

**NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION OF KOREA**

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



National Human Rights Commission of Korea



Logo of the National Human Rights Commission of Korea

The logo's simplicity and formative beauty are intended to add to the reliable and authoritative image of the National Human Rights Commission of Korea as the nation's leading institution dedicated to the protection of human rights.

The logomark is rendered in blue, representing "creation," "life," and "spring" in accordance with the five elements theory, to communicate the identity of the Commission as a human rights institution committed to the well-being of people. The symbol also combines Korea's modernity and tradition: a dove and a hand standing for "peace" and "inclusiveness;" and a circle, the most fundamental shape, implying "centeredness and concentration," "diversity and positivity," "sun and brightness," "harmony and inclusiveness," and "justice and fairness."

Annual Report 2022

This annual report is a compilation of the activities, etc., of the National Human Rights Commission of Korea from January 1 to December 31, 2022. It was published to be submitted to the President and the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea pursuant to Article 29 (1) of the National Human Rights Commission of Korea Act.

Foreword



“ We are committed to achieving a society where the dignity, equality, and freedom of every individual is upheld by taking proactive measures to address human rights issues and steadily expanding the foundation for human rights.”

In 2022, the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic shed light on the vulnerable areas of human rights within our society. It exposed the disproportionate effects of social and economic polarization, inequality, major disasters, climate crisis, and emergencies on vulnerable populations, resulting in severe violations of their human rights. This realization has emphasized the pressing need to establish social safety nets and foster solidarity to safeguard the rights of these vulnerable groups.

The rapidly changing human rights landscape, including the Itaewon Incident in October 2022, climate crisis and disasters, the entry into an intelligence information society and a super-aging society, and the spread of hate speech and discrimination, heightened our awareness of the responsibilities of the State, corporations, independent actions of civil society, and the importance of international solidarity. As we observe the prompt actions taken by the international community, including the United Nations, we engage in deep reflection on our awareness of the crises and our effectiveness in implementing appropriate measures to address them.

As an independent national institution entrusted with the protection and promotion of human rights, the Commission is dedicated to strengthening its accountability and expertise, enhancing its mandate in human rights policy formulation, investigation and redress, human rights education and advocacy, as well as domestic and international cooperation.

In 2022, the Commission issued 104 recommendations and opinions on various human rights issues. In response to the pressing challenges faced by our society, we provided human rights perspectives on social issues by presenting an opinion on climate crisis and human rights, recommendation to amend the Infectious Disease Control and Prevention Act, a statement on the Itaewon incident, and recommendation on human rights guidelines for the development and utilization of AI. The Commission also made proactive efforts to promote international solidarity and position itself as a leading advocate for human rights.

Additionally, we conducted various surveys, investigations, and initiatives to assess the human rights situation of vulnerable and marginalized groups. Based on the findings, we formulated proposals and alternatives for enhancing institutional frameworks and ensuring effective human rights protection.

The Commission handled a total of 65,989 consultations, petitions, and other inquiries. We received 10,573 petitions and processed 10,345 cases, of which 1,306 cases were remedied. In addition to addressing petitions, the Commission also worked to assess the human rights situation and ensure effective remedies by employing emergency relief measures, conducting *suo motu* investigations, and undertaking on-site visits.

The Commission provided human rights education to a total of 582,733 individuals across different sectors, including public institutions, schools, the military, and social welfare. Thirty-two new human rights instructors were appointed and efforts were made towards the establishment of a dedicated Human Rights Training Institute to further enhance human rights education.

In 2022, with the establishment of the Military Human Rights Protector and the Bureau of Human Rights in Military, the Commission laid a solid foundation for effectively carrying out tasks related to the safeguarding and improvement of human rights within the military.

Additionally, the Commission was actively involved in efforts to pass the Equality Bill as part of its commitment to implementing international recommendations, resolving conflicts stemming from discrimination, and fostering a society that values diversity.

In 2022, the Chairperson of the Commission was elected as the Chair of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF) and played a leading role in enhancing cooperation among human rights institutions in the Asia Pacific region and discussing key human rights issues in the international community. Additionally, in the absence of an international normative framework for the protection of older persons' rights, the Commission drafted a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons and presented it to the international community, demonstrating its leadership in the field of human rights.

This annual report provides an overview of our activities and significant decisions made during the year 2022. We hope that this report serves as a valuable resource to increase public interest and understanding of the Commission's role and human rights, as well as to foster greater appreciation for human rights within society.

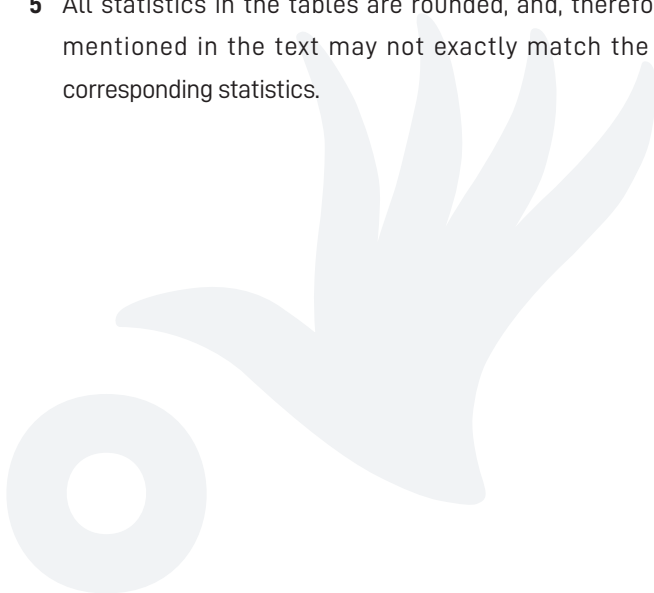
Moving forward, the Commission remains steadfast in acknowledging the responsibility as a national human rights institution. We will continue our capacity-building endeavors to promote and protect human rights, take proactive measures to address human rights issues, and steadily expand the foundation for human rights. Through these efforts, we are committed to realizing a society where the dignity, equality, and freedom of every individual are upheld. Thank you.

Song, Doo-hwan
Chairperson of NHRCK



Notes

- 1 Civil society groups and organizations are described herein as human rights and civil society organizations.
- 2 Months stated herein fall in the year 2022 unless specified otherwise.
- 3 The "-" symbol used in the tables signifies "none (0)."
- 4 The total in each statistical table is the sum of pertinent data accumulated from November 25, 2022 (the date of the establishment of the Commission), to December 31, 2022, unless specified otherwise.
- 5 All statistics in the tables are rounded, and, therefore, the totals mentioned in the text may not exactly match the sums of the corresponding statistics.





Abbreviations

Commission/NHRCK	National Human Rights Commission of Korea
NHRCK Act	National Human Rights Commission of Korea Act
Paris Principles	Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights
NAP	National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights
AI	Artificial Intelligence
Human Rights Committee	Committee on Civil and Political Rights
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
UN	United Nations
EU	European Union
GANHRI	Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions
APF	Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions
NHRIs	National Human Rights Institutions
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

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PART

1

National Human Rights
Commission of Korea
Annual Report 2022





Summary

Chapter 1 Basic Directions and Major Activities in 2022

Chapter 2 NHRCK in Brief



All human beings are born free and
equal in dignity and rights.

They are endowed with reason and conscience and
should act towards one another in
a spirit of brotherhood.

- Article 1 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights -

The purpose of this Act is to
contribute to the recognition of human dignity and
worth as well as to the safeguard of
the basic order of democracy by establishing
the National Human Rights Commission to
ensure that inalienable fundamental human rights of
all individuals are protected and the standards of
human rights are improved.

- Article 1 of National Human Rights Commission of Korea Act -

Chapter 1 Basic Directions and Major Activities in 2022

1. Strategic Objectives & Achievement Goals

Vision A World of Dignity for All

Mission Realize a society where human rights are respected, and every individual is guaranteed the dignity, equality, and freedom

Strategic Objectives

I Preemptive response to a rapidly changing human rights environment and global disaster and crisis situations

II Reinforcement of domestic implementation of international human rights norms

III Building accountability and competence as the national human rights institution

Achievement Goals

- 1 Guaranteeing human dignity and rights under disaster situations
 - 2 Strengthening social safeguards to address poverty and polarization
 - 3 Protecting information rights in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution
 - 4 Enhancing the rights of seniors in a super-aged society
 - 5 Addressing new blind spots in labor rights and strengthening human rights in business management
 - 6 Shifting paradigm and strengthening protection for human rights in sports
 - 7 Improving human rights conditions in North Korea
-
- 1 Supporting enactment of Equality and Anti-discrimination Act, and responding to hate speech
 - 2 Combating racial discrimination and protecting the rights of migrants and refugees
 - 3 Laying the basis for combating gender discrimination and achieving gender equality
 - 4 Facilitating the social participation of the persons with disabilities from a rights perspective
 - 5 Raising awareness on the rights of children and young people, and supporting legal and institutional improvements
 - 6 Encouraging human rights-friendly approach in criminal justice
 - 7 Responding to unratified international human rights treaties and strengthening international cooperation
-
- 1 Ensuring prompt, effective, and professional investigations and remedies
 - 2 Encouraging a lifelong process of human rights learning, and promoting a conducive environment for the enjoyment of human rights
 - 3 Engaging in effective exchanges and cooperation, and tightening human rights governance
 - 4 Strengthening local human rights safeguards and building capacity of human rights offices
 - 5 Strengthening safeguards for human rights in the military
 - 6 Establishing a system for diagnosis and assessment
 - 7 Enhancing NHRCK expertise and independence

2. Key Functions

Policy

- Conducts investigations, research, and providing recommendations and opinions to enhance laws, regulations, policies, and practices
- Provides recommendations and opinions on accession to international human rights treaties and ensuring compliance with their provisions

Investigations and Remedies

- Conducts investigation and remedial actions for human rights violations and discriminatory acts by national institutions, local governments, schools, public agencies, detention facilities, and protective facilities
- Conducts investigation and remedial actions for discriminatory acts by corporations, organizations, and individuals
- Conducts investigation and remedial actions for sexual harassment
- Conducts investigation and remedial actions in accordance with the Act on the Prohibition of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities and Remedy Against Infringement of Their Rights, and the Act on the Prohibition of Age Discrimination in Employment and Elderly Employment Promotion
- Conducts investigation and remedial actions for human rights violations and discriminatory acts related to the military

Education and Promotion

- Conducts human rights awareness education
- Promotes and disseminates a culture of human rights

Domestic and International Cooperation

- Collaborates with domestic human rights organizations and individuals
- Engages and cooperates with international human rights organizations and associations

3. Key Activities

A Human Rights Policy

Legal Basis

National Human Rights Commission of Korea Act

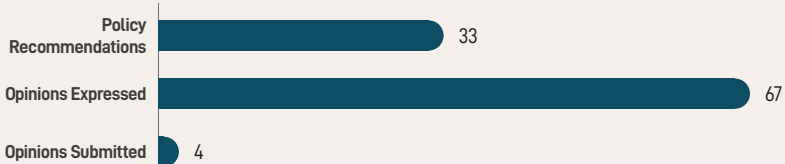
- Recommendation or expression of opinions on the enhancement of laws, regulations, policies, and practices pertaining to human rights (subparagraph 1 of Article 19, and Article 25)
- Recommendation or expression of opinions on the ratification and implementation of international human rights treaties (subparagraph 7 of Article 19)
- Submission of opinions to courts, including the Constitutional Court, on ongoing trials related to the protection and improvement of human rights are taking place (Article 28)

Policy Recommendations and Opinions Expressed

From 2001 (establishment) to 2022

472 policy recommendations made, 697 opinions expressed, and 34 opinions submitted

Policy Recommendations, Opinions Expressed, and Opinions Submitted in 2022 (Unit : cases)



Key Decisions

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation of human rights guidelines for the development and utilization of Artificial Intelligence (AI) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation for the 4th National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (NAP) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expression of opinions on climate crisis and human rights | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation for institutional improvements to strengthen human rights education in the National Assembly |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation for a comprehensive revision of the Sports Human Rights Charter and Guidelines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation and expression of opinions on expanding social responsibility for caregiving |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation for the improvement of the military medical system to ensure access to healthcare for servicemembers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expression of opinions on the partial amendments to the Labor Standards Act and the Trade Union and Labor Relations Adjustment Act |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation for improving and promoting human rights based on visits to correctional facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of Opinion to the Constitutional Court on the Unconstitutionality Lawsuit of Article 7 of the National Security Act |

B Human Rights Consultation, Investigation, Remedies

Legal Basis

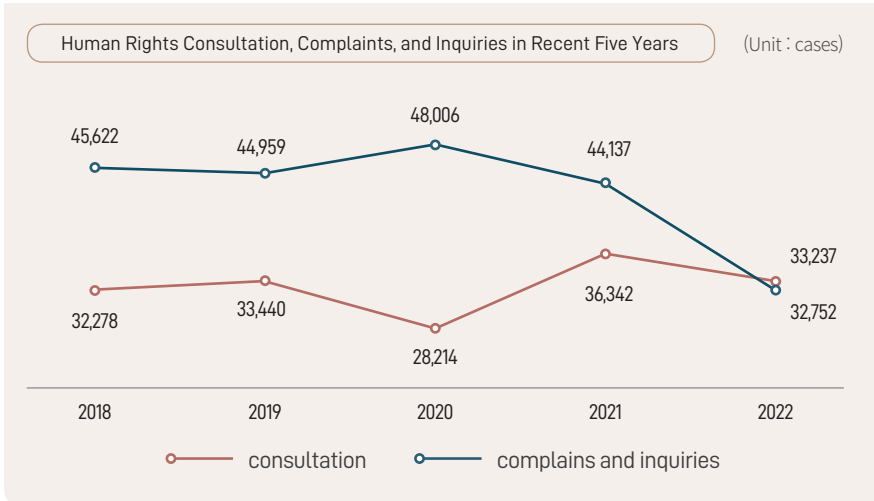
NHRCK Act

- Petition investigation and remedies (subparagraph 2 and 3 of Article 19, and paragraph 1 of Article 30)
 - Investigation of violations of basic human rights and discriminatory acts committed by national institutions, local governments, schools, public agencies, or detention facilities in relation to the performance of their duties, provided that such violations or discrimination are related to the provisions of Articles 10 through 22 of the Constitution
 - Investigation of discriminatory acts by corporations, organizations, or individuals
- *Suo motu* investigation (paragraph 2 of Article 30)
- On-site inspection (Article 24, Article 50-4)
- Recommendations for emergency remedies (Article 48)

Human Rights Consultation, Complaints, and Inquiries

From 2001 (establishment) to 2022

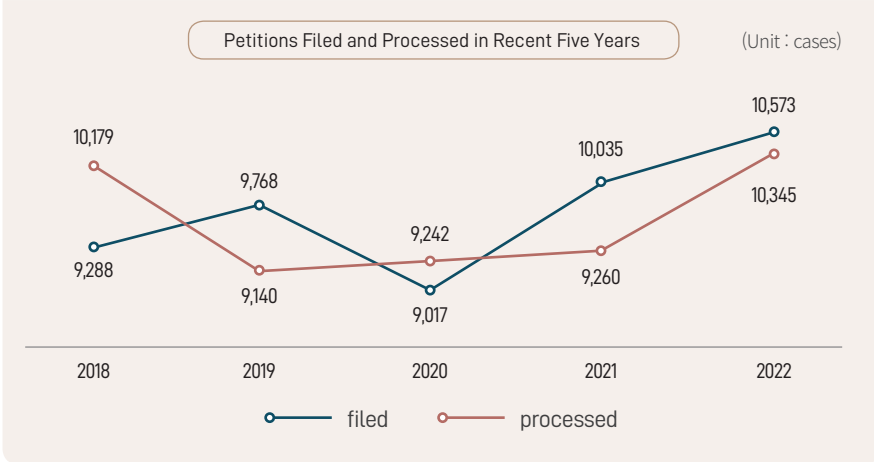
500,157 cases of human rights consultation and 640,984 cases of complains and inquiries



✔ Petitions Filed and Processed

📁 From 2001 (establishment) to 2022

171,593 petitions filed and 167,066 processed



✔ Key Emergency Relief Cases

- Police inaction in preventing the obstruction of Wednesday protests
- Secondary victimization of an Air Force servicewoman who experienced sexual violence

✔ Key Suo Motu Investigations

- Discrimination based on educational background or other qualifications in collage hiring process
- Improper placement of disabled children into mental health institutions
- Death caused by inadequate medical care in the military
- Improper isolation and coercion practices in mental health institutions

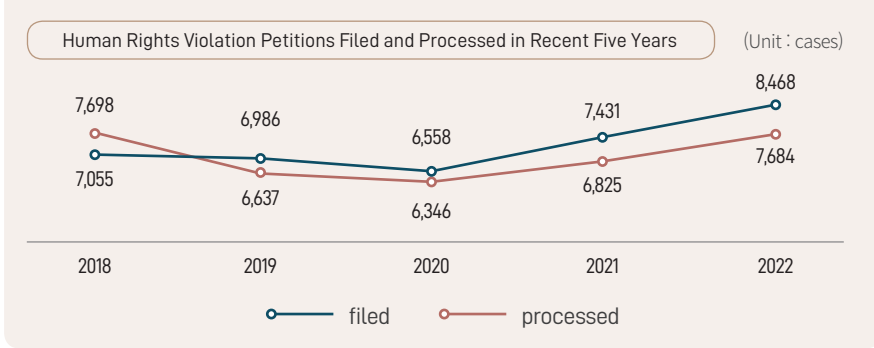
✔ Key On-site Inspections

- Metropolitan police detention centers
- Foreigner protection facilities
- Army and Marine Corps recruit training centers
- Correctional facilities
- Single-parent family welfare facilities
- Elderly welfare facilities
- Mental health institutions

Remedies for Human Rights Violations

From 2001 (establishment) to 2022

130,564 human rights violation petitions filed and 126,821 processed



Human Rights Violation Petitions Processed in 2022

(Unit : cases)

Filed	Processed	Remedies					Rejected	Transferred	Dismissed	Investigation suspended
		Subtotal	Investigation requested / report to police	Recommendations, etc.	Closed by settlement	Resolved during investigation				
8,468	7,684	827	1	414	29	383	4,146	34	2,625	52

Key Decisions Related to Human Rights Violations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excessive use of handcuffs during police interrogations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harassment through unjustified deployment and extension of deployment measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human rights violations due to overcrowding and excessive use of restraints in women's correctional facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human rights violations resulting from inadequate protection of protesters by the police during rallies and demonstrations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Violations of personal rights, including dignity, during the course of obstetrics and gynecology treatment at university hospitals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excessive human rights violations in a middle school due to the enforcement of school regulations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human rights violations in disability residential facilities, including abuse of disabled residents and concealment of incidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human rights violations resulting from the non-provision of discharge examination applications and procedural assistants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Violations of the right to life resulting from insufficient protection of abuse victims in the Navy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unjust refusal to acknowledge the line-of-duty death for a police officer

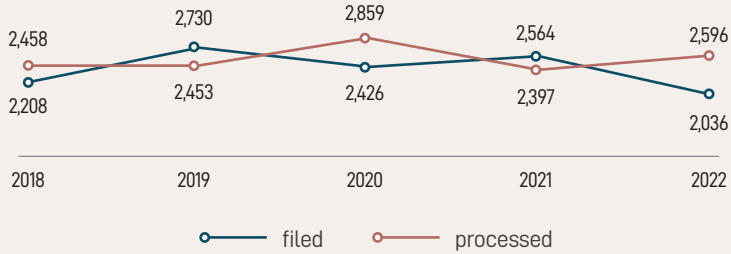
Remedies for Discriminatory Acts

From 2001 (establishment) to 2022

38,544 discrimination petitions filed and 37,768 processed

Discrimination Petitions Filed and Processed in Recent Five Years

(Unit : cases)



Discrimination Petitions Processed in 2022

(Unit : cases)

Filed	Processed	Remedies					Transferred	Dismissed	Investigation suspended
		Sub-total	Recommendations, etc.	Closed by settlement	Resolved during Investigation	Rejected			
2,036	2,596	474	189	19	266	1,061	9	1,036	16

Key Decisions Related to Discriminatory Acts

- Gender-based discrimination in golf club memberships
- Secondary victimization against an individual who reported a sexual harassment case
- Hospital's refusal to admit a transgender woman into the women's ward
- Lack of sufficient accessibility for visually impaired individuals in online shopping platforms
- Differential application of retirement age based on rank in a public agency
- Discrimination in COVID-19 infection-related subsidies based on employment status
- Religious discrimination by a graduate school due to conducting job interviews on Saturdays
- Hospital refusal to perform surgery for reason of patient's HIV infection
- Denial of bank account opening for foreigners
- Fertility treatment restrictions for unmarried women
- Unfavorable treatment in employment based on previous criminal records
- Unfair discrimination against special mission non-commissioned officers

C Human Rights Education

Legal Basis **NHRCK Act**

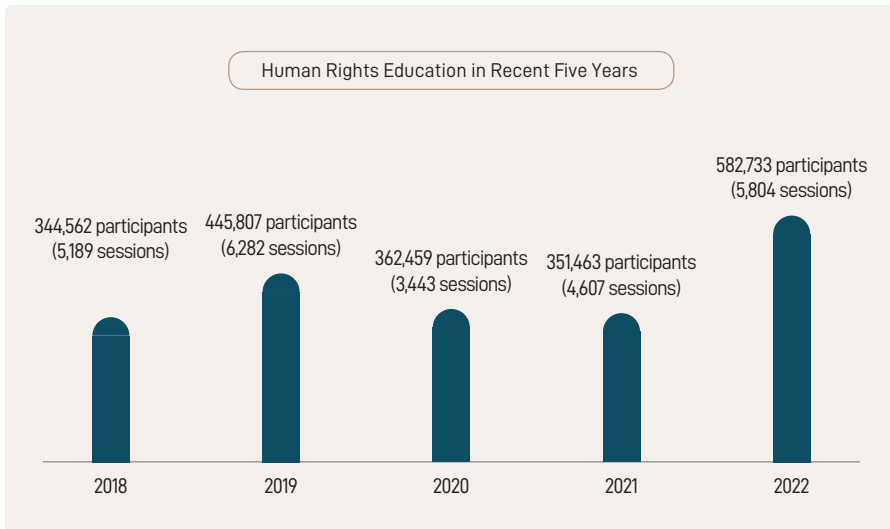
- Human rights education and promotion are guaranteed under subparagraph 5 of Article 19, Article 26

Human Rights Education

(Unit : cases)

Classification	Total		Educational course		Visitation program		Cyber training		Special lecture		(Nara Learning Center) Shared platform training	
	Sessions	Participants	Sessions	Participants	Sessions	Participants	Sessions	Participants	Sessions	Participants	Sessions	Participants
Cumulative	47,919	3,679,150	4,432	194,730	4,141	86,224	10,643	1,630,714	19,953	1,242,200	8,750	525,282
2022	5,804	582,733	214	5,947	423	6,488	2,419	433,244	1,076	46,837	1,672	90,217

※ The cumulative data includes the period from 2001 when the Commission was established to 2022.



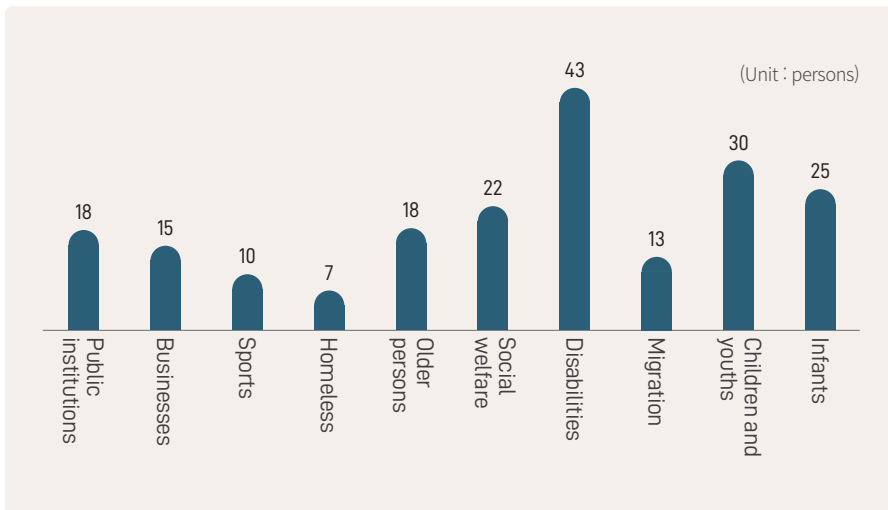
Specialized Human Rights Training Course

(Unit : sessions, persons)

Classification	Program name	Frequency	Size	Target
Public Sector	Local Council Member Human Rights Leadership Course	3	3	Local Council members
	Local Government Human Rights Officer Capacity-Building Course	1	12	Local government officials in charge of human rights education
	Local Government Human Rights Commissioner Human Rights Leadership Course	1	74	Local government human rights human rights Commissioners and related government officials
	Local Government Human Rights Protection Officer Capacity-Building Course	1	75	Local government and Education Office human rights protection officers
	Local Government Capacity-Building Course for Child Protection and Human Rights	1	20	Local Council members and related government officials
	Local Government Human Rights Officer Capacity-Building Course	1	12	Local government officials in charge of human rights affairs
Schools	School Administrator Workshop	11	243	Principals and Vice Principals of Elementary, Middle, and High Schools
	2022 University Human Rights Center Capacity-Building Workshop	1	154	Personnel in charge of University Human Rights Centers
	2022 University Human Rights Center Capacity-Building Program	5	130	University Human Rights Center personnel
	National University Human Rights Center Director Leadership Workshop	1	52	Director of University Human Rights Center
	Meeting of National Elementary School Teachers Human Rights Education, Practice and Research Association	4	29	Elementary school teachers
The Military	Military Human Rights Officer Course	9	378	Military human rights instructors and candidates for appointment as human rights instructors
	Advanced Course for Military Human Rights Officers	1	15	Individuals who have completed the Military Human Rights Instructor Course and require advanced training
	Course for Military Personnel Engaged in Human Rights Work	9	313	Military personnel engaged in human rights-related work
	Appointed Instructors Military Field Capacity-Building Course	2	62	Instructors appointed by the Commission
Social and Welfare Sector	Social Welfare Human Rights Leadership Course	8	131	Directors and managers of social welfare facilities
	Social Welfare Human Rights Capacity-Building Course	3	61	Personnel in charge of operating social welfare facilities (human rights work)
	Social Welfare Human Rights Education Course	2	24	Human rights instructors in the field of social welfare
	Social Welfare Human Rights Sensitivity Course	7	352	Staff members of small-scale welfare facilities for persons with disabilities

Classification	Program name	Frequency	Size	Target
Citizen	Corporate and Human Rights Capacity Building Course	3	71	Employees and executives (Director-level and below) at public organizations
	Corporate and Human Rights Sensitization Course	8	147	Public sector workers
	Human Rights Educator Course for Human Rights Education Organizations	2	60	Human rights educational activists in national human rights education associations
	Human Rights Counselor and Capacity Building Course	2	31	Human rights counselors in human rights organizations and associations
	Human Rights Activist and Capacity Building Course	3	46	Human rights activists in local human rights organizations
	Sports Field Human Rights Sensitization Course	5	229	Sports coaches or instructors
	Elderly Rights Human Rights Educator Course	2	33	Elderly rights instructors appointed by elderly rights educational institutions
	Health and Medical Field Elderly Rights Human Rights Sensitization Course	1	23	Health and medical professionals and activists
Media Mandatory Education	Media Personnel Human Rights Sensitization	2	23	Media personnel, including newspaper, broadcasting, and media practitioners
	Mandatory Education for Homeless Shelter Staff	52	2,044	Staff members in homeless shelters

Appointed Human Rights Instructors

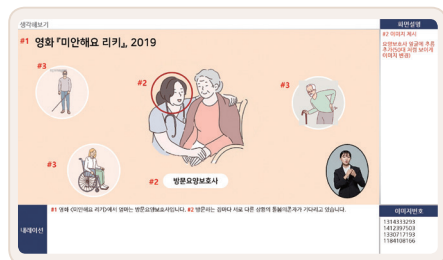
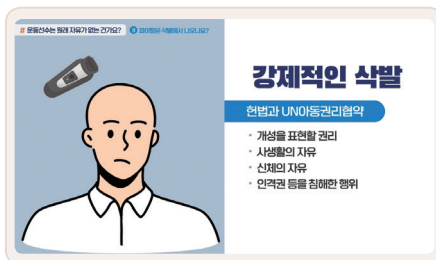


📌 Cyber Human Rights Education

- 30 courses, including Understanding of Human Rights (2,419 sessions and 433,244 participants in total)
- Content provided to 145 organizations, including public institutions, university human rights centers, and private companies (331,495 participants)

📌 Development of Human Rights Education Content (for children, youths, office workers, and older persons)

Target	Course	Format
Elementary school students	General human rights	Illustrated video
	Labor rights	
	Sports rights	
Middle school students	General human rights	
	Labor rights	
Middle school students (athletes)	Sports rights	
High school students	General human rights	
	Labor rights	
High school students (athletes)	Sports rights	
Corporate employees	Human rights in business practices	
Workers in general	Labor rights(examples)	Interviews and lectures video
General Facility managers, hospital directors	Care work and human rights	Lecture
Older persons	Labor rights	Interviews and lectures video



D Human Rights Promotion and Information Dissemination

Legal Basis

NHRCK Act

- Human rights education and promotion (subparagraph 5 of Article 19, and Article 26)

Development and Distribution of Human Rights Education Content



Twelve Shades Human Rights Playground: A Guide to Using Play to Learn Human Rights

- A guidebook for educators to link the values of human rights, explored through play, to real-life situations and educational settings
- Offers explanations about why human rights values are important in play, various methods of play, and useful tips for connecting students' responses from post-play questioning and discussions to human rights education



Climate Avengers: Safeguarding Earth's One-Degree

- An animated video series for climate crisis and human rights education (4 episodes)
- Episode Breakdown:
 - Ep.1 Is climate crisis our problem?
 - Ep.2 Is climate crisis the same for everyone?
 - Ep.3 Who is responsible for the climate crisis?
 - Ep.4 Can we change the future?



