played a critical role in bridging the gap between lived community realities and national policymaking processes. Through rigorous research, documentation of violations, policy analysis, and sustained advocacy, these organisations have generated the knowledge necessary to illuminate governance failures, expose structural injustices, and propose concrete reforms.

The organisation has built a structured research portfolio that integrates empirical documentation, legal and institutional analysis, policy design, oversight, and longitudinal learning. This approach ensures that evidence collected at the grassroots level is systematically translated into reforms that are both contextually relevant and institutionally actionable.

HURIA's work reflects a philosophy that sustainable change requires credible evidence, analytical rigor, and inclusive engagement. By documenting structural inequalities, rights violations, and governance gaps, HURIA provides a knowledge base for county and national authorities, civil society actors, donors, and international stakeholders. Our methodology combines field-based

qualitative research with political economy and governance analysis, participatory validation processes, and structured dialogue platforms, ensuring research outputs are robust, credible, and policy-oriented.

This report presents HURIA's knowledge portfolio as an integrated system of outputs—ranging from applied policy research to accountability assessments and practitioner tools—organized across five strategic thematic domains. It highlights key contributions to policy and institutional reform, illustrates our capacity to undertake sensitive and complex research, and underscores the organisation's role as a thought leader and normative actor in promoting rights-based, accountable governance.

This report examines the role of evidence in shaping accountability and reform in Kenya through the work of Human Rights Agenda (HURIA). It documents how a decade of research, documentation, and policy engagement has contributed to national conversations on human rights, security sector accountability, civic space, and legislative reform. By mapping HURIA's knowledge architecture and research portfolio, the report demonstrates how community-based evidence can be translated into policy influence and institutional change.

## 1.1 Background and Rationale for the Report

Kenya has undergone significant political and institutional transformation over the past two decades, particularly following the promulgation of the Constitution of 2010. The Constitution introduced an ambitious framework for democratic governance, the protection of human rights, devolution of power, and strengthened oversight of state institutions. However, the realisation of these constitutional commitments continues to face substantial challenges.

Persistent issues such as extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, restrictions on civic space, electoral tensions, counterterrorism abuses, and inequalities in access to land and resources demonstrate the gap that often exists between constitutional ideals and everyday realities. In many cases, these governance deficits are exacerbated by weak accountability mechanisms, politicised institutions, and limited access to credible evidence that can inform reform processes.

Within this context, the generation of reliable research and community-based documentation has become a critical tool for advancing accountability and policy reform. Evidence-based advocacy enables civil society organisations to move beyond anecdotal claims and instead provide systematic analysis that can influence legislative processes, public policy, and institutional oversight.

This report was developed to document and reflect on a decade of Human Rights Agenda's work in producing such evidence. It examines how research and documentation have been strategically used to inform advocacy, support legislative engagement, and contribute to broader national and international human rights debates.

By consolidating this experience, the report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of HURIA's knowledge systems, research portfolio, and policy influence strategies.

## 1.2 Kenya's Governance and Human Rights Context

Kenya's governance landscape is characterised by both progressive constitutional frameworks and persistent structural challenges that undermine the full realisation of human rights. The Constitution of 2010 significantly expanded the legal protections for civil liberties, introduced devolved governance structures, and strengthened independent oversight institutions. These reforms created important opportunities for accountability and citizen participation in governance.

Despite these advancements, several governance and human rights concerns remain prominent. Security sector operations, particularly within the context of counterterrorism, have generated sustained concerns regarding extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, and enforced disappearances. Communities in coastal regions and the northern parts of the country have been particularly affected by these practices, which have at times eroded trust between citizens and state institutions.

Kenya's civic space has also faced increasing pressures in recent years. Legislative proposals restricting protests, media regulation initiatives, and the use of excessive force against demonstrators have raised concerns about the shrinking space for democratic participation and dissent.

Electoral processes, while largely institutionalised, continue to generate periods of political tension and violence, highlighting ongoing challenges in electoral governance and democratic consolidation. Additionally, structural inequalities related to land ownership, natural resource access, and gender disparities continue to shape patterns of marginalisation, particularly within historically underserved communities along the Kenyan coast.

These intersecting governance challenges underscore the importance of independent research, credible documentation, and sustained policy engagement to ensure that constitutional guarantees translate into practical protections for citizens.

## The Role of Civil Society in Knowledge Production and Policy Reform

Civil society organisations have long played an essential role in advancing human rights, democratic governance, and institutional accountability in Kenya. Beyond traditional advocacy, many organisations have increasingly invested in the systematic generation of knowledge as a foundation for influencing policy and reform processes.

Through field research, community consultations, legal analysis, and documentation of violations, civil society actors produce critical evidence that informs both national and international policy discussions. This evidence often provides insights that may not be captured through official government data or institutional reporting mechanisms.

In contexts where violations occur in marginalised or politically sensitive environments, civil society organisations frequently serve as the primary actors documenting abuses and amplifying the voices of affected communities. By transforming these experiences into credible research outputs,

organisations are able to engage policymakers, parliamentary committees, independent commissions, and international human rights mechanisms.

The role of civil society in knowledge production therefore extends beyond documentation. It involves translating complex evidence into accessible narratives, policy recommendations, legislative proposals, and advocacy strategies that can influence institutional behaviour.

In Kenya, evidence-based civil society advocacy has contributed to significant policy debates and reforms across areas such as transitional justice, police accountability, counterterrorism law, electoral governance, and land rights. These contributions demonstrate the growing importance of research-driven advocacy as a mechanism for strengthening democratic accountability.

## About Human Rights Agenda (HURIA)

Human Rights Agenda (HURIA) is a rights-based, sub-national not-for-profit organisation headquartered at the Coast of Kenya. Established in 2012 in the wake of the transformative aspirations of the Constitution of Kenya 2010, HURIA was founded to ensure that constitutional guarantees do not remain abstract commitments, but become tangible realities for historically marginalised communities.

HURIA operates at the intersection of human rights, governance reform, security sector accountability, access to justice, climate justice, and youth democratic participation. The organisation bridges community realities with policy reform processes, translating grassroots evidence into legislative advocacy, institutional engagement, and systemic change.

Since its establishment, HURIA has focused on addressing governance and human rights challenges affecting marginalised communities, particularly along Kenya's coastal region. The organisation's work is grounded in the belief that sustainable reform requires credible evidence, strong community engagement, and sustained policy dialogue with state institutions.

Over the years, HURIA has developed a diverse research portfolio covering issues such as counterterrorism and human rights, enforced disappearances, civic space and democratic governance, electoral processes, land and resource rights, and gender justice. Through these research initiatives, the organisation has generated critical evidence highlighting governance gaps, institutional weaknesses, and structural drivers of injustice.

Beyond research, HURIA has actively engaged in legislative advocacy, parliamentary submissions, policy dialogues, and coalition-building efforts aimed at advancing institutional reforms. The organisation has also contributed to national and international human rights mechanisms by providing documentation and analysis that informs broader accountability efforts.

Through this integrated approach combining evidence generation and policy engagement, HURIA has positioned itself as an important voice in Kenya's human rights and governance landscape.

## 1.5 Objectives and Scope of the Report

This report seeks to document and analyse a decade of HURIA's contributions to evidence-based advocacy and policy reform in Kenya.

Specifically, the report aims to:

- *Examine the institutional evolution of HURIA as a research-driven human rights organisation.*
- *Map the organisation's knowledge architecture and methodological approaches to evidence generation.*
- *Document key research outputs and thematic areas of intervention between 2016 and 2026.*
- *Analyse how research and documentation have been translated into advocacy, legislative engagement, and policy influence.*
- *Highlight case studies demonstrating the impact of evidence-based advocacy on governance and human rights debates in Kenya.*

- *Identify lessons learned from a decade of knowledge-driven civil society engagement.*

The report focuses primarily on HURIA's work in Kenya over the past ten years, with particular attention to its research and advocacy activities in areas such as counterterrorism accountability, enforced disappearances, civic space protection, electoral governance, and land and resource rights.

By presenting these experiences, the report aims to contribute to broader discussions on the role of civil society research in strengthening democratic accountability and advancing human rights reforms in Kenya.

## 1.6 Typology and Thematic Architecture of HURIA's Research Portfolio

Human Rights Agenda (HURIA) has developed a diversified yet coherent research portfolio that systematically bridges evidence, policy, and practice. Its outputs span a spectrum from empirical documentation to policy design, evaluation, oversight, and institutional learning, forming an integrated evidence-to-policy ecosystem.

At the core of this portfolio are **applied policy research reports**, which interrogate governance, security, and socio-economic rights challenges using field-based evidence, community testimonies, and institutional analysis. These studies address issues including corporate impunity, environmental justice, enforced disappearances, policing integrity, barriers to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) justice, and land inequality. Each report combines a clearly defined problem statement with legal and regulatory analysis, producing actionable recommendations for policymakers, reform actors, and advocacy networks.

Complementing research, HURIA develops **policy frameworks and action plans** that operationalize findings into governance instruments. Crafted through multi-stakeholder consultations, these plans include objectives, coordination mechanisms, accountability structures, and implementation pathways. Notable examples include County Action Plans on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) and the localisation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda under UNSCR 1325. These instruments are informed by contextual risk analysis and aligned with both national and international policy frameworks.

**Policy assessments and evaluations** constitute another pillar, reviewing existing governance instruments to identify performance gaps, bottlenecks, and lessons for iterative reform. Such analyses of early county-level CVE Action Plans, for instance, have strengthened evidence-based adaptation and reinforced HURIA's dual role as both policy designer and accountability actor.

**Accountability and oversight reports** focus on transparency deficits, corruption risks, abuse of power, and systemic institutional failures. By examining COVID-19 fund allocations, police recruitment, public complaints mechanisms, and enforced disappearances, these outputs consolidate evidence and engage watchdog institutions to promote rule of law, institutional integrity, and democratic accountability.

To support practical implementation, HURIA produces **thematic practice notes and guidance tools** that translate complex technical, legal, or securitized concepts into accessible formats for civil society actors, county officials, and practitioners. These resources, including business engagement guides in PVE and simplified glossaries of counter-extremism terminology, strengthen capacity and broaden policy literacy beyond specialist audiences.

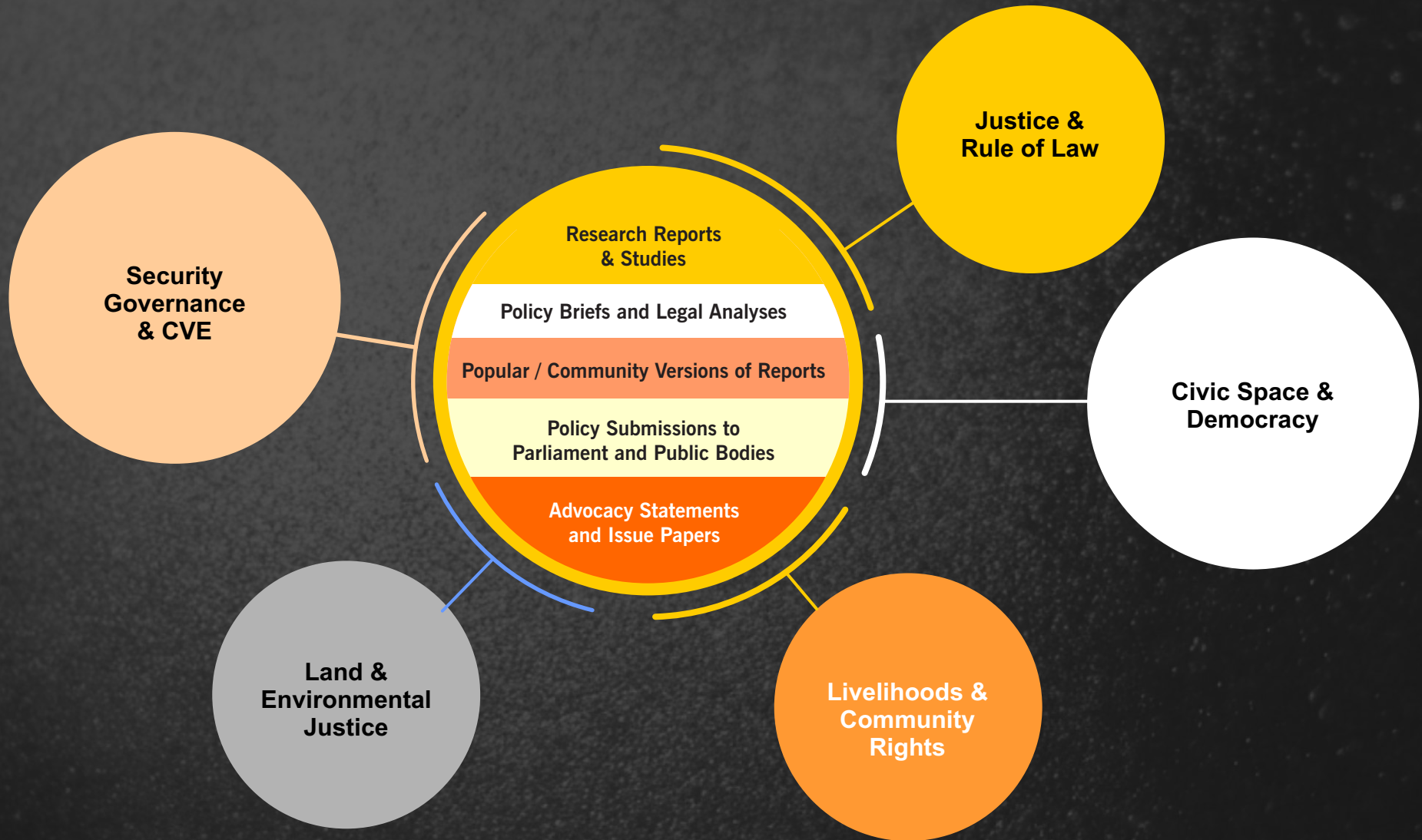
Finally, **longitudinal institutional and contextual reports**, including triennial and annual publications such as the *Footprints of Justice* series, track trends in civic space, governance, security, and rights protections over time. They function as institutional memory while capturing lessons for organizational learning. Complementing these, structured dialogues produce **communiqués and multi-stakeholder outcome documents** that record consensus-building, promote policy harmonization, and facilitate peer learning across counties and sectors.