Supplementary Materials for Utilizing the Climate Avengers Video:

- Supplementary educational materials introducing the Climate Avengers video and providing ideas for follow-up activities
- Offers considerations for conducting video-based education, including important points to keep in mind, a list of reference materials, and five proposed ideas for follow-up activities



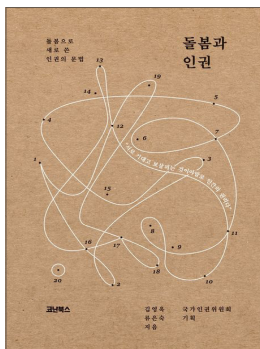
Climate Crisis and Human Rights Stories with Professor Cho Hyo-je:

- A lecture video featuring Professor Cho and two current teachers engaging in diverse discussions for teachers starting the "Climate Crisis and Human Rights" class
- Explores practical approaches to education on the climate crisis and human rights, addresses challenges in educating about climate definitions and climate injustice, discusses methods to help students comprehend the severity of the climate crisis in a time of abundance, and emphasizes the educational goal of encouraging individuals to take action beyond personal practices



Human Rights Education through Play with Elementary School Teachers Nationwide:

- Introduces activities of the "Nationwide Research Group for Human Rights Education in Elementary Schools" established for the study and research of practical methods for school-based human rights education
- In an interview, two teachers provide insights and share their experiences in the research group, discussing practical methods and the utilization of human rights education through play in the classroom



Caregiving and human rights



A human rights textbook on dignity, freedom, equality, and solidarity



A guidebook on human rights practice for child welfare facility workers

Development and Distribution of Human Rights Advocacy Content:

Development of Human Rights Films: "Finding Strength in Time"

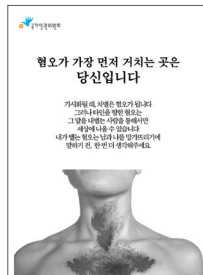
- A feature-length film addressing human rights issues facing youth who are involved in popular culture and the arts

Human Rights Artwork Contest

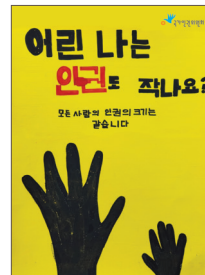
- Selection of 30 award-winning works to be produced as Commission calendars and postcards for distribution and promotional use in education



Grand Prize in General Division



Excellence Award in Youth Division



Grand Prize in Elementary Division

Production and Distribution of Key Decision Videos

Human Rights Café 1

<Discrimination in employment>
Wage and promotion discrimination based on non-regular employment status

Human Rights Café 2

<Harassment in the workplace>
Human rights violations resulting from non-acceptance of corrective measures for workplace harassment

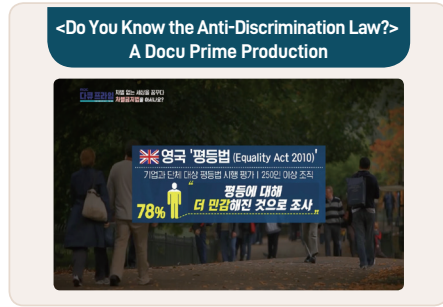
Human Rights Café 3

<Human rights in the military>
Verbal abuse, physical assault, and other forms of human rights violations by military commanders

Human Rights Café 4

<Human rights in the military>
Addressing discrimination in regulations regarding hair length between military officers and enlisted soldiers

○ Promotion Using Media Platforms



○ Commemorative Event for Human Rights Day



○ Publication of Ingwon (Human rights) Magazine

- Introduces major human rights issues, key decisions, and Commission news (6 issues per year)



Key Press Releases

No.	Distribution date	Title
1	Mar. 7	Statement from the Chairperson regarding the situation in Ukraine
2	Apr. 4	Statement from the Chairperson on welcoming the application of health insurance coverage for Kymriah
3	May. 17	Development of "Guidelines on Artificial Intelligence Development and Utilization in relation to Human Rights"
4	Jul. 12	Recommendation for institutional improvement to ensure the right to medical access and health rights of correctional facility residents
5	Jul. 25	Non-payment of COVID-19 allowance to indirectly employed workers in similar or related occupations is discrimination
6	Aug. 4	Key recommendations for the 4th National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights
7	Aug. 18	Emergency relief recommendation to protect a sexual violence victim in the Air Force
8	Sep. 26	Statement from the Chairperson regarding the movement to repeal local human rights ordinances
9	Nov. 4	Requirement for visually impaired individuals to have a companion when riding amusement park rides is discriminatory
10	Nov. 28	Statement from the Chairperson regarding the preliminary notice of the revised 2022 curriculum

※ A total of 288 press releases distributed in 2022

Presentation of the 2022 Annual Human Rights Reporting Awards

- Six media articles awarded for their contribution to the voluntary production and dissemination of materials for the protection and promotion of human rights

- Human Rights and Climate Crisis, Employment Situation of Refugees in Gyeonggi-do Province, Series of reports on the long-term accommodation of individuals with developmental disabilities at a treatment and protection facility, Special coverage on 22-year-old Kang Do-young who was charged with the murder of his father while caring for him, Investigative Report on 'Gangneung Story' (related to migrant workers), Daughter of a Stigmatized Prisoner

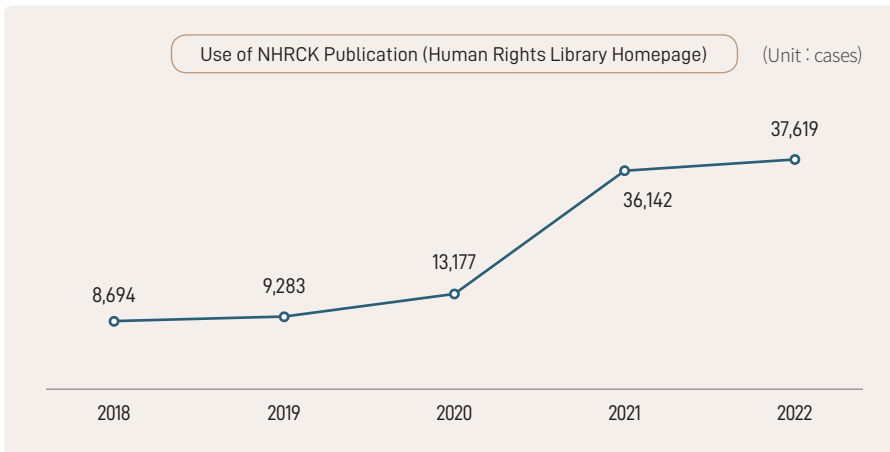
✔ User Statistics by Media

(Unit : persons)

Classification	2020	2021	2022
Website visitors (NHRCK, Human Rights-e)	421,752	516,020	613,212
Blog visitors	646,454	630,697	646,905
Facebook subscribers (cumulative)	45,200	46,029	46,902
Youtube subscribers (cumulative)	13,149	14,302	15,590

✔ Human Rights Information Provided through the Human Rights Library

Borrowing (books and non-books)		Library users
Internal users	External user (individuals, groups)	
552 persons / 1,880 books	333 persons / 1,093 books	19,265 persons



E Domestic and International Exchange and Cooperation

Legal Basis

NHRCK Act

- Collaboration with organizations and individuals involved in the promotion and advancement of human rights (subparagraph 8 of Article 19)
- exchange and cooperation with international and foreign human rights organizations (subparagraph 9 of Article 19)

Exchange and Cooperation with Human Rights and Civil Society Organizations

Networking and cooperation with local governments

- Human Rights Defenders Meeting (Theme: Ten years of local human rights institutionalization, status and prospects of local government human rights systems)



Funding (subsidies) of promotional activities by human rights organizations

(Unit : cases)

Classification	Applications	Applications (pending)	Classification	Applications	Applications (pending)
Women	9	4	Human rights in North Korea	2	(1)
Disabilities	6	1	Sports rights	2	(1)
Human rights in general, human rights education	4	1	Gender minorities	1	1
Children and teenagers	3	(1)	Youths	1	1
Climate change	2	2	Health rights	1	1
Discrimination	2	2	International human rights	1	-
Subtotal	26	10(1)	Subtotal	8	3(2)

Meetings, workshops, and field visits with human rights and civil society organizations to understand various issues and promote exchange and collaboration

☑ Exchange and Collaboration with International Human Rights Organizations and Associations

○ Collaboration with the GANHRI and the APF

- Elected as the Chair of APF in September 2022, representing the Asia-Pacific region and presenting opinions; greater leadership within GANHRI
- As Chair of the GANHRI Working Group on Ageing, hosted meeting in the second half of the year, actively advocating for the need to adopt an international convention on the rights of older persons
- Organized a training program inviting National Human Rights Institutions("NHRIs") from the Asia-Pacific region

○ Collaboration with international organizations and human rights groups

- Consulted with major embassies, including the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and the EU, for the enactment of an Equality Act, and participated in meeting of the New York City Commission on Human Rights and other organizations to address discrimination and hate crimes
- Engaged in discussions with Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and other major international human rights organizations regarding collaboration to enhance human rights in North Korea in the context of the COVID-19 situation
- Exchanged information with NHRIs and supported visits and investigations by the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights

○ Hosting international conferences on human rights issues:

- Collaborated with the EU and the APF to co-organize an international human rights conference, aiming to raise awareness and facilitate discussions on the importance of an international convention on the rights of older persons
- Co-organized the International Conference on North Korean Human Rights with the UK Parliamentary Association 'All-Party Parliamentary Group on North Korea' in UK and Korea Future, focusing on North Korean human rights issues norms

○ Promoting domestic implementation of international human rights

- Regularly reviewed country-specific human rights situations through the UPR and prepared response to the UN Human Rights Committee's review of South Korea's reports
- Submitted an independent report on the combined second and third periodic reports on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities



4. NHRCK Activities by Month

2022

January

January 5

- Visit to the Wednesday Protest site related to victims of Japanese military sexual slavery (comfort women)



January 12

- Chairperson's statement on fostering an inclusive society where North Korean defectors do not feel socially isolated

January 20

- Meeting with human rights civil society organizations in Busan, Ulsan, and Gyeongnam

January 27

- Chairperson's statement on the decision by the Ministry of Justice to extend residency status eligibility to immigrant children with long-term stay in South Korea

February

February 24

- Chairperson's statement on the reinstatement of dismissed worker Kim Jin-sook



February 28

- Announcement of the winners of the 11th Human Rights Reporting Awards

February 25

- Participation in the memorial ceremony commemorating the 8th anniversary of the Songpa Three Women case

March

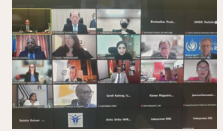


March 3

- Hosting of the 5th Elderly Human Rights Forum

March 7

- Chairperson's statement on the situation in Ukraine



March 8

- Participation in the GANHRI annual meeting

March 21

- Chairperson's statement on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

April

April 1

- Visit to rally of Solidarity Against Disability Discrimination



April 4

- Visit to site related to human rights of migrants and refugees
- Chairperson's statement on the implementation of health insurance coverage for Kimriah



April 8

- Hosting of a symposium for the establishment of a sustainable epidemic prevention system



April 12

- Visit to the protest site of the Coalition for Enactment of Anti-discrimination Law

April 19

- Visit to the rally against the deployment of THAAD

April 22

- Chairperson's statement on the Supreme Court ruling regarding indecent act offense under the Military Criminal Act

April 5

- Meeting with civil society organizations on human rights



May

May 4

- Chairperson's statement on the 100th Children's Day

May 8

- Chairperson's statement urging prompt enactment of the Equality Act (Anti-Discrimination Act)



May 11

- Work agreement system established with the Korea Institute of Criminology

May 17

- Chairperson's statement on the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia



May 18

- Site visit to the Korean diaspora community



May 31

- Visit to the Hwaseong Foreigner Protection Center

June



June 10

- Visit to Daejeon Veterans Hospital in commemoration of the Month of Patriots and Veterans



June 13

- Meeting with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation, and guarantees of non-recurrence

June 15

- Chairperson's statement on the Elder Abuse Prevention Day and World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

June 20

- Chairperson's statement on World Refugee Day



June 23

- First-half meeting of the GANHRI Working Group on Ageing

July



July 1

- Inauguration ceremony of the establishment of Military Human Rights Protection Officer

July 1

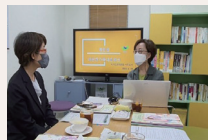
- Chairperson's statement on a military death incident



July 16

- Campaign for enactment of the Equality Act

August



August 18

- Visit to a single-parent family welfare facility



August 19

- Visit to promote the rights of older persons



August 23-24

- 2nd National Conference on the Rights of Migrants

August 26

- Chairperson's statement welcoming the recommendations for the recovery of victims of the past by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission



August 30

- Meeting with the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights situation in North Korea



August 31

- Symposium on the state of information rights in the era of AI and contentious issues

September



September 14

- International symposium on improving the immigration detention system

September 26

- Chairperson's statement on the movement to repeal local human rights ordinances



September 27

- Visit to Hanawon Settlement Support Center for North Korean defectors
- Chairperson's statement on the concluding observations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities regarding combined second and third periodic reports

October

October 11

- Chairperson's statement on the 20th World Day Against the Death Penalty



October 12

- Visit to facilities and transitional housing for people with disabilities



October 20

- North Korean Human Rights International Conference

October 26

- Chairperson's statement welcoming the decision of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission regarding the Seon-gam Academy incident



October 31 - November 1

- Human Rights Advocates Conference

November

November 4

- Chairperson's statement on the Itaewon tragedy



November 22

- Exhibition "Reading the Paintings of People with Mental Disabilities: Looking at the Times"



November 23

- International conference on the draft UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons



November 24

- Award ceremony for the Human Rights Artwork Contest



December 9

- Commemoration of Human Rights Day 2022

December 12

- Welcoming the ratification of the UN Convention on Enforced Disappearances

December 20

- Chairperson's statement on the UN General Assembly resolution on North Korean human rights



November 25

- Celebrating the 21st anniversary of the Commission through volunteer work in distributing briquettes to Guryong Village

November 28

- Chairperson's statement on the announced revised curriculum



November 29

- Visit to the April 16 Memorial Foundation for Democratic Citizenship Education

December



December 21

- Hosting of a symposium on promoting sustainable sports rights

December 29

- Visit to the Ganghwa Island Marine Corps for encouragement





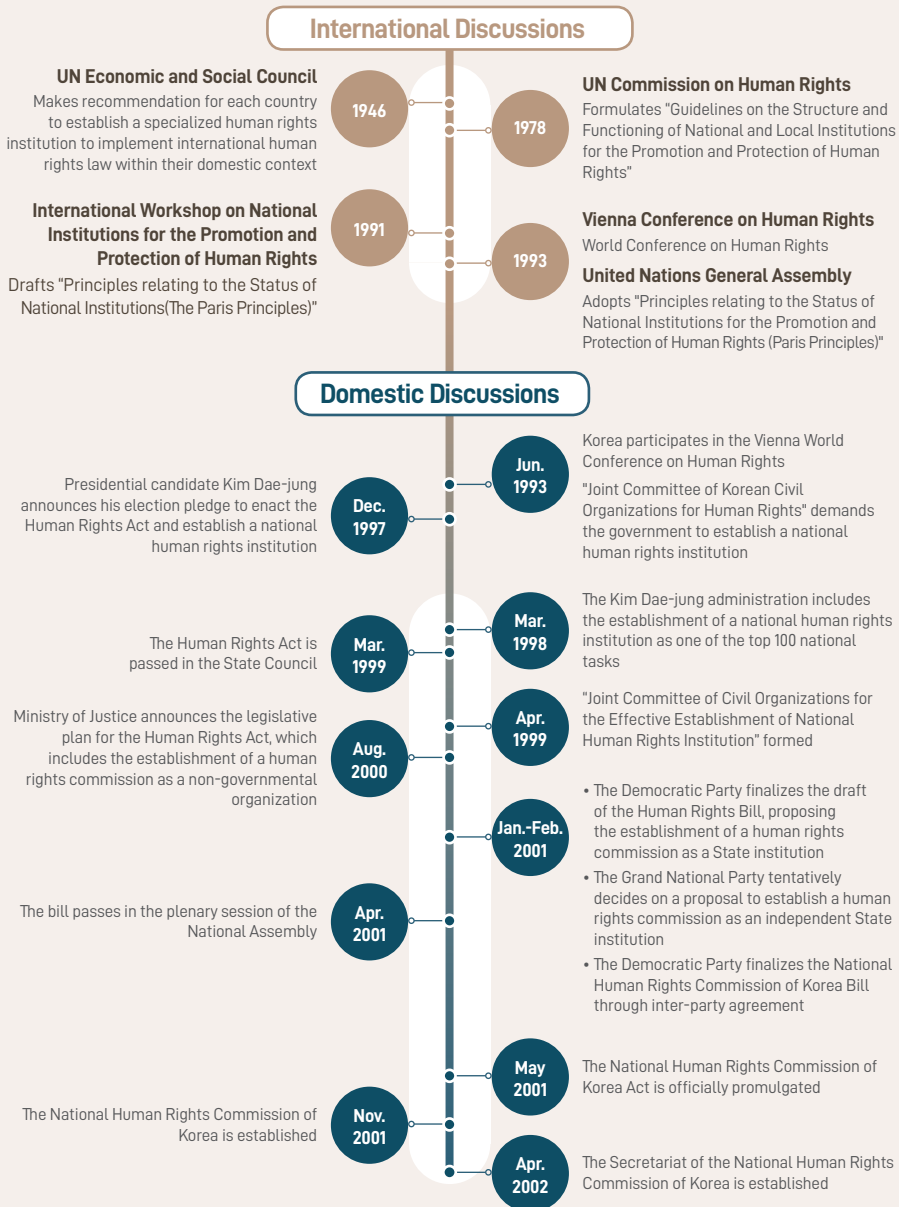
National Human Rights Commission of Korea



National Human Rights Commission of Korea

Chapter 2 NHRCK in Brief

1. NHRCK Establishment Timeline



2. Nature of NHRCK



☑ National Institution Dedicated to Human Rights

A State institution that actively promotes and defends the rights of individuals as guaranteed by the Constitution and performs duties related to the protection and promotion of human rights as outlined in the National Human Rights Commission Act of Korea

☑ Independent Body

An independent State institution that operates independently from the legislative, judiciary, and executive branches of government; it maintains its autonomy in conducting its operations and ensures a diverse composition within its structure

☑ Quasi-Judicial Body

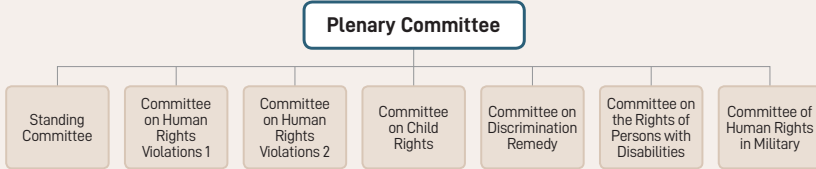
An entity that conducts investigations into individual cases of human rights violations or acts of discrimination, takes remedial measures to address them, offers recommendations for enhancing laws, regulations, and practices that may impede human rights, and complements the existing judicial procedures for seeking redress by addressing any limitations they may have

☑ Quasi-International Organization

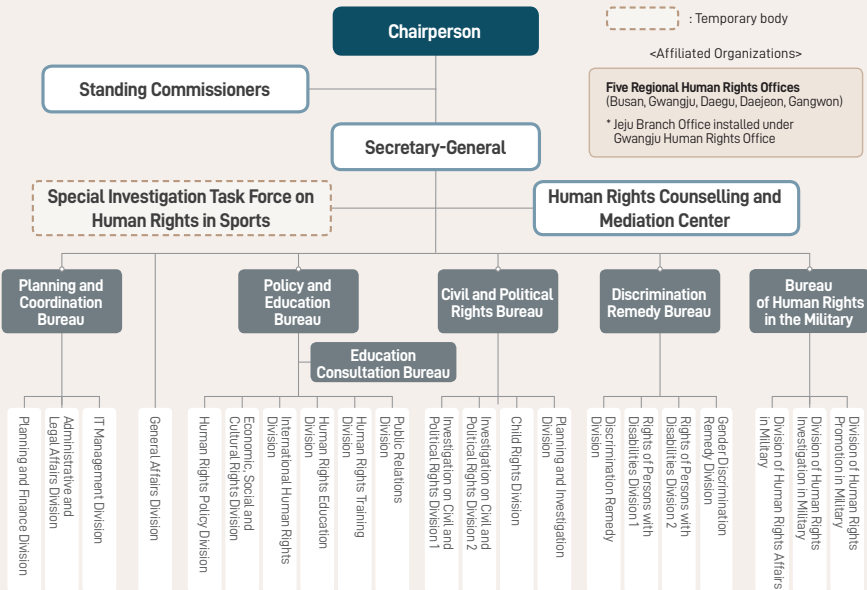
An organization with an international character that provides guidance on aligning the laws, regulations, and systems with international human rights standards, and actively participates in exchanges and collaborates with the United Nations and international human rights organizations; a domestic institution according to national law but founded on the principles of international human rights laws and assuming the responsibility of implementing and upholding these standards

3. NHRCK Organization

Commission



Secretariat



Number of Personnel

(Unit : persons)

Classification	Total	Political appointees	Higher-ranking officials	Grade 3-4	Grade 4	Grade 4-5	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Records and research staff	Reduction
Total	248	4	7	3	22	13	66	62	43	8	18	1	1
Headquarters	205	4	7	3	17	13	56	53	33	3	14	1	1
Affiliated institutions	43	-	-	-	5	-	10	9	10	5	4	-	-

※ as of December 31, 2022

PART

2

National Human Rights
Commission of Korea
Annual Report 2022





Introduction

Chapter 1 NHRCK Overview

Chapter 2 Domestic and International
Environment in 2022

Chapter 3 Basic Directions and Key Achievements



National Human Rights
Commission of Korea

Annual Report 2022

2

Introduction



Chapter 1

NHRCK Overview

1. Establishment and Key Functions

An independent national institution dedicated to human rights issues, the National Human Rights Commission of Korea (hereinafter referred to as the “Commission”) was established on November 25, 2001 in accordance with the National Human Rights Commission of Korea Act (hereinafter referred to as the “NHRCK Act”) to uphold the right to and respect for human dignity, while contributing to reinforcing democracy by safeguarding and promoting fundamental, inviolable human rights.

The Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (the “Paris Principles”) were laid out at a time when newly democratized nations were beginning to establish national human rights institutions in the late 1980s. The Paris Principles were adopted by the United Nations (the “UN”) Commission on Human Rights Resolution (1992/54) in 1992 and the UN General Assembly in 1993.

Discussions to establish a national human rights institution in Korea were first sparked when a joint committee of private entities took part in the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, Austria, in June 1993. With continuously voicing the need for a national institution dedicated to human rights issues, human rights and civil society organizations engaged in public discourse on enacting legislation to establish an independent national human rights institution responsible for research, investigation, education, and promotion related to the protection and enhancement of human rights in accordance with the UN Commission on Human Rights Resolution (1992/54) and the Paris Principles.

Informed by discussions both domestically and internationally, presidential candidate Kim Dae-jung pledged to establish a human rights institution as part of his campaign for the presidential election in 1997. In April 1999, a joint task force consisting of 71 human rights and civil society organizations was established. After three years of dedicated work by the task force, the NHRCK Act was enacted on May 24, 2001, during the Kim Dae-jung Administration. Six months later, on November 25, 2001, the Commission was established as an independent national human rights institution.

The Commission is a national institution dedicated to protecting and promoting the rights of socially disadvantaged individuals and minorities. This mandate is derived from the Constitution, other domestic laws, as well as customary international laws and human rights treaties that Korea has joined and ratified. The Commission is an independent institution that is not affiliated with any of the legislative, judicial, or executive branches of the government. It is a quasi-judicial organization whose procedures for investigating and redressing cases of human rights violations and discrimination complement the existing remedial procedures of other judicial agencies. The Commission functions as a quasi-international organization by implementing international human rights standards within the nation. It adheres to the authorities, responsibilities, organizational structure, and operational guidelines defined in the Paris Principles.

With a view to protecting and promoting human rights for all, the Commission assumes four key functions, which are policy, investigations and remedies, education and promotion, and cooperation at home and abroad. In the realm of policy, the Commission makes recommendations and presents opinions on matters that require further study, research, and improvement in human rights- related laws and regulations, institutions, policies, and practices. It also submits opinions regarding proceedings that have significant implications on human rights. The Commission's investigations and remedies are focused on addressing human rights violations and discrimination in national institutions, local governments, schools, public service-related organizations, and detention and protection facilities, as well as discrimination perpetrated by corporate bodies, organizations, and private individuals without justifiable reasons. The human rights education and promotion function is aimed at raising public awareness, and the exchanges and cooperation function involves collaborating with a wide range of human rights and civil society organizations, individuals in Korea, as well as relevant international organizations and human rights institutions abroad.

2. Organization

The Commission comprises 11 commissioners, which includes the Chairperson, three standing commissioners, and seven non-standing commissioners. Four commissioners are elected by the National Assembly, four nominated by the President, and three nominated by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and approved by the President. Neither gender may account for more than 60% of all 11 commissioner positions. Among the standing members designated by the President, one person is appointed as the Military Human Rights Protector under the Framework Act on Military Status and Service. This individual is responsible for safeguarding the fundamental rights of soldiers and ensuring that appropriate remedies are provided in cases of rights violations.

The Chairperson is selected from among the commissioners and appointed by the President following a personnel hearing at the National Assembly. The Chairperson represents the Commission and oversees its overall operation. If necessary, the Chairperson appears and states his or her opinions before the National Assembly and, if required by the National Assembly, is obligated to testify and respond to questions on matters pertaining to the Commission. The Chairperson has the authority to represent the Commission and speak at the State Council. He or she can recommend the Prime Minister to submit bills, including presidential decree bills, related to matters concerning the Commission. The term of office for all commissioners, including the Chairperson, is three years, and they can serve a consecutive term just once.

The Commission makes decisions and takes actions through the Plenary Committee with all the commissioners, as well as the Standing Committee, comprising the Chairperson and three standing commissioners, and the subcommittees. The subcommittees include the Committee on Human Rights Violations I (the Prosecution, Police, military, intelligence service, legislative branch, and judicial branch); Committee on Human Rights Violations II (other areas, including national institutions, local governments, public service-related organizations, and detention and protection facilities); Committee on Child Rights (children and youths under 19, child care homes, and youth detention centers); Committee on Discrimination Remedy (discrimination remedy issues); Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (discrimination against persons with disabilities and violations in facilities for persons with disabilities and mental healthcare centers); and Committee of Human Rights in Military (in the field of military human rights).

As of December 31, 2022, the Secretariat consists of four political appointees, the Secretary General, six bureaus, 20 divisions, two teams, five regional offices, one branch office, and one temporary department. The total number of personnel is 248, with 205 working at the headquarters (including the four political appointees) and 43 in the affiliated institutions.

Chapter 2 Domestic and International Environment in 2022

The COVID-19 pandemic brought to light preexisting human rights issues in our daily lives. It has exacerbated social and economic polarization, inequality, labor rights concerns, discrimination based on hatred, and gender inequality. These are issues that have often been marginalized in human rights discussions. Consequently, there is a pressing need to enhance social safety nets and foster social integration to address these challenges.

With the ongoing occurrence of global disasters and crises, there is a growing demand for adopting a human rights-based approach to disaster management, encompassing both prevention and response measures. Social disasters and climate crises are one of the biggest challenges we face today, as they affect a wide range of rights, including the right to life, health, and housing. However, their impact is not evenly distributed and tends to disproportionately affect certain demographics. Recognizing the urgency of the climate crisis, the international community has framed it as a human rights issue, and the UN Human Rights Council has adopted 12 resolutions addressing the intersection of climate change and human rights obligations. These resolutions highlight the responsibilities of States and corporations, as well as international obligations.

The Itaewon Tragedy that took place in October 2022 in Korea served as a stark reminder that the construction of a safe society, including robust disaster safety management and prevention systems, should no longer be postponed. The incident highlighted the importance of having a strong sense of responsibility among national leaders towards ensuring the safety of citizens.

The development of new technologies, including AI and big data, and the transition towards an intelligent information society have brought about significant changes to various aspects of human life and rights. These advancements have implications for employment, finance, administration, and welfare, among others, and can also pose risks to privacy, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and demonstration, and labor rights. Accordingly, the UN recognizes the critical importance of a comprehensive human rights-based approach that carefully balances the benefits of AI technology and the challenges posed by its impact on privacy rights and other human rights issues,

Furthermore, income polarization has far-reaching consequences, which extend beyond poverty and exclusion to education, health, housing, environment, medical care, self-development, and cultural enjoyment. Recognizing the interconnectedness of these issues, discussions on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) policies have gained momentum, with major corporations and economic departments actively participating. There is a growing consensus that companies have a responsibility to respect and uphold the human rights of all individuals, both directly and indirectly, and that they should actively engage in efforts to protect and promote human rights.

Meanwhile, with the National Assembly agreeing to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in 2022, measures were put in place to prevent and punish enforced disappearance crimes and protect human rights. With the National Assembly's consent to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, individuals will now have the opportunity to submit their communications that the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities conducts an inquiry, considers and transmits the findings to the government together with any comments and recommendations. Furthermore, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities reviewed Korea's second and third combined national report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and presented 79 recommendations.

However, some local governments faced campaigns to repeal fundamental human rights ordinances and student human rights ordinances, and there were attempts to reduce or merge departments responsible for safeguarding and promoting human rights. These actions contradict the goal of achieving human rights values in our society. In response, the Commission issued statements from the chairperson expressing concerns and is working towards preserving and

strengthening the regional system for human rights protection.

Furthermore, through the revision of the NHRCK Act in January and its enforcement in July 2022, the position of Military Human Rights Protector was established. This development was accompanied by the establishment of the Bureau of Human Rights in Military, further enhancing the capacity to safeguard human rights in the military setting.

The Commission remains committed to its legislative endeavors aimed at establishing a solid foundation for human rights in our society. These efforts include advocating for the enactment of an Equality Act, which aims to address conflicts arising from discrimination and promote a society that values diversity. The Commission is also actively involved in the establishment of a Framework Act on Human Rights Policy, seeking to provide an institutional framework for the protection of human rights. Despite these ongoing efforts, however, the completion of relevant legislation in the National Assembly is still pending.

In light of the evolving human rights landscape, the Commission has been proactive in its approach to safeguarding human rights and promoting international human rights standards. Recognizing the importance of establishing a society where the dignity, equality, and freedom of all individuals are protected, the Commission has undertaken various tasks in the fields of investigation, policy formulation, education, promotion, and cooperation.

1. Basic Directions

In anticipation of its 20th anniversary, the Commission established the Human Rights Promotion Action Strategy (2021-2025) as a five-year goal-setting framework. This strategy encompasses three major strategic goals and 21 performance goals. Building upon this strategy, the Commission detailed its 2022 annual work plan and pursued a range of initiatives to attain the strategic and performance objectives.

The Commission also sought to enhance the efficiency and impact of its work, ensure timely and effective responses to emerging human rights issues, reinforce its role as a quasi-international organization, foster sustained collaboration both domestically and internationally, and bolster its preventive capabilities for safeguarding human rights. These endeavors were undertaken with the aim of establishing the Commission as a trusted institution that enjoys the support of the general public.

2. Progress in Achieving Performance Goals

A. Responding Proactively to Rapidly Changing Human Rights Environments, and Global Emergencies and Crises

1) Ensuring Human Dignity and Rights in Disaster Situations

In the face of the prolonged national disaster caused by COVID-19, the Commission focused on proactively addressing the potential impact of significant societal changes on human rights. It is dedicated to ensuring that the fundamental values of human rights are not compromised in the midst of rapid industrial structural shifts, societal polarization, population aging, inequality, and the challenges posed by the climate crisis.

The Commission organized round-table discussions on building a sustainable epidemic prevention system and meetings focused on COVID-19 prevention to gather valuable insights

from experts and civil society regarding the protection of human rights in the context of epidemic situations. As a result, the Commission made recommendations to revise certain provisions of the law that pertain to significant human rights issues arising during infectious disease outbreaks, including the definition of suspected patient of infectious diseases, quarantine measures, and provisions for safeguarding vulnerable groups.

The Commission also identified and addressed human rights issues to strengthen the social safety net for vulnerable groups facing various violations, including income and labor instability, gaps in medical and care services, and hatred and discrimination amid the prolonged COVID-19 situation.

The Commission made recommendations and expressed opinions on the right of workers to rest when sick during infectious disease situations. Additionally, it issued a Chairperson's statement in relation to the Itaewon incident, urging the government to acknowledge its responsibility, conduct a thorough investigation, and support the victims. The Commission also conducted a survey to explore ways to protect the human rights of farmers in the context of the climate crisis and held policy discussions to strengthen the housing rights of vulnerable groups whose housing issues were exacerbated by heavy rain during the summer.

In particular, the Commission played a crucial role in fostering a social consensus on the importance of adopting a human rights approach to addressing the climate crisis. It emphasized the government's fundamental obligation to protect and promote human rights in response to the climate crisis.

2) Strengthening Social Security to Address Poverty and Inequality

The Commission worked to protect and enhance social security rights and reduce polarization by addressing various care issues such as care gaps, overburdened care, and re-familialization of care caused by the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic. It recommended institutional improvements to resolve blind spots in caregiving, strengthen the public nature of elderly care, and improve working conditions of elderly care workers; made recommendations and expressed opinions to expand social responsibility for caregiving; recommended improvements in systems to support the social reintegration of socially isolated young people; and recommended institutional improvements to enhance the accessibility and expansion of mental health services for young people.

3) Strengthening Human Rights Protection in the Intelligent Information Society

With the development of innovative information processing technologies such as AI and Big Data, we have entered into an intelligence information society, and new issues related to information rights have emerged. In response, the Commission carried out monitoring and policy reviews of new human rights issues such as human rights violations and discrimination caused by new technologies.

In order to protect information rights that are easily infringed upon by the development of new technologies and prevent human rights infringements that arise from social change, the Commission recommended human rights guidelines for the development and utilization of AI, made recommendations and issued opinions on protecting human rights in the introduction and use of facial recognition technology, and recommended improvements to temporary measures under the Information and Communications Network Act, expressed opinion on the National Cyber Security Bill, and conducted research on assessments to evaluate the impact of AI on human rights.

4) Enhancing the Rights of Older Persons in a Super Aged Society

As Korea enters an era of super-aged society, the Commission held policy discussions to address the growing issue of poverty among the elderly, conducted surveys on the human rights situation of the elderly due to the digital divide, and worked to raise public awareness and set agendas on the human rights of older persons through events such as the Elderly Human Rights Forum. The Commission also made efforts to protect and enhance the human rights of the elderly by recommending strengthening the public nature of elderly care and improving working conditions for elderly caregivers, improving systems to protect the elderly from traffic accidents, and recommending improvements in the protection of elderly abuse victims and prevention of elderly abuse.

5) Resolving Unaddressed Issues in Labor Rights and Strengthening Human Rights in Business Management

In Korea, despite the country's economic level, polarization is deepening, and there is a high proportion of low-wage workers as well as a high rate of occupational deaths. Labor rights are not properly guaranteed, with long working hours being common. In response, the Commission

took several actions to address labor rights blind spots, including submitting opinion on the lawsuit to overturn the dismissal of an HIV-infected firefighter, making recommendations and expressing opinions to improve unfair labor practices, providing opinions on the partial amendments to the Labor Standards Act and the Trade Union and Labor Relations Adjustment Act, conducting surveys on the labor rights situation of waste management and call center workers, and holding policy discussions and workshops on various labor rights issues.

The Commission conducted policy discussions to tackle the diverse labor rights issues stemming from the rapid expansion of logistics centers, driven by the profound transformation in the way people engage in non-face-to-face daily activities. Additionally, it announced the results of a survey on the human rights situation faced by nurses in the context of infectious disease crises, and organized policy discussions.

The Commission worked to establish a system for promoting human rights management and inspections in private companies. To this end, it organized a private sector human rights management workshop, and launched a pilot project to explore practical models based on voluntary participation and collaboration of private companies. The Commission held the Human Rights Management Forum to promote communication and cooperation among civil society organizations, companies, government, and academia, and to share current issues. It also made efforts to improve the human rights management system and raise awareness in public institutions and public companies by recommending adoption of the Human Rights Management Reporting and Evaluation Guidelines.

6) Shifting the Paradigm in the Sports Human Rights Environment and Strengthening Human Rights in Sports

In 2022, the Commission recommended revising and adopting the Sports Human Rights Charter and Guidelines to address the evolving human rights landscape in the field of sports since the establishment and initial recommendation of the Human Rights in Sports Guidelines in 2010. During the process of revising the guidelines, the Commission actively engaged with stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and Tourism, the Korean Olympic Committee, the Sports Ethics Center, athletes, and coaches, to consider and incorporate their perspectives and feedback. The guidelines were developed to prevent various types of harassment and violent control, protect athletes, and promote fair participation in sports.

The Commission urged local government bodies with municipal sports teams to incorporate essential human rights protection measures for athletes, such as the obligation to protect their rights and ensure the freedom of privacy, into relevant ordinances. Furthermore, to prevent human rights violations against student athletes and assess the situation during sports competition, the Commission monitored national competitions in 20 different disciplines, the 103rd National Sports Festival and the 42nd National Para Games. A Policy Round-table for Human Rights-Friendly Sports Competitions was also held to share the results with the Ministry of Education, the Korean Sport & Olympic Committee, and other sports-related organizations, and to gather their opinions.

7) Enhancing Human Rights in North Korea

Despite the challenges posed by factors such as nuclear testing, sanctions on North Korea, severed inter-Korean dialogue, escalated tensions, and the closure of the North Korean border, the Commission held an international symposium on North Korean human rights in London, in collaboration with the British Parliament.

It also enhanced its policy and expertise on North Korean human rights by promoting international cooperation, such as meeting with the UN Special Rapporteur on North Korean human rights and the head of the UN Human Rights Office in Seoul, conducting research on the human rights situation in North Korea during the COVID-19 pandemic, and organizing a committee of human rights experts. Furthermore, efforts were made to bring about substantive improvements in North Korean human rights, such as issuing a chairperson's statement advocating for the creation of an inclusive society where North Korean defectors do not experience social isolation, visiting the Settlement Support Center for North Korean Defectors, and issuing a statement welcoming the adoption of the North Korean human rights resolution by the 77th UN General Assembly.

B. Strengthening Domestic Implementation of International Human Rights Standards

1) Enactment of Laws and Institutionalization for Equality and Non-Discrimination, and Addressing Hate Speech

Advancing the Legislative Proposal for the Equality Act

In 2022, the Commission conducted a perception survey on gender equality, and actively raised awareness about the necessity of an Equality Act. This included release of a Chairperson's statement urging the prompt enactment of the law, meetings with civic and religious organizations, interviews with the media, and creation and dissemination of promotional materials on the law. The Commission also discussed ways to support the enactment of the Equality Act with foreign embassies and international organizations in Korea and obtained a statement of support for the Equality Bill from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

In addition, the Commission remained committed to the legislation by supporting public hearings on the four bills pending in the National Assembly, holding meetings with members of the Legislation and Judiciary Committee, attending the Legislation and Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Bill Review, and explaining key issues related to the Equality Bill.

The Commission also made efforts to promote public awareness and support for the enactment of the Equality Act by producing a special report, a special report about the Act on Prevention of Human Trafficking and Protection of Victim through Korean Broadcasting System ("KBS") and a series of news reports on undocumented migrant children through Seoul Broadcasting System ("SBS"). In addition, the Commission collaborated with various broadcasting media outlets to produce special reports on the occasion of the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia.

Addressing the Spread of Hate Speech and Discrimination

The Commission held capacity-building training sessions for instructors and workshops to promote respect for human rights among youths, shape a culture of equity, and promote the

practice of self-regulation measures against hate speech and discrimination, and produced videos that can be used by educators.

Among other efforts to respond to various hate speech and discrimination issues, the Commission monitored hate speech by politicians during the presidential election period, issued a Chairperson's statement to prevent hate speech during the local election period, and sent letters requesting major political parties and the National Election Commission to prevent and address hate speech. It also examined ways to improve relevant regulations and monitored the status of self-regulation measures in different sectors.

2) Combating Racial Discrimination and Protecting the Rights of Migrants and Refugees

The Commission monitored refugee application procedures and treatment to understand recent policy changes and the realities related to the housing rights and health rights of migrant workers, and to identify policy tasks.

Through an opinion expressed on the government's twentieth to twenty-second reports, submitted in a single document, under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Commission monitored the situation of migrants and refugees in South Korean society and advocated for policy improvements to address the challenges and uncertainties in residence status faced by individuals re-applying for asylum and foreign guardians of children with Korean nationality.

The Commission organized an international symposium to address the human rights concerns related to the immigration detention system for foreign nationals who are at risk of forced eviction. It also made efforts to improve the living conditions of vulnerable migrants in detention and increase public awareness about alternatives to detention by expressing opinions on the proposed partial amendment to the Rules on Detention of Aliens and providing policy recommendations based on visits to foreigner protection facilities.

The Commission collaborated closely with civil society organizations to advance the rights of migrants. It monitored the human rights situation of migrants in the post-COVID-19 period, explored strategies for the new government's immigration policies and the development of the Fourth Framework Plan for Foreigner Policy. Additionally, it organized the 2nd National

Conference on the Rights of Migrants, fostering networking among immigration activists and experts across the country.

3) Resolving Gender Discrimination and Establishing a Foundation for Gender Equality

The Commission actively sought input from external experts through a policy forum focused on preventing and addressing sexual harassment, held to commemorate the publication of the White Paper on Sexual Harassment Cases Volume 2. The objective was to enhance the effectiveness of investigations and remedies related to sexual harassment, and to develop preventive measures and effective remedies for such cases.

Furthermore, the Commission explored ways to prevent and deal with sexual harassment and secondary victimization caused by a lack of gender sensitivity among law enforcement officials such as police and prosecutors during investigation and trial processes. This was achieved through a survey of gender sensitivity and case law analysis in the criminal justice field, as well as through discussions and consultations with experts on various gender-related issues, including the Gender Equality Forum and women's rights civil society organizations.

Building upon these efforts, the Commission played an active role in addressing gender-related issues, including expressing opinions on the 9th national report to comply with international human rights norms related to gender equality and recommending amendments to the Political Parties Act and the Public Official Election Act to improve gender imbalances in politics. It also expressed opinions on the proposed amendment to the Government Organization Act, which deals with the abolition of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family. Additionally, on the occasion of the International Day of Transgender Visibility, the Commission produced a card news based on a survey of hate speech and discrimination against transgenders and actively promoted it through its Social Network Service (SNS) channels. The Commission also made efforts to enhance the human rights of sexual minorities by issuing a Chairperson's statement on the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia, making policy recommendations to improve transgenders' rights, monitoring the Seoul Queer Culture Festival, and pushing for a hearing on the gender correction process for transgender individuals.

4) Enhancing Disability Rights through Increased Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities

The Commission submitted an independent report and participated in the deliberation of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to strengthen domestic implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and to contribute to the development of a substantive concluding observations. Afterwards, it produced and distributed easy-to-read materials of the concluding observations to ensure that people with disabilities can easily understand the contents.

The Commission also conducted policy research and responded to current issues to protect the rights of persons with disabilities. It monitored the use of unmanned information terminals, worked on establishment of criteria to determine discrimination against people with disabilities, and monitored policies related to welfare services and remedies for rights violation concerning individuals with developmental disabilities.

To improve social awareness of hate speech and discrimination against persons with mental disabilities, the Commission organized an exhibition of artwork created by individuals with mental disabilities, and actively supported and cooperated with stakeholder organizations to voluntarily promote projects aimed at improving awareness and reducing prejudices against persons with mental disabilities through media monitoring.

Furthermore, the Commission made proactive efforts to raise public interest and protect human rights by conducting a survey on human rights-based therapeutic environment for persons with mental disabilities, a survey on the guarantee of labor rights for persons with mental disabilities, and visits and inspections of mental health institutions.

5) Establishing Awareness of Children and Youth Rights and Improving Laws and Systems

The Commission recommended institutional improvements to promote the labor rights of children and youths, including employment contracts for the youth and enhancing education on youth labor rights. It also recommended guaranteeing the rights to rest, sleep, health, and education of children and adolescents engaged in popular culture and art activities, as well as strengthening remedies for human rights violations and discrimination. The Commission

also recommended enhancing the understanding of child rights among popular culture and art enterprises.

Regarding the issue of lowering the age limit for criminal minors and the upper age limit for juvenile offenders, the Commission expressed the opinion that such adjustments go against international human rights standards, which call for the social reintegration and rehabilitation of juveniles, and cannot be effective solutions to prevent juvenile crime and recidivism. The Commission also expressed the need for legal measures to register the births of unregistered migrant's children born in Korea and to improve their access to medical services.

In addition, the Commission expressed the opinion that the use of the term ‘*lin-i*’¹⁾ in official documents, broadcasts, and the internet by public institutions should be discontinued. To address the ongoing issues related to the on-the-job training system and the various accidents that have occurred, the Commission conducted a survey of on-site training programs in specialized high schools.

The Commission continues to recommend against excessive restrictions on the basic rights of students, such as the right to freely express their individuality and self-determination and the right to general freedom of action. These recommendations were made as a result of actively uncovering human rights issues in order to establish an understanding of child and adolescent rights and make legal and institutional improvements.

6) Human Rights-friendly Improvements in Criminal Justice Procedures

The Commission made efforts to address human rights violations in the entire criminal justice process, including submitting opinions on cases related to the unconstitutionality of Article 7 of the National Security Act and Article 19 of the Prevention of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome Act, and the need for a bill to legalize the practice of tattooing by non-medical practitioners.

Additionally, it conducted research on improving the human rights and treatment of inmates in correctional facility, analyzing international human rights standards and identifying issues with the Administration and Treatment of Correctional Institution Inmates Act, and examined

1) The suffix “-lin-i” is used to refer to someone who is a beginner or novice in a particular field or activity

specific cases to gain insights and identify areas for improvement within the correctional system.

Furthermore, in accordance with Article 25 (5) of the NHRCK Act, the Commission monitored the implementation status of its recommendations to ensure their effectiveness. This included measures to guarantee the right to defense in cases involving the disclosure of personal information, ensuring the right to know in the event of non-indictment decisions, and guaranteeing the right to defense through accompaniment of trusted persons.

7) Compliance with International Human Rights Treaties and International Cooperation

Strengthening Domestic Implementation of International Human Rights Norms

The Commission actively responded to deliberation of international human rights systems in order to effectively promote the domestic implementation of international human rights norms. In relation to the fourth UPR of the UN Human Rights Council on the human rights situation in Korea, the Commission played an active role in advocating for its key human rights improvement task proposals to be reflected in the resulting UPR recommendations.

Regarding the fifth consideration of the UN Human Rights Committee on the report submitted by the Republic of Korea scheduled in 2023, the Commission proactively responded by analyzing the concluding observations of the UN Human Rights Committee on the human rights situation in other countries, and by seeking expert advice on the government's implementation of the fourth concluding observations. Additionally, through monitoring of regular sessions of the UN Human Rights Council, the Commission analyzed and shared reports, resolutions, and other human rights issues that are discussed and debated by the Human Rights Council, enabling prompt responses to international human rights policy trends both domestically and internationally.

The Commission also made efforts to promote implementation of international human rights norms by holding meetings to explore ways to implement the individual communication (individual complaint) system of the UN human rights treaty bodies and holding seminars focused on the application of international human rights standards in constitutional adjudication.

Strengthening Collaboration and Leadership in the International Human Rights Community

The Commission has played a central role in promoting human rights in the Asia-Pacific region and addressing current issues by voicing opinions and collaborating with UN agencies and other international organizations, especially since the Chairperson of the Commission was elected as the APF Chair at the 27th APF Annual Meeting in September 2022. As a member of the GANHRI Bureau and the Chair of the GANHRI Working Group on Ageing, the Commission demonstrated leadership in the international human rights community, raising the status of Republic of Korea as a human rights country.

Moreover, the Commission represented GANHRI at the 12th UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing and the UN Human Rights Council, advocating for the necessity of a dedicated Convention on the Rights of Older Persons and taking a leadership role by presenting a draft at an international conference.

The Commission also collaborated with diplomatic missions in Korea to promote the enactment of the Equality Act, while exploring collaboration strategies with various international partners, including the Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP), the New York City Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes, and the European Court of Human Rights.

C. Enhancing Accountability and Capacity of the National Human Rights Institution

1) Enhancing Speed, Effectiveness, and Expertise in Investigative and Remedial Activities

Investigation of Petitioned Cases

The number of petitions filed increased by 538 (5.4%) to a total of 15,730 in comparison to the previous year. There was also an increase in the number of cases processed, with 10,345 cases handled, reflecting a rise of 1,085 (11.7%) from the previous year. Additionally, the Commission issued 101 more recommendations, making it a total of 605 (20.0%). The

impact of the COVID-19 pandemic had initially caused a significant decline in the number of petitions filed, with only 9,000 cases filed in 2020. However, there has been a consistent increase in the numbers since then. The notable increase in processed cases can be attributed to the Commission's focus on addressing long-standing cases. However, the overall cumulative acceptance rate of recommendations, from the inception of the Commission until 2022, remained at a similar level of 91.3% compared to the previous year, with a slight decline below 90% from 2021.

Investigations and Remedies of Human Rights Violations

The number of petitions filed for human rights violations saw a notable increase of 1,037 cases (14.0%) compared to the previous year, reaching a total of 8,468 cases. This increase was particularly significant in petitions related to educational institutions, including petitions concerning regulations on students' appearance and restrictions on mobile phone usage. Additionally, with the establishment of the Military Human Rights Protector, there was a continued rise in petitions filed concerning the military, as well as petitions related to the Police and correctional facilities.

The number of petitions processed increased by 859 cases (12.6%) compared to the previous year, reaching a total of 7,684 cases. Additionally, the number of cases resolved through remedies also increased to 827 cases, showing a growth of 134 cases (19.3%) compared to the previous year. As a result, the rate of remedy has been steadily increasing since 2020.

To highlight some of the main recommendations made by type of institution, the Commission advised amending the Telecommunications Business Act to the Minister of Science and ICT to address the unjustified collection of communication data by investigative agencies, and the establishment or revision of manuals and guidelines for the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials, the Prosecution, and the Police. Regarding human rights violations by the Police, the Commission recommended the implementation of procedures that require clear consent from residents, along with evidence of such consent, when entering residences without a warrant. It also recommended that the Police take proactive measures to prevent the obstruction of the Wednesday demonstrations for comfort women victims. Additionally, the Commission conducted investigations and made recommendations to address recurring cases of excessive use of restraints and violations of the rights of defense counsel during criminal procedures.

Investigations and Remedies of Discrimination

In 2022, a total of 2,036 discrimination petitions were filed, which marked a decrease of 528 cases (20.6%) compared to the previous year (2,564 cases). This decrease can be attributed to a reduction in the proportion of collective petitions, which decreased from 768 cases (30%) in 2021 to 400 cases (19.6%) in 2022. The breakdown of discrimination cases by specific areas in 2022 was as follows: discrimination in the supply or use of goods or services accounted for 882 cases (43.3%), employment-related discrimination 726 cases (35.6%), sexual harassment 171 cases (8.4%), discrimination in other areas 166 cases (8.2%), and discrimination in the use of educational facilities and other areas 91 cases (4.5%).

The number of cases seeking remedies for rights violations decreased by 0.8% to 474 cases compared to the previous year. However, the number of cases resulting in remedial recommendations increased by 18.9%.

The Commission recommended revising ethical guidelines that restrict fertility treatments for unmarried women. It also called for the rectification of discriminatory practices related to COVID-19 infection management allowances based on employment types. Furthermore, it expressed its opinions on several issues, including restrictions on mobile phone use for logistics center workers and discriminatory practices in the promotion and re-appointment of clinical professors in university hospitals, particularly regarding the requirement of recommendation letters. The Commission also conducted *suo motu* investigations to address discriminatory practices within private schools, such as educational background restrictions, excessive weighting of academic degrees, the implementation of a grading system based on the alma mater in staff recruitment, and discrimination in employment based on educational background and academic credentials. These endeavors were undertaken to tackle these concerns and establish remedial measures.

Strengthening Capacity for Deliberate Investigations

The Commission conducted *suo motu* investigations and performed on-site inspections in cases that required monitoring and intervention. In 2022, it decided to initiate seven *suo motu* investigations. Six cases, including two carried over from the previous year, were conducted and resulted in relief recommendations. Additionally, the Commission decided to initiate seven on-

site inspections. Seven cases, including those carried over from the previous year, led to policy recommendations.

Strengthening Investigative Capacity

The Commission conducted regular training sessions and seminars to strengthen the investigative capabilities of its investigators while implementing mentoring programs, mentor-mentee activities, and joint investigator programs. Internal and external diagnostic teams conducted thorough revisions of the Guidelines for Investigating and Remediating Human Rights Violations and Discrimination and formulated the Regulations on Investigating and Remediating Human Rights Violations and Discrimination. The Commission published and distributed the NHRCK Investigation Manual, which includes principles for handling investigations and remedies, investigation procedures, and guidelines for writing investigation reports.

The Commission also released several manuals and resources to support the management and handling of special cases, workplace harassment cases, discrimination determination, cases involving disability facilities and mental health institutions, and cases involving military personnel and other deaths. Additionally, the Commission established a Case Reference bulletin board on the e-Petition System, where precedents and exemplary decisions of social and human rights significance are shared. These resources serve as valuable references for investigators in their investigative work.

2) Expanding Human Rights Education across Lifespan and Promoting Human Rights

Formalizing and Professionalizing Human Rights Education

The Commission made significant efforts to advance policy, education, and collaboration initiatives aimed at enhancing human rights education based on different life stages and strengthening and expanding the infrastructure for human rights education. One key initiative was the development of the implementation design for the Human Rights Training Institute, which will play a central role in nurturing human rights experts. The design laid the foundation for the actual construction of the institute, which is scheduled to commence in 2023. The Commission devised and executed training programs targeting local governments, schools,

and childcare sectors with the objective of enhancing their knowledge and capabilities in the field of human rights. Additionally, it focused on raising youth awareness by delivering human rights lessons that cover important topics on hate speech and discrimination. To address the pressing human rights issues of the present time, the Commission created educational resources specifically focused on the intersection of the climate crisis and human rights. It developed and distributed human rights education content that caters to the practical needs of various audiences, including videos that showcase the practical application of human rights principles in school settings and a guidebook that explores the use of play-based approaches to facilitate the learning of human rights concepts. The Commission proposed several institutional improvements to enhance human rights education within the National Assembly. These recommendations included mandatory completion of human rights education, establishment of human rights education courses, and measures to raise the completion rate of legal mandatory education. It also conveyed its view that the proposed introduction of coercive measures, such as imposing fines on individuals who fail to complete mandatory education, as outlined in the proposed amendments to the Welfare of Senior Citizens Act and the Long-Term Care Insurance Act, is not suitable.