Across this typology, HURIA's outputs converge around five **strategic thematic domains**:

1. **Security Governance and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE):** Promoting rights-based security, preventive approaches, institutional accountability, civil society oversight, and victim protection in national and county frameworks.
2. **Policing and Rule of Law:** Strengthening recruitment integrity, professional standards, responsiveness, and community-oriented policing to enhance institutional legitimacy and trust.
3. **Access to Justice and Legal Empowerment:** Advancing survivor-centered justice, paralegal recognition, and grassroots legal empowerment as structural pathways to rule of law.
4. **Governance, Accountability, and Public Finance:** Examining resource management, corporate responsibility, anti-corruption measures, and transparency frameworks to reinforce democratic governance.
5. **Land, Environment, and Economic Justice:** Investigating structural marginalization, gender disparities, livelihood security, and sustainable resource governance at the intersection of economic and human rights issues.

# Research Portfolio

## Knowledge Products



## 1.6 Building a Knowledge-Driven Human Rights Organisation

Over the past decade, Human Rights Agenda (HURIA) has progressively evolved into a knowledge-driven human rights organisation grounded in rigorous research, community documentation, and policy engagement. Recognising that sustainable reforms require credible evidence, HURIA has invested in building institutional systems that generate reliable data on governance failures, human rights violations, and structural inequalities affecting vulnerable communities.

This institutional shift was informed by the recognition that many governance and accountability challenges in Kenya persist partly because of limited documentation and weak evidence linking community experiences with national policy debates. HURIA therefore adopted an approach that places research and documentation at the centre of its advocacy strategy.

At the operational level, this transformation involved strengthening the organisation's capacity to conduct systematic field research, legal analysis, and policy studies. HURIA developed internal frameworks for evidence collection that combine qualitative field methods including key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and testimonial documentation with legal and policy analysis. This approach allows the organisation to capture both the lived experiences of affected communities and the institutional dynamics shaping governance outcomes.

Equally important has been the integration of grassroots knowledge into national policy discourse.

HURIA's research processes are deliberately designed to ensure that the voices of victims, survivors, and community actors are documented and translated into evidence capable of informing legislative and policy debates. Through validation forums, community dialogues, and stakeholder consultations, the organisation ensures that research outputs reflect both empirical realities and the perspectives of affected populations.

Institutionally, HURIA has also strengthened its knowledge management systems to organise and preserve research outputs, documentation records, and policy submissions. These systems allow the organisation to maintain a growing archive of evidence that informs advocacy campaigns, policy interventions, and public discourse on governance and human rights.

Through these efforts, HURIA has positioned itself not only as an advocacy organisation but also as a credible knowledge producer contributing to national conversations on justice, accountability, and democratic governance.

# 2

## CHAPTER TWO

# Milestones in Research, Advocacy and Policy Influence

Over the past decade, Human Rights Agenda (HURIA) has developed a distinctive approach to human rights research that moves beyond documentation toward **strategic policy engagement and institutional reform**. By combining grassroots evidence, legal analysis, and targeted advocacy, the organisation has translated community experiences into **national policy debates, legislative advocacy, and accountability initiatives**.

Several milestones illustrate how HURIA has progressively expanded its influence from community-based research initiatives along Kenya's Coast to sustained engagement with national institutions, parliamentary processes, and international human rights frameworks.

### ***Shaping National Policy Debates through Evidence***

A central milestone in HURIA's trajectory has been its role in bringing **under-reported governance and human rights issues into national policy discourse**. Through evidence-based research and public reporting, the organisation has illuminated the lived realities of communities affected by structural marginalisation, security operations, and governance failures.

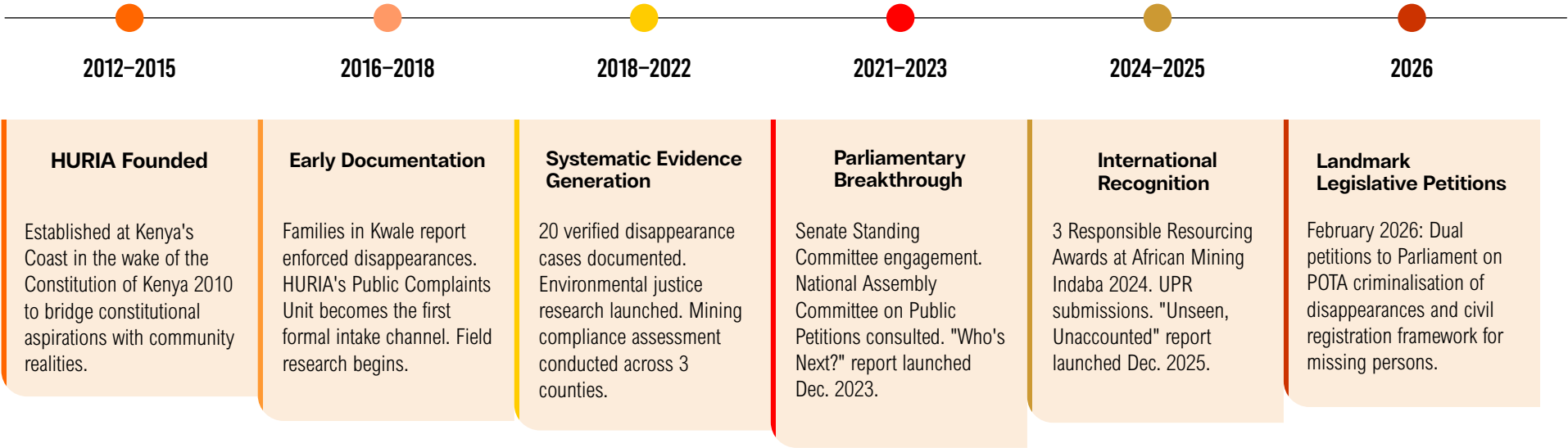
For example, HURIA's documentation of **enforced disappearances along Kenya's Coast** provided one of the most comprehensive civil society accounts of how families experience the disappearance of relatives suspected of links to extremist networks. The report *"Unseen, Unaccounted and Unrecognised: The Harsh Realities of Enforced Disappearances Victims and the Quest for Redress"* consolidated testimonies from affected families and exposed the absence of effective legal remedies and victim support mechanisms.

Similarly, HURIA's research on **corporate accountability and extractive industries** examined the social and environmental consequences of mining operations in coastal counties, highlighting gaps in regulatory oversight and community participation in natural resource governance. These findings generated dialogue among civil society actors, policymakers, and community leaders on the need for stronger safeguards to protect local livelihoods and environmental rights.

# INSTITUTIONAL JOURNEY

## HURIA's Decade of Impact

From community complaint recording in Kwale County to parliamentary petitions and international human rights submissions a chronological journey of evidence-to-reform.



By grounding national discussions in **empirical community evidence**, HURIA has helped shift public discourse away from abstract policy debates toward the **human rights consequences of governance decisions**, thereby strengthening the evidence base for reform.

### *Influencing Legislative and Policy Processes*

Another significant milestone has been HURIA's growing engagement with **legislative and policy-making institutions**. Evidence generated through research has informed parliamentary consultations, policy submissions, and multi-stakeholder dialogues aimed at strengthening Kenya's legal and governance frameworks.

In 2023, HURIA participated in consultations convened by the **National Assembly's Committee on Public Petitions** regarding the need to criminalize enforced disappearances in Kenya. Drawing on its field research and documentation of affected families, the organisation presented submissions outlining gaps in existing legal frameworks and recommending legislative measures to ensure accountability and victim protection.

HURIA has also contributed to policy debates surrounding Kenya's **counterterrorism framework under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA)**. Through case documentation and legal analysis, the organisation has highlighted instances where counterterrorism measures risk undermining civil liberties, particularly in coastal communities where security operations have had significant social consequences. These findings have informed advocacy for **balanced security policies that protect human rights while addressing legitimate national security concerns**.

At the sub-national level, HURIA has engaged with **County Action Plans on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)** in counties such as Kwale, advocating for prevention strategies that incorporate community participation, gender perspectives, and accountability mechanisms.

Through these interventions, HURIA has demonstrated how **community-based evidence can be translated into practical legislative and policy recommendations**.

### *Advancing Institutional Accountability*

A further milestone lies in HURIA's role in strengthening **public accountability and oversight** through

investigative research and governance analysis. By systematically documenting governance failures and institutional weaknesses, the organisation has contributed to broader civil society efforts aimed at improving transparency and public sector integrity.

For instance, HURIA conducted analyses of **police recruitment processes**, raising concerns about transparency, fairness, and the risk of corruption in recruitment procedures. The organisation has also examined **public expenditure during the COVID-19 pandemic**, highlighting accountability gaps in the management of emergency funds and the implications for service delivery.

Research into **public complaints mechanisms and access to justice** has further identified structural barriers faced by citizens seeking redress from state institutions. By consolidating survivor testimonies, community perspectives, and legal analysis, HURIA's accountability reports provide credible evidence that supports the work of oversight bodies, reform advocates, and governance watchdogs.

In the security sector, HURIA's work on enforced disappearances and policing practices has contributed to advocacy efforts aimed at **improving transparency in security operations and strengthening protections for victims and their families**.

### *Empowering Communities through Participatory Research*

A defining milestone in HURIA's institutional development has been the adoption of **participatory research approaches that centre community voices in knowledge production**. Rather than treating communities solely as subjects of research, HURIA actively engages local actors in documenting issues, validating findings, and shaping policy recommendations.

Through focus group discussions, community dialogues, and collaboration with grassroots human rights defenders and paralegals, HURIA ensures that research findings reflect **the lived experiences of affected populations**.

The organisation has also developed **accessible "popular versions" of research reports**, translating complex legal and policy issues into formats that can be

understood by community members and local stakeholders. Examples include simplified reports on **land ownership disparities in Kwale County** and the **registration and governance of fisheries landing sites**, which have enabled coastal communities to engage more effectively with county authorities on issues affecting their livelihoods.

By making research accessible and participatory, HURIA has strengthened **community agency in governance and policy processes**.

### *Connecting Local Evidence with National and Global Advocacy*

HURIA's final milestone lies in its ability to connect **local human rights evidence with national and international policy frameworks**. Through engagement with civil society coalitions, oversight institutions, and international partners, the organisation has ensured that governance challenges affecting Kenyan

communities are understood within broader global debates on human rights, security, and democratic governance.

Research findings have been presented in **multi-stakeholder dialogues, parliamentary engagements, and international human rights discussions**, contributing to wider awareness of issues such as enforced disappearances, counterterrorism practices, and civic space restrictions in Kenya.

By aligning its research with international normative frameworks including global human rights conventions and the **Women, Peace and Security agenda**, HURIA has strengthened the visibility of coastal Kenya's governance challenges while positioning community evidence within global advocacy networks.

## 2.1 HURIA's Comparative Advantage in Evidence-Based Advocacy

Human Rights Agenda's approach to evidence-based advocacy is distinguished by several institutional strengths that enable the organisation to generate credible research and translate it into meaningful policy influence.

A key comparative advantage lies in HURIA's close engagement with grassroots communities. The organisation maintains strong relationships with community actors, victims' families, local leaders, and grassroots networks, particularly within Kenya's coastal region. This proximity allows HURIA to access firsthand testimonies and local perspectives that are often overlooked in formal policy processes.

This grassroots engagement is complemented by the organisation's capacity to translate community experiences into structured research and policy analysis. By combining field documentation with legal and institutional analysis, HURIA is able to produce evidence that resonates both with affected communities and with policymakers responsible for designing reforms.

Another important strength is HURIA's strategic engagement with policy institutions. Rather than limiting its role to advocacy campaigns, the organisation actively

participates in legislative consultations, parliamentary hearings, and multi-stakeholder policy dialogues. This direct engagement with decision-making processes increases the likelihood that research findings will inform policy outcomes.