Furthermore, the Commission strengthened collaboration and exchange with relevant institutions and organizations to gather on-site feedback and opinions on improving human rights education systems and the implementation of human rights education courses, and to increase the effectiveness and satisfaction of human rights education.

Developing and Disseminating Human Rights Content to Promote the Spread of a Human Rights Culture

The Commission implemented various strategies to ensure effective communication of its key policies and current issues. It diversified its communication channels and enhanced internal and external consultations. Timely and appropriate promotion was prioritized to disseminate information. Specifically, the Commission produced and promoted content on climate crisis and human rights to raise awareness, aligning with the Climate Justice Week initiative. Additionally, a year-long campaign on climate crisis and human rights was conducted through the bimonthly Human Rights magazine.

In July, on the occasion of the establishment of the Military Human Rights Protector, the

Commission conducted special coverage, interviews, and media support. It also created and disseminated content through diverse media channels to reach a wide audience.

Furthermore, the Commission collaborated with broadcast media, particularly TV and radio, for their extensive coverage and impact. To commemorate the Chairperson's first anniversary, various initiatives were undertaken to actively engage with the public, including Educational Broadcasting System(EBS) talk shows and interviews featuring the Chairperson. In the realm of video content, the Commission utilized the YouTube platform for promotional activities. The *Byeolbyeol* Reporters played a role in enhancing public acceptance of human rights policies by delivering content related to human rights culture. Furthermore, the Commission achieved significant results by producing diverse content suitable for new media platforms and sharing them on social networking services, which led to increased viewership and effectively raised awareness about human rights in our society.

3) Deepening effective partnerships and strengthening overall governance structures

The Commission carried out various activities to enhance cooperation and collaboration with human rights and civil society organizations. It engaged in visits to human rights sites, including protest camps of dismissed workers, support facilities for North Korean defectors, and housing for deinstitutionalized disabled individuals. The Commission also organized mid-year and year-end meetings with organizations to assess the human rights situation and listen to the perspectives from the ground. Additionally, it actively supported and accommodated various requests from human rights organizations that were in line with the Commission's strategic objectives, such as co-hosting human rights events and providing endorsements. This aimed to contribute to the expansion of a human rights culture and the advancement of human rights in society.

4) Strengthening Human Rights Protection Systems and Capacities of Human Rights Offices at the Regional Level

Recognizing the crucial role of local governments in advancing and safeguarding human rights within our society, the Commission established effective channels of communication and collaboration with local authorities and human rights offices. It closely monitored efforts aimed

at revoking human rights ordinances and released an official statement from the Chairperson expressing the Commission's stance.

The 2022 Human Rights Defenders Conference, held as an in-person event after a three-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, served as a valuable platform for diverse stakeholders, including human rights organizations, experts, and officials responsible for human rights in local governments. Under the theme of "Ten Years of Human Rights Institutionalization in the Regions: Current Status and Prospects of Local Government Human Rights Systems," participants had the opportunity to share insights and collaborate on pressing human rights issues. Additionally, through the Local Human Rights Committee, concerted efforts were made to enhance the expertise and effectiveness of local human rights work, in line with the growing trend of institutionalizing human rights administration at the local level (enactment of human rights ordinances, establishment of departments dedicated to human rights affairs, and operation of human rights committees).

Each Regional Human Rights Office actively engaged in addressing human rights issues and promoting collaboration through the establishment of regional human rights education councils, human rights policy forums, and inter-agency consultation bodies. These initiatives aimed to foster a culture of human rights and advance related projects.

5) Enhancing Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in the Military

In response to public sentiment and demands from civil society regarding the need to eradicate human rights violations within the military, the National Assembly passed a partial amendment to the NHRCK Act in December 2021, which led to the establishment and empowerment of the Military Human Rights Protector. Consequently, the position was officially inaugurated on July 1, 2022.

To establish and strengthen the operational framework of the newly established Bureau of Human Rights in Military, several measures were implemented, including developing work plans for the bureau, establishing the Military Death Incident Management System (e-Report System), providing training to enhance the capacity of the bureau staff, establishing a system to offer psychological support to staff involved in military death incidents, and publishing a compilation of military human rights rulings. In addition, to facilitate informed deliberations

by the Committee of Human Rights in Military, a Military Human Rights Expert Group was formed. The group held regular meetings to enhance the effectiveness of its operations.

Visits and inspections were carried out at training camps, which serve as the initial entry point for new military recruits, in order to assess their conditions and propose improvements from a human rights perspective. Furthermore, surveys were conducted to investigate the level of rights protection for service members in cases of military deaths or injuries. These surveys provided essential data for formulating measures to protect the rights of service members in relation to military accidents. Additionally, efforts were dedicated to strengthening the Commission's role in military human rights policy, including submitting opinions to the Constitutional Court regarding Article 92-6 of the Military Criminal Act, providing recommendations for improving the military healthcare system, and expressing opinions on the right to choose vegetarian meals in military dining facilities.

Efforts were undertaken to ensure timely response in cases of military death, including receiving notifications from the Ministry of National Defense and assessing the necessity of intervention based on the nature of deaths. Based on decision by the Military Human Rights Protector regarding level of involvement, a series of systematic procedures were followed, including on-site inspections, interviews of investigative personnel, meetings with bereaved families, and monitoring of investigations. Additionally, if deemed necessary, complaints were received from bereaved families and further investigations were conducted.

The Military Human Rights Protector implemented various initiatives to improve service members' access to remedies through appearances on defense-related media platforms such as Defense News, Defense FM, and KTV. In addition, extensive public relations activities were conducted using TV advertisements, online platforms (Naver, Kakao, and YouTube), outdoor advertising (bus terminals, train stations, and media boards), as well as mobile applications. These efforts were focused on increasing visibility of the Military Human Rights Protector program in its inaugural year.

Capacity-building programs were implemented for instructors appointed in the military field to enhance their understanding of the military's unique characteristics and strengthen their ability to deliver human rights education effectively. Additionally, monitoring of human rights education in the Ministry of National Defense was conducted, along with advanced courses for

human rights officers, and training programs to enhance human rights sensitivity among senior military officers. Furthermore, the Military Human Rights Protector gave special lectures on human rights, which were well-received by soldiers.

6) Creating Structured and Organized System for Assessing and Evaluating Human Rights

Recommending the Fourth National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights

The National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (hereinafter the “NAP”) is a comprehensive, long-term plan with a nationwide scope aimed at protecting and promoting the human rights of the people. In order to support the government in formulating the NAP, the Commission selected 100 key tasks that need to be urgently addressed or significantly improved over the next five years (2023-2027). It recommended the government to establish the Fourth NAP to provide guidance on the direction of human rights policies.

Publishing the 2021 Report on Human Rights Situation

In accordance with Article 29 (1) of the NHRCK Act, the Commission published the 2021 Report on Human Rights Situation in the Republic of Korea. The report reflects on the domestic human rights situation within the country in 2021, provides assessments, and suggests measures for improvement. The report is structured into three parts and six chapters, evaluating 66 key areas across 18 categories. It is significant as it highlights the role of the Commission as an independent institution dedicated to human rights and provides guidance on the direction that Korean society should aim for in terms of human rights.

Producing and Analyzing National Human Rights Statistics

The Commission has been working on the establishment of a human rights statistics system since 2019. This system aims to assess and evaluate the human rights situation in Korea by gathering human rights-related statistics from officially recognized sources and administrative data. Additionally, the Commission conducts nationwide human rights surveys to collect

primary data. It uses the collected data to develop and implement national human rights policies.

Every year, the Commission reviews the relevance of statistics, making updates, developing new statistics, and eliminating outdated ones. As of 2022, a comprehensive set of 467 national statistics was established, consisting of 417 compiled statistics and 50 survey-based statistics. Notably, in 2022, a human rights awareness survey was conducted, targeting individuals aged 18 and above. The survey aimed to gather statistics on subjective human rights experiences and perceptions that cannot be captured through existing approved statistics and data sources.

7) Building Expertise and Independence of the NHRCK

The Commission has made efforts to establish standards for human rights policies as an independent national human rights institution. In March, ahead of the inauguration of the new government, the Commission presented the ten major human rights issues to the Presidential Transition Committee for inclusion in the national agenda. In July, the Commission selected and presented 100 key tasks for the fourth NAP, for implementation over five years from 2023. Furthermore, the Commission published and distributed the 2021 Report on the Human Rights Situation in Korea, which summarizes and analyzes the human rights situation in the country.

In addition, during the annual meeting of the APF on September 15, the Chairperson of the Commission was elected as the Chair of the APF for a two-year term. This provides an opportunity for the Commission to play a leading role in enhancing cooperation among national human rights institutions in the Asia Pacific region and contributing to international discussions on important human rights issues.

The Commission made efforts to strengthen the investigative capacity and expertise of its members in various ways, such as establishing judgment criteria for different types of cases (focusing on the Police and the Prosecution), developing a practical manual for handling workplace harassment cases, translating Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights concerning discrimination and representative judgments from the European Court of Human Rights, and outsourcing monitoring services for establishing criteria on disability discrimination.

PART
3

National Human Rights
Commission of Korea
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Key Activities

Chapter 1 Improvement of Human Rights-related
Statutes, Institutions, Policies, and Practices

Chapter 2 Investigations and Remedies of Human Rights
Violations and Discrimination

Chapter 3 Promoting Human Rights Education to
Cultivate Culture of Human Rights

Chapter 4 Domestic and International Exchange and
Cooperation

Chapter 5 Human Rights Offices



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3

Key Activities



Chapter 1

Improvement of Human Rights-related Statutes, Institutions, Policies, and Practices

Section 1. Overview

Based on the NHRCK Act, the Commission makes recommendations or expresses opinions to offer insights and perspectives for enhancing laws, systems, policies, and practices related to human rights, conducts surveys on human rights situations, recommends or expresses opinions on accession to international human rights treaties and their implementation, and submits opinions to courts and the Constitutional Court on trials that have significant impacts on the protection and enhancement of human rights.

If required, the Commission may establish committees and advisory bodies tailored to specific areas, and may request consultations with government agencies, local governments, and other public or private organizations. It may also require attendance from representatives, stakeholders, or persons with relevant expertise or experience to provide statements of fact or opinion.

Section 2. Policy Recommendations and Opinions Expressed on Human Rights

1. Status of Policy Recommendations and Opinions

In 2022, the Commission made 33 policy recommendations, which is an increase of seven compared to the previous year. It expressed 67 opinions, which marks a 13% decrease from the previous year. In addition, the Commission continued its efforts to improve various laws, regulations, policies, and practices related to human rights, including submitting four opinions, which is consistent to the previous year.

Since its establishment, the Commission has seen a cumulative acceptance rate of 86.9% for its recommendations. This rate has shown a slight decreasing trend over time.

[Table 3-1-1] Current Status of Recommendations or Opinions on Laws and Policies Related to Human Rights in the Past Five Years

(in numbers and percentages)

Classification	Total	Policy recommendations					Rate of acceptance (%)			Opinions expressed	Opinions submitted
		Subtotal	Full acceptance	Partial acceptance	Non-acceptance	Under review	Total Acceptance	Full acceptance	Partial acceptance		
Cumulative	1,203	472	219	165	58	30	86.9	49.6	37.3	697	34
2022	104	33	3	3	1	26	85.7	42.9	42.9	67	4
2021	103	26	12	8	3	3	87.0	52.2	34.8	77	-
2020	118	25	10	11	3	1	87.5	41.7	45.8	92	1
2019	102	25	7	16	2	-	92.0	28.0	64.0	75	2
2018	64	28	15	11	2	-	92.9	53.6	39.3	33	3

* The cumulative data includes the period from the establishment of the Commission on November 25, 2001, until December 31, 2022.

* According to the statistical compilation standards, the full acceptance rate is calculated as: (full acceptance)/(full acceptance + partial acceptance + non-acceptance)×100

Partial acceptance rate is calculated as: (partial acceptance)/(full acceptance + partial acceptance + non-acceptance)×100

Total acceptance is calculated as: (full acceptance + partial acceptance)/(full acceptance + partial acceptance + non-acceptance)×100

* According to the Guidelines for Human Rights Statistics Compilation and Management (National Human Rights Commission Regulation No. 109), cases still under review were excluded from the calculation of the acceptance rate.

In 2022, the institutions for which the Commission had the most policy recommendations, opinions expressed, or opinions submitted were the Ministry of Health and Welfare with 23 (15 in the previous year), National Assembly with 14 (7 in the previous year), Ministry of Justice with 13 (15 in the previous year), and Ministry of National Defense with 10 (6 in the previous year), in this order.

Due to their close connection to the Commission's work, the Ministry of Health and Welfare and the Ministry of Justice, received a significant number of policy recommendations and opinions from the Commission. In 2022, the Commission actively engaged in providing recommendations and expressing opinions regarding human rights in the military, particularly in response to the launch of the Military Human Rights Protector.

2. Key Policy Recommendations, Opinions Expressed, and Opinions Submitted

A. Recommendation of Human Rights Guidelines for the Development and Application of AI

The Commission recommended to the Prime Minister and related ministers the Human Rights Guidelines for the Development and Application of AI to prevent human rights violations and discrimination that may occur in the process. It recommended that the Prime Minister establish and implement policies related to AI based on the guidelines, and coordinate with and lead relevant agencies to amend related laws. The Commission also recommended that various agencies, such as the Ministry of Science and ICT, the Personal Information Protection Commission, the Korea Communications Commission, the Fair Trade Commission, and the Financial Services Commission, establish and implement AI-related policies, and work to amend related laws and regulations based on the guidelines, and oversee that public institutions and private companies comply with the guidelines.

The development of AI technology is having significant impact on human life and rights across various fields such as employment, finance, administration, and welfare. However, stakeholders are not guaranteed the opportunity to express their opinions or participate in the introduction, operation, and decision-making processes. In addition, there are insufficient

procedures and methods for effective remedies in cases of human rights violations or discrimination caused by AI. In this regard, the Commission recognized the need to establish standards that should be followed from a human rights perspective in the development and utilization of AI, and reviewed relevant contents.

The international community is already developing systems and guidelines to prevent problems that may arise due to AI. The United Nations has, on multiple occasions, recommended establishment of human rights protection measures for AI use, and the European Union has released a draft of the Artificial Intelligence Act, which includes the ban on AI-aided facial recognition systems, the assignment of high-risk levels to AI interview systems, and regulatory levels according to the degree of risk. In line with these international trends, the Commission presented guidelines that guarantee the dignity and autonomy of individuals, transparency and accountability, the right to self-determination, non-discrimination, implementation of AI human rights impact assessment, establishment of risk levels, and relevant laws and systems.

B. Recommendation for Institutional Improvements to Safeguard the Right to Health and other Medical Rights of Inmates Based on the Findings of Visits to and Inspections of Correctional Facilities

Based on a survey on health rights conditions in detention facilities conducted in 2016, the Commission had recommended the Ministry of Justice to promote the health rights of detainees in August 2018, taking into account the recommendations of the UN Committee Against Torture on ensuring detainees' access to medical care in May 2017. The Ministry of Justice had notified the Commission of an implementation plan, including increasing medical personnel in correctional facilities.

However, as of 2021, more than 35% (70-80 cases per year) of petitions related to correctional facilities filed with the Commission had to do with the medical treatment and health rights of detainees, and cases of human rights violations, such as mass COVID-19 infections and deaths among detainees, continue to occur. Consequently, on November 3, 2021, the Commission carried out visitation investigations (Case No. 21BangMun0000300), focusing on the medical situation in the Busan Correctional Facility and nine other correctional facilities nationwide.

The findings indicated violations of detainees' health rights and their right to receive proper medical care: 1) the medical budget per detainee in correctional facilities is only 12% of the per capita medical expenses in Korea; 2) there is a shortage of medical specialists compared to facilities' capacity; 3) the proportion of mentally ill detainees is increasing and there is high demand for mental health care, but the response is limited; 4) the use of remote medical treatment and temporary suspension of execution of sentences (pretrial detention) is not being effectively utilized; 5) there is insufficient temperature control in the living environment and hot water supply during winter is insufficient; and 6) the outdoor exercise time provided for detainees does not meet international standards.

Based on the findings of 2021, on May 13, the Commission recommended to the Minister of Justice the necessary institutional improvements to guarantee detainees' access to medical care, health rights, and the right to live with dignity. Additionally, the Commission recommended the Ministry of Planning and Finance to make every effort to reflect the budget required for expanding medical resources and personnel within correctional facilities.

C. Recommendation of the Fourth National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (2023-2027)

The Commission recommended the Fourth National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (NAP) to the President (primary responsibility: Minister of Justice) on July 11. The recommendations under the Fourth NAP were developed following five meetings of the Fourth NAP Recommendation Promotion Planning Team, composed of Korean and international human rights experts, 21 consultation meetings with civil society organizations in 19 areas of human rights, and were decided through deliberation by the Plenary Committee.

Article 71 of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, unanimously adopted at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, Austria, which marked the 45th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, recommended that each country develop a National Action Plan (NAP) for human rights. A comprehensive, cross-national, and medium- to long-term plan for protecting and promoting human rights, the NAP aims to improve human rights-related laws, institutions, and practices to contribute to the substantive

protection and promotion of human rights. Since 2006, the Commission has recommended the establishment of a comprehensive government-wide basic plan for human rights three times.

The proposed recommendations in the Fourth NAP carry 100 key tasks that require urgent attention or improvements in the next five years (2023-2027). Classified in one of six categories, the key tasks include protection of vulnerable groups in disasters and accidents (key task 3), combating hate speech and discrimination (key task 4-6), human rights issues under infectious disease situations (key task 15, 19, 69, 88), human rights issues in digital environments (key task 14, 54, 71), and the development of AI technology and human rights protection (key task 77-79).

D. Submission of Opinion to the Constitutional Court regarding Constitutional Challenge to Article 7 of the National Security Act

On August 31, in relation to the constitutional appeal against the National Security Act (11 cases including Case No. 2017Hun-Ba42), the Commission decided to submit the opinion to the Constitutional Court that paragraph (1), (3) and (5) of Article 7 of the National Security Act are unconstitutional as they violate the principles of clarity, proportionality, as well as international human rights law, and infringe upon the freedom of expression, freedom of thought, and conscience.

The National Security Act has been revised seven times since it was enacted by the first Constituent National Assembly in 1948, but concerns about infringement of the freedom of expression and other basic rights have persisted, leading to demands for its abolition or revision from the political sphere, civil society, and the international community. Since recommending the abolition of the National Security Act in 2004, the Commission has consistently raised this issue, including recommending its revision or abolition in the First to Fourth NAPs.

In a constitutional judgment on the constitutionality of Article 7 of the National Security Act on April 2, 1990, the Constitutional Court (Case No. 89Hun-Ka113) ruled that, while some terms like members, activities, and confederacy in the old National Security Act were excessively ambiguous and had too broad an application, the Act is partially constitutional to the extent that it is understood to be applicable only in cases where there is a clear risk to the fundamental principles of a free and democratic. Based on this decision, Article 7 of the National Security Act was revised in 1991, and the Constitutional Court has continued to rule

that Article 7 is constitutional.

The Commission concluded that Article 7 of the National Security Act is in violation of the principle of clarity due to the wording's ambiguity, abstractness, and broad application, and of the principle of proportionality by punishing without a substantive and realistic evaluation of the risk posed by acts that endanger the existence, security, or free democratic order of the country. The Commission also saw the provision as being inconsistent with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which South Korea has joined, and is therefore unconstitutional, and decided to submit its opinion to the Constitutional Court.

E. Recommendation and Opinion Expressed for Expanding the Social Responsibility of Caregiving

On November 3, the Commission recommended to the Minister of Health and Welfare to establish and promote a policy to expand integrated nursing and caregiving services as a universal medical service in order to expand the social responsibility of caregiving. It also suggested establishing a legal basis and system to manage caregiving personnel.

It recommended that, while all patients admitted to hospital-level medical institutions, including nursing homes, should be able to receive integrated services, it is desirable to implement policies that expand medical and care services in the patient's residential area to reduce social admission to nursing care hospitals. Public medical institutions are advised to establish a phased and comprehensive expansion plan, focusing on delivering integrated services in all wards. The Commission also emphasized the need to develop a nursing workforce plan that can address regional disparities in the nursing workforce.

Caregiving is an inherent aspect of the human experience, encountered by individuals throughout their lifespan. As such, appropriate and sufficient support systems need to be established. Additionally, everyone should have the right to receive care regardless of their health status or economic ability, and the burden of caregiving should be shifted from individuals to a collective social responsibility. Private caregiving should be integrated into the formal system so that it is accessible through publicly available services. The Commission believed that it is necessary to expand integrated services to all wards, ensuring that all patients admitted to the hospital can receive caregiving as a universal service within the local community.

Currently, caregivers find themselves in an ambiguous situation that straddles both the medical and welfare domains, and there are no regulations governing their roles, qualifications, and management. Caregiving labor is being provided without a systematic approach to vocational education and training, which could ultimately lead to violations of patients' right to health. Therefore, the Commission concluded that a clear definition of the roles, qualification criteria, and scope of duties of caregiving personnel is needed in order to improve their qualifications and quality of services.

F. Recommendations for Enhancing Human Rights Education in the National Assembly

The Commission recommended the following on November 24 to enhance human rights capacity through the institutionalization of human rights education in the National Assembly. It advised the Speaker of the National Assembly to clearly indicate that members of the National Assembly and their staff are not exempt from legal mandatory education, and to establish mandatory human rights education requirements that take into account the legislative duty of legislators, such as the Code of Ethics for Members of the National Assembly or Practical Guidelines for Ethical Conduct of Members of the National Assembly. It also recommended the Secretary-General of the National Assembly to establish a structured human rights education curriculum within the annual education programs conducted by the National Assembly Training Institute, specifically targeting a legislator participation course and a staff education course to support human rights-friendly legislative activities, and to devise effective implementation measures to improve the rate of completion of mandatory education by members of the National Assembly and their staff. Furthermore, it advised each party representative to formalize the human rights education requirements in party regulations and ethical guidelines for elected and party officials.

As the legislative body representing the people, the National Assembly has exclusive authority to propose and amend various laws to protect basic rights and enhance human rights. In order to actively respond to the changing forms of human rights violations and discrimination, it is necessary to strengthen the human rights sensitivity of the members within the legislative institution. The Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations have recognized the importance of human rights education within parliaments and have established principles in this

regard. In particular, in 2016, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the OHCHR jointly published the Human Rights Handbook for Parliamentarians to emphasize the role of parliaments and their members in promoting and protecting human rights. Furthermore, in 2020, the Inter-Parliamentary Union highlighted the important role of parliaments in promoting and protecting human rights through the Principles on Parliaments and Human Rights. However, according to a survey on the state of human rights education in the National Assembly conducted by the Commission in 2021, the completion rates of mandatory human rights education, such as the four education programs on violence prevention (sexual harassment, prostitution, sexual violence, and domestic violence), for members of the National Assembly and their staff are significantly low. Specifically, no statistics have been disclosed on the completion rate of such education for members of the National Assembly and others.

Furthermore, although the National Assembly Training Institute offers various educational programs such as the Legislator Participation Course, Staff Education Course, and Legislative Academy, there is currently no specific human rights education program designed for members of the National Assembly or their staff. Moreover, elected politicians including legislators affiliated with political parties are regulated by party constitutions and rules. However, significant discrepancies were found among the party constitutions and rules regarding the mandatory implementation and enforcement of human rights education. In light of this, the Commission recommended that the Speaker and the Secretary-General of the National Assembly, and the representatives of each political party make institutional improvements to enhance human rights education in the National Assembly in order to better fulfill its legislative role to protect and promote the fundamental rights of the people.

G. Opinion Expressed on Climate Crisis and Human Rights

On November 28, the Commission expressed its views on the climate crisis and human rights to the government (the President). The opinion reflected both domestic and international demands to actively respond to climate change, which has emerged as the most significant threat to human rights, and is significant in that it was the Commission's first official opinion on climate crisis and human rights issues.

The Commission emphasized that the climate crisis has direct and indirect wide-ranging

impacts on human rights such as the right to life, food, health, and housing. It emphasized that, in the context of the climate crisis, the government should recognize the protection and promotion of the human rights of all individuals as a fundamental obligation of the State and improve relevant laws, regulations and systems to address climate change from a human rights perspective.

Furthermore, the Commission recommended that the government categorize vulnerable groups affected by the climate crisis, analyze the threats posed by climate change to vulnerable groups, and develop measures to enhance their protection and adaptation. It also suggested setting an upward revision of the 2030 national greenhouse gas reduction target, establishing post-2030 reduction targets, and ensuring the participation and incorporating the opinions of more vulnerable groups in the decision-making process. The Commission called for the introduction of systems and policies that encourage greenhouse gas reduction by businesses to enhance their responsibility and transparency. It also proposed a comprehensive system of information sharing through systematic and transparent disclosure of climate change-related information, allowing everyone to quickly access relevant information.

Additionally, in response to the global efforts and collective response required by the climate crisis, the Commission stated its intention to promote a human rights-based approach throughout government policies and systems related to the climate crisis.

H. Policy Recommendations on the Revision of the Sports Human Rights Charter and Guidelines

On December 12, the Commission revised the Sports Human Rights Charter and Guidelines in line with changes in the sports environment, and made policy recommendations to sports-related agencies such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism.

In 2010, the Commission established the Sports Human Rights Guidelines and recommended their implementation to relevant agencies. In the course of about ten years following the recommendation, sports rights were explicitly stated in the Framework Act on Sports, and the National Sports Promotion Act was amended to strengthen the human rights protection system in the field of sports. Issues of equality, such as the participation of sexual minorities in sports,

gained attention both domestically and internationally, and there was a need to pay attention to various forms of “violent control” and harassment that athletes face in their daily lives. During the revision process, the viewpoints and feedback from relevant stakeholders were carefully considered and incorporated. The revised Charter clearly emphasized the rights that everyone involved in sports should enjoy and the responsibilities of the State and others. The revised guidelines include instructions aimed at preventing violence and harassment in sports, strategies and policies of sports organizations to promote appropriate remedies in case of incidents, and guidelines to resolve discrimination based on gender and safeguard the right to sports for all individuals, including vulnerable and marginalized populations.

I. Recommendations for Improving Military Healthcare System to Ensure Access to Medical Services for Service Members

On December 22, the Commission recommended to the Minister of National Defense the reorganization of the medical system to ensure the medical access rights of military personnel, including expanding access to civilian hospitals, and the establishment of a medium to long-term roadmap. It also recommended the enactment of legislation to guarantee the right of military personnel to choose medical treatment, establishment of regulations requiring the commanding officers to approve leave requests and outside activities related to medical treatment purposes, extension of the current maximum period of hospitalization in civilian hospitals from 10 days to 30 days for soldiers, relaxation of requirements for medical leaves, and measures to allow soldiers to use their leave in increments of one hour. The Commission also recommended adjustment of the operating hours of military medical institutions and promoting nighttime medical services.

Although South Korea has a high level of medical accessibility, with the highest number of outpatient visits per capita among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, according to a survey conducted by the Commission on the status of the military medical system and the health rights of soldiers, it was found that soldiers often do not receive necessary medical services in a timely manner. Furthermore, the quality of medical services provided to soldiers who fulfill their defense duties should be equivalent to or better than universal medical services, but the current military medical system and services were found to fall short of this standard. The low satisfaction with military medical services was attributed

to insufficient human and material resources in military medical institutions. Therefore, the Commission recommended the Minister of National Defense to make institutional improvements to guarantee soldiers' right to medical access.

J. Opinion Expressed on the Proposed Partial Amendment to the Trade Union and Labor Relations Adjustment Act

On December 28, the Commission expressed its opinion to the Speaker of the National Assembly regarding the proposed amendment to the Trade Union and Labor Relations Adjustment Act currently pending in the Assembly. The opinion was made based on concerns that lawsuits seeking substantial compensation for damages and imposition of provisional seizure resulting from labor disputes undermine the three labor rights guaranteed under the Constitution; threaten the right to survival of workers and their families, causing them severe economic hardships; and generate social issues such as suicide due to mental depression.