HURIA also benefits from its interdisciplinary approach to human rights research. The organisation's work integrates legal analysis, political economy perspectives, and qualitative field research, enabling it to examine governance challenges from multiple dimensions. This comprehensive approach strengthens the credibility and relevance of its research outputs.

Finally, HURIA's ability to build partnerships with other civil society organisations, academic institutions, and advocacy networks further amplifies the impact of its work. Through coalition-building and collaborative advocacy, the organisation contributes to broader movements for accountability and institutional reform.

Taken together, these strengths position HURIA as an important actor within Kenya's civil society landscape, capable of connecting community realities with national policy debates and contributing to evidence-informed governance reforms.

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## 2.2 Research Portfolio: A Decade of Evidence Generation

Over the past decade, Human Rights Agenda (HURIA) has built a substantial research portfolio examining critical governance, human rights, and justice challenges affecting communities in Kenya. At the core of this work is the recognition that credible, systematic evidence is essential for informing public debate, shaping policy processes, and strengthening institutional accountability.

HURIA's research reflects both national governance priorities and the lived experiences of communities, particularly in historically marginalised regions such as Kenya's coastal counties. Through field investigations, legal and policy analysis, and documentation of human rights violations, the organisation has generated evidence on key issues including civic space, security sector accountability, counterterrorism practices, enforced disappearances, land and resource governance, gender inequalities, and electoral governance.

Beyond documenting violations, HURIA's research aims to inform policy reform and institutional oversight by producing actionable recommendations for legislators, public institutions, and civil society actors. By combining community testimonies with legal and political economy analysis, the organisation's work provides insight into the structural drivers of governance challenges and potential pathways for reform.

This section outlines the major thematic areas that have shaped HURIA's research agenda over the past decade, highlighting the organisation's role in generating evidence that supports advocacy, policy engagement, and accountability efforts.

### 2.2.1 Overview of HURIA's Research Portfolio

Over the past decade, **Human Rights Agenda (HURIA)** has developed a robust research portfolio that supports its advocacy, policy engagement, and accountability work in Kenya. The organisation's research approach combines **field-based documentation, legal analysis, and governance assessments** to generate evidence on systemic human rights challenges affecting communities, particularly at the Coast.

HURIA's research framework is grounded in three core principles. First, it prioritises **community-centred evidence generation**, documenting the lived experiences of individuals affected by human rights violations and governance failures. Second, it emphasises **analytical rigour and accessibility**, ensuring that research findings can inform policymakers, civil society actors, and public discourse. Third, research outputs are designed to **directly support advocacy and institutional reform**, linking grassroots evidence with national policy engagement and international human rights mechanisms.

Through this approach, HURIA has produced **reports, policy briefs, legal analyses, and case documentation studies** that inform advocacy campaigns, parliamentary submissions, litigation support, and public accountability initiatives.

- **Numerous case documentation files** supporting legal advocacy on issues such as enforced disappearances, misuse of counterterrorism legislation, and civic space violations.
- **Evidence submissions to parliamentary committees, government agencies, and constitutional commissions**, including contributions to public policy consultations.
- **Engagement with international human rights mechanisms**, where HURIA research has informed submissions to regional and global accountability processes.

Collectively, this body of work reflects HURIA's role as an **independent evidence generator and policy advocate**, linking grassroots documentation with national governance debates and institutional reforms.

The organisation's research portfolio is structured around several interrelated thematic areas outlined below.

### 2.2.2 Snapshot of HURIA's Research and Knowledge Outputs (2014–2025)

Over the past decade, HURIA has built a substantial body of evidence on governance and human rights issues affecting Kenya's coastal region and the country more broadly.

Key outputs include:

- **40+ research reports and documentation studies** addressing governance, human rights, security sector accountability, land rights, and resource governance.
- **25+ policy briefs and advocacy papers** produced to inform legislative debates, public policy reforms, and institutional accountability processes.

### 2.2.3

#### *Civic Space, Governance and Democratic Accountability*

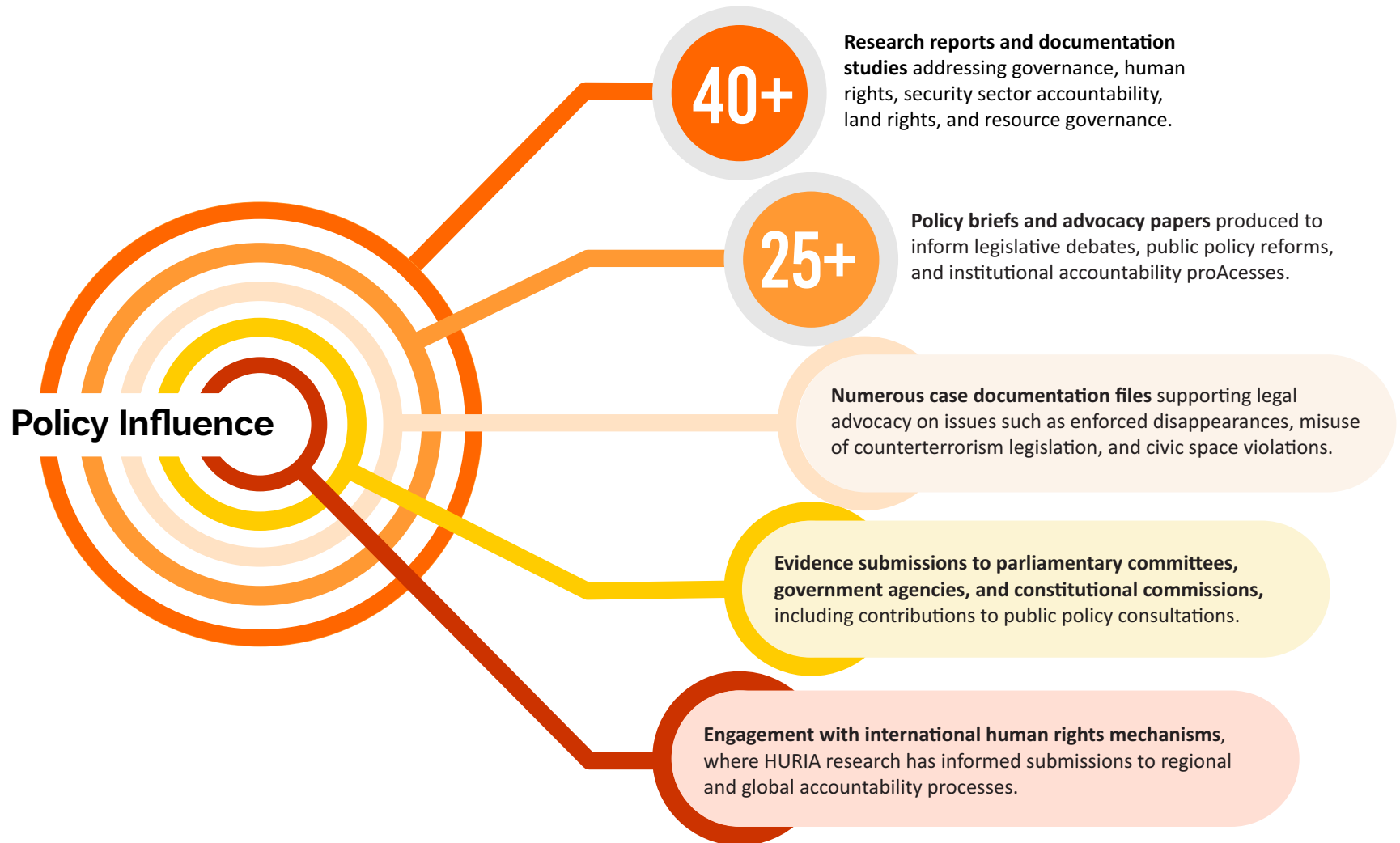
HURIA's research on civic space focuses on the **legal, political, and institutional conditions that enable citizens to exercise their constitutional rights**, including freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly.

Research in this area analyses legislative developments, government policies, and security practices affecting civic participation. Particular attention has been given to **regulation of public protests, restrictions on civil society activities, and limitations on media freedom**.

Through documentation of protest responses and legislative proposals, HURIA has highlighted patterns of **excessive use of force, arbitrary arrests, and administrative restrictions** that undermine democratic participation. This evidence contributes to national debates on **protecting civic freedoms and strengthening democratic accountability mechanisms**.

# Advocacy Architecture

Snapshot of HURIA's Research and Knowledge Outputs (2014–2025)



2.2.4

### *Counterterrorism, Radicalisation and Security Sector Accountability*

Kenya's counterterrorism framework has generated ongoing debates regarding the balance between **national security and human rights protections**. HURIA's research in this area examines how counterterrorism policies and laws are implemented in practice, particularly in regions affected by intensive security operations.

Through field investigations and legal analysis, the organisation has documented concerns relating to **arbitrary arrests, prolonged detention, community profiling, and misuse of counterterrorism legislation**, including the application of the Prevention of Terrorism Act in non-violent contexts.

HURIA's research also examines **drivers of radicalisation**, including socio-economic marginalisation, political grievances, and perceptions of injustice. By analysing these structural factors, the organisation contributes to policy discussions on **preventing violent extremism through community-based and rights-respecting approaches**.

2.2.5

### *Enforced Disappearances and Extrajudicial Violations*

The documentation of **enforced disappearances and extrajudicial violations** represents one of HURIA's most significant research and advocacy areas. Through field investigations and engagement with victims' families, the organisation has documented cases involving alleged security sector involvement in disappearances and unlawful killings.

This research highlights both the **human impact of these violations** and the **institutional accountability gaps** that allow them to persist. Testimonies from affected families reveal profound psychological, social, and economic consequences, particularly in communities with limited access to justice mechanisms.

HURIA's research has also examined **Kenya's legal obligations under international human rights law**, including gaps in domestic legislation addressing enforced disappearance. These findings support advocacy efforts aimed at **strengthening oversight of security institutions and improving legal accountability frameworks**.

2.2.6

### *Land, Resource Governance and Community Rights*

Land and natural resource governance remain central to many governance disputes in Kenya, particularly in coastal counties affected by **historical land injustices, tenure insecurity, and contested resource management systems**.

HURIA's research examines how land administration, policy frameworks, and resource governance arrangements affect **community rights, livelihoods, and equitable development**. Studies have addressed issues such as **community land disputes, access to fishing grounds, and registration of fish landing sites**.

By documenting these governance challenges, HURIA contributes evidence to policy discussions on **land reform, equitable resource management, and protection of community livelihoods**.

2.2.7

### *Gender and Social Justice*

Recognising that governance challenges often have **gendered impacts**, HURIA integrates gender analysis across its research portfolio. Studies in this area focus on structural inequalities affecting women and other marginalised groups in access to resources, decision-making processes, and economic opportunities.

Research has examined issues such as **women's access to land ownership, participation in local governance structures, and barriers to economic inclusion**. These findings highlight the intersection between gender inequality, socio-economic marginalisation, and governance systems.

By documenting these dynamics, HURIA's research contributes to advocacy for **gender-responsive policies and stronger protections for women's rights**.