In Korea, it is difficult for labor dispute actions to be legally recognized due to legal constraints. Therefore, based on international human rights standards, the Commission recommended the following amendments to Article 2 of the Trade Union and Labor Relations Adjustment Act: (1) to include in the definition of "worker" under the subparagraph 1 of Article 2 workers in non-standard forms of employment or platform workers who, despite appearing as individual business owners, provide labor and receive compensation for the benefit of others so as to reflect changes in the economic and social environment and the provision of labor, in line with ILO Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize and Convention No. 98 on the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining; (2) to include in the definition of "employer" under the subparagraph 2 of Article 2 individuals who exercise substantial influence and control over the working conditions and labor union activities of workers, even if they are not parties to the employment contract; and (3) to revise the definition of "industrial disputes" under the subparagraph 5 of Article 2, to include matters related to structural adjustments involving changes in labor conditions and the improvement of workers' economic and social status, in accordance with Article 3 (1) of the Constitution and the purpose of the Trade Union and Labor Relations Adjustment Act.

Furthermore, regarding the limitation of compensation claims for dispute actions, the

Commission recommended the following provisions under Article 3 of the Trade Union and Labor Relations Adjustment Act: (1) to prohibit claim compensation or application for an injunction against workers or labor unions for damages suffered as a result of exercising their constitutionally guaranteed rights to association, collective bargaining, and collective action; (2) to prohibit claim compensation or application for an injunction against individual workers or guarantors for damages suffered as a result of dispute actions led by labor unions; and (3) to allow the court to reduce the amount of compensation, taking into account the cause and progress of dispute actions, the financial condition of obligated parties, and employers' unfair labor practices. The majority opinion favored the establishment of provisions that allow the court, either on its own authority or upon the request of the parties, to dismiss lawsuits or injunction applications that are brought with the intention of undermining the constitutionally guaranteed rights to association, collective bargaining, and collective action.

The Commissioners who held opposing views were supportive of the proposed provisions prohibiting compensation claims against guarantors in illegal dispute actions and allowing the court to reduce the amount of compensation based on various considerations, but disagreed on other matters. Excluding those issues, the unanimous opinion of the remaining Commission members was to submit the relevant opinions to the Speaker of the National Assembly.

Section 3. Human Rights Situation Survey and Human Rights Promotion Activities

1. Human Rights Situation Surveys and Commissioned Research

[Table 3-1-2] Human Rights Situation Surveys and Commissioned Research in 2022

No	Task	Organization	Period
1	Survey on the human rights situation of nurses during infectious disease crises	Institute of Health and Welfare Resources	Apr. 13. - Sep. 9.
2	Survey on the human rights situation of workers handling domestic waste	Korean Contingent Workers' Center	Apr. 18. - Nov. 13.
3	Policy research for strengthening and establishing human rights protection system at the regional level	Korea Human Rights Policy Institute	Apr. 20. - Oct. 16.
4	Commissioned research on the human rights situation in North Korea during COVID-19 and ways to improve the situation	Industry-Academic Cooperation Foundation of Kyungnam University	Apr. 25. - Oct. 21.
5	Commissioned research on measures to improve the human rights and treatment of individuals in correctional facilities	Changdeok Institute for Legal Policy Research	May 10. - Nov. 5.
6	Survey on the human rights situation of farmers in the context of the climate crisis	Korean Rural Sociological Society	May 18. - Nov. 13.
7	Survey on the human rights situation of older persons affected by the digital divide	KStat Research	May 18. - Dec. 13.
8	Research on methods and indicators for assessing impacts of human rights policies	Sookmyung Women's University Research & Business Development Foundation	May 23. - Dec. 18.
9	Survey on the impact of child separation measures on child rights and development of child protection measures	Industry-Academia Cooperation Division of Seoul Theological University	May 25. - Dec. 20.
10	Survey to safeguard the labor rights of individuals with mental disabilities	Industry-Academia Cooperation Division of Hanyang Cyber University	May 30. - Nov. 25.
11	Survey of gender awareness of law enforcement officials in the criminal justice field and analysis of precedents related to gender-based violence	Korea Institute of Criminology	May 30. - Dec. 25.
12	Research on human rights protection measures through a survey on the human rights situation of internationally adopted individuals	Soongsil University Foundation of University-Industry Cooperation	Jun. 2. - Nov. 28.
13	Research on the development of domain-specific guidelines for the use of AI and the introduction of AI human rights impact assessment	Handong Global University Industry-Academic Cooperation Foundation	Jun. 3. - Dec. 29.
14	Commissioned research on the development of human rights training programs for public officials	Korea Human Rights Policy Institute	Jun. 8. - Dec. 4.
15	Study on ways to enhance and protect the human rights of specialized high school interns	Jeonbuk Labor Policy Research Institute	Jun. 10. - Dec. 6.

No	Task	Organization	Period
16	Survey on the guarantee of rights for soldiers in the event of death, injury, and other accidents	Sangmyung University Industry-Academia Cooperation Foundation	Jun. 14. - Dec. 10.
17	Survey on human rights-friendly therapeutic environment for individuals with mental disabilities	Guardianship and Trust Research Center	Jun. 27. - Dec. 23.
18	Research on comprehensive plan and programs for human rights experiential centers	Communitas	Jul. 5. - Dec. 31.

2. Human Rights Promotion Programs

A. Women's Rights

■ Public Hearing on Gender Confirmation Criteria

On October 20th, the Commission held a hearing to gather opinions from stakeholders and experts regarding the criteria for gender correction. When seeking to legally change their gender, transgender individuals are required to apply for gender confirmation approval with the court, go through a trial, and obtain court approval. Courts use the Supreme Court's Established Rule, known as the Guidelines for Processing Administrative Affairs Related to Application Cases etc. of Gender Change Approval of Transgender, as the basis for judgment. According to Article 6 of the Guidelines, gender reassignment surgery and loss of reproductive ability are presented as references in evaluating applications for gender confirmation approval. In practice, however, courts consider these factors as necessary requirements for granting gender confirmation approval, and this has led to criticism that international standards are not being upheld, as transgender individuals' rights to bodily integrity and self-determination are being infringed upon.

Regarding the Guidelines, the Commission extensively sought input from various stakeholders, including Supreme Court officials, individuals with experience in gender correction trials, constitutional law professors, medical professionals, and others regarding their insights and trial experiences in gender correction cases, international human rights standards, and medical perspectives. Based on these inputs, the Commission is currently reviewing policy recommendations for relevant authorities to establish reasonable and human rights-oriented criteria for gender correction permissions.

■ Release of Volume 2 of the White Paper on Sexual Harassment Petitions and Policy Discussions

In 2012, the Commission released Volume 1 of the White Paper on Sexual Harassment Petitions, which documented the accomplishments and challenges from the past ten years in addressing sexual harassment cases. In 2022, Volume 2 of the White Paper was published, presenting an analysis of petition trends filed with the Commission between 2012 and 2021. It includes information on how these petitions were handled and identifies policy tasks.

Volume 2 presents an overview of the petitions filed with and addressed by the Commission in relation to sexual harassment (2,365 cases), and the outcomes and resolutions of these cases. It includes various statistics on the gender, age, geographical distribution, and status of the individuals involved, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the evolving patterns and trends over the past decade. The paper also explores secondary incidents of sexual harassment, examining the organizations where these incidents occurred and the occupations of the victims, aiming to facilitate understanding of sexual harassment cases. It also incorporates insights and recommendations from external experts concerning future policy tasks.

Concurrent with the release of Volume 2, the Commission organized a policy discussion forum on December 1, with a primary focus on policy initiatives aimed at preventing sexual harassment and ensuring effective resolution. The forum encompassed presentations and deliberations on various subjects, including criteria for determining sexual harassment and strategies for safeguarding and advocating for the rights of sexual harassment victims.

B. Rights of the Child and Youth

■ Monitoring of Children Rights

The Commission annually monitors the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the promotion of children's rights in the country. This process encompasses policy analysis, field assessments, and engagement with relevant stakeholders.

In 2022, efforts were focused on "Violence against Children" from June to November. In the area of policy monitoring, a specialized forum was held on "Ensuring the Rights of Children to

be Free from School Violence.” The forum addressed various aspects related to school violence, starting from initial responses to incidents, case investigations, committee deliberations, decision-making processes, implementation of measures, and the appeals process. The current status and issues were identified, and potential avenues for improvement explored. Field monitoring activities involved surveying teachers in elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as professionals dealing with cyber violence cases. The aim was to examine the prevalence and patterns of cyberbullying in the context of school violence, identify on-site challenges, and seek effective solutions. Stakeholder monitoring involved an online survey conducted by a group of 139 children aged 10 to under 18 from across the country. A total of 1,134 children were surveyed under the theme of “Are Children Safe in the Cyber World?” This process shed light on the importance of establishing clear standards and regulations, and raising awareness about the process of seeking counseling and reporting incidents.

■ Children’s Rights Reporting Conference

From November 28 to 30, the Commission organized a three-day Children’s Rights Reporting Conference. The conference served as a platform to disseminate the findings of monitoring conducted in 2022, focusing on the theme of “Violence Faced by Children: What Should We Do?” The conference featured six sessions²⁾ dedicated to pressing children rights issues.

On the first day, November 28, the session focused on “Violence against Children in the Cyber World,” where the findings of stakeholder monitoring were shared with the participants. On the second day, November 29, the conference delved into issues related to the handling of school violence cases and the patterns of cyberbullying, using the insights gained from policy and field monitoring. Discussions were held on various measures aimed at safeguarding the rights of children and ensuring their freedom from violence. Additionally, presentations and discussions were conducted on strategies to protect children’s rights in relation to child separation actions and ways to enhance the human rights of specialized high school students during their on-the-job training.

2) Session 1: Violence against children in cyberspace; Session 2: Survey to protect children’s rights through child separation measures; Session 3: Ensuring the rights of children to be free from school violence; Session 4: Freedom from cyberbullying; Session 5: Presentation of findings to protect the rights of specialized high school interns; Session 6: The current state and future challenges of children’s rights

On the last day, November 30, the focus shifted to the theme of “The Current Situation of Children’s Rights and Future Challenges.” The Commission presented its initiatives in promoting children’s rights and explored the directions and challenges that need to be addressed in order to effectively implement the principles outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

C. Rights of Older Persons

■ Monitoring to Assess Human Rights Protection in Elderly Care Facilities

The Commission conducted monitoring of elderly care facilities to assess the human rights situation of elderly residents and establish a monitoring system.

The monitoring process was conducted in 11 facilities located in Seoul and Gyeonggi-do Province during the months of August and September. A monitoring team consisting of 22 members, including experts in elderly protection, facility staff, and government officials, was assembled for this purpose. Their focus was to assess the human rights protection system within the facilities and the measures implemented to safeguard human rights in light of the COVID-19 situation. While no significant cases of human rights violations or abuse were identified during the monitoring period, it was observed that efforts for institutional improvement aimed at promoting the human rights of elderly residents had not fully trickled down to the operational level.

On December 15, a session was held to announce the results and a workshop was conducted to strengthen the capacity of facility staff in promoting human rights. The objective was to share the findings of the monitoring and enhance the staff’s competence, with the aim of preventing human rights violations in elderly care facilities.

■ Older Persons Human Rights Forum

The Commission established the Older Persons Human Rights Forum in 2021 to facilitate public discourse on various issues related to the rights of older persons in Korea’s rapidly aging society and to explore solutions for major challenges. The forum comprised 85 members, including professors specializing in older persons and their human rights, as well as researchers from government-funded institutions. Since its establishment, the forum has held four regular

meetings, and in 2022, it organized five regular forums addressing topics such as the need, content, and prospects of a new international convention on the rights of older persons, multidimensional reflections on the significance of work and labor for older persons, brain health and quality of life in old age, and progress in the formulation of a UN convention on the rights of older persons and a convention drafted by National Human Rights Institutions.

Moving forward, the Older Persons Human Rights Forum is committed to remaining actively involved in protecting and promoting the rights of older persons. It will strive to provide guidance in upholding the rights of the elderly, stimulate public discussions on social issues pertaining to the definition of old age, age limits, and retirement criteria, assess existing policies on elderly welfare, explore avenues to strengthen human rights protections, and advocate for government participation in international initiatives aimed at advancing the rights of older persons.

D. Rights of Persons with Disabilities

■ Exhibition of Artworks by Artists with Mental Disorders

The Commission, along with the Ministry of Health and Welfare, the Seoul Metropolitan City, the National Mental Health and Welfare Commission, the Korean Research Center for Guardianship and Trusts, and Member of Parliament Kang Min-jeong and 20 others, jointly organized an art exhibition titled “Reading the Paintings of Individuals with Mental Disorders, and Reading the Era” at the Kyungae Art Museum from November 22 to 27.

The exhibition aimed to raise awareness about the lives of individuals with mental disorders and challenge the prevailing prejudices and discrimination they face in society. It featured 123 art pieces created by individuals with mental disorders and garnered active participation from them, their families, and various stakeholders. The event also received substantial media coverage, helping to combat stereotypes and reduce prejudice against individuals with mental disorders. Moreover, this exhibition was seen as a groundbreaking initiative, enabling individuals with mental disorders to assert their dignity and talent through artistic expression and affirming their rightful place in the cultural and artistic realms.

■ Report on the Human Rights of Individuals with Mental Disorders and Policy Monitoring

In the 2021 Report on the Human Rights of Individuals with Mental Disorders, the Commission put forth recommendations for seven significant key initiatives along with detailed implementation tasks. However, as many of these recommended tasks necessitate mid- to long-term implementation, there is a need for continuous monitoring to ensure that both the central and local governments effectively carry out these tasks.

To address this, the Commission established the Forum on the Rights of Individuals with Mental Disorders in 2022, which includes opinion leaders from organizations representing individuals with mental disorders and their families, as well as relevant institutions. From April 19 to July 19, a total of six policy forums were conducted, focusing on the implementation tasks outlined in the Report on the Human Rights of Individuals with Mental Disorders, as well as current human rights issues. The forums delved into various topics, including rehabilitation services, the institutionalization of support for individuals and families, crisis intervention for individuals with mental disorders, medical services in mental health institutions, and improvements in laws and regulations pertaining to individuals with mental disorders.

The Forum on the Rights of Individuals with Mental Disorders was broadcasted simultaneously on site and on the Commission's YouTube channel. Various stakeholders, including individuals with mental disorders, their families, and relevant organizations, participated in each forum to review policy progress, engage in key discussions, and make proposals.

E. Rights of Migrants and Refugees

■ National Conference on Migrant Rights

In 2019, the Commission held the inaugural National Conference on Migrant Rights to combat racial discrimination. Due to the dynamic changes in the immigration landscape caused by COVID-19, it became necessary to address and strategize a response to the new government's immigration policies and the 4th Basic Plan for Foreigner Policy. Based on this urgent need, the Commission organized the 2nd National Conference on Migrant Rights on August 23-24 to facilitate discussions and strategy development.

The conference featured a plenary discussion on inclusive immigration policies for all, as well as separate discussions focusing on five specific groups: migrant workers, migrant women, migrant children, refugees, and undocumented migrants/aliens in protective custody. In addition, there were seven thematic discussions, covering topics such as networking for the right to stay of undocumented migrants, nationwide networking of migrant women's organizations, education rights and social integration in areas with high concentrations of foreigners, the importance of communication as a basic right through the Interpretation System for Migrants, mental health rights and trauma of migrants and refugees, efforts and prospects for improving multicultural awareness through coexistence education, and the rights of sexual minority and HIV-infected individuals in foreigner protection facilities and correctional facilities.

The conference brought together a total of 212 participants, including activists from migrant organizations, professionals working in the field of immigration, members of migrant communities, representatives from international organizations such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), scholars, and individual activists and researchers. The event offered a valuable opportunity to strengthen solidarity among over 130 migrant organizations and enhance the capacity of migrants and refugees. Through multi-faceted discussions, participants examined the human rights situation of migrants and refugees in the post-COVID-19 era and explored effective approaches that would guide the new government's immigration policies and the formulation of the 4th Basic Plan for Foreigner Policy.

■ International Symposium on Immigration Detention System

On September 14, the Commission organized an international symposium to address the reform of the immigration detention system. The symposium focused on various aspects, including the potential implementation of a maximum detention period, and the establishment of detention limits and alternative measures for vulnerable foreigners.

Under the Immigration Act, the term “protection” of foreigners refers to the act of accommodating individuals who are subject to forced deportation, such as those who have overstayed their permitted period of stay, in order to facilitate their departure from the country. However, the international community perceives this practice as *de facto* “detention.”³⁾

3) In General Comment No. 35, the UN Human Rights Committee explicitly stated that the detention of migrants for the

According to Article 63 (1) of the Immigration Act, aliens who are subject to forced deportation are protected in facilities without any specified time limit until they can be repatriated. While the majority of protected foreigners are repatriated to their home countries within a short period, challenges arise when individuals, including asylum seekers or those involved in legal proceedings, face difficulties in the deportation process and end up being detained for an extended period.

Protected foreigners encounter difficulties in filing complaints and raising their concerns regarding protection decisions, living conditions in the protection facilities, and the deportation process. In particular, addressing human rights violations such as illegal acts or acts of cruelty in a timely manner proves challenging. The lack of specific considerations for vulnerable groups within the system is also a concern, including cases involving minors subjected to protective measures and HIV-infected foreigners kept for extended periods without access to appropriate treatment. The symposium held by the Commission aimed to facilitate discussions on the nation's immigration detention system in line with international standards, best practices, and systems in other countries. Criteria and cases related to the detention of minority and vulnerable individuals were examined. The concept of "Alternative to Detention" was introduced to promote a shift in perspective and bring about reforms in the immigration detention system.

F. Military Human Rights

■ Swift Response and Early Intervention in Military Death Incidents

The Framework Act on Military Status and Service provides for the establishment of a Military Human Rights Protector to ensure the guarantee of basic rights for soldiers, address infringements of those rights, and establish separate legal provisions on the organization, duties, and operations of the Military Human Rights Protector. However, there have been criticisms that effective measures have not been taken in response to cases of violations of soldiers' rights, leading to the introduction of Article 50-6 of the NHRCK Act and others on July 1. Based on these provisions, when a soldier or other military personnel dies during service, the Minister of

purpose of deportation or removal constitutes a violation of the right to liberty, *i.e.*, deprivation of liberty, under Article 9 of the Covenant.

National Defense must immediately notify either the Commission or the Committee of Human Rights in Military. Upon receiving such notification, the Commission or the Committee of Human Rights in Military may request that the Military Human Rights Protector and his/her staff participate in the investigation or inquiry into the ongoing case conducted by the military investigative agency.

To ensure prompt response to military incidents and achieve effective resolution of human rights issues, a preliminary investigation was carried out by actively participating in the investigation and inquiry of death incidents. This encompassed implementing measures to protect the victims, verifying the requests of their families, and determining the circumstances and underlying factors involved in the incidents. Additionally, a comprehensive manual for managing notifications and responses was developed. Efforts were also made to ensure the timely progress of the participation process, including coordinating with military investigative units and actively attending briefings hosted by the Ministry of National Defense.

G. Human Rights in Sports

■ Monitoring of Major Sports Events

From May to November, the Commission monitored the human rights situation in 20 national competitions, the 103rd National Sports Festival and the 42nd National Para Games to develop preventive measures against human rights violations and strategies to promote human rights-friendly sports events. While significant improvements were observed in terms of a lower rates of sexual violence incidents, physical assault, and verbal abuse during the competitions, it was evident that the establishment of a system to ensure the human rights-friendly operation of sporting events has not been fully realized. This includes the need to establish essential facilities like changing rooms and practice facilities, develop accommodation guidelines for the events, appoint human rights supervisors to prevent violations, and increase promotional efforts to educate victims about the process of seeking redress and taking appropriate actions in response to human rights violations.

During a policy roundtable aimed at promoting human rights-friendly sports event management, in which representatives from the Ministry of Education, the Korean Sport &

Olympic Committee, and other sports-related organizations participated, the Commission shared the findings and facilitated discussions to identify measures for further improvement.

H. Social Rights

■ Policy Forum on Housing Rights (Disaster Safety Rights) for Vulnerable Populations

On September 26, the Commission co-hosted a policy forum on strengthening the protection of housing rights for vulnerable groups at the National Assembly Library Auditorium. The forum was jointly organized with the National Assembly and civil society organizations.

The policy forum aimed to explore alternative policies that ensure the dignity and safety of vulnerable populations residing in (semi-)basements, rooftop houses, *gosiwons*, and vinyl houses, protecting them from the adverse effects of climate conditions and disasters. It was emphasized that stronger government commitment and increased budget allocation for housing welfare were essential in order to improve the housing situation for vulnerable populations. A consensus was reached on the importance of expanding the supply of long-term public rental housing, reinforcing the principle of prioritizing distribution to vulnerable populations, broadening eligibility for housing subsidies (setting the income threshold at 60% or above the median income), and raising the minimum housing standards.

■ Organization of the 2022 Human Rights Policy Forum

Due to technology and societal changes in Korea, human rights issues have emerged in various domains, and there was a call to reexamine existing problems with a fresh perspective. To address these issues, the Commission organized a public symposium on November 17-18, focusing on five session topics: “Vulnerable Groups and Social Safety Nets,” “Human Rights in Disaster and Emergency Situations,” “the Criminal Justice System and Human Rights,” “Human Rights in the Digital Environment,” and “Promoting a Human Rights Framework.” The symposium brought together 31 participants, including human rights activists, experts, and professionals in relevant fields, who served as chairpersons, presenters, and panelists. Discussions were held to identify challenges and explore potential solutions.

I. Human Rights in Business Management

■ Pilot Initiative for Institutionalizing Human Rights Management and Assessments in Private Businesses

The Commission implemented a pilot project from March to August to foster a culture of human rights management and effective implementation of human rights practices in private businesses, primarily targeting large companies. Participating companies were Pulmuone, SeAH Group, and SM Entertainment. Training programs were conducted on application of guidelines for human rights impact assessment, human rights management reporting, and evaluation protocols. The project involved workshops in which human rights management experts collaborated with participating companies and developed quantitative indicators based on human rights management checklist. Furthermore, focus group interviews (FGI) of employees were conducted at production factories and various other locations. These initiatives aimed to identify any negative impacts within the participating companies and devise measures to alleviate them, including enhancing communication between the companies and stakeholders. The Commission will continue these pilot projects to advance the integration of human rights management practices in the private sector.

■ Forum to Promote Business Awareness and Empathy on Human Rights

Since 2013, the Commission has been hosting the Human Rights Management Forum once or twice a year, aiming to foster collaboration and communication among civil society, businesses, government, and academia. The forum serves as a platform for sharing current issues and building collaboration. In July 2022, the forum was organized to share the outcomes of the pilot project on human rights management in private enterprises and to promote a consensus on ESG practices.

Furthermore, in line with the global trend of strengthening human rights management, the Commission assessed the implementation of international standards in the domestic context and strengthened collaboration with international organizations, including participating in and presenting at the UN South Asia Forum on Business and Human Rights.

J. Human Rights in Information & Communication Technology (ICT)

■ Forum on Human Rights in ICT

Since 2020, the Commission has been operating the Forum on Human Rights in ICT, a specialized advisory body, to actively respond to the rapid development of emerging information processing technologies such as AI and Big Data, as well as emerging issues related to information rights in the era of intelligent information society. In 2022, the Information Rights Forum comprised 15 members and organized four sessions, including closed-door seminars and public forums.

During the 1st session held on February 25, discussions were held on the operational plans for the 2022 Information Rights Forum, the Commission's work plans regarding information rights, and the topics of interaction, safety, and human rights protection in the Metaverse virtual reality. The 2nd session, titled "Public Debate for Establishing a Sustainable Epidemic Prevention System," took place on April 8 to discuss improvements to the Infectious Disease Control and Prevention Act and ways to enhance the epidemiological investigation support system. The 3rd session, held on August 31, focused on the current status and issues of information rights in the era of intelligent information. Discussions revolved around the introduction of AI impact assessments, the status and problems related to facial recognition programs, and the controversies surrounding the regulation of fake news and misinformation. The 4th session, held on November 30, discussed the protection of personal information in both the public and private sectors, as well as the Commission's 2023 work plans on information rights.

From 2023 onwards, building on the accomplishments of the Information Rights Forum, the Commission will establish the Information Rights Special Committee as an official advisory body to sustain and strengthen engagement.

K. Human Rights in North Korea

■ International Conference on North Korean Human Rights

Together with the UK Parliamentary Association, 'All Parliamentary Group on North Korea (APPG on NK),' and Korea Future, the Commission organized the International Conference

on North Korean Human Rights on October 20 at Portcullis House in the UK Parliament. The conference aimed to generate international attention to the human rights situation in North Korea, facilitate discussions on approaches to improve human rights in North Korea, and foster international networking in this regard.

The conference consisted of three sessions: “Freedom of Religion and Freedom of Belief in North Korea,” “Key Challenges to Human Rights in North Korea,” and “Approaches to Improving Human Rights in North Korea.” During the opening ceremony, Chairperson Song Doo-hwan and Fiona Bruce, a member of the UK Parliament and the Prime Minister’s Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, delivered opening remarks. Subsequently, the first session was chaired by Lord Alton of Liverpool, a member of the UK House of Lords and co-chair of the All Parliamentary Group on North Korea. Various North Korean human rights experts from the UK and other European countries participated in the conference to discuss the human rights situation in North Korea and potential avenues for improvement.

L. Domestic Implementation of International Human Rights Norms and Standards

■ Preparation for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a mechanism established by the UN Human Rights Council in 2006 as a core system for human rights monitoring. It involves the regular review and examination of the human rights situation among UN Member States every four and a half years.

The Commission actively participated in the generation of UPR recommendations from UN Member States to improve human rights in South Korea through position papers and oral statements to the UN Human Rights Council. Furthermore, the Commission urged the government to implement the UPR recommendations to promote and enhance human rights in the country.

The Commission organized meetings with human rights organizations specializing in international human rights issues, and engaged in discussions with the Expert Committee on International Human Rights to gather input on the key issues to be included in its independent

report for UPR. In July 2022, the Commission prepared and submitted the independent report. With regard to the government's preparation of the national report, the Commission actively participated in a consultative meeting hosted by the Ministry of Justice to present its views and suggestions. It also provided written feedback on three different occasions to ensure that pertinent key issues could be appropriately addressed.

Furthermore, the Commission actively engaged in pre-sessions organized by UPR INFO, in collaboration with civil society organizations in South Korea. The objective was to ensure that the human rights proposals put forward by the Commission and civil society could translate into UPR recommendations during the discussions of the UPR Working Group in January 2023. These pre-sessions offered the opportunity to interact with key UN missions and present the challenges in advancing human rights in the country.

■ Preparations in Support of the UN Human Rights Committee's Review of the Fifth State Report of the Republic of Korea

In October 2023, the UN Human Rights Committee is scheduled to review the fifth periodic report of the Republic of Korea on civil and political rights under the ICCPR.

To enhance the domestic implementation of the ICCPR, it is essential for National Human Rights Institutions to assist the Committee in formulating its concluding observations based on independent reports and other objective and fair documents during the review of State reports. This is a very important role that the Commission plays in promoting the domestic implementation of international human rights treaties.

The Commission conducted an analysis of the UN Human Rights Committee's general comments and concluding observations on other countries in order to prepare a proactive response to the Committee's review of the Republic of Korea's fifth State report.

■ Submission to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of Report of Combined Second and Third Reports by the NHRCK

As a party to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Republic of Korea submitted its combined second and third periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in March

2019. The UN Committee conducted a review of these reports in August 2022. In support of the review, the Commission submitted an independent report that reflects its views and participated in the review process to facilitate the domestic implementation of the Convention.

In developing an early version of the independent report, the Commission conducted expert consultations and solicited input from relevant organizations. Through subsequent internal consultations, feedback from individuals with disabilities and disability organizations, and a public hearing, the Commission compiled a well-rounded and comprehensive independent report that incorporated diverse perspectives.

Throughout the review process, the Commission took active measures to encourage the government's implementation of the Convention. These measures involved meeting with civil society organizations working on disability issues, conducting closed briefings, delivering opening statements during the review of the national report, submitting written queries, and providing responses. The objective was to generate momentum for the government to adhere to the Convention and to ensure that the content of the independent report could be duly considered in the concluding observations of the UN CRPD.