2.2.8

### *Electoral Governance and Political Participation*

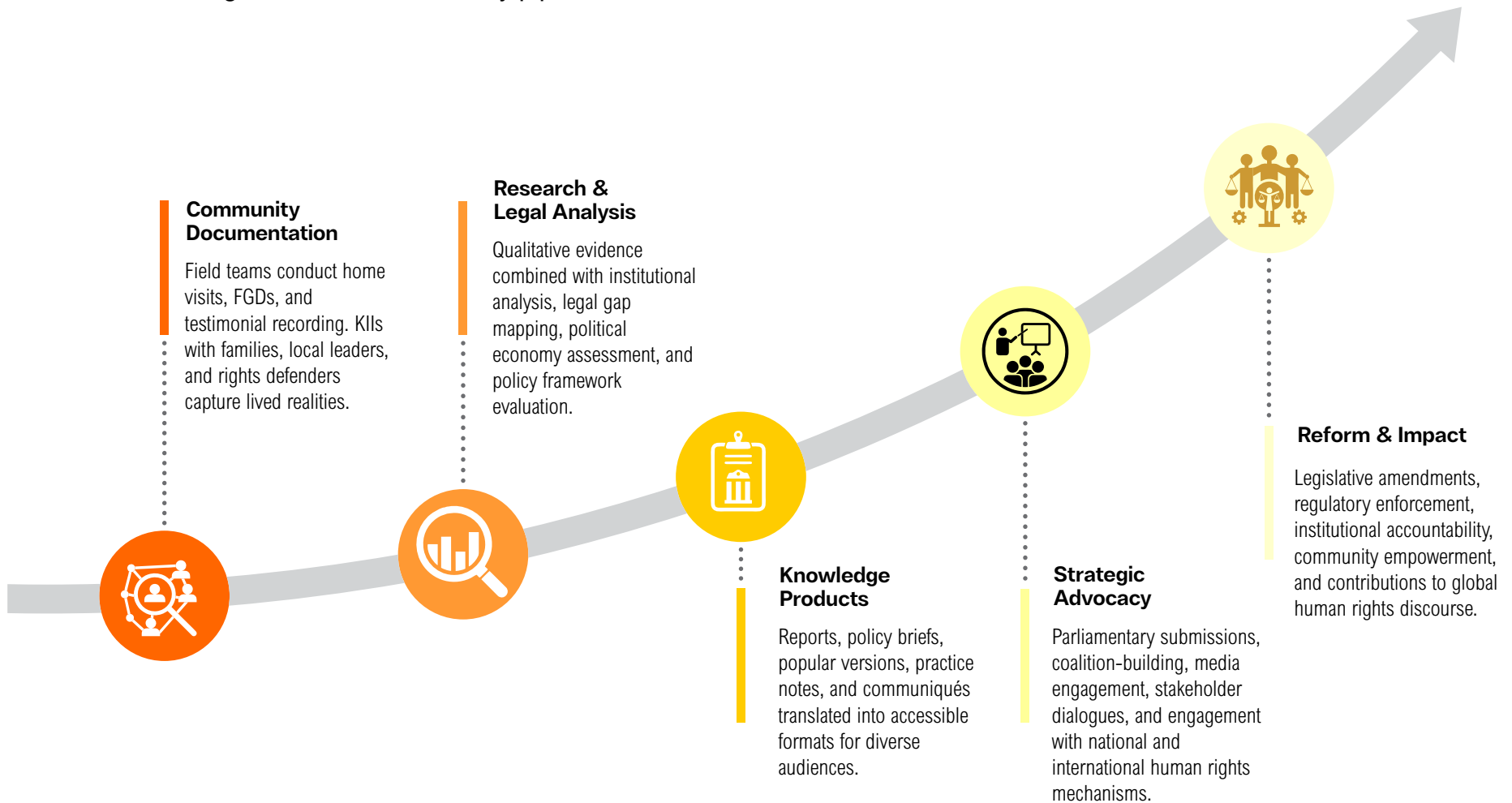
Electoral processes represent a critical test of democratic governance in Kenya. HURIA's research on electoral governance examines challenges affecting **electoral integrity, political participation, and protection of civil liberties during election cycles.**

Through observation, analysis, and community engagement, the organisation has documented issues such as **voter intimidation, political mobilisation of violence, and the role of security actors during elections.**

Research also explores the institutional frameworks governing elections, including **electoral management bodies, legal safeguards, and dispute resolution mechanisms.** This work contributes to national discussions on **strengthening electoral transparency, promoting peaceful political participation, and safeguarding democratic processes.**

# From Evidence to Policy Reform

HURIA's five-stage evidence-to-advocacy pipeline





## CHAPTER THREE

# From Evidence to Advocacy: Translating Research into Policy Influence

For civil society organisations working on governance and human rights, the generation of evidence is only the first step in advancing meaningful reform. The ability to translate research findings into advocacy strategies, policy engagement, and institutional dialogue is what ultimately determines whether evidence contributes to tangible change.

Human Rights Agenda (HURIA) has adopted a strategic approach that integrates research with advocacy and policy engagement. Rather than treating research as a stand-alone activity, the organisation positions evidence generation as the foundation of its broader reform agenda.

Research findings are systematically translated into policy recommendations, legislative submissions, public advocacy campaigns, and engagement with national and international accountability mechanisms.

Through this approach, HURIA has been able to connect community-level experiences with national governance debates, ensuring that the voices of affected populations inform policy discussions and reform processes.

This chapter examines the key strategies through which HURIA has transformed research outputs into policy influence over the past decade.

### 3.1 Evidence-Based Advocacy as an Institutional Strategy

Evidence-based advocacy lies at the core of HURIA's institutional model. The organisation's work is premised on the understanding that credible research and documentation provide a powerful foundation for influencing governance reforms.

HURIA's advocacy initiatives are therefore grounded in empirical evidence generated through field research, legal analysis, and community documentation. By systematically documenting violations, governance failures, and institutional gaps, the organisation is able to substantiate its advocacy positions with verifiable data and credible analysis.

This approach enhances the legitimacy of HURIA's advocacy efforts and strengthens its engagement with policymakers, oversight institutions, and development partners. Evidence-based advocacy also allows the organisation to move beyond reactive responses to individual incidents and instead highlight broader systemic problems that require structural reforms. In practice, this strategy involves translating research findings into policy briefs, legislative proposals, legal analyses, and advocacy campaigns designed to influence institutional behaviour and public discourse.

## 3.2 Parliamentary Engagement and Legislative Advocacy

One of the most significant avenues through which HURIA has sought to influence policy has been engagement with parliamentary processes. Parliament plays a central role in shaping Kenya's legislative and governance framework, making it a critical arena for civil society advocacy.

Over the years, HURIA has actively participated in parliamentary consultations, public hearings, and committee proceedings related to human rights and governance reforms. Through written submissions and oral presentations, the organisation has presented research findings and policy recommendations to parliamentary committees responsible for justice, legal affairs, security, and human rights.

These engagements have enabled HURIA to contribute to legislative discussions on issues such as the criminalisation of enforced disappearances, reforms in counterterrorism legislation, and the protection of civic space.

By grounding its submissions in empirical research and documented case studies, HURIA is able to provide lawmakers with evidence that illustrates both the human impact of governance failures and the legal gaps that require reform.

Parliamentary engagement also provides an opportunity for civil society organisations to shape public debate and ensure that legislative processes incorporate the perspectives of affected communities.

## 3.3 Strategic Litigation, Legal Reform and Policy Advocacy

In addition to legislative engagement, HURIA's research has informed broader efforts to strengthen legal and policy frameworks addressing human rights violations.

Legal analysis conducted as part of the organisation's research work has highlighted gaps within Kenya's domestic legislation, particularly in areas such as enforced disappearances and accountability for security sector abuses. By identifying these gaps, HURIA has contributed to advocacy initiatives calling for legal reforms aligned with international human rights standards.

While not primarily a litigation-focused organisation, HURIA's documentation and research outputs provide valuable evidence that can support legal interventions, public interest litigation, and accountability efforts pursued by civil society coalitions and legal advocacy groups.

The organisation also engages in policy advocacy aimed at influencing executive agencies and oversight institutions responsible for implementing governance reforms. This includes engagement with government ministries, independent commissions, and national human rights institutions.

Through these interactions, HURIA contributes to ongoing policy discussions and encourages institutional actors to adopt reforms informed by credible research evidence.

## Coalition Building and Civil Society Partnerships

Recognising that complex governance challenges require collective action, HURIA actively collaborates with other civil society organisations, research institutions, and advocacy networks.

Coalition-building enables organisations working on related issues to pool expertise, share research findings, and coordinate advocacy strategies aimed at influencing national policy processes. Through such partnerships, HURIA's research contributes to broader advocacy efforts that extend beyond the organisation's immediate institutional reach.

Collaborative advocacy initiatives have been particularly important in campaigns addressing enforced disappearances, civic space protection, and accountability for security sector abuses. In these contexts, HURIA's research outputs serve as important evidence supporting collective advocacy positions and policy recommendations. Participation in national and regional civil society networks also allows HURIA to engage with broader policy discussions and contribute to coordinated responses to emerging governance challenges.

## Engagement with International and Regional Human Rights Mechanisms

HURIA's evidence generation efforts also contribute to international and regional human rights accountability processes. By documenting violations and governance challenges at the national level, the organisation provides information that can inform engagement with international oversight bodies and human rights mechanisms.

Civil society organisations play a crucial role in ensuring that international human rights frameworks reflect the realities experienced by local communities. Through research reports, submissions, and policy analyses, organisations such as HURIA contribute to the

monitoring of states' compliance with international obligations.

These engagements provide additional avenues for raising awareness about governance challenges and encouraging governments to implement reforms consistent with international human rights standards. For HURIA, engagement with international mechanisms complements national advocacy efforts by amplifying evidence generated through community-based research and placing governance challenges within broader global accountability frameworks.

## Public Advocacy, Media Engagement and Knowledge Dissemination

Beyond institutional engagement, HURIA recognises the importance of public awareness in advancing governance reforms. Research findings are therefore disseminated through multiple channels aimed at reaching diverse audiences, including policymakers, civil society actors, media organisations, and the general public.

The organisation publishes research reports, policy briefs, and analytical articles that translate complex research findings into accessible narratives. Public forums, community dialogues, and stakeholder workshops provide additional platforms for sharing evidence and promoting informed discussion on governance issues.

Media engagement also plays an important role in amplifying research findings and bringing attention to issues affecting marginalised communities. By engaging with journalists and public commentators, HURIA contributes to shaping public discourse around human rights, accountability, and governance reforms.

Through these combined strategies, the organisation ensures that evidence generated through research does not remain confined to academic or policy circles but instead informs broader societal debates.

## From Knowledge to Reform: Lessons from a Decade of Advocacy

A decade of experience in evidence-based advocacy has generated important lessons for HURIA and the broader civil society community.

*First*, credible and systematic research significantly strengthens advocacy efforts. Policymakers and institutions are more likely to engage constructively with reform proposals that are supported by reliable data and well-documented case studies.

*Second*, sustained engagement with policy processes is essential for translating research into reform. Evidence alone is rarely sufficient to drive change; it must be accompanied by persistent advocacy, coalition-building, and strategic engagement with decision-makers.

*Third*, the integration of community voices into research and advocacy processes enhances the legitimacy and relevance of policy recommendations. When research reflects the experiences of affected populations, it becomes a powerful tool for amplifying marginalised perspectives within national policy debates.

*Finally*, the combination of local evidence generation and engagement with broader national and international mechanisms creates multiple pathways for influencing governance reforms.

These lessons continue to shape HURIA's approach to research and advocacy as the organisation works to strengthen accountability, protect civic freedoms, and promote human rights in Kenya.

# 4

## CHAPTER FOUR

# Case Studies of Policy Influence

Over the past decade, Human Rights Agenda (HURIA) has demonstrated how community-based research and systematic documentation can shape national policy debates and drive institutional reform. By engaging directly with affected communities, policymakers, and civil society partners, HURIA has translated evidence into advocacy initiatives that influence legislation, public discourse, and governance practices.

This chapter presents selected case studies illustrating how HURIA's research has informed policy processes across key thematic areas, highlighting the pathways through which grassroots evidence, field investigations, and policy analysis can advance legislative advocacy and institutional dialogue.

### 4.1 Advancing the Criminalisation of Enforced Disappearances

HURIA has been a leading voice in advocating for strengthened legal protections against enforced disappearances in Kenya. Families of victims have historically faced immense barriers in seeking justice, as the domestic legal framework lacked a specific offence addressing enforced disappearance.

Through comprehensive research and documentation, HURIA highlighted the human impact and systemic gaps in the legal system. The publication of **“Unseen, Unaccounted and Unrecognised: The Harsh Realities of Enforced Disappearances Victims and the Quest for Redress in Kenya”** provided evidence-based recommendations for legislative reform.

Beyond research, HURIA engaged in civil society consultations and participated in parliamentary hearings, including with the National Assembly's Committee on Public Petitions in October 2023. By presenting documented cases and legal analysis, HURIA contributed to growing momentum for the criminalisation of enforced disappearances, aligning Kenya's framework with international human rights standards.

### 4.2 Documenting the Misuse of Counterterrorism Laws

HURIA has critically examined Kenya's Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA), highlighting concerns over its application in ways that compromise civil liberties. Through systematic documentation of court cases, community testimonies, and legal analysis, HURIA exposed instances where individuals were charged under counterterrorism provisions despite weak or contested evidence.

The Shakahola tragedy illustrated the challenges of applying POTA to cases of non-violent radicalisation resulting in mass harm. HURIA's analysis clarified the legal complexities and informed advocacy for safeguards in counterterrorism law, including improved prosecutorial standards and stronger judicial oversight. These efforts have contributed to national discussions on balancing security objectives with fundamental rights.

## Protecting Civic Space

HURIA has also played a central role in defending civic space in Kenya, particularly in response to restrictive legislative proposals following the **Saba Saba demonstrations**. Through monitoring, documentation, and policy analysis, the organisation highlighted threats to freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly, including the use of excessive force against protestors and measures that could undermine constitutional rights.

By combining legal analysis with incident documentation, HURIA informed public debate and advocacy, reinforcing the importance of protecting civic space as a core pillar of democratic governance.

## Influencing Resource Governance

HURIA's work on land and natural resource governance demonstrates how evidence can inform policy in economic and community development. In Kwale County, research on fish landing sites documented challenges in registration, governance, and community access.

Through detailed reports and community-friendly publications, HURIA highlighted administrative gaps and socio-economic implications, contributing to policy discussions on sustainable fisheries management and community rights. This work exemplifies how grassroots evidence can strengthen institutional accountability and inform regulatory reforms.