Following the issuance of the concluding observations, the Commission took steps to ensure widespread awareness and understanding of their significance and content. This included statements by the Chairperson and the distribution of press releases to disseminate the observations within the country. Internally, the Commission analyzed and reported on the specific details of the concluding observations, facilitating their dissemination and utilization within the Commission itself. It also actively responded to the CRPD's request to make the content of the concluding observations readily accessible, including in easy-to-read format, to reach the government, non-governmental organizations, persons with disabilities, and their family members. These easy-to-read materials were designed, produced and distributed to enhance understanding and information accessibility for all citizens, including those with developmental disabilities.

M. Research and Legislative Activities

■ 2021 NHRCK Publication on Human Rights Situation in the Republic of Korea

The Commission released the 2021 NHRCK Report on Human Rights Situation in accordance with Article 29 (1) of the NHRCK Act. The report depicts the situation of domestic human rights during the year 2021 and offers assessments and suggestions for improvement. It marks the Commission's inaugural publication of a comprehensive report on the human rights situation, encompassing the human rights concerns that emerged in South Korea over the course of the year.

The 2021 NHRCK Report on Human Rights Situation is divided into three parts, with six chapters, covering 18 areas and addressing 66 topics. It presents a compilation of the major human rights situations and evaluations in 2021. It highlights issues that garnered significant attention within our society, including several cases of sexual violence that led to the death of soldiers, the forced discharge and subsequent death of a transgender soldier, the enactment and limitations of the Serious Accident Punishment Act, as well as the intersection of COVID-19 and human rights concerns, among various others.

■ Advocating for Enactment of Equality Act and Providing Support for Post-Legislation Measures

The Commission engaged in various activities to support the successful legislation of the Equality Act. One of these activities was the release of a statement by the Chairperson (May 2022), emphasizing the importance of prompt legislation of the Equality Act as a crucial step towards resolving conflicts caused by discrimination and fostering a society that values diversity. This advocacy was prompted by the findings of a recent national survey on public awareness of discrimination (conducted in April 2022), which indicated that 67.2% of the population supported the enactment of the pending equality bill in the National Assembly. Furthermore, international bodies such as the UN human rights treaty bodies have consistently recommended legislative action to our government, and a majority of OECD member countries have already enacted their own equality laws to promote social harmony and respect for diversity.

Specifically, the Commission submitted an opinion on the bill to the Legislative and Judiciary

Committee, provided support for public hearings held by the Subcommittee on Legislation and Judiciary 1, and delivered statements in the Legislative and Judiciary Committee of the National Assembly. Moreover, to facilitate legislative progress through international cooperation, the Commission held meetings with foreign embassies, such as those of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and representatives from the OHCHR and the European Union based in Korea. The Commission also led the production of a statement of support for the equality bill from the UN Refugee Agency.

Meanwhile, the Commission also promoted public discourse and facilitated discussions on the subject. It strengthened collaboration with human rights organizations through meetings with the Coalition for Anti-Discrimination Legislation and support for promotional booths at the Seoul Queer Festival. Working with the Christian community, the Commission also produced and distributed fact-check leaflets on the Equality Bill to raise awareness. Moving forward, the Commission will continue to support the legislation of the Equality Act, which will serve as a yardstick to assess the level of national dignity and human rights standards in South Korea.

Section 1. Overview

The NHRCK conducts investigations into cases of human rights violations and discrimination, and takes appropriate remedial measures in accordance with the NHRCK Act.

1. Subjects of Investigation

The Commission’s investigations encompass national institutions, local governments, schools⁴⁾, public service-related organizations⁵⁾, detention and protection facilities involved in their duties⁶⁾, where they violate the human rights guaranteed under Articles 10 through 22 of the Constitution or engage in discriminatory practices, as well as corporations, organizations, and individuals who commit acts of discrimination.

2. Petitions

Investigations into human rights violations and discriminatory acts are primarily initiated through petitions, which can be submitted not only by victims but also by third parties aware of the incidents. To ensure the right to petition for individuals in detention or protection facilities who may find it difficult to submit petitions orally or by phone, the Commission conducts on-site petitioning visits known as the “face-to-face petitioning⁷⁾” system.

4) Schools established in accordance with Article 2 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Article 2 of the Higher Education Act, and other relevant laws and statutes

5) Public service-related organizations under Article 3-2 (1) of the Public Service Ethics Act

6) Excluding the legislation of the National Assembly and trials in courts and the Constitutional Court

7) According to Article 31 (Guarantee of the Right to Petition) Paragraphs 2 and 4 of the NHRCK Act, if a person in a facility wishes to make a petition in the presence of a commissioner or a staff member of the Commission, the Commission shall arrange for a commissioner or a staff member to visit the detention or protective facility and receive the petition orally or in writing.

Upon receiving a petition, the Commission initiates an investigation, and if it concludes that a human rights violation or discriminatory act has taken place, recommendations are provided to the relevant party or supervisory authority to implement appropriate measures for prevention and restoration. Cases are rejected if they do not fall within the scope of investigation as defined by the NHRCK Act. Cases are dismissed if they do not involve human rights violations or discriminatory acts, if the facts are unsubstantiated or cannot be proven, or if no separate remedial measures are required, including cases where the harm has already been redressed.

In 2022, there were 10,573 petitions filed for human rights violations, representing a 5.4% increase compared to the previous year. The number of cases processed was 10,345, indicating a significant increase of 11.7% over the previous year. In 2022, there was a 20% increase in the number of recommendations issued⁸⁾, with a total of 605 cases recorded. The COVID-19 pandemic had a noticeable impact on the number of petitions received, resulting in a significant decline in 2021. However, the numbers have been steadily increasing since then. The substantial increase in processed cases can be attributed to a focus on long-term cases. It is worth noting that the cumulative acceptance rate of recommendations, from the establishment of the Commission until 2022, remained at 91.3%, maintaining a similar level as before. However, since 2021, there has been a slight decrease, with the acceptance rate falling below 90%.

⁸⁾ The figure includes cases where there are two or more recommended institutions for each petition received, in accordance with Article 44 of the NHRCK Act.

[Table 3-2-1] Petitions Filed, Processed, and Recommendations Accepted in Recent Five Years

(in number of cases and in percentage)

Classification	Petitions filed	Petitions processed	Recommendations	Recommendation Status				Under review	Rate of acceptance (A+B)/C
				Subtotal (C)	Fully accepted (A)	Partially accepted (B)	Non-accepted		
Cumulative	171,593	167,066	6,505	6,262	4,731	988	543	243	91.3
2022	10,573	10,345	605	463	337	78	48	142	89.6
2021	10,035	9,260	504	404	319	44	41	100	89.9
2020	9,017	9,242	583	583	367	179	37	-	93.7
2019	9,768	9,140	494	493	390	78	25	1	94.9
2018	9,288	10,179	547	547	470	47	30	-	94.5

* The cumulative data includes the period from the establishment of the Commission on November 25, 2001 to December 31, 2022.

* According to the "Guidelines for Human Rights Statistics Compilation and Management" (National Human Rights Commission Regulation No. 109), cases that are still under review were excluded from the calculation of the acceptance rate.

[Table 3-2-2] Petitions Filed and Processed in 2022

(in number of cases)

Classification	Petitions filed	Petitions processed	Remedies						Rejected	Transferred	Dismissed	Investigation suspended
			Subtotal	Investigation requested / report to police	Recommendations	Mediation	Closed by settlement	Resolved during investigation				
Total	10,573	10,345	1,306	1	603	-	48	654	5,264	44	3,663	68
Violation	8,468	7,684	827	1	414	-	29	383	4,146	34	2,625	52
Discriminatio	2,036	2,596	474	-	189	-	19	266	1,061	9	1,036	16
Others	69	65	5	-	-	-	-	5	57	1	2	-

* The above statistics also include cases that were re-investigated and closed as a result of the cancellation of administrative adjudication and administrative litigation.

In 2022, the organizations that received the most recommendations in human rights cases were educational institutions with 124 cases, followed by the Police with 56 cases, multiple-person protection facilities with 53 cases, local governments with 51 cases, and businesses and other profit-oriented organizations with 50 cases. The cumulative acceptance rate of recommendations was 88.3%. Notably, the recommendation acceptance rates by the prosecution, police, National Intelligence Service, multiple-person protection facilities, and immigration authorities were all 100%.

Emergency Remedies

The Commission has the authority to take urgent remedial measures established under Article 48 of the NHRCK Act when there is a significant likelihood that human rights violations or discriminatory acts, if left unaddressed, may result in irreparable harm.

In 2022, the Commission issued emergency relief recommendations in two cases that were presented for urgent remedial actions. The first case involved the Police taking no action to prevent disruptions during the regular Wednesday protests that address the issue of “comfort women” during the Japanese colonial period. The second case was related to secondary victimization of a survivor of sexual assault in the Air Force.

***Suo Motu* Investigations**

According to Article 30 (3) of the NHRCK Act, even in the absence of a petition, the Commission has the authority to initiate an investigation if there is reasonable evidence to believe that there are human rights violations or discriminatory acts of significant importance.

In 2022, the Commission made the decision to initiate seven *suo motu* investigations and concluded six cases, including two cases carried over from the previous year. Remedial measures were taken in all six cases.

On-site Inspections

According to Article 24 (1) of the NHRCK Act, the Commission has the authority to conduct on-site inspections of detention and protection facilities if deemed necessary.

In 2022, the Commission decided to initiate on-site inspections on seven cases, including a visit to a single-parent family welfare facility that it had not previously investigated. Policy recommendations for enhancing human rights were issued for seven cases, which encompassed both ongoing and previously conducted investigations.

Section 2. Human Rights Counselling and Petitions

A review of the status of petitions, counselling, and complaints and inquiries filed shows a 15.4% decrease in the number of cases compared to the previous year. This decline can be attributed to the government’s more lenient infectious disease control policies and relaxed social distancing measures amid the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as a decrease in collective complaints.

There were a total of 10,573 petitions, 33,237 consultations, and 32,752 complaints and inquiries (including inquiries about subjects of investigation, filing procedures, and information on other organizations) received. Petitions increased by 538 cases (5.4%) compared to 2021, while consultations decreased by 3,105 cases (8.5%), and complaints and inquiries decreased by 11,385 cases (25.8%).

[Table 3-2-3] Petitions, Consultations, and Complaints and Inquiries Filed in Recent Five Years

(in number of cases)

Year	Petitions	Consultations	Complaints and inquiries	Total
Cumulative	171,593	500,157	640,984	1,312,734
2022	10,573	33,237	32,752	76,562
2021	10,035	36,342	44,137	90,514
2020	9,017	28,214	48,006	85,237
2019	9,768	33,440	44,959	88,167
2018	9,288	32,278	45,622	87,188

* The cumulative data includes the period from the establishment of the Commission on November 25, 2001 to December 31, 2022.

* Consultations include face-to-face petitions that were resolved through consultation.

* The above statistics also include cases that were re-investigated and closed as a result of the cancellation of administrative adjudication and administrative litigation.

1. Human Rights Counselling

The Commission provides guidance on remedies in its areas of responsibility through telephone consultations and face-to-face consultations. It also operates a specialized consultation channel staffed by human rights counselors and specialized counselors. Interpretation services are available for migrant workers, marriage immigrants, and other individuals. Since 2020, the Commission has focused on high-demand areas such as law, labor, and general human rights to ensure efficient consultation and has implemented an appointment-based consultation system. Additionally, the Commission collaborates with the Sign Language Center to provide sign language services.

Since its establishment up until the end of December 2022, the Commission handled over 500,000 consultation cases. In 2022, it processed 33,237 cases, representing an 8.5% decrease compared to the previous year. An analysis of the types of consultations in 2022 revealed that consultations related to human rights violations accounted for 32.9% of the total, consultations related to discriminatory acts for 5.0%, consultations for mediation in labor disputes for 3.0%, and other consultations for 59.1%. Compared to the previous year, the percentage of consultations related to human rights violations increased by 0.9%, while consultations related to discriminatory acts decreased by 0.7%. Other consultations included matters related to property rights, disputes between individuals, legislative matters in the National Assembly, and issues related to judicial proceedings.

[Table 3-2-4] Consultations in Recent Five Years

(In number of cases and in percentage)

Classification Year	Total	Human rights violations		Discriminations		Others		Face-to-face petitions and consultations	
		Number of cases	Percentage	Number of cases	Percentage	Number of cases	Percentage	Number of cases	Percentage
Cumulative	500,157	191,835	38.4	40,677	8.1	236,601	47.3	31,044	6.2
2022	33,237	10,946	32.9	1,652	5.0	19,627	59.1	1,012	3.0
2021	36,342	11,615	32.0	2,054	5.7	21,602	59.4	1,071	2.9
2020	28,214	12,231	43.4	2,177	7.7	12,727	45.1	1,079	3.8
2019	33,440	13,743	41.1	2,767	8.3	15,874	47.5	1,056	3.1
2018	32,278	12,970	40.2	2,772	8.6	15,365	47.6	1,171	3.6

* The cumulative data includes the period from the establishment of the Commission on November 25, 2001 to December 31, 2022.

2. Petitions Filed

Since its establishment in November 2001, a total of 171,593 petitions have been filed. Among them, 76.1% (130,564 cases) were related to human rights violations, 22.5% (38,544 cases) to discriminatory acts, and 1.4% (2,485 cases) to other reasons.

In 2022, out of the 10,573 petitions filed, human rights violation cases accounted for 8,468 cases (80.1%), while cases of discriminatory acts accounted for 2,036 cases (19.3%).

[Table 3-2-5] Petitions Filed in Recent Five Years

(in number of cases and in percentage)

Classification Year	Total	Human rights violations		Discriminations		Others	
		Number of cases	Percentage	Number of cases	Percentage	Number of cases	Percentage
Cumulative	171,593	130,564	76.1	38,544	22.5	2,485	1.4
2022	10,573	8,468	80.1	2,036	19.3	69	0.6
2021	10,035	7,431	74.1	2,564	25.6	40	0.4
2020	9,017	6,558	72.7	2,426	26.9	33	0.4
2019	9,768	6,986	71.5	2,730	27.9	52	0.5
2018	9,288	7,055	76.0	2,208	23.8	25	0.3

* The cumulative data includes the period from the establishment of the Commission on November 25, 2001 to December 31, 2022.

3. Face-to-Face Petitions

From November 2001 to December 2022, a total of 66,506 face-to-face petitions were received in detention and protective facilities. Out of the 2,339 face-to-face cases concluded in 2022, 345 cases (14.7%) were submitted as petitions, 1,012 cases (43.3%) were resolved through consultation, and 982 cases (42.0%) were withdrawn by the applicants. As the number of face-to-face petitions decreased, the proportion of cases concluded through consultation, which accounts for the largest proportion, also slightly decreased. Cases concluded through consultation typically involve inquiries related to previously submitted cases or matters related to investigations or trials that the Commission cannot intervene in based on the NHRCK Act.

Similar to 2021, in 2022, the number of face-to-face petitions decreased due to the temporary

suspension of face-to-face activities amid the COVID-19 pandemic. To enhance the efficiency of face-to-face petitions, the Commission plans to analyze the system and develop improvement measures based on that analysis.

[Table 3-2-6] Face-to-Face Petitions Filed and Processed in Recent Five Years

(in number of cases and in percentage)

Classification Year	Filed	Processed						
		Subtotal	Filed		Consultation concluded		Withdrawn	
Cumulative	66,506	66,496	16,393	24.6	31,044	46.7	19,059	28.7
2022	2,086	2,339	345	14.7	1,012	43.3	982	42.0
2021	2,411	2,349	354	15.1	1,071	45.6	924	39.3
2020	2,529	2,392	330	13.8	1,079	45.1	983	41.1
2019	2,669	2,636	560	21.2	1,056	40.1	1,020	38.7
2018	2,648	2,590	506	19.5	1,171	45.2	913	35.3

* The cumulative data includes the period from the establishment of the Commission on November 25, 2001 to December 31, 2022.

4. Civil Complaints

As the national human rights watchdog, the Commission not only receives and investigates petitions but also handles various civil complaints and inquiries. In cases where a complaint cannot be processed and investigated as a petition under the NHRCK Act, the Commission actively seeks to resolve the complainant's concerns by referring them to other remedial measures specified by law, relevant institutions or groups, and providing legal counseling.

In 2022, the Commission processed a total of 30,544 complaints, which indicates a decrease of approximately 9,061 cases compared to the 39,605 cases in 2021. This decrease can be partially attributed to the absence of a significant number of group complaints. Specifically, in July 2021, the Commission had received a notable volume of 2,940 group complaints from women's organizations regarding its recommendation to prevent the complete exclusion of male users from the Jecheon City Women's Library. There was also a reduction of approximately 5,247 cases files through the e-People portal, which were subsequently transferred to other ministries or agencies as they fell outside the scope of the Commission's investigation.

[Table 3-2-7] Civil Complaints Filed and Processed in Recent Five Years

(in number of cases and in percentage)

Classification Year	Total	Postal mail/Fax		Online		Presidential Secretariat		e-People		Others	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Cumulative	337,528	69,419	20.6	141,539	41.9	852	0.3	124,255	36.8	1,463	0.4
2022	30,544	5,440	17.8	8,535	27.9	115	0.4	16,243	53.2	211	0.7
2021	39,605	4,526	11.4	13,116	33.1	34	0.1	21,814	55.1	115	0.3
2020	33,674	3,976	11.8	9,518	28.3	2	0.0	20,042	59.5	136	0.4
2019	30,280	4,753	15.7	8,546	28.2	1	0.0	16,788	55.4	192	0.6
2018	29,607	4,785	16.2	9,909	33.5	18	0.1	14,705	49.7	190	0.6

* The cumulative data includes the period from the establishment of the Commission on November 25, 2001 to December 31, 2022.

Section 3. Mediation

In July 2018, the Commission underwent organizational restructuring by amending the Enforcement Decree on the Organization of the NHRCK and its Affiliated Agencies. As part of the restructuring, the existing Human Rights Consultation Centers were transformed into Human Rights Consultation and Mediation Centers. Additionally, a dedicated team was newly established to handle preliminary investigations and mediation tasks. In 2021, a total of 14 mediation cases were received and successfully resolved. Due to the backlog of petitions and complaints, the Commission faced challenges in conducting preliminary investigations as the team responsible for such investigations was reassigned to handle complaint-related duties.

To address this issue, starting from 2022, the preliminary investigation tasks were transferred to the Investigation Division. However, the omission of the preliminary investigation process created challenges in the mediation process within the Human Rights Counselling and Mediation Center. To enhance the effectiveness of the mediation system, measures have been implemented. From 2023 onwards, mediation specialists have been appointed, and efforts are being made to introduce a system for independent mediation and the appointment of mediation commissioners through legal amendments.

Section 4. Investigations and Remedies of Human Rights Violations

1. Petitions Filed and Processed

A. Petitions Filed

In 2022, a total of 8,468 petitions were filed in relation to human rights violations, which represents an increase of 1,037 cases (14.0%) compared to 2021.

By type of institutions, there was a notable surge in cases related to educational institutions in 2022. These cases were related to school restrictions on outings and overnight stays imposed as part of COVID-19 prevention measures, as well as regulations on student hair appearance and cell phone usage. Furthermore, the establishment of the Military Human Rights Protector contributed to an increase in cases associated with the military. Additionally, cases involving the Police and correctional facilities also experienced a sustained upward trend.

[Table 3-2-8] Human Rights Violation Petitions by Institution in Recent Five Years

(in number of cases)

Year	Total	The Prosecution	The Police	National Intelligence Service	The Military	Central administrative agencies	The Legislative	The Judiciary	Other state organizations	Local governments	Public institutions	Educational institutions	Detention facilities	Immigration organizations	Multi-person care facilities	Medical institutions	Others
Cumulative	130,564	3,460	25,154	277	2,837	7,704	119	1,493	1,353	5,656	3,328	8,356	36,718	1,279	30,843	367	1,620
2022	8,468	73	1,480	9	326	515	13	73	37	512	376	1,180	2,127	118	1,392	77	160
2021	7,431	97	1,259	12	239	511	10	92	38	484	362	877	1,830	91	1,223	52	254
2020	6,558	118	1,192	4	200	332	9	70	28	392	276	535	1,715	57	1,426	59	145
2019	6,986	146	1,320	10	190	447	4	85	28	405	294	669	1,693	50	1,499	26	120
2018	7,055	128	1,259	12	187	263	3	59	15	273	208	584	1,827	67	2,091	11	68

* The cumulative data includes the period from the establishment of the Commission on November 25, 2001 to December 31, 2022.

B. Petitions Processed

In 2022, there was a significant increase in the number of human rights violation petitions processed, with a total of 7,684 cases, representing a 12.6% increase compared to 2021. This rise can be attributed to a higher number of petitions received. Furthermore, focused efforts to resolve long-standing cases that had accumulated since 2021 also influenced this outcome.

In 2022, the number of human rights violation petitions that were remedied reached 827, representing a notable increase of 134 cases (19.3%) compared to the previous year. The significant increase in remedied human rights violation petitions in 2022 can mainly be attributed to a notable rise in the number of cases that received remedial recommendations and cases that were resolved during the investigation phase, with 71 and 62 more cases, respectively.

[Table 3-2-9] Human Rights Violation Petitions Processed in Recent Five Years

(in number of cases)

Year	Petitions filed	Petitions processed	Remedies							Rejected	Transferred	Dismissed	Investigation suspended
			Subtotal	Investigation requested / report to police	Recommendations, etc.	Request for legal aid	Mediation	Closed by settlement	Resolved during investigation				
Cumulative	130,564	126,821	14,578	148	3,869	20	15	1,919	8,607	72,786	1,616	37,250	591
2022	8,468	7,684	827	1	414	-	-	29	383	4,146	34	2,625	52
2021	7,431	6,825	693	-	343	1	-	28	321	3,832	34	2,259	7
2020	6,558	6,346	631	-	304	-	-	37	290	3,907	39	1,765	4
2019	6,986	6,637	530	3	244	-	-	24	259	4,161	125	1,817	4
2018	7,055	7,698	667	3	209	-	-	122	333	4,697	74	2,248	12

* The cumulative data includes the period from the establishment of the Commission on November 25, 2001 to December 31, 2022.

* The above statistics also include cases that were re-investigated and closed as a result of the cancellation of administrative adjudication and administrative litigation.

* Recommendations, etc.: The total number of recommendations, including recommendations for redress, disciplinary recommendations, and recommendations for emergency relief, that require a response from the responsible authority regarding their acceptance or rejection, as mandated by the NHRCK Act

* Resolved during investigation: Cases that were dismissed or rejected through the efforts or mediation of the investigator, where the matter was resolved smoothly or no further remedial measures were required

* Dismissed or rejected: Cases dismissed or rejected with an outcome other than being resolved during the investigation process

By institution type, the number of cases processed was highest in correctional facilities with 1,904 cases, followed by the Police with 1,400 cases, facilities for caring for many persons with 1,359 cases, correctional facilities with 935 cases, and central government agencies and local governments with 428 cases each.

Furthermore, in terms of the number of cases remedied, correctional facilities had the highest count with 220 cases, followed by the Police with 134 cases, facilities for caring for many persons with 130 cases, correctional facilities with 115 cases, public agencies with 58 cases, central government agencies with 48 cases, and local governments with 45 cases.

2. Emergency Remedies, *Suo Motu* Investigations, and On-site Inspections

A. Emergency Remedies

■ Police Inaction in the Obstruction of Wednesday Protests

On January 5, the Commission received an urgent relief request (Case No. 22GinGeub0000100) regarding the Wednesday protest demonstration taking place in front of the Japanese Embassy. It was reported that opposing groups had been disrupting the rally for the past year through mockery and offensive behavior, challenging the proper conduct of the assembly. The Commission recognized the Wednesday protest as an unprecedented movement in world history, where our civil society holds Japan accountable for the inhumane crimes committed during Japanese imperialism. It further observed that the rally has taken place at the same location and time every week since January 1992, spanning over 30 years, making it the world's longest-running protest. Consequently, the Commission concluded that the matter should not be approached solely as coordinating the protection of two separate rallies, but rather through measures that can safeguard the exceptionally enduring demonstration seeking justice, truth, and accountability for past injustices.

Subsequently, on January 14, the Commission recommended to the Chief of the ○○ Police Station to encourage the opposing group to choose a different time and location for their rally, in order to avoid any disruption and ensure the uninterrupted conduct of the regular

Wednesday protest. If both rallies are held simultaneously at the same or adjacent locations, the Commission advised the Police to intervene on-site to prevent the opposing group from obstructing the Wednesday rally through excessive speaker noise or engaging in acts that defame or insult victims of the Japanese military's "comfort women" system and other participants. The Commission further recommended actively prohibiting and investigating such acts should the victims demand punishment.

■ Protection of Sexual Violence Survivors

On August 16, the Commission made recommendations for immediate actions to prevent secondary victimization of a servicewoman who experienced sexual violence while serving in the ○○ Air Wing. The Commission advised the Minister of National Defense to provide oversight and leadership to the military prosecution office to prevent secondary victimization. Furthermore, it suggested that the Chief Prosecutor of the Air Force Prosecution Unit temporarily halt ongoing investigations and decisions regarding prosecution in separate individual cases concerning the victim.

The Commission conducted an investigation into the primary case (Case No. 22JinJeong0644800 and 22JinJeong0646800) associated with the emergency relief case (Case No. 22GinGeub0001100) and concluded that the incident in which the victim of sexual violence, a member of the ○○ Air Wing, became a suspect in a separate case during the investigation, amounts to secondary victimization of a survivor of sexual violence.

On December 1, the Commission advised the Minister of National Defense to transfer the case to the military prosecution unit under the Defense Ministry for additional investigation. It further recommended that the Ministry of National Defense and military investigative agencies take measures to prevent similar incidents. The Commission also recommended educational programs aimed at preventing secondary victimization.

B. *Suo Motu* Investigations

■ Child Rights Violations Including Unjustified Admission of Disabled Children in Group Home into Psychiatric Institutions

In response to a reported case involving the forced admission and abandonment of disabled children from a group home into a mental health institution, the Commission conducted a *suo motu* investigation (Case No. 22JigGwon 0000500 and 22JigGwon0000700, consolidated) into the involved institution. On September 28, the Commission recommended the following actions: to the Director of ○○ Hospital, establish measures to prevent recurrence, ensuring that individuals with cognitive disabilities or mental disorders, who lack sufficient decision-making capacity, are not admitted or discharged without voluntary and clear consent, and that their requests for discharge are not denied; to the County governor with jurisdiction over the children's shared living facility, issue administrative measures in accordance with Article 56 of the Child Welfare Act and other relevant regulations; and to the Minister of Health and Welfare, establish criteria for assessing the decision-making capacity of patients with respect to voluntary hospital admission in accordance with Article 41 and 42 of the Mental Health Promotion and Mental Illness Welfare Services Support Act, make revision to laws on the supervision of guardianship for minors, conduct a comprehensive investigation into the human rights situation of disabled children in foster care, as well as the use of psychotropic drugs, and if necessary, establish dedicated foster care facilities for disabled children.

■ Death in Military Due to Inadequate Medical Care

On December 20, the Commission recommended to the Minister of National Defense the following measures to protect the health rights of service members from acute febrile illnesses, including Severe Fever with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (SFTS): to raise awareness among all military personnel about the risks and importance of preventing SFTS and other acute febrile illnesses; to emphasize to frontline unit commanders the importance of vaccination history management; to establish a management system led by the Armed Force Medical Command to ensure effective management; to require medical personnel at the division level to conduct detailed screenings, considering outdoor activity history and other relevant factors when diagnosing fever patients; to ensure that fever diagnosis kits are available in all medical facilities

at the division level and above, and kits be utilized for early diagnosis of acute febrile illnesses; and to formulate measures to prevent recurrence of delays in patient transfer in violation of the relevant military guidelines when determining whether to transfer acute fever patients to advanced military hospitals or nearby civilian hospitals.

The victim, who served as a soldier in the Army, passed away on August 23, 2020, while undergoing hospitalization and treatment for SFTS, which resulted in septic shock. The victim's father lodged a complaint (Case No. 22JinJeong027800, filed on April 13, 2022), alleging that the victim's right to life was violated due to the negligence of military officials in providing appropriate medical care and the lack of proper investigation and punishment for those responsible. Additionally, a third-party complaint with similar allegations (Case No. 22JinJeong0504300, filed on July 1) was submitted. The Commission identified deficiencies in the military response system to acute febrile illnesses, including SFTS. Consequently, on July 26, the Commission decided to initiate an official investigation (Case No. 22JigGwon0000800) into the matter.