# From *Polluted Justice* to Policy Reform

Environmental Justice & Extractive Sector Governance

*How Local Evidence Generated by HURIA Shaped Environmental Governance and Corporate Accountability in Kenya's Extractive Sector*

## 1 Background: Why Evidence Was Needed

The work of Human Rights Agenda (HURIA) in advancing environmental justice along Kenya's Coast began with growing complaints from communities living near industrial operations in Kaloleni Sub-County in Kilifi County. Residents reported persistent dust pollution, environmental degradation, and health complications that they believed were linked to nearby cement manufacturing and quarrying activities associated with Athi River Mining Company.

Communities described declining agricultural productivity, contamination of water sources, and respiratory illnesses linked to air pollution from industrial operations. Yet despite these experiences, affected residents struggled to obtain remedies or hold companies accountable. Environmental laws existed, but enforcement mechanisms were weak and communities lacked access to information about their rights or the regulatory obligations of corporations.

This disconnect between environmental regulations and the lived realities of communities highlighted a governance gap in environmental protection and corporate accountability in Kenya. In response, HURIA undertook the *Polluted Justice* study to document these experiences and generate credible evidence that could inform advocacy and policy engagement.

Through community consultations, interviews with affected residents, and analysis of environmental governance frameworks, the research revealed that pollution-related grievances were closely linked to broader issues of regulatory enforcement, access to justice, and public participation in environmental decision-making. The study demonstrated that environmental harm was not only an ecological concern but also a public health and human rights issue.

## 2 Expanding the Evidence: Mining Sector Compliance Assessment

The findings from Kaloleni prompted HURIA to examine whether similar governance challenges existed in the broader extractive sector along Kenya's Coast. As mining activities expanded in the region, concerns were emerging about environmental impacts, limited community participation, and weak monitoring of corporate compliance.

Under the Environmental Justice and Corporate Accountability Project supported through the Changieni Rasilimali Facility, HURIA expanded its research to assess compliance with environmental, health, and safety standards among mining companies operating across Kwale County, Kilifi County, and Taita Taveta County.

Working in partnership with Pwani University and Taita Taveta University College, the organization conducted a comprehensive assessment of mining companies' compliance with regulatory standards. The study analyzed environmental management practices, community consultation processes, and enforcement of environmental and occupational health regulations.

The research confirmed that many of the issues identified in Kaloleni reflected wider systemic governance challenges within Kenya's extractive sector. These included gaps in environmental monitoring, limited community involvement in Environmental Impact Assessment processes, and weak accountability mechanisms for addressing environmental grievances.

Together, the *Polluted Justice* and *Mining and Environment* studies generated a strong body of locally grounded evidence on environmental governance challenges affecting communities in extractive zones.

3

### **Evidence-Based Advocacy and Parliamentary Engagement**

HURIA strategically used the evidence generated through its research to influence policy and legislative processes at both county and national levels.

The organization convened stakeholder forums in Kilifi, Kwale, and Taita Taveta counties to disseminate research findings and collect community recommendations. These forums brought together community leaders, county officials, civil society actors, and technical experts to discuss environmental governance challenges and possible policy solutions.

The outcomes of these consultations were compiled into memoranda and policy submissions that were presented to national decision-making bodies, including parliamentary committees responsible for environmental governance, natural resources, and public health oversight.

Drawing on evidence linking environmental pollution to community health impacts, HURIA engaged relevant parliamentary committees, particularly those responsible for environment, natural resources, and health to highlight the public health implications of weak environmental regulation in extractive areas.

The organization also supported community representatives in submitting petitions and memoranda to legislative bodies, ensuring that the lived experiences of affected communities informed national policy debates. These submissions contributed to deliberations on key legislative processes, including the Mining Bill 2014 and proposed reforms to the Environmental Management and Coordination framework.

Through these engagements, HURIA mobilized the Coastal Parliamentary Caucus to advocate for stronger provisions on community participation, environmental stewardship, and benefit-sharing mechanisms within the mining legal framework.

At the county level, the organization also supported communities to submit policy inputs into emerging environmental legislation, including county environmental bills and regulatory frameworks related to natural resource governance.

4

### **Building Community Oversight and Participation**

Alongside policy advocacy, HURIA invested heavily in strengthening community capacity to monitor environmental compliance and participate in governance processes.

Through the project, the organization trained a network of 90 environmental champions drawn from communities in Kilifi, Kwale, and Taita Taveta counties. These community monitors were equipped with knowledge on environmental regulations, monitoring tools, and mechanisms for reporting corporate non-compliance.

More than 1,000 community members were sensitized on their constitutional right to a clean and healthy environment as guaranteed under the Constitution of Kenya 2010. Training sessions also targeted civil society actors, youth groups, and county assembly representatives to strengthen their participation in Environmental Impact Assessment processes associated with mining projects.

These initiatives created a grassroots network of environmental monitors capable of sustaining oversight and advocacy efforts beyond the life of the project.

5

### **Tangible Impact and Governance Outcomes**

The Environmental Justice and Corporate Accountability Project generated measurable outcomes demonstrating the impact of HURIA's evidence-based advocacy approach.

Research conducted under the project provided empirical evidence on mining companies' compliance with environmental, health, and safety standards across three coastal counties. The findings informed policy advocacy aimed at strengthening environmental governance and regulatory enforcement.

Community advocacy efforts supported by HURIA also contributed to regulatory action against non-compliant companies. In one case, a mining company operating in the Chasimba area of Kilifi County was shut down by the Cabinet Secretary responsible for environment after investigations revealed that the company was operating without proper licensing and failing to comply with environmental regulations.

The project also strengthened public awareness of environmental justice issues. Media coverage of the research findings helped elevate the connection

between environmental protection, public health, and human rights within national discussions on natural resource governance.

Overall, HURIA's initiatives directly reached more than 2,000 individuals across Kilifi, Kwale, and Taita Taveta counties through training programs, stakeholder forums, and public awareness activities.

6

### **Lessons for Evidence-Based Policy Advocacy**

HURIA's experience demonstrated the effectiveness of research-driven advocacy in addressing environmental governance challenges in the extractive sector.

Evidence generated through field-based research strengthened the credibility of community concerns and provided policymakers with concrete data needed to inform legislative reforms. Engagement with parliamentary committees and submission of community petitions ensured that grassroots experiences influenced national policy discussions.

Partnerships with academic institutions, civil society organizations, and government oversight bodies also played a critical role in enhancing the legitimacy and reach of the advocacy effort.

Finally, building community capacity to monitor environmental compliance helped establish sustainable local oversight mechanisms capable of promoting corporate accountability in the long term.

7

### **Conclusion**

The progression from *Polluted Justice* to broader policy engagement illustrates how community-generated evidence can influence governance reforms in complex sectors such as mining and natural resource management.

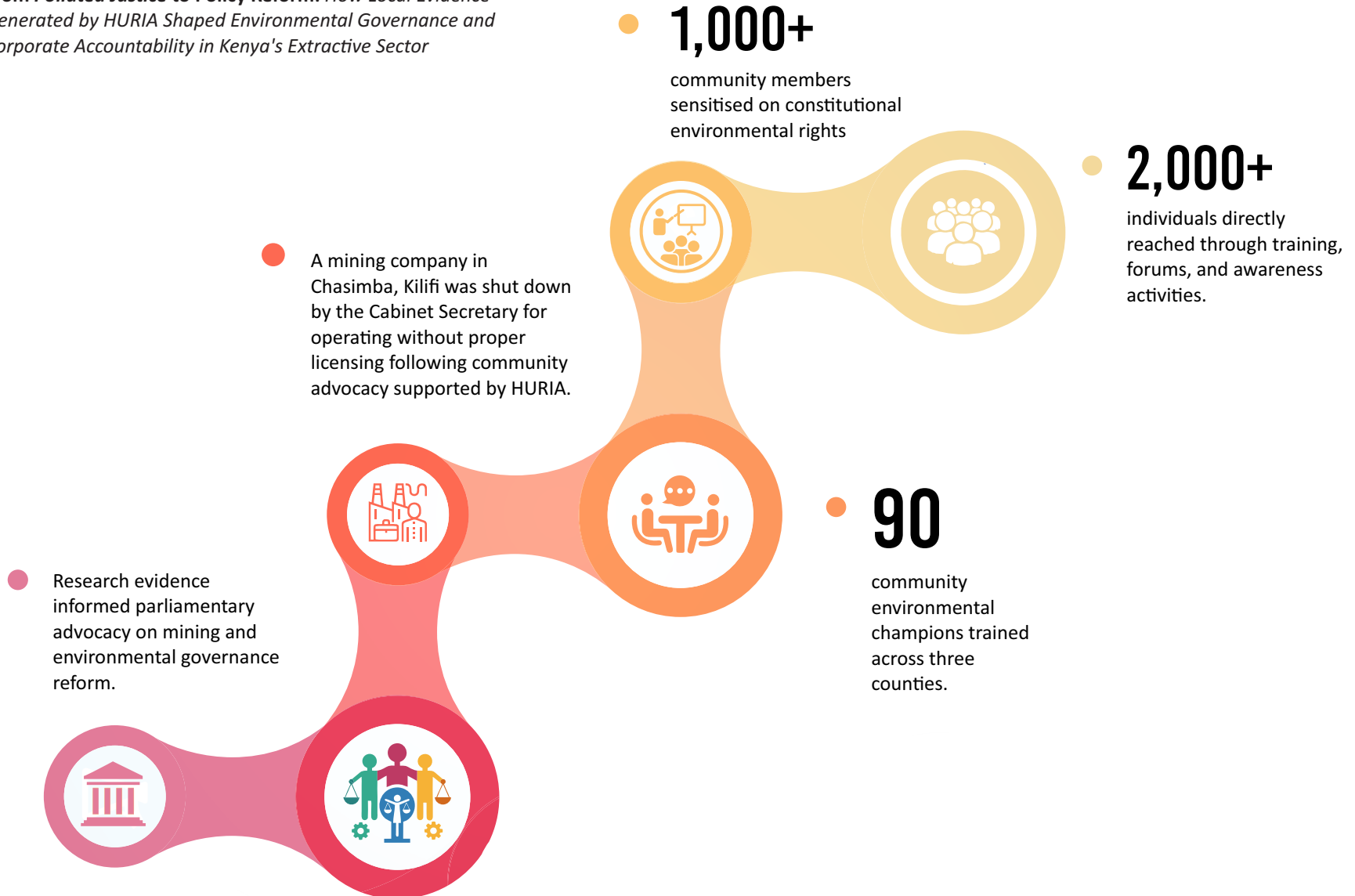
By documenting environmental harm, expanding research across the extractive sector, and strategically engaging policymakers, including parliamentary committees responsible for environment, natural resources, and public health, Human Rights Agenda (HURIA) successfully translated local evidence into policy influence.

The case demonstrates how civil society organizations can bridge the gap between community experiences and national policy processes, ensuring that environmental governance frameworks protect both ecosystems and the rights of communities living in resource-rich regions.

**Case Study 1:**

# Tangible Outcomes

*From Polluted Justice to Policy Reform: How Local Evidence Generated by HURIA Shaped Environmental Governance and Corporate Accountability in Kenya's Extractive Sector*



# 0.2 Corporate Accountability in Responsible Mining

Strengthening Human Rights Due Diligence

## How HURIA Helped Strengthen Responsible Mining at Base Resources

1

### Background: Responsible Mining in High-Risk Contexts

The extractive sector often operates in environments where governance gaps, informal labour markets, and weak regulatory enforcement create heightened risks of labour exploitation and modern slavery. Companies operating in such contexts increasingly face pressure from regulators, investors, and global markets to demonstrate robust human rights due diligence and transparent supply chain management.

For companies headquartered in jurisdictions with strong regulatory frameworks, these expectations are also legal obligations. Australian companies with a consolidated annual revenue of at least AUD 100 million must comply with the reporting requirements under the Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Cth). The law requires businesses to identify and address modern slavery risks in their operations and supply chains and to publicly report on the measures taken to mitigate those risks.

Within this regulatory and ethical landscape, Base Resources, an Australian mining company operating the Kwale Mineral Sands Project in Kenya through its subsidiary Base Titanium Limited (BTL), sought to strengthen its understanding of local human rights risks and align its operations with both global responsible mining standards and statutory reporting obligations.

Recognising the importance of credible local expertise, the company partnered with Human Rights Agenda Mombasa (HURIA), a Kenyan civil society organisation with extensive experience in human rights research, community engagement, and accountability advocacy.

2

### Building an Evidence Base: HURIA's Research on Modern Slavery Risks

The partnership between HURIA and Base Resources began with a critical need: to generate reliable, context-specific evidence on modern slavery risks within the company's operational environment and supply chain.

HURIA conducted comprehensive field research across Kwale and Mombasa counties, where Base Resources' operations and supply networks are concentrated. The research combined community consultations, stakeholder interviews, supplier engagement, and contextual risk analysis to examine labour conditions, recruitment practices, and vulnerabilities within local supply chains.

This work allowed HURIA to identify structural risk factors associated with modern slavery, including informal labour arrangements, limited awareness of labour rights among small suppliers, and compliance gaps among contractors and service providers. Importantly, the research translated local realities into practical insights capable of informing corporate decision-making and strengthening responsible sourcing frameworks.