Based on the investigation, despite the significance of conducting immediate testing of patients in division-level units, such as the victim in this case, who exhibit symptoms suggestive of SFTS, the military's infection statistics over the past five years showed that no confirmed diagnoses of acute febrile illnesses have been made in division-level medical units. Instead, most cases required individuals to seek confirmation at higher-level military hospitals. Additionally, the Ministry of National Defense's revised guidelines for SFTS vaccination stipulate that both the first and second doses should be administered during basic training. However, the statistics provided by the Army Training Center indicated a high coverage rate for the first dose among newly enlisted soldiers, while the second dose had not been administered until October 2022. Based on the findings, the Commission determined that had the military authorities taken appropriate measures when the victim initially displayed fever symptoms, such as assessing his activities related to weed clearance and outdoor training and using early fever diagnosis kits to consider the possibility of SFTS, followed by prompt transfer to a higher-level medical institution, it would have been highly likely that the victim's death could have been prevented. Consequently, the Commission concluded that the failure of the military authorities to implement such measures ultimately constituted a failure to fulfill the State's obligation to protect the victim's right to life and health.

■ Unlawful Isolation, Coercion, and Other Human Rights Violations in Mental Health Facilities

The patients admitted to ○○ Mental Health Institution lodged complaints (Case No. 22JinJeong0745000, 22JinJeong0870400) with the Commission regarding the prohibition of personal cell phone possession, forced labor, and verbal abuse by caregivers within the wards. Subsequently, the Commission conducted three on-site inspections and uncovered additional instances of human rights violations, including unjustified isolation and coercion without medical instructions, unauthorized involuntary admissions, and physical abuse by caregivers. Taking into account the significant number of victims and the gravity of the allegations, the Commission made the decision to initiate an official investigation (Case No. 22JigGwon0001400) on November 30.

The Commission conducted document reviews, interviews, and telephone investigations on December 27-28 to assess the legality of isolation and coercion measures, the suitability of voluntary and consented hospitalization procedures, and instances of physical abuse by caregivers towards hospitalized patients. If the investigation confirms human rights violations against the patients in question, the Commission plans to explore measures to prevent a recurrence of similar cases.

C. On-site Inspections

■ Metropolitan Police Lockup Facilities

Despite notable improvements in the conditions of lockup facilities, ongoing reports indicate persisting issues such as outdated infrastructure, improper use of restraints, insufficient healthcare, and continuous demands for improved meals. To address these concerns, the Commission conducted on-site inspections (Case No. 22BangMun0000300) from May to September. Eight facilities falling under the jurisdiction of 17 regional police agencies were visited nationwide. The facilities were selected from metropolitan lockups that had not undergone inspection for over 10 years and had received numerous complaints or required inspections for environmental enhancements.

The Commission conducted an environmental assessment through document reviews and

on-site inspections into the treatment of detainees, protection of rights in criminal procedures, physical safety and medical care, protection of the rights of vulnerable groups such as individuals with disabilities and pregnant women, and the treatment of long-term detainees in the facilities, as well as interviews with detainees and lockup facility staff, and examination of relevant records.

■ Alien Protection Facilities

In response to the reported incidents concerning the use of force against protected foreigners (commonly known as the “shrimp bending incident”) at the Hwaseong Foreigner Protection Center in 2021, which received public attention, as well as the numerous complaints and grievances expressed regarding inadequate meals, the Commission decided to initiate an on-site inspection (Case No. 22BangMun0000100) to improve the treatment and human rights of protected foreigners and enhance the institutional framework. From August to October, focused investigations were conducted on the use of force within the protection facilities and the provision of meals, specifically at the Hwaseong Foreigner Protection Center, Cheongju Foreigner Protection Center, and the Yeosu Immigration Office. Additionally, a visitation survey was carried out at the Hwaseong Foreigner Protection Center, which has transitioned to an open-type protection facility, specifically examining the “open-type protection facility (women’s unit).”

■ Army and Marine Corps Recruit Training Centers

Following media reports on the poor facility conditions, including overcrowding, in the military training camps in July, the Commission conducted inspections and established preventive measures for similar human rights violations. From September to October, the Commission verified and examined the facility conditions, operational status, treatment of trainees, training support, and the grievance redress system for trainees. Following inspection on December 20 (Case No. 22BangMun0000400), recommendations were made to the Chief of Staff of the Army and the Commandant of the Marine Corps to improve the human rights situation of trainees in the training camps. These recommendations included ensuring adequate living space in the barracks, refining the regulations governing the replacement cycle of essential facilities in the barracks, enhancing the supply system through individual issuance of personal

canteen upon enlistment, improving outdoor training facilities such as pit toilets and establishing all-weather training facilities, enhancing the privacy of open-type public phone facilities, revising the Marine Corps regulations on grievance handling to ensure trainees' rights to seek recourse from external organizations, improving the open-type urinal facilities in the Marine Corps training units, and widely promoting the Military Human Rights Protector program to safeguard the rights of military personnel and others.

■ Correctional Facilities

Despite efforts to address and resolve the numerous grievances raised by inmates, the Commission faces challenges in substantiating claims due to the inherent structural and institutional constraints within correctional facilities. To address these issues, on-site inspections (Case No. 22BangMun0000200) were conducted in October and November, specifically targeting 10 correctional facilities that were associated with multiple complaints or frequent appearances by prosecutors in court proceedings. The investigations focused on various aspects, including the living conditions of inmates (such as management practices, overcrowding, health rights, safety facilities, and stable water supply), the special provisions related to pending prosecution cases, and progress made in implementing the Commission's recommendations concerning overcrowding and other relevant concerns. The visitation survey aimed to assess the compliance of these facilities with international standards concerning inmate living conditions and to undertake proactive and policy-oriented investigations.

■ Single-Parent Family Welfare Facilities

Following a specialist planning meeting in July, the Commission conducted on-site inspections of 10 facilities dedicated to single-parent family welfare in November (Case No. 22BangMun0000700). In Korea, various support options for single-parent families are available outside these facilities. It was found that a very small number of single-parent families, specifically 2,200 out of a total of over 1.5 million single-parent households as of 2021, resided in these facilities. It can be inferred that many of them face challenges in seeking support outside the facilities. This situation called for on-site inspections to examine the unique circumstances of single-parent families within these facilities, including their family situations and economic conditions, and to assess their human rights situation.

The Commission conducted a comprehensive inspection, which included assessing the living spaces provided for single-parent families to ensure privacy and a humane living environment, the appropriateness of the duration of facility usage, the freedom of religion and the right to self-determination, and the sufficiency of educational programs focused on fostering independence and human rights, and psychological support programs.

Based on the findings, the Commission plans to engage in discussions with relevant agencies and experts to identify necessary legal, policy, and systems improvements, including ensuring appropriate living environments and durations of stay for those entering these facilities, improving the human rights situation within the facilities, and strengthening psychological support, for further recommendations to the respective authorities.

■ Elderly Welfare Facilities

Despite the ongoing occurrence of continuous abuse, physical restraints, and repeated violations of human rights against elderly residents in elderly care facilities, the Commission recognized that the elderly residents faced difficulties in reporting the abuse and seeking remedies on their own. Therefore, it conducted on-site inspections of elderly care facilities (Case No. 22BangMun0000600) to assess and improve the human rights situation of elderly residents.

The inspections took place from October to December on 10 facilities nationwide. In addition to examining cases of abuse and the human rights protection system in the facilities, the Commission focused on ensuring the right to health and freedom of movement. Where necessary, on-site corrective measures were implemented.

■ Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Systems in Psychiatric Hospital Wards

The Commission receives ongoing petitions concerning privacy violations caused by the presence of CCTV cameras in psychiatric hospital wards. However, the absence of established guidelines to address these concerns has resulted in arbitrary practices in the installation and management of CCTV systems in frontline psychiatric healthcare institutions. Additionally, a notable number of incidents involving physical abuse and mistreatment occur in isolation rooms or areas with limited visibility. However, there are often challenges in objectively determining the truth due to the varying retention periods of CCTV footage among hospitals.

The Ministry of Health and Welfare, in its 2022 Mental Health Program Guidelines, provides for the installation and operation of CCTVs where deemed necessary for fire monitoring or medical purposes, such as in isolation rooms and wards for severely ill patients. It mandates that the presence of CCTVs and retention periods of CCTV footage be publicly disclosed to patients and their legal guardians. However, the guidelines do not provide specific details on how to minimize privacy infringement, and the standard guidelines issued by the Personal Information Protection Commission also lack specific information regarding the installation and operation of CCTVs in psychiatric healthcare facilities.

To assess the status of CCTV installation and operation in those facilities and promote improvements where necessary, on-site inspections (Case No. 22BangMun0000500) were conducted in 40 hospitals nationwide from November to December. If deemed necessary, policy recommendations will be provided to the relevant authorities to establish standardized guidelines.

3. Key Petitions

■ Violation of Female Inmates' Rights in Overcrowded Correctional Facilities

On February 11, the Commission recommended to the Minister of Justice to promptly develop measures to address the problem of overcrowding in correctional facilities housing female inmates, and advised the director of the ○○ Correctional Facility to provide gender-sensitive human rights education to the medical officer (Case No. 21JinJeong0028500).

The findings indicated that the petitioner, during a period of 158 days in overcrowded conditions, had to be cautious not to bump into other inmates, faced additional challenges during her menstruation. It was found that these factors could have potentially contributed to a decline in her physical and mental well-being. The Commission concluded that confining inmates in excessively cramped conditions that impede the fulfillment of basic human needs violates the constitutional right to pursue happiness (Article 10) and the freedom of the body (Article 12).

As of September 7, 2021, the average occupancy rate for female inmates in correctional facilities nationwide was 136%, with some facilities reaching a maximum occupancy rate of 273%. The overcrowding situation for female inmates is severe. The Commission concluded that the Ministry of Justice should promptly develop measures to address overcrowding among

female inmates. Furthermore, the Commission found that the instruction given by a male medical officer to a nurse to confirm the amount of the female petitioner's menstruation without taking into account the physical and psychological characteristics of female inmates, constituted an inappropriate remark that humiliated the female inmate and infringed upon her right to dignity as guaranteed by Article 10 of the Constitution.

■ Excessive Use of Handcuffs During Police Interrogations

Regarding the allegation of excessive use of handcuffs by the Police during suspect interrogations (Case No. 21JinJeong0351700), the Commission recommended on February 23 to the chief of the respective police station to educate the police officers on the conditions, limitations, and precautions regarding the use of handcuffs. As a matter of principle, law enforcement agencies should refrain from using handcuffs or restraints during suspect interrogations. This principle is implemented to safeguard the rights of suspects, allowing them to freely exercise their defense rights without encountering any form of physical or psychological intimidation. Handcuffs and restraints should only be used in exceptional cases where there is a clear and concrete risk of escape, assault, or self-harm. Furthermore, once the evident necessity for their use no longer exists, they should be promptly removed.

It was found that the petitioner was interrogated by the Police with a single handcuff on the right hand for over 3.5 hours. The presence of a clear and concrete risk of escape or evident self-harm could not be established, and there was a lack of regular assessment by the interrogator of the necessity for handcuff usage based on the petitioner's demeanor. The Commission concluded that the Police's use of handcuffs on the petitioner, without adhering to the conditions and limitations, violated the principle of proportionality and infringed upon the petitioner's right to freedom of the body as stated in Article 12 of the Constitution.

■ Violation of Personal Dignity in Obstetrics and Gynecology Treatment at a University Hospital

On March 25, the Commission recommended to the director of ○○ University Hospital to establish preventive measures, including restructuring facilities and improving treatment procedures, to prevent similar human rights violations in the obstetrics and gynecology department (Case No. 22JinJeong0065200).

The hospital implemented a procedure in which three female patients were positioned in the examination room with a one-meter distance between them, and one patient was attended to at a time. Due to limited space and a large number of waiting patients, this arrangement inadvertently led to patients overhearing others' medical consultations. The Commission concluded that this violated not only the rights of the victims but also the rights of all patients to the self-determination of personal information and personal dignity, as their medical conditions, treatment progress, and test results were exposed to others. The Commission recommended implementing changes in the hospital's treatment methods and actively improving the environment to address these issues.

■ Harassment through Improper Dispatch and Extension of Dispatch

On March 25, the Commission recommended that the chief of ○○ Police Station request an investigation into the petitioned organization regarding allegations of abuse of authority in relation to a harassment case involving improper dispatch and extension measures (Case No. 21JinJae0000300). The Commission also recommended the Minister of Security and Public Administration to investigate the case in □□ City. It also emphasized the importance of taking appropriate personnel actions and ensuring thorough management and supervision to prevent the misuse of dispatching and training of local government officials in order to uphold the integrity of the civil service system. The Commission concluded that the practice of improper dispatch and coerced retirement, which takes place after local elections through the indirect influence of local government heads under the guise of “personnel authority,” constitutes a violation of the authority of public officials and the right to pursue happiness.

After a comprehensive in-depth investigation involving various parties related to the case and legal firms, the Commission concluded that the petitioned organization engaged in “abuse of authority.” Furthermore, through an initial request for investigation and recommendations for institutional improvements regarding the exercise of improper personnel authority, the Commission safeguarded the integrity of the civil service system and protected the rights of the petitioners, including their right to pursue happiness. The Commission set a precedent by recognizing that the exercise of improper personnel authority can be considered as abuse of authority.

■ Infringement of Rights Due to the Non-Provision of Discharge Evaluation Request Forms and Procedural Assistants

On April 28, the Commission issued the following recommendations to ensure that individuals with intellectual disabilities who are admitted to mental health institutions receive proper guidance regarding their rights throughout the admission and discharge process.

The Commission recommended the following actions: to the director of ○○ Hospital to ensure that documents necessary for the exercise of rights during discharge are easily accessible to patients in a visible location and to conduct job training for hospital staff to ensure that they immediately provide relevant documents to hospitalized patients who express their intention to be discharged; to the mayor of ○○ City ○○ District that, in cases where intellectually challenged individuals with communication or decision-making difficulties are administratively admitted to mental health institutions in accordance with Article 44 of the Mental Health and Welfare Act, to make procedural assistants⁹⁾ available to assist and provide proper information on the detention and relief procedures; and to the Minister of Health and Welfare to develop user-friendly rights notification forms for individuals with intellectual disabilities who are admitted to mental health institutions and to provide for the procedural assistant program in mental health and welfare laws so that the rights of intellectually challenged individuals can be protected throughout the admission and discharge process.

The petitioner, who was involuntarily admitted to the hospital, expressed the desire to be discharged on multiple occasions. He claimed that the hospital did not take appropriate actions, such as providing a discharge evaluation request form. Through an investigation, the Commission found that the hospital was aware of the petitioner's intention to be discharged but failed to inform him about his right to submit a discharge evaluation request and a petition for relief. Additionally, the necessary forms for rights redress were not readily available in the

9) A procedural assistant is a person who assists individuals with intellectual disabilities, mental disorders, or other conditions that hinder their ability to make decisions and comprehend their rights as protected by the Constitution and laws. They aid individuals in making informed choices and provide essential support throughout the decision-making process by offering unbiased information, knowledge, and the necessary procedural assistance. In Germany, this role is known as a "Verfahrensbeistand (or procedural supporter)," while in the United Kingdom, it is referred to as an "advocate." These individuals assist individuals with mental disorders in participating in decisions concerning their hospitalization, treatment, and other relevant matters.

ward. The Commission concluded that these actions violated the petitioner's right to freedom of the body, as guaranteed by Article 12 of the Constitution, by restricting his right to submit a discharge evaluation request, which is protected under the Mental Health and Welfare Act.

The Commission observed that, considering the substantial presence of individuals with intellectual disabilities among inpatients in mental health institutions, the production and distribution of rights notification forms by national agencies and local governments, without considering the specific type of disability, amounts to discriminatory behavior, as it fails to provide adequate convenience to individuals with intellectual disabilities during their engagement in relevant procedures.

The Commission observed that, considering the substantial presence of individuals with intellectual disabilities among inpatients in mental health institutions, the production and distribution of rights notification forms by national agencies and local governments, without considering the specific type of disability, amounts to discriminatory behavior, as it neglects to provide adequate convenience to individuals with intellectual disabilities during their engagement in relevant procedures.

Currently, Seoul, Gyeonggi-do Province, and some other local governments have initiated a pilot program designed to offer procedural support to non-consenting inpatients, providing guidance on admission and discharge procedures, and assisting with decision-making. Nevertheless, the absence of legal grounds for this program has led to inadequate results. Thus, the Commission concluded that it is necessary to introduce specific provisions within the Mental Health and Welfare Act and other relevant legislation to establish a framework for procedural assistance tailored to the needs of patients with impaired decision-making capabilities. These provisions should explicitly outline the roles, responsibilities, and qualifications of procedural assistants.

■ Human Rights Violations in Disability Residential Facilities

On June 2, the Commission determined that the acts of restraining individuals with intellectual disabilities on toilets, restricting their movement, abandoning them in the bathroom for prolonged periods, and subjecting them to various forms of abuse, including forced labor related to excretion and toilet cleaning for other disabled individuals, meal preparation, as well as coercion into religious services and donations, constituted violations of human rights.

Based on the findings, the Commission recommended that the Prosecutor General initiate legal proceedings against the director and staff of the disability residential facility. Additionally, the Commission advised ◎◎ City and the facility director to implement measures to protect the basic rights of facility residents and enhance the overall operation of the facility (Case No. 22JinJeong0018700).

The Commission concluded that the practice of restraining victims and keeping them seated on the toilet for prolonged periods multiple times a day, citing budget and personnel shortages as reasons, cannot be justified as an unavoidable circumstance. The Commission also found that such actions are not aligned with the expected responsibilities and duties of the personnel working in social welfare.

Furthermore, even considering the shortage of personnel in the facility and the challenges in caring for individuals with severe intellectual disabilities, the repetitive acts of physically forcing individuals into the bathroom, leaving them seated on the toilet for extended periods, and neglecting them over a period of several years cannot be dismissed lightly. Thus, the Commission determined that such actions violated Article 32 (Prevention of harassment) and Article 49 (Discriminatory acts) of the Anti-Discrimination Against and Remedies for Persons with Disabilities Act, as well as Article 59-9 (Prohibited acts) of the Act on Welfare of Persons with Disabilities, which prohibit harassment, violence, and confinement towards individuals with disabilities, and also establish the duty of facility personnel to respect and protect the rights of individuals with disabilities. As such, the actions were seen as a violation of the constitutional rights of the victims, specifically their right to dignity and freedom of the body guaranteed under Article 10 and 12 of the Constitution.

In response, the facility in question implemented the Commission's recommendations to introduce consent forms for participation in vocational, independent skills programs and in religious services, as well as measures to protect service users. The responsible authority, ◎◎ City, issued administrative measures in the form of a first improvement order and developed plans to address the situation, including comprehensive measures and enhanced supervision for all affected victims, and exploring options to increase staffing. Additionally, the ∇∇ District Prosecutors' Office is conducting an investigation based on the report filed by the Commission.

■ Infringement of the Right to Life by the Navy due to Inadequate Protection of an Assault Victim

On July 26, the Commission recommended the Chief of Naval Operations to strengthen the management of servicemembers' records for early identification of suicide risks, develop suicide prevention manuals, provide training to all servicemembers, and establish incentives for servicemembers who contribute significantly to suicide prevention efforts (Case No. 21JinJeong0812500).

An investigation revealed that the individuals involved in the case first became aware of the victim's military maladjustment on March 16, 2021. Subsequently, on March 24, the victim received initial treatment at the Naval Medical Center, and on April 5, was treated and hospitalized at the Armed Forces Daejeon Hospital. The individuals involved may have become aware of the fact that the victim had sustained injuries requiring a minimum of two weeks of treatment (nine weeks of hospitalization) no later than April 5. However, the individuals only reported the perpetrators to the Military Disciplinary Committee on April 8 and did not take actions for an investigative agency to initiate an investigation into the perpetrators until the victim's death occurred on June 18.

The Commission determined that such actions were not in compliance with Article 10 (2) of the Directive of the Ministry of National Defense on Disciplinary Affairs Handling of Military Personnel and Civilian Military Employee, and as a result, it was difficult to conclude that appropriate measures were taken to protect the victim and address the perpetrators. However, it was found that the captain of the responsible unit was demoted (from Captain to Commander) on November 25, 2021, for violation of the duty of diligence (negligence), and the second-in-command of the unit also received disciplinary action with a three-month suspension for violation of the duty of diligence (negligence) and violation of the duty to maintain dignity. Therefore, instead of recommending separate measures against responsible individuals, the Commission recommended improvements to the system to prevent similar incidents from recurring.

■ Excessive Violations of Human Rights Based on School Regulation

On September 15, the Commission recommended that ○○ Middle School cease the practice of restricting students from wearing earrings and piercings, and revise the school regulations

(Case No. 22JinJeong0525100). The Commission concluded that such restrictions excessively curtail students' freedom of expression and their right to self-determination within the school environment.

The school justified the restriction on earrings and piercings based on concerns of potential earlobe injuries caused by sharp and pointed earring posts and backings, as well as the potential discomfort it may cause to others if piercings were allowed on body parts other than the ear, such as eyebrows or lips.

However, the Commission concluded that a complete prohibition on students wearing earrings and piercings was excessive, even though some level of restriction may be warranted for accessories worn within the school community. The Commission suggested exploring alternatives that can minimize harm to students while still achieving the objective of guiding school life: for instance, for earrings, using silicone or rubber backings instead of metal ones, allowing the use of non-piercing alternatives like ear cuffs and clip-on earrings, and for piercings, seeking student input to identify body parts with minimal risk of injury or imposing restrictions on flashy and extravagant metal accessories that may cause discomfort to others.

■ Denial to Recognize Line-of-Duty Death of a Duty Police Officer

On September 23, the Commission advised the Commissioner General of the National Police Agency to conduct a comprehensive and specialized review of the agency's sustained position to classify the death of the victim as a "natural death" (Case No. 22JinJeong0575500).

The victim enlisted in the Army on August 13, 1998, and was assigned to the ○ Platoon, ○○○ Combat Police Unit of the ○○○ Mobile Unit (○○ Police Station) on October 16 of the same year. On October 29, around 11:00, during a cleaning session at the unit, the victim jumped from the emergency staircase railing between the 4th and 5th floors of the building and died at approximately 13:30. While the National Police Agency classified the victim's death as a "regular death," the Presidential Truth Commission on Deaths in the Military, on July 26, 2021, determined that the victim had experienced physical abuse and mistreatment as a new recruit and that there was negligence in unit management. As a result, a request was made for the victim to be recognized as having died in the line of duty.

The bereaved family appealed to the Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs to recognize

the victim's death as a line-of-duty death, and the ministry made the decision to grant such recognition. To receive death benefits from the ministry, the National Police Agency is required to respond regarding the victim's eligibility for death benefits. However, the petitioner lodged a petition with the Commission, challenging the agency's persistence to classify the victim's death as a "regular death." Despite the Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs' recognition of the victim as a service-related death, the National Police Agency continued to maintain its previous stance.

The Commission concluded that the agency's unchanged stance was repeating past erroneous practices and contradicted the evolving veteran compensation system, which aimed to increase the State's responsibility for sacrifices made during defense duties and to protect the rights and honor of deceased victims. The Commission concluded that the case represented a failure on the part of the State to fulfill its fundamental responsibility to safeguard the lives and safety of servicemembers, and a violation of the honor of the victim, who died while performing defense duties.

■ Police's Inadequate Protection Measures Resulting in Human Rights Violations during Rallies and Protests

In response to the claim that the petitioner, who felt unjustly dismissed by the company, was hindered by the company in staging his protest and that the Police did not take any action, the Commission recommended on November 10 that the police station chief take the necessary steps to provide job training on rallies and demonstrations for employees and local police officers. The Commission recommended implementing measures to ensure the full protection of protests regardless of the chronological order they were filed (Case No. 21JinJeong0795700).

An investigation revealed that the company obstructed the petitioner's protest by attempting to damage the petitioner's tent and claiming the protest area as their own by holding banners inside the tent. It was also found that although the company had filed a protest report before the petitioner, they were not actually holding a protest in the area when the petitioner had completed his protest preparations. Despite the police officers' obligation to protect the petitioner and ensure his exercise of the freedom of expression without interference, as well as their responsibility to provide strict guidance and enforce sanctions against unlawful acts of self-help by protesters affiliated with the company, the Police failed to take proactive measures. They

claimed that the issue was outside their jurisdiction due to the presence of overlapping protests. These actions by the Police can be considered a violation of the petitioner's constitutional right to freedom of assembly, as guaranteed by Article 21 of the Constitution.

Section 5. Investigations and Remedies: Discrimination

1. Petitions Filed and Processed

A. Petitions Filed by Category

Since the establishment of the Commission until the end of 2022, there have been a cumulative total of 38,544 petitions related to discrimination. By category of discrimination, the highest proportion was discrimination in the supply or use of goods or services, accounting for 15,653 petitions (40.6%). Discrimination in employment, such as recruitment, promotion, or wages, accounted for 11,052 petitions (28.7%), discrimination in areas outside those covered under Article 3 of the NHRCK Act accounted for 7,299 petitions (18.9%), sexual harassment for 2,501 petitions (6.5%), and discrimination in the use of educational facilities or vocational training institutions for 2,039 petitions (5.3%), among others.

In 2022, there were 2,036 petitions filed for discrimination, which represents a decrease of 528 (20.6%) compared to the previous year (2,564 petitions). This decrease can be attributed to a lower proportion of petitions of similar content merged into collective petitions, from 30% (768 petitions) in 2021 to 19.6% (400 petitions) in 2022.

By area, the distribution of discrimination-related petitions in 2022 was as follows: discrimination in the supply or use of goods or services accounted for 882 cases (43.3%), discrimination in employment for 726 cases (35.6%), sexual harassment for 171 cases (8.4%), discrimination in other areas for 166 cases (8.2%), and discrimination in the use of educational facilities for 91 cases (4.5%).

B. Petitions Filed by Reason

The Commission processed a total of 2,596 discrimination cases, representing an increase of 199 cases (8.3%) compared to the previous year (2,397 cases).

In 2022, 474 petitions were resolved through remedies, showing a slight decrease of 0.8% compared to 478 cases in 2021. The number of cases resolved through recommendations increased by 30 cases (18.9%) compared to the previous year, reaching a total of 189. However, the number of petitions closed by settlement and those resolved during investigation showed a slight decrease.

[Table 3-2-10] Discrimination Petitions Processed in Recent Five Years

(in number of cases)

Year	Petitions filed	Petitions processed	Remedies					Rejected	Transferred	Dismissed	Investigation suspended	
			Sub-total	Investigation requested / report to Police	Recommendations, etc.	Mediation	Closed by settlement					Resolved during Investigation
Cumulative	38,544	37,768	8,219	22	2,610	58	860	4,669	19,661	167	9,545	176
2022	2,036	2,596	474	-	189	-	19	266	1,061	9	1,036	16
2021	2,564	2,397	478	1	159	-	30	286	1,245	8	666	-
2020	2,426	2,859	981	1	266	1	32	668	1,291	7	578	2
2019	2,730	2,453	514	2	243	1	39	224	1,303	5	630	1
2018	2,208	2,458	948	3	335	8	19	580	1,025	3	481	1

* The cumulative data spans from the Commission's establishment on November 25, 2001, to December 31, 2022.

* Recommendations, etc.: The total number of recommendations, including recommendations for agreement, recommendations for redress, disciplinary recommendations, and recommendations for emergency relief, that require a response from the responsible authority regarding their acceptance or rejection, as mandated by the NHRCK Act

* Resolved during investigation: Cases that were dismissed or rejected through the efforts or mediation of the investigator, where the matter was resolved smoothly or no further remedial measures were required

* Dismissed or rejected: Cases dismissed or rejected with an outcome other than being resolved during the investigation process

Meanwhile, looking at the distribution of the processed discrimination petitions in 2022 (2,596 cases) by reason, the highest proportion was disabilities with 830 cases (32.0%), followed by gender with 597 cases (23.0%), others with 507 cases (19.5%), sexual harassment with 193 cases (7.4%), social status with 166 cases (6.4%), and age with 117 cases (4.5%).

The number of discrimination petitions based on gender increased from 163 cases in the previous year to 597 cases, representing an increase of 434 cases. This can be attributed to the collective petitions related to gender discrimination, such as the case involving a crowdfunding intermediary rejecting project evaluation based on gender, gender discrimination in the assignment of positions in a college, and local government discrimination against men through operation of women-only rental apartments.