Through this research partnership, Base Resources gained a clearer understanding of where risks were concentrated, which suppliers required additional support, and what types of interventions would be most effective. The findings subsequently informed the company's approach to managing modern slavery risks within its Kenyan operations.

3

### *From Research to Action: Designing the Modern Slavery Programme*

The insights generated by HURIA's research directly informed the design of Base Resources' Modern Slavery Programme for its Kenyan operations.

Using the risk assessments developed through the partnership, the company was able to identify higher-risk suppliers and operational vulnerabilities within its value chain. This enabled Base Resources to move beyond generic policy commitments toward targeted, evidence-based interventions.

A central component of the programme involved supplier capacity-building initiatives designed to improve understanding of modern slavery risks and responsible labour practices. The programme included structured in-person training workshops, interactive online learning modules, and direct engagement with suppliers to support the adoption of compliance systems aligned with international human rights standards.

By grounding these interventions in locally generated research, HURIA ensured that the programme addressed real vulnerabilities within the Kenyan context rather than relying solely on externally developed corporate frameworks.

4

### *Strengthening Transparency and Stakeholder Engagement*

Another important dimension of the partnership involved strengthening stakeholder engagement and accountability mechanisms.

HURIA facilitated dialogue between Base Resources and its local suppliers and stakeholders, ensuring that supply chain actors understood the risks associated with modern slavery and their responsibilities in preventing labour exploitation. These engagements helped create a more transparent environment in which suppliers were supported in improving labour standards rather than simply subjected to compliance monitoring.

This collaborative approach reflected global best practices in responsible mining and corporate human rights due diligence. It also strengthened Base Resources' ability to demonstrate meaningful stakeholder engagement, an increasingly important benchmark used by regulators, investors, and industry evaluators to assess corporate governance practices.

5

### *Supporting Compliance with Statutory Reporting Obligations*

Beyond strengthening operational practices, HURIA's research and engagement work played a critical role in supporting Base Resources' compliance with the reporting obligations established under the Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Cth).

Under Section 16 of the Act, companies must report on their structure, operations, and supply chains, identify modern slavery risks, describe the actions taken to address those risks, assess the effectiveness of those actions, and outline consultation processes across entities within the organisation.

HURIA's research enabled Base Resources to map modern slavery risks across its operational landscape and supplier networks, providing evidence to support the risk identification sections of the company's Modern Slavery Statement. The mitigation measures derived from the research including supplier training and policy implementation support, formed part of the company's documented actions to address those risks.

Additionally, HURIA's facilitation of engagement with suppliers and other stakeholders strengthened the consultation and accountability components required under the Act, contributing to the credibility of the company's annual disclosures on Australia's public modern slavery reporting register.<sup>5</sup>

6

### *International Recognition at the African Mining Indaba*

The impact of these initiatives gained international recognition at the African Mining Indaba held in Cape Town in 2024. Widely regarded as the leading mining investment and policy forum for Africa, the event brings together governments, industry leaders, investors, and civil society organisations to promote responsible mining across the continent.

During the 2024 event, Base Resources received three Responsible Resourcing Awards, including the overall award for Excellence in Best Practices and awards in the Transparency and Economy categories. The Transparency Award specifically recognises companies demonstrating leading practices in accountability, integrity, and governance.

A key criterion for the award is the extent to which companies collaborate with credible third-party partners to address complex human rights challenges. In presenting its modern slavery programme, Base Resources acknowledged the contributions of its partners including HURIA, in strengthening the design and implementation of its responsible sourcing initiatives.

The judging panel was led by Estelle Levin-Nally, an internationally recognised expert on responsible mineral sourcing and supply chain governance. Recognition from a panel of this calibre underscored the credibility and impact of the company's collaborative approach to addressing modern slavery risks.

society can improve governance standards, enhance supply chain transparency, and contribute to the protection of vulnerable workers in resource-rich regions.

The recognition received by Base Resources at the African Mining Indaba highlights the growing importance of such partnerships. It also demonstrates how locally grounded human rights expertise can help companies meet both legal obligations and the expanding global expectations for ethical and responsible resource extraction.

7

### **Impact and Lessons**

The partnership between HURIA and Base Resources demonstrates the critical role that civil society organisations can play in strengthening corporate accountability in complex operating environments.

Through rigorous research, contextual knowledge, and sustained engagement with suppliers and communities, HURIA helped translate corporate commitments into practical interventions tailored to local realities. The collaboration enabled Base Resources to strengthen its risk identification processes, implement targeted mitigation strategies, and demonstrate compliance with international regulatory frameworks.

At a broader level, the partnership illustrates how collaboration between corporations and civil



### **International Recognition — 2024 African Mining Indaba**

Base Titanium received three Responsible Resourcing Awards at the 2024 African Mining Indaba, including the overall award for Excellence in Best Practices and awards in Transparency and Economy categories.

The company acknowledged HURIA's contributions to the design and implementation of its responsible sourcing initiatives.

Transforming Grassroots Evidence into Legislative Reform — HURIA's Advocacy on Enforced Disappearances in Kenya (2016–2026)

1

Executive Summary

Human Rights Agenda (HURIA) has spent over a decade advancing human rights protections in Kenya's coastal region, focusing particularly on enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings. Through systematic community documentation, national advocacy, report publications, and strategic petitions to Parliament, HURIA has successfully transformed grassroots evidence into actionable policy and legislative reforms. This case study chronicles the organization's journey from local complaint recording in Kwale County to influencing national law and international human rights reporting, demonstrating how civil society can bridge community experiences with systemic change.

2

The Challenge

From 2016 onwards, families in Kwale County, especially in Msambweni and Matuga sub-counties, began reporting the sudden disappearance of relatives under circumstances suggesting state involvement. Abductions occurred in both public and private spaces, typically carried out by men in multiple vehicles, often in plain clothes and masks. Victims were rarely presented in court or officially acknowledged in state custody. Families were left in prolonged uncertainty, facing social stigma, loss of livelihoods, and profound psychological distress. At the same time, the legal and institutional framework in Kenya lacked specific provisions to address enforced disappearances. Investigations frequently stalled, oversight mechanisms were weak, and existing laws on counterterrorism and civil registration were insufficient to prevent arbitrary arrests, secret detention, and ensure legal recognition for disappeared persons.

2

HURIA's Response

**Community Documentation and Awareness (2016–2022)**

Through its Public Complaints and Response Unit, HURIA became the first formal avenue for families to report cases of enforced disappearance. Between 2018 and 2022, the organization systematically documented twenty verified cases of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings across Bongwe–Gombato, Waa–Ngombeni, and Ramisi wards. Field teams conducted home visits and interviews to capture eyewitness accounts and assess the socio-economic and psychological impacts on affected families. HURIA organized four community awareness forums and seven focus group discussions, bringing together families, youth and women leaders, religious figures, local administrators, civil society actors, and media representatives to ensure that community voices informed advocacy. In parallel, HURIA engaged national oversight institutions, including the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, the Independent Policing Oversight Authority, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, and the Directorate of Criminal Investigations, highlighting stalled investigations and systemic gaps. These activities ensured that grassroots evidence was meticulously recorded and positioned HURIA as a credible intermediary between affected communities and state institutions.

3

### **Evidence-Based Reporting and Policy Advocacy (2023–2025)**

HURIA consolidated its findings into two landmark reports. The first, *“Who’s Next? An Account of Enforced Disappearances in Kwale County,”* published in December 2023, highlighted recurring abductions, extrajudicial killings, and institutional failures, while analyzing legal gaps, particularly the absence of a dedicated offence for enforced disappearance. The report recommended criminalization of enforced disappearance, strengthened oversight, inter-agency coordination, and mechanisms for justice and reparations. The second report, *“Unseen, Unaccounted, and Unrecognised: The Harsh Realities of Enforced Disappearances Victims and the Quest for Recognition,”* launched in December 2025, documented the lived realities of affected families, identified institutional and legal gaps, and provided actionable recommendations for recognition, justice, and psychosocial support.

HURIA’s reporting informed the Senate Standing Committee inquiries in 2021 into extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances, providing evidence on patterns of abuse, socio-economic consequences, and institutional weaknesses. HURIA also contributed to Kenya’s 2025 Universal Periodic Review submissions alongside national and international partners, highlighting coastal counterterrorism abuses, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and systemic impunity. Through this multi-level advocacy, HURIA amplified community voices in both national and international policy discussions.

4

### **Legislative Engagement and Draft Bill Development (2023–2025)**

Following the tabling of a public petition by Kituo cha Sheria in March 2023 urging criminalization of enforced disappearances, HURIA facilitated civil society consultations and multi-stakeholder workshops to refine the Draft Enforced Disappearance Prevention, Protection, and Accountability Bill, 2025. The draft legislation incorporated urgent search procedures, victim and family rights, accountability mechanisms, and reparations frameworks. Technical reviews conducted in December 2025 ensured alignment with constitutional guarantees and international human rights obligations, establishing a clear pathway for parliamentary consideration.

5

### **Strategic Petitions to Parliament (February 2026)**

In February 2026, HURIA advanced its advocacy through the submission of two landmark petitions to the National Assembly. The first petition focused on the Prevention of Terrorism Act (Cap 59B, 2012), proposing criminalization of enforced disappearance and torture, enhanced judicial oversight, independent monitoring of security agencies, and the establishment of county-level counterterrorism frameworks to better align Kenya’s counterterrorism law with constitutional and international human rights standards. The second petition addressed civil registration and legal recognition for missing persons by recommending amendments to the Public Trustee Act (Cap 168), the Criminal Procedure Code (Section 387), and the Births and Deaths Registration Act (Cap 149). This petition introduced clear procedures for issuing Certificates of Absence and Presumed Death, established a central registry for missing persons, and created mechanisms to allow families to manage estates and secure rights during prolonged disappearances. Both petitions were grounded in extensive community engagement, systematic documentation, and multi-stakeholder consultations, exemplifying HURIA’s strategy of transforming grassroots evidence into legislative advocacy.

6

### **Outcomes and Strategic Impact**

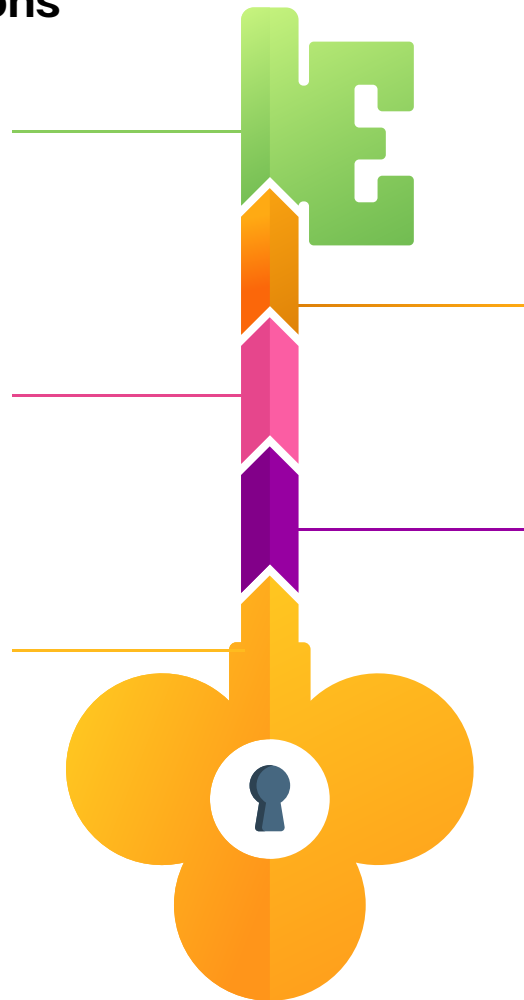
HURIA’s decade-long efforts demonstrate the transformative power of evidence-based advocacy. Systematic documentation of human rights violations provided the legitimacy and precision necessary for effective policy engagement. Community consultations amplified the voices of affected families, ensuring reforms reflected lived realities. By bridging local, national, and international platforms, HURIA strengthened the relevance and impact of its advocacy, while collaborations with civil society organizations, legal experts, and human rights institutions enhanced credibility and technical depth. Direct engagement with parliamentary committees and the submission of legislative proposals translated evidence into enforceable laws, institutional reforms, and frameworks for reparations, ultimately strengthening accountability, enhancing protections for victims, and advancing human rights in Kenya.

## Key Interventions

Research on misuse of POTA affecting coastal communities and parliamentary submissions on legal reform.

Analysis of the Shakahola case and identification of institutional accountability gaps.

Monitoring and documentation of civic space violations during 2023 protests.

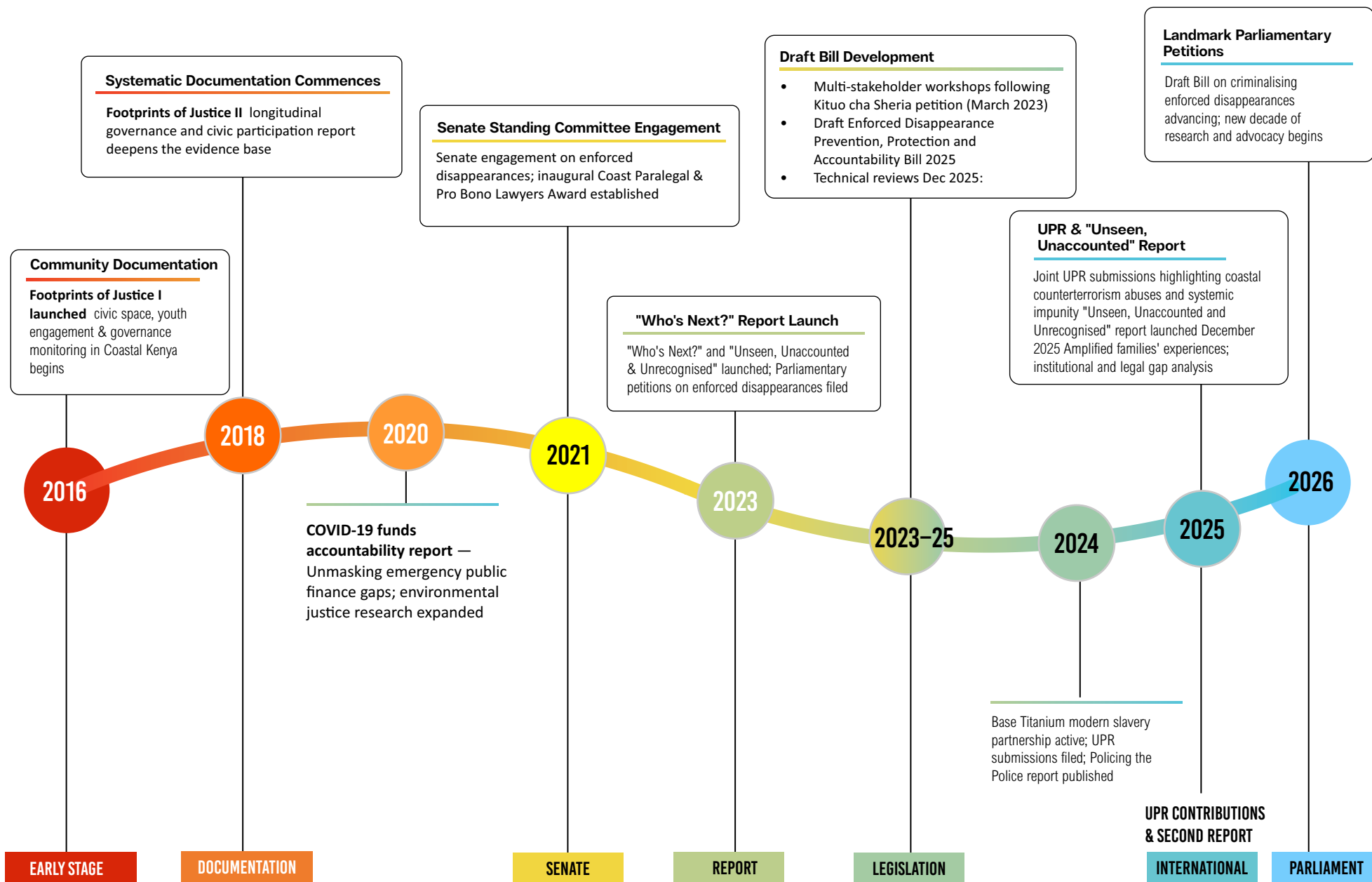


Documentation of enforced disappearances and legal analysis contributing to advocacy for criminalisation.

Advocacy for safeguards in counterterrorism law and strengthened judicial oversight.

# Chronological Timeline of HURIA's Advocacy (2016–2026)

A decade of systematic community documentation, national legislative advocacy, and international engagement — from Kwale County to Parliament.



## Conclusion

These case studies illustrate HURIA's strategic approach to translating research into policy influence. By combining field-based evidence with targeted advocacy and institutional engagement, the organisation has shaped national conversations on governance, human rights, and resource management. The experiences documented here demonstrate that sustained investment in research and documentation enables civil society to drive meaningful reform, ensuring that public policies are evidence-based and responsive to the needs of affected communities.

# 5

## CHAPTER FIVE

# Knowledge to Impact: Results and Policy Influence

The central objective of Human Rights Agenda's research and documentation efforts has always been to move beyond knowledge production and contribute to tangible governance reforms. Over the past decade, HURIA has demonstrated how evidence generated through systematic research, community documentation, and policy analysis can influence public debates, legislative processes, and institutional accountability mechanisms.

By combining research with strategic advocacy and institutional engagement, the organisation has been able to connect grassroots realities with national policy discussions.

This approach has enabled HURIA to amplify the voices of affected communities, provide policymakers with credible evidence, and contribute to broader efforts aimed at strengthening democratic governance and human rights protections in Kenya.

The impact of these efforts can be observed across several domains, including policy debates, legislative reform initiatives, accountability processes, and the empowerment of communities to participate more effectively in governance processes.

### 5.1 Protecting Civic Space

One of the most significant contributions of HURIA's research has been its ability to inform and shape national conversations on governance and human rights. Through the publication of research reports, policy briefs, and analytical papers, the organisation has brought attention to issues that might otherwise remain underrepresented in national policy discussions.

Research outputs addressing civic space, counterterrorism practices, enforced disappearances, and community resource governance have helped frame debates on the relationship between security, development, and human rights. By presenting well-documented evidence and grounded analysis, HURIA's work has contributed to a more informed public discourse

on the implications of governance policies for citizens' rights and democratic participation.

These research contributions have been disseminated through public forums, stakeholder consultations, media engagement, and policy dialogues. As a result, issues documented through HURIA's research have increasingly featured in national conversations among policymakers, civil society organisations, and development partners.

The organisation's ability to link community experiences with broader governance debates has been particularly important in ensuring that policy discussions reflect the realities faced by marginalised communities.

## Contributions to Legislative Reform

Evidence generated through HURIA's research has also played an important role in supporting legislative reform initiatives. Through policy analysis and parliamentary engagement, the organisation has contributed to discussions on legal frameworks affecting human rights, security governance, and civic freedoms.

Research findings have informed submissions to parliamentary committees, policy consultations, and stakeholder dialogues addressing gaps in Kenya's legal framework. In particular, HURIA's work on enforced disappearances has contributed to national advocacy efforts calling for the criminalisation of enforced disappearance as a distinct offence within Kenyan law.

Similarly, research examining the implementation of counterterrorism legislation has contributed to debates on the application of the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the need for safeguards that protect due process and civil liberties.

By grounding its legislative advocacy in empirical evidence and documented case studies, HURIA has been able to provide policymakers with practical insights into how laws operate in practice and where reforms may be necessary.

These contributions illustrate the important role that civil society research can play in strengthening legislative processes and ensuring that legal frameworks reflect both constitutional principles and the lived realities of communities.

## Strengthening Accountability and Oversight

Another important dimension of HURIA's impact lies in its contribution to strengthening accountability and oversight mechanisms within governance institutions.

Through the documentation of human rights violations and governance failures, HURIA's research has helped highlight gaps in institutional accountability and the need for stronger oversight of state institutions. Evidence generated through research reports has been used to raise awareness about issues such as enforced disappearances, security sector abuses, and restrictions on civic freedoms.

By documenting patterns of violations and providing detailed analysis of governance practices, HURIA's work supports the efforts of oversight bodies, human rights institutions, and civil society coalitions seeking to improve transparency and accountability.

Research findings also serve as a resource for advocacy campaigns aimed at encouraging institutional reforms, strengthening investigative mechanisms, and promoting adherence to constitutional and international human rights standards.

In this way, HURIA's evidence generation contributes to broader efforts to ensure that public institutions operate in a manner consistent with principles of accountability, rule of law, and respect for human rights.

## Empowering Communities through Evidence

Beyond its influence on policy processes, HURIA's research work has also contributed to empowering communities by providing them with information and evidence that supports their engagement with governance institutions.

Community-based research methodologies allow affected populations to participate directly in the documentation of issues affecting their rights and livelihoods. Through interviews, focus group discussions, and participatory consultations, community members are able to share their experiences and contribute to the generation of knowledge about governance challenges.

The dissemination of research findings through community dialogues, simplified publications, and public forums helps ensure that evidence generated through research is accessible to local populations.

This information can support communities in advocating for their rights, engaging with local authorities, and participating more effectively in decision-making processes.

In contexts such as land governance and fisheries management, research findings have helped communities better understand regulatory frameworks and identify avenues for engaging with government institutions responsible for resource management.

By integrating community participation into research processes, HURIA strengthens the link between evidence generation and grassroots empowerment.

## Influence on National and International Human Rights Discourse

HURIA's research and advocacy efforts have also contributed to broader national and international discussions on human rights and governance.

Civil society organisations play an important role in informing international human rights mechanisms by providing independent evidence on the implementation of human rights obligations. Through research reports and policy analyses, HURIA contributes information that can support engagement with regional and international human rights bodies.

The organisation's work on issues such as enforced disappearances, civic space restrictions, and counterterrorism practices has helped situate local governance challenges within global human rights debates. By documenting how international norms intersect with national governance practices, HURIA's research contributes to efforts aimed at strengthening compliance with international standards.

At the national level, the organisation's research outputs also contribute to intellectual and policy discourse within Kenya's civil society and academic communities. By producing credible and accessible knowledge, HURIA supports the development of a stronger evidence base for governance reforms and human rights advocacy.

Through these contributions, HURIA demonstrates the critical role that civil society research institutions can play in bridging local realities, national policy processes, and global human rights frameworks.

# Lessons Learned from a Decade of Evidence-Based Advocacy

Over the past decade, Human Rights Agenda (HURIA) has gained extensive experience in using research and documentation to influence governance reforms and promote accountability. Working at the intersection of community engagement, human rights advocacy, and policy reform has provided valuable insights into what enables evidence to shape public policy, as well as the challenges that civil society organisations encounter when attempting to influence institutional change.

The experiences accumulated through research initiatives, legislative advocacy, and engagement with affected communities have revealed important lessons about the dynamics of policy influence in Kenya's governance landscape. These lessons highlight both the opportunities and the constraints facing organisations seeking to advance reforms through evidence-based advocacy.

This section reflects on key insights emerging from HURIA's work over the past decade, focusing on effective strategies for policy influence, the challenges encountered in research and advocacy, and the importance of strengthening knowledge systems within civil society.

## 6.1 What Works in Policy Influence

Experience has shown that credible and well-documented evidence is a powerful foundation for advocacy. Policymakers, oversight institutions, and development partners are more likely to engage with reform proposals when they are supported by systematic research, verified data, and clear analysis.

One of the most effective strategies employed by HURIA has been the integration of community testimonies with legal and policy analysis. By documenting the lived experiences of affected communities and linking them to gaps in legislation and institutional practice, research findings become both human-centred and policy-relevant. This approach allows advocacy efforts to highlight not only abstract governance problems but also their direct consequences for individuals and communities.

Another critical factor in successful policy influence is sustained engagement with institutional processes. Legislative reform and policy change often occur through long and complex processes involving multiple actors and

consultations. Continuous participation in parliamentary hearings, policy dialogues, and stakeholder consultations increases the likelihood that civil society perspectives will be considered in decision-making processes.

Coalition-building has also proven to be an effective strategy. Working in partnership with other civil society organisations, academic institutions, and advocacy networks allows organisations to pool expertise, amplify advocacy messages, and strengthen collective influence. Collaborative advocacy can help ensure that research findings reach a wider audience and carry greater weight within policy debates.

Finally, effective communication and dissemination of research findings significantly enhance policy influence. Reports, policy briefs, and public forums that translate complex research into accessible narratives make it easier for policymakers, journalists, and community actors to engage with evidence and understand its implications.

## Challenges in Research and Advocacy

Despite the potential of evidence-based advocacy to inform policy reform, the process is often accompanied by significant challenges. One of the primary obstacles is the limited availability of reliable data on sensitive governance issues such as enforced disappearances, security sector operations, and human rights violations.

In many cases, official records are incomplete, inaccessible, or contested. Civil society organisations therefore rely heavily on community documentation and independent field investigations, which require substantial time, resources, and institutional capacity.

Another challenge relates to the complexity of translating research findings into policy change. Even when evidence clearly demonstrates governance failures or legal gaps, reform processes may be slow due to bureaucratic inertia, competing political interests, or institutional resistance to change.

Resource constraints also affect the ability of civil society organisations to sustain long-term research programmes. Conducting high-quality field research, maintaining documentation systems, and engaging in policy advocacy require specialised expertise and sustained financial support.

In addition, research on sensitive issues can expose organisations and researchers to security risks or political pressure. Documenting human rights violations and holding institutions accountable often involves working in environments where access to information is restricted and where stakeholders may be reluctant to cooperate.

These challenges underscore the need for resilient institutional systems, strong partnerships, and careful risk management when undertaking research and advocacy on complex governance issues.

## Navigating Political and Institutional Resistance

Advocacy efforts aimed at promoting governance reforms frequently encounter resistance from political actors and institutions that may perceive reform initiatives as threats to existing power structures or institutional interests.