2. *Suo Motu* Investigations

■ Discrimination Based on Educational Background or Other Qualifications in College Hiring Process

The petition (Case No. 21JinJeong0445700) alleged that ○○ University and other institutions engaged in discrimination based on academic background and educational credentials during their employee hiring processes. The Commission faced challenges in investigating the case and dismissed it due to the lack of specific information about the victims and insufficient evidence of harm. Nevertheless, the Commission acknowledged the likelihood of inappropriate practices in university staff hiring process, including restrictions based on academic qualifications, excessive awarding of bonus points for degrees, and the implementation of a grading system based on the reputation of applicants' alma mater. It concluded that these practices can constitute employment discrimination based on academic background and educational credentials.

The Commission made the decision on June 14 to initiate *suo motu* investigations (Case No. 22JigGwon0000400) of 10 private universities where concerns had been raised by the Ministry of Education regarding the practice of including academic background and alma mater information in hiring evaluation forms or job application forms, imposing degree requirements or awarding points based on degrees, and implementing a ranking system for alma maters.

The Commission is conducting interviews with university human resources personnel, reviewing hiring documents, and conducting on-site visits. The investigation is designed to examine and rectify employment discrimination based on academic background and educational credentials in the staff recruitment process.

3. Key Petitions

■ Unfavorable Treatment in Employment Based on Expired Previous Conviction

The Commission made a recommendation on February 24 (Case No. 21JinJeong0715500) to rescind the petitioner's ineligibility for appointment and to introduce preventive measures, such as fair evaluation criteria for applicants with unique backgrounds.

The petitioner had applied for a non-permanent research position at the ○○ Research Institute and successfully passed the initial document screening and subsequent interviews. He filed a petition that his employment was unjustly denied based on a previous conviction that had already expired.

The director of the institute affirmed that there were no procedural errors in substantiating the decision. According to him, the background check uncovered "unusual circumstances" about the petitioner, leading to a review meeting in accordance with personnel management guidelines. Upon thorough deliberation and considering the heightened public awareness on drunk driving subsequent to the enactment of the revised road traffic law in 2018, concerns arose regarding the petitioner's capacity to uphold integrity and trustworthiness as a public official due to his previous actions. Consequently, a final determination of "ineligible" was made, and the petitioner was notified accordingly.

Nevertheless, the Commission concluded that the actions taken against the petitioner amounted to discriminatory treatment, as they were based on a prior conviction that had already expired and lacked reasonable justification for treating him unfavorably. The Commission considered several factors, including the fact that the petitioner's criminal offense was a violation of traffic regulations due to drunk driving, which had no direct relevance to the position he applied for; the conviction had already expired; there were no other criminal records indicating a habitual pattern of offenses; the petitioner did not fall under the disqualification criteria

announced at the time of recruitment; and the institute's disciplinary regulations or standards for public officials impose a disciplinary action of salary reduction or temporary suspension of duties for a first offense of drunk driving with a blood alcohol concentration below 0.08%.

■ Discrimination Arising from Limited Access to Fertility Treatments for Unmarried Women

On April 12, the Commission recommended (Case No. 20JinJeong0915500 and 21JinJeong0190000 merged) that the President of the ○○○○○ Association revise the Ethical Guidelines for Assisted Reproductive Technologies, which restrict fertility treatments for unmarried women.

According to the association, the guidelines prohibit fertility treatments using assisted reproductive technologies for unmarried women based on the prohibition of commercial sale of sperm or eggs under the Bioethics and Safety Act. The association argued that unmarried individuals, who do not have the requirement of obtaining consent from a spouse like those in marital relationships, have relatively more freedom in making decisions and are more likely to use reproductive cells for purposes other than reproductive purposes. However, it has been observed through various surveys and statistics that society's perceptions and attitudes towards unmarried and single-parent births are rapidly changing in line with the diversification of lifestyles and paradigms.

Moreover, government agencies responsible for legislation and policy-making are currently deliberating the recognition of childbirth for unmarried individuals and exploring the implementation of suitable policies in this regard. Therefore, the imposition of autonomous restrictions based on the association's own criteria, on a matter not entrusted to them by law, lacks justification.

Considering the increasing diversity of personal circumstances and the significance of upholding women's right to self-determination, the Commission has recommended to the association's President that the Ethical Guidelines for Assisted Reproductive Technologies, which currently impose restrictions on in-vitro fertilization (IVF) and other fertility treatments for unmarried women, should be revised.

■ Discrimination in Golf Club Membership Based on Gender

On June 2, the Commission recommended the CEO of ○○ Tourism Development Corporation and others to take measures to prevent the exclusion of women from full golf club membership (Case No. 21JinJeong0262201, 21JinJeong0262202, etc.).

The petitioner filed a complaint with the Commission, alleging that the practice of granting full and exclusive membership qualifications to men while excluding women constitutes discrimination based on gender.

The golf clubs stated that they were established in the 1980s-1990s, a time when golf was perceived as a sport for men. Based on the social atmosphere at the time, the clubs set the membership qualifications as “males aged 35 and above,” and these conditions have been maintained to the present day. They also argued that women have access to the golf clubs as weekday members, family members, or non-members, and as such the restriction on full membership qualifications does not significantly infringe upon their rights and interests.

While recognizing that golf was historically perceived as a sport primarily for men when the golf clubs were established, the Commission highlighted that the “2017 Korean Golf Index” revealed a more balanced participation rate. Out of the 6.36 million golf participants in 2017, 3.47 million were male (54.6%) and 2.89 million were female (45.4%), indicating a more equitable gender ratio in golf activities. Also, even though women have the option to join as weekday members, family members, or non-members, they are still being subject to disadvantageous treatment compared to full members in terms of weekend access, usage fees, and the ability to utilize affiliated golf clubs.

The Commission concluded that restricting full membership qualifications for women without a rational reason and treating them differently or disadvantageously based on their gender constitutes a discriminatory act that violates the right to equality. Thus, it recommended corrective measures to address this issue.

■ Unfair Discrimination against Special Mission Officers

On June 7, the Commission issued a recommendation to the Minister of National Defense, urging improvements to the relevant procedures to ensure that special mission personnel, who undergo a proper selection process upon enlistment as Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs),

are not automatically categorized as staff sergeants solely based on the duration of their service. The petitioner had applied to be a special agent for North Korean operations and was appointed as an NCO. In his petition, the petitioner raised concerns about unjust discrimination compared to other NCOs who are eligible for disability pension benefits. He emphasized that the organization categorized him as a staff sergeant without taking into account the selection process he underwent, and instead based the classification solely on the duration of his military service, which was the same as the mandatory service period of 30 months.

The Commission found it reasonable to interpret that the term “management staff sergeant” documented in the petitioner’s personnel records does not pertain to regular staff sergeants, but rather to special agents assigned to carry out specific missions. It acknowledged that this change in terminology reflected the evolving nature of the role. Despite the historical existence of military intelligence units responsible for training North Korean spies, it was evident that the practice of denying the existence of these special agents and downplaying their sacrifices persisted. Therefore, the Commission concluded that it was appropriate to hold the government accountable for providing evidence in this regard.

The Commission determined that classifying the petitioner, who served as a special agent in the military intelligence unit, as a staff sergeant solely based on the duration of his military service, which was the same as the mandatory military service period, amounted to discrimination. This practice treated different circumstances as equivalent, disregarding the principle of equality. The Commission also concluded that treating special mission personnel, who underwent rigorous training and endured unique challenges, in the same manner as regular enlisted soldiers constituted a violation of the principle of equality.

■ **Discrimination in Payment of COVID-19 Infection Control Allowances Based on Employment Status**

On June 14, the Commission issued a recommendation (Case No. 22JinJeong0140600) to the Director of the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency, urging the implementation of measures to prevent the exclusion of indirect employees engaged in similar or related work to the employees of the employing organization from eligibility to receive COVID-19 infection control allowances.

The Commission determined that the objective of the COVID-19 infection control allowances was to enhance the morale and improve the treatment of healthcare professionals and personnel involved in the care of COVID-19 patients. The payment criteria were based on factors such as the frequency of patient contact, job difficulty (work intensity), risk exposure, and other work conditions. In light of these factors, the Commission concluded that the arguments put forth by the Director of the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA) lacked reasonable justification.

In addition, the disbursement of funds in 2021 was conducted based on applications submitted by healthcare institutions, which included applications on behalf of indirect employees as well. Therefore, it was unjustifiable for the KDCA to assume that healthcare institutions would not handle the allowance applications for indirect employees. Furthermore, the Director stated that consultations were held with healthcare and medical labor unions regarding the paying agency, eligible occupations, and payment amounts. However, the agreement reached with the unions aimed to ensure fair compensation for the efforts of healthcare professionals and did not specify the exclusion of indirect employees from being considered as part of the healthcare workforce. Therefore, it was considered unreasonable to exclude indirect employees who are engaged in similar or related work from being eligible for COVID-19 infection control allowances.

The agency Director implemented revised guidelines, effective from August 4, to include COVID-19 infection control allowances for indirect employees, following the Commission's recommendation.

■ Bank Refusal to Allow Foreign Nationals to Open Account

In response to a petition concerning the rejection of a foreign national's bank account application based solely on lengthy English name, the Commission recommended (Case No. 21JinJeong 0559200) to the President of ○○ Bank on June 14, urging the implementation of measures to prevent discrimination in the bank account opening process for foreign nationals.

The bank argued that the denial of the bank account opening was not due to the individual's foreign nationality, but rather because the customer name field for opening a personal business account had a character limit (20 characters), which applied to both domestic and foreign individuals.

Following an investigation, the Commission concluded that the case constituted indirect discrimination against foreigners, as the limitations on the number of characters in the name field for bank account opening unfairly disadvantaged certain foreign nationals. The limitations on name characters, as outlined in Supreme Court Family Registry Regulations No. 509, do not typically impose significant restrictions on Korean nationals.

In light of the essential role personal business accounts play in individual economic activities and the bank's capacity to enhance its criteria, the Commission concluded that the limitation on the number of characters in the customer name field constituted a discriminatory practice, unfairly disadvantaging foreign nationals in their access to and utilization of services. In response to the Commission's recommendation, the President of the bank has committed to improving the system to allow foreign nationals, including those with names exceeding 20 characters, to open personal business accounts.

■ Denial of Surgery at a Hospital Based on HIV Infection

On July 14, the Commission recommended (Case No. 21JinJeong0640400) the President of ○○ Hospital to conduct training for medical staff and employees regarding the treatment of patients with HIV infection and to establish measures to prevent similar cases from recurring in the future.

In response to the petition regarding the hospital's refusal to perform surgery on the petitioner's right hand due to HIV infection, the hospital explained that the patient did not disclose his medical history during the emergency room visit and orthopedic consultations. The hospital stated that it provided information to the patient about appropriate treatment options for uncommon chronic conditions like HIV and referred him to a specialized healthcare facility for further medical assistance. The hospital asserted that its actions were not discriminatory.

Based on the investigation conducted, the HIV patient treatment guidelines provided by the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC, currently KDCA) indicate that there is no requirement for separate equipment or facilities when performing surgeries on individuals with bloodborne pathogens, including HBV, HCV, and HIV, as long as standard precautions are followed, which apply to all patients. The guidelines also specify that there is no need for specialized surgical instruments or specific disinfectants for HIV patients undergoing fracture

surgery. In light of these established guidelines, the Commission found it difficult to consider the hospital's refusal to perform the surgery scheduled for the next day and the subsequent referral to another hospital as a reasonable course of action.

The fact that the petitioner contacted another hospital the next morning and underwent the fracture surgery in the afternoon indirectly suggests that the surgery the petitioner sought could be conducted without the requirement for special tools or preparations, even in the case of HIV infection.

Thus, the Commission concluded that the hospital's refusal to perform the surgery without reasonable justification, based on the petitioner's medical history, unfairly disadvantaged the petitioner in terms of accessing medical services, and as such constituted a discriminatory act that infringed upon the right to equality under subparagraph 3 of Article 2 of the NHRCK Act.

■ Differential Application of Retirement Age Based on Ranks in Public Service-Related Institutions

On July 14, the Commission issued a recommendation (Case No. 21JinJeong0755300) to the President of ○○ Corporation, urging the revision of personnel regulations that establish different retirement ages based on job grades. Currently, the retirement age is set at 61 for Grade 2 and above employees, while Grade 3 and below employees are required to retire at the age of 60.

Differentiated retirement age systems based on job grades in organizations, such as public institutions, educational institutions, and corporations, have been consistently deemed discriminatory by the Commission, as they violate the principle of equality. The key reasons for this determination are as follows: based on the established baseline grade for determining retirement age, there is no evident differentiation in the tasks performed by employees in lower grades compared to those in higher grades; movement between these groups is possible based on promotions and other personnel appointments; being in a specific job grade or above does not necessarily imply a greater level of experience, knowledge, or value that justifies prolonged employment; certain job positions that require a higher level of skill or expertise can be a reason for differentiated entry requirements and compensation for the specific positions, but they do not automatically warrant a longer guaranteed retirement age.

The corporation cited the allocation guidelines of the Ministry of Planning and Finance as a justification for not raising the retirement age to 61 for Grade 3 and below employees. The

rationale behind the higher retirement age for employees in higher-ranking positions was to optimize the utilization of the organization's human resources, a principle that has been in place since its establishment. However, the Commission found it difficult to view employees in higher and lower job grades in the corporation as fundamentally different groups, as stated in its previous decisions. There has been no concrete evidence demonstrating that employees promoted to higher job grades possess superior job skills or how their utilization contributes to the organizational efficiency. Additionally, though regulating total personnel expenses as a matter of principle, the Ministry of Planning and Finance recognizes the autonomy of organizations to implement retirement age adjustments through mutual agreement between labor and management. Hence, the Commission determined that the corporation cannot be exempted from its responsibility or obligation to eliminate discrimination solely based on concerns about excessive personnel expenses resulting from the unification of retirement age.

The Commission concluded that the corporation's practice of implementing different retirement ages based on job grades without reasonable justification constituted a discriminatory act that violated the right to equality stipulated in subparagraph 3 of Article 2 of the NHRCK Act.

■ Religious Discrimination Resulting from Saturday Interviews in Graduate School

On August 9, the Commission recommended (Case No. 22JinJeong0407900 and 22JinJeong0408400 merged) that the president of ○○ University Graduate School make religious accommodations when scheduling interview dates.

The petitioner, who follows the △△ religion, applied for the doctoral program at ○○ University Graduate School. The interview examination was scheduled for a Saturday, which made it impossible for him to participate. He reportedly requested an alternative arrangement for the interview, but the school denied his request.

The Commission found it hard to believe that the school couldn't make any effort to accommodate the victim's needs, such as getting consent from other applicants or offering different interview dates, without going beyond the school's reasonable discretion or obligation. However, individuals may find themselves in a situation where they have to completely give up taking the exam or face psychological conflict related to their religious beliefs because the

interview is scheduled for a Saturday morning. Considering that this situation could result in individuals having to forfeit their desired educational program entirely, the Commission recognized that the extent of the harm the victim had to endure was by no means insignificant compared to the purpose pursued by the school.

Moreover, religious activities encompass not only spiritual aspects but also various practices and activities that individuals engage in to manifest their beliefs. Failure to provide convenience and facilities that align with these beliefs may lead to discrimination against individuals of that religion. The Commission determined that it is necessary for the school to incorporate accommodations in the interview plan to minimize restriction of fundamental rights.

The president of the school expressed their response to the Commission's recommendations and pledged to take necessary actions for future doctoral entrance examinations. They assured that the school will make every effort to accommodate applicants' religious considerations by providing necessary accommodations, including changes in interview dates, if requested.

■ Reporting of Sexual Harassment Incident Leading to Secondary Harm

On September 13, the Commission determined that the actions of the respondent amounted to secondary harm as an outcome of a reported sexual harassment incident. The Commission recommended that the individual participate in a specialized human rights education program organized by the Commission and advised the school principal to implement preventive measures to address the potential recurrence of secondary harm resulting from sexual harassment (Case No. 21JinJeong0510900). The victim and the respondent were both teachers at the same high school. In reaction to the disciplinary action that resulted from the victim's report of sexual harassment, the respondent created posts that allowed for the identification of the victim and collected reports and evidence of the victim's human rights violations and misconduct from students.

The respondent argued that the Disciplinary Committee did not acknowledge the occurrence of sexual harassment and claimed that the disciplinary action was unrelated to sexual harassment. Therefore, he contended that the concept of secondary harm resulting from sexual harassment does not apply in this case. However, according to relevant laws such as the Framework Act on Prevention of Violence Against Women, secondary harm encompasses

the harm experienced throughout the entire process of handling and recovering from a case of violence against women. It extends protection not only to the victims of sexual harassment but also to the individuals who report the incidents and offer assistance. Taking these legal provisions into account, the Commission concluded that if the victim suffered additional harm as a consequence of the sexual harassment report, it is justifiable to consider it as secondary harm resulting from sexual harassment.

■ Transgender Woman Refused Admission to Women's Wards at Hospital

On September 13, the Commission made a recommendation to the Minister of Health and Welfare to establish guidelines regarding hospitalization of transgender individuals (Case No. 21JinJeong0749500).

The petitioner, a transgender woman who transitioned from male to female without undergoing gender reassignment surgery or legal gender change, sought medical counseling and had plans to be admitted to ○○ University Hospital in November 2021. However, a dispute arose with the hospital regarding the assigned ward, as the hospital insisted on admitting her to a male ward based on her registered gender. The petitioner filed a complaint with the Commission, alleging discrimination based on gender identity.

The hospital explained that it does not have specific internal criteria for the hospitalization of transgender patients and instead follows medical regulations that require the separation of males and females in hospital wards based on legal gender. They also mentioned that in 2021, two other transgender patients were admitted to the hospital, and they chose to use single rooms at their own expense.

The Ministry of Health and Welfare clarified that there are no specific guidelines or regulations regarding the hospitalization of transgender individuals, but hospitals are required to maintain separate wards for males and females as stipulated in subparagraph 2 of Article 35-2 of the Enforcement Rules of the Medical Service Act. The Commission recognized the need for medical institutions to assign hospital rooms based on certain criteria, including gender. However, it also acknowledged the practical limitations of solely relying on legal gender as the criterion for differentiation, considering that there are individuals who do not fit into either the male or female category.

The Commission considers that categorizing transgender individuals solely based on their legal gender and within the binary framework of male or female, without acknowledging their gender identity, goes against the fundamental principle of equal treatment that calls for treating different cases differently. To safeguard the right to healthcare access for transgender individuals and prevent their medical exclusion, the Commission recommended the development of guidelines or protocols specifically addressing their hospitalization.

■ Inadequate Provision of Reasonable Accommodations for Visually Impaired Individuals on Online Shopping Websites

On December 21, the Commission recommended (Case No. 21JinJeong0595002) that online shopping websites and mobile apps comply with the Korean Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 for web content accessibility and Mobile App Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 to ensure accessibility for visually impaired individuals and others. The Commission also recommended that online shopping website operators implement measures, such as technological advancements and contractual provisions, to ensure that visually impaired individuals can access and utilize the detailed product information page provided by the sellers on an equal basis with non-visually impaired users.

A legal entity under the Commercial Act, the petitioned company is engaged in various businesses such as e-commerce, advertising services, and design development. The company operates an online shopping website where sellers can register and sell products. The Commission determined that it is also the responsibility of the platform operator to provide alternative text for the product information displayed on its online shopping mall, even if the information is originally generated by the seller.

The Commission concluded that implementing measures to provide alternative text would not pose significant difficulties or excessive burdens for the company. This determination is based on the potential establishment of a system that mandates sellers to input alternative text when attaching image files, the development and provision of manuals on entering alternative text, the opportunity to conduct training for sellers, and the existence of similar practices in other online shopping malls.

Section 6. Administrative Review Committee

The Administrative Review Committee of the Commission has reviewed and issued judgments on petition outcomes since 2002. Following a decision by the Constitutional Court recognizing the binding nature of the Commission’s rejection decisions (Case No. 2013 214, March 26, 2015), the number of administrative adjudication claims has steadily increased. There was a significant surge in claims in 2019 when it became mandatory to notify parties of the appeals process, resulting in delays in administrative adjudication. In 2022, there were 231 administrative adjudication claims, similar to the previous year, with 208 cases resolved. Therefore, measures must be taken to improve the operation of and accelerate processing by the Administrative Review Committee, including allocating additional personnel and implementing efficient processing procedures.

[Table 3-2-11] Administrative Review Claims Filed and Processed

(in number of cases)

Year	Filed (Requested)					Processed (Closed)				
	Petition	Information disclosure	Others	Re-investigation*	Sub-total	Citation	Dismissed	Rejected	Transfer withdrawn, etc.	Sub-total
Cumulative	815	65	52	5	937	80	474	79	74	707
2022	217	10	4	-	231	15	171	7	15	208
2021	213	25	20	4	262	21	156	32	20	229
2020	171	13	6	-	190	23	80	10	11	124
2019	164	15	15	1	195	13	43	26	23	105
2018	50	2	7	-	59	8	24	4	5	41

* Re-investigation of cases where petitions were ruled for revocation through administrative adjudication

Section 1. Overview

In accordance with subparagraph 5 of Article 19 and Article 26 of the NHRCK Act, the Commission is actively involved in human rights education and promotion activities. These activities aim to raise awareness and improve the understanding of human rights among all individuals. Human rights are universal values that should be widely disseminated in society and not confined to specific times and places. Therefore, human rights education and promotion play a crucial role in spreading the values of human rights throughout society. In 2022, the Commission was entrusted with various tasks and challenges to enhance and strengthen human rights education. These included establishing systems and creating an environment for expanding human rights education, enhancing professionalism and capacity in human rights education, fostering cooperation and collaboration to systematize and professionalize human rights education, promoting the dissemination of human rights culture through the development and distribution of human rights content, strengthening cooperation with human rights and civil society organizations, and enhancing the local human rights protection system.

The Commission undertook several initiatives to advance human rights education and support the work of human rights and civil society organizations. These efforts include establishing the Human Rights Education Institute, enhancing institutional and policy frameworks for human rights education, facilitating the training and capacity building of qualified human rights instructors, creating and disseminating relevant and user-friendly human rights education materials, developing accessible formats for educational content, fostering collaboration with diverse human rights advocacy groups, shaping conditions for robust local human rights protection systems, and providing effective assistance to human rights and civil society organizations in their endeavors to promote human rights. Additionally, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission has actively promoted the diversification of educational curricula and the adoption of remote learning approaches to ensure the consistent delivery of high-quality human rights education.

Section 2. Key Achievements

1. Promoting Institutionalization and Development of Human Rights Education Infrastructure

A. Institutionalization of Human Rights Education

The Commission expressed opposition to the proposed legislation that seeks to impose fines on individuals who fail to complete the mandatory human rights training as mandated by the Welfare of Senior Citizens Act and Long-Term Care Insurance Act. The Commission reasoned that, considering the current high completion rate of over 90%, imposing fines would result in a significant increase in administrative and judicial resources and costs, without guaranteeing the effectiveness of education. Instead, it suggested focusing on assessing cyber education and enhancing the educational environment to improve the effectiveness of human rights education for the target audience.

The Commission decided to recommend the institutionalization of human rights education to the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Secretary-General of the National Assembly, and the leaders of each political party, aiming to strengthen the human rights capacity within the National Assembly. As the legislative body representing the people, the National Assembly has exclusive authority to enact and amend laws to protect and enhance the fundamental rights of the citizens. Recognizing the need for proactive legislative activities in response to evolving forms of human rights violations and discrimination, the Commission deemed it necessary to cultivate human rights sensitivity among the members of the legislative institution.

The Commission is dedicated to enhancing human rights education for public officials in metropolitan and provincial governments, elementary and secondary school teachers, and children by working towards the improvement of laws, regulations, policies, and practices in this area.

B. Training and Appointment of Human Rights Instructors

The Commission recognizes the importance of human rights education in our society and

has placed a strong emphasis on the role of human rights instructors. Since its establishment, the Commission has been running a training program for human rights instructors as part of its efforts to establish a strong foundation for popularizing human rights education. In 2015, the Commission introduced a system for appointing human rights instructors, which has been in operation ever since. It provides and operates various programs to enhance the capacity of appointed instructors. Initially, human rights instructors are appointed for a one-year period, after which they may be reappointed for another two years following an evaluation process. These efforts are aimed at improving the capacity and quality of human rights instructors.

Participants for the human rights instructor training program are selected annually in early March through the NHRCK Cyber Human Rights Education Center¹⁰⁾. The selection process considers the demand for human rights instructors in various fields. In 2022, special attention was given to strengthening human rights education for facility managers and practitioners in the social welfare sector. Training of human rights instructors in the social welfare and public sectors was prioritized in order to meet the demand for human rights education in the public sector, which may be more challenging to address within the private sector.

To enhance the effectiveness of human rights instructors, one-on-one consulting sessions were introduced to provide personalized guidance and support. Furthermore, a comprehensive survey was conducted among organizations that requested the assistance of human rights instructors, collecting feedback from 350 institutions. The main purpose of this survey was to gather valuable data to improve the utilization process of human rights instructors and identify areas for further enhancement.

C. Establishment of Human Rights Education Institute

The Human Rights Education Institute will have a vital role in providing training for human rights education professionals and ensuring equal access to human rights education. To address the funding gap, the total budget was increased through comprehensive budget revisions. The initial budget of 9.59 billion won was raised to 12.9 billion won, representing an increase of 3.36 billion won or 35.1%.

10) NHRCK Cyber Human Rights Education Center (<http://edu.humanrights.go.kr>)

Under the Seoul Metropolitan Area Readjustment Planning Act, there are stringent regulations imposed on facilities that have the potential to contribute to population concentration in the metropolitan area. Initially, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport expressed opposition to the establishment of the Human Rights Education Institute, classifying it as a facility that could potentially lead to population concentration. However, the Commission emphasized the importance of establishing and operating the Human Rights Education Institute, highlighting the rights to receive human rights education, the need for professional training, the spread of education beyond Seoul, economic stimulation, improved transportation and living conditions, as well as local support. As a result, the center obtained conditional approval from the working-level Metropolitan Development Committee. Moving forward, the Commission is committed to ensuring the smooth progress of the establishment of the Human Rights Education Institute by employing effective construction project management strategies and conducting successful contract negotiations.

2. Development of Collaborative System for Human Rights Education

The Metropolitan Municipality Human Rights Education Council shared best practices and key action plans for human rights education in metropolitan local governments. It also discussed ways to strengthen the local human rights protection system and collaborated with local governments on human rights education. The Council shared the results of a survey on human rights education for metropolitan municipal officials and engaged in discussions on issues and improvements. Following discussions to continue online communication, the Council opened a group chat room to facilitate regular communication between the metropolitan local governments and the Commission. Subsequently, the Council maintained its collaborative relationship with metropolitan local governments by supporting human rights education, including capacity-building programs and human rights leadership courses.

To promote human rights and activate human rights education in schools, the Commission, together with the Ministry of Education and provincial education offices, organizes a School Human Rights Education Council every year. During the 16th council meeting, the findings of a survey on human rights education among elementary and middle school teachers were presented, and participants engaged in discussions regarding the challenges and areas for

improvement in human rights education for teachers. The Council shared best practices in human rights education from each provincial education office and discussed collaboration strategies. Collaboration was fostered through such initiatives as the School Principal and Vice Principal Human Rights Leadership Program and the School Capacity-Building Program targeting education officials responsible for human rights education at the provincial education offices.

In October 2019, the Commission collaborated with 62 university human rights centers to establish the University Human Rights Center Council. The council aimed to support the centers in strengthening their capacities and promoting a university culture that values human rights. The fourth council meeting took place on December 20, with the participation of 105 representatives from the Commission, Ministry of Education, and university human rights centers. During the meeting, the Ministry of Education presented the findings of the pilot project on exemplary models of university human rights centers and sought feedback and input from the participating universities. Additionally, the Commission formed and actively operated regional university human rights center councils, involving primarily the Human Rights Education Division and the Regional Human Rights Offices in Busan, Gwangju, Daegu, and Daejeon. These efforts contributed to regional networking.

Meanwhile, the Commission provides mandatory human rights education for staff working in elderly welfare facilities and long-term care institutions. It also supports the capacity-building of human rights instructors and promotes collaboration among relevant organizations. In 2022, the Commission provided capacity-building programs (two sessions) for elderly human rights instructors trained by the Commission, the Human Resources Development Institute for Health and Welfare, and