Civil society organisations must therefore navigate complex political environments while maintaining credibility and independence. One important lesson from HURIA's experience is the importance of framing advocacy efforts in ways that emphasise constructive engagement rather than confrontation.

Evidence-based advocacy allows organisations to present reform proposals as solutions to governance challenges rather than as criticisms of specific institutions or individuals. By grounding advocacy messages in credible research and legal analysis, organisations can encourage dialogue with policymakers and oversight institutions while maintaining principled positions on accountability and human rights.

Another important strategy involves engaging multiple stakeholders across different sectors. Policy influence is rarely achieved through engagement with a single institution; rather, it requires interaction with legislators, executive agencies, oversight bodies, civil society networks, and international partners.

Maintaining open channels of communication with these stakeholders can help create opportunities for dialogue and increase the chances that reform proposals will gain institutional support.

At the same time, organisations must remain vigilant in safeguarding their independence and ensuring that advocacy efforts remain guided by evidence and human rights principles rather than political considerations.

## Strengthening Civil Society Knowledge Systems

A key lesson from HURIA's decade of work is the critical importance of strengthening knowledge systems within civil society organisations. Sustainable advocacy requires reliable systems for collecting, analysing, and preserving information on governance and human rights issues.

Developing robust documentation practices, data management systems, and research methodologies enables organisations to build institutional memory and ensure that evidence generated through research remains accessible for future advocacy initiatives.

Investment in knowledge systems also enhances the credibility of civil society organisations as producers of reliable information. When research outputs are based on rigorous methodologies and well-documented evidence, they are more likely to be taken seriously by policymakers, development partners, and the public.

Another important dimension involves building research capacity among civil society actors. Training researchers, strengthening analytical skills, and fostering collaboration with academic institutions can help expand the quality and scope of research produced by civil society organisations.

Finally, strengthening knowledge systems requires effective dissemination strategies that ensure research findings reach relevant audiences. Publications, policy briefs, digital platforms, and community outreach activities all play a role in ensuring that evidence informs both policy debates and public understanding.

By investing in these systems, civil society organisations can enhance their ability to generate credible evidence, sustain advocacy efforts, and contribute to long-term governance reforms.

# The Road Ahead: Strategic Vision for the Next Decade

As Human Rights Agenda (HURIA) reflects on a decade of evidence-based advocacy and policy influence, the organisation looks ahead to the opportunities and challenges that will shape its work over the next ten years. Kenya's governance landscape continues to evolve, presenting both new human rights risks and openings for reform. HURIA's strategic vision is anchored in its commitment to strengthen evidence-based interventions, expand civil society collaborations, and ensure that research and advocacy continue to drive tangible impact for communities and national governance systems.

## 7.1 Emerging Governance and Human Rights Challenges

The next decade will present complex and interrelated governance challenges. These include:

- **Civic space restrictions and democratic deficits**, particularly around the protection of freedom of expression, assembly, and association.
- **Evolving security threats and counterterrorism practices**, which must be addressed without compromising human rights or community trust.
- **Socio-economic inequities and resource governance issues**, including land disputes, access to fisheries, and sustainable management of natural resources.
- **Persistent gender and social inequalities**, where women and marginalised groups remain excluded from meaningful participation in decision-making processes.
- **Electoral integrity and political accountability**, requiring vigilance to ensure free, fair, and transparent political processes.

HURIA recognises that these emerging issues demand adaptive strategies, rigorous evidence generation, and proactive engagement with both communities and institutions.

## 7.2 Strengthening Evidence-Based Advocacy

Building on a decade of research, HURIA will deepen its commitment to evidence-based advocacy by:

- Enhancing **research methodologies** to capture complex governance dynamics and emerging trends.
- Expanding **field-based documentation** to ensure that the lived experiences of affected communities continue to guide policy interventions.
- Integrating **data-driven policy analysis** with strategic advocacy to strengthen the impact of submissions to parliament, oversight institutions, and international mechanisms.
- Leveraging **innovative communication tools** to translate research into accessible, actionable knowledge for policymakers, civil society, and communities.

By continuously improving the quality, credibility, and relevance of evidence, HURIA aims to remain a trusted source of knowledge that informs governance reforms and human rights protections.

## 7.3

## Expanding Partnerships and Civil Society Networks

Collaboration and coalition-building have been central to HURIA's success in advancing reform. Looking ahead, the organisation will:

- Strengthen **national and regional networks** to enhance coordinated advocacy and knowledge-sharing.
- Partner with **academic institutions, research organisations, and development actors** to broaden expertise and access to resources.
- Engage **grassroots civil society actors** to amplify community voices and ensure inclusive participation in governance dialogues.
- Support **cross-sectoral initiatives** that integrate human rights, governance, and development objectives, ensuring holistic approaches to reform.

Expanding partnerships will allow HURIA to extend the reach and impact of its evidence-based advocacy, creating collective influence across multiple sectors.

## 7.4

## Institutional Sustainability and Knowledge Management

Sustaining HURIA's impact requires robust institutional systems to manage knowledge, resources, and operational capacity. Key strategic priorities include:

- Strengthening knowledge management systems to preserve research outputs, institutional memory, and policy insights for future advocacy.
- Investing in staff capacity-building, including training in research, policy analysis, and advocacy strategies.
- Ensuring financial sustainability through diversified funding, long-term partnerships, and resource mobilisation strategies.
- Leveraging digital platforms and data technologies to enhance research collection, analysis, and dissemination.

By building resilient institutional structures, HURIA ensures that its advocacy remains adaptive, credible, and impactful over the long term.

## 7.5

## HURIA's Commitment to Transformative Impact

Over the next decade, HURIA's strategic vision is anchored in its enduring commitment to transformative impact for communities and the nation:

- Ensuring **marginalised voices are central** to governance debates.
- Promoting **evidence-informed policy reforms** that strengthen democratic accountability, human rights protections, and social justice.
- Facilitating **institutional reforms** that enhance transparency, oversight, and the rule of law.
- Contributing to a **sustainable ecosystem of civil society knowledge** that supports continuous monitoring, advocacy, and reform.

HURIA recognises that sustainable change requires persistence, collaboration, and adaptability. By combining rigorous research, strategic advocacy, and community engagement, the organisation will continue to advance human rights, accountability, and governance reform in Kenya over the next decade and beyond.

# Mapping HURIA's Knowledge Portfolio: From Evidence to Impact

Over the years, Human Rights Agenda (HURIA) has built a diverse and robust knowledge portfolio that merges rigorous research with strategic policy engagement. Across thematic areas and formats, HURIA's outputs reflect a coherent approach: generating evidence, strengthening accountability, and supporting community-centered governance. Its publications can be categorized by type, purpose, and thematic focus, demonstrating a consistent trajectory from analysis to actionable impact.

## 8.1 Typology of HURIA Publications

### 1. Applied Policy Research Reports

These form the core of HURIA's analytical work, addressing governance, security, and socio-economic rights challenges. Grounded in field-based evidence, they combine legal, institutional, and policy analysis with actionable recommendations. Examples include studies on corporate impunity, environmental justice, enforced disappearances, barriers to SGBV justice, policing gaps, and land inequality. Each report defines the problem in context, evaluates existing structures, and charts pathways for reform.

01

### 2. Policy Frameworks and Action Plans

HURIA translates research into operational governance tools, including County Action Plans on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) and localized strategies for implementing UNSCR 1325. These documents integrate multi-stakeholder consultation, context-sensitive risk analysis, and clear operational objectives, ensuring alignment with national and international policy frameworks and fostering sustainable, coordinated interventions.

02

### 3. Policy Assessments and Evaluations

Evaluative publications examine the effectiveness of existing frameworks, identify implementation gaps, and draw lessons for adaptive reform. For example, assessments of first-generation CVE Action Plans highlight successes, challenges, and pathways for improved planning and rights-based programming.

03

### 4. Accountability and Oversight Reports

Focusing on transparency, integrity, and abuse prevention, these reports consolidate evidence on corruption, mismanagement, or power misuse—from COVID-19 fund allocations to policing practices. They guide civil society engagement with watchdog institutions and strengthen public trust and institutional performance.

04

### **5. Thematic Practice Notes and Guidance Tools**

HURIA produces concise, accessible tools for practitioners, such as guides on business engagement in PVE or the *Pocket Dictionary on P/CVE*. These resources clarify norms, demystify technical concepts, and build capacity for effective, rights-based interventions.

05

### **6. Longitudinal Institutional and Contextual Reports**

Triennial and annual publications, including the *Footprints of Justice* series, provide longitudinal insights into civic engagement, governance trends, and institutional learning, serving as essential reference points for both policymakers and scholars.

06

### **7. Communiqués and Multi-Stakeholder Outcome Documents**

These outputs document the results of structured dialogues, such as Inter-County CVE Exchanges, emphasizing consensus-building, peer learning, and policy harmonization emerging from multi-stakeholder engagement.

07

## 8.2 Strategic Thematic Domains

Across its portfolio, HURIA's research converges around five interrelated domains:



## National and County-Level Policy Influence

HURIA's publications have shaped discourse and reform across its thematic domains:

### 8.3.1 Security Governance and CVE

#### Who's Next?

1

An Account of Enforced Disappearances in Kwale County elevated enforced disappearances from isolated incidents to systemic governance concerns, informing civil society advocacy and engagement with oversight institutions and UN mechanisms.

2

#### Unseen, Unaccounted and Unrecognized

Deepened discussions on victim recognition, reparations, and Kenya's human rights obligations.

3

#### Civil Society Perspectives on CVE Oversight

Challenged weak safeguards and tokenistic participation, influencing donor and national policy dialogue.

4

#### Good Practice Note for Business Sector Engagement in PVE

Introduced rights-based safeguards into public-private prevention initiatives.

5

#### Kwale County Action Plans on CVE and UNSCR 1325

Institutionalized multi-stakeholder

6

#### Communiqué: Inter-County Exchange on P/CVE

Facilitated horizontal learning and policy harmonization.

7

#### Pocket Dictionary on P/CVE

Strengthened inclusive engagement by clarifying technical terminology.

### 8.3.2 Policing and Rule of Law

1

#### Policing the Police

*Safeguarding Transparency and Merit influenced oversight narratives linking recruitment integrity to professionalism and public trust.*

2

#### Where Are the Police?

*Reframed insecurity as a policing accountability concern.*

3

#### Beyond the Shadows of Justice

*Reinforced advocacy for independent oversight and redress mechanisms.*

### 8.3.3 Governance, Accountability, and Public Finance

1

#### Unmasking COVID-19 Funds Expenditure

Informed national discourse on emergency public finance oversight.

2

#### Lifting the Veil of Corporate Impunity

Aligned Kenyan debates on corporate responsibility with global standards.

### 8.3.4 Land, Environment, and Economic Justice

1

#### Polluted Justice

Reframed environmental harm as a governance and justice issue.

3

#### Mining and Environment

Strengthened extractives governance and community consultation.

1

### Nowhere to Land

*Safeguarding Transparency and Merit influenced oversight narratives linking recruitment integrity to professionalism and public trust.*

2

### Unequal Ground

*Reframed insecurity as a policing accountability concern.*

8.3.5

## Access to Justice and Legal Empowerment

1

### The Cost of Justice: SGBV Survivors in Kinango

Informed survivor-centered justice reforms.

2

### Inaugural Coast Annual Paralegal and Pro Bono Lawyers Award (2021)

Elevated grassroots legal empowerment in national reform conversations.

1

### Advancing the Rights of Vulnerable Groups through Innovation and Micro-Granting

influenced donor approaches to localized, community-driven funding.

3

### Footprints of Justice: Triennial Reports (2015–2017; 2018–2020)

Shaped understanding of civic space, youth engagement, and long-term governance trends.

## 8.4

**Selected National-Level Impact**

HURIA's reports have directly influenced policy discourse, oversight, and reform:

<b>Who's Next?</b>	Catalyzed advocacy for systemic recognition of enforced disappearances
<b>Unseen, Unaccounted and Unrecognized</b>	Advanced national and international accountability frameworks.
<b>Policing the Police</b>	Informed recruitment reforms and strengthened institutional trust.
<b>Civil Society Perspectives on Oversight and Reporting in CVE</b>	Shaped civil society engagement in CVE policy.
<b>Good Practice Note for Business Engagement in PVE</b>	Integrated rights-based safeguards in national PVE dialogues.
<b>Unmasking COVID-19 Funds Expenditure</b>	Strengthened oversight and fiscal transparency
<b>Beyond the Shadows of Justice</b>	Supported reform of complaint-handling and oversight mechanisms.
<b>Lifting the Veil of Corporate Impunity</b>	Advanced corporate accountability discussions
<b>Pocket Dictionary on P/CVE</b>	Enabled informed participation in national CVE frameworks
<b>Footprints of Justice</b>	Informed donor and policy strategies on civic engagement and governance

This body of work underscores HURIA's approach: generating rigorous evidence, translating research into actionable frameworks, and leveraging knowledge to influence policy, strengthen institutions, and empower communities.

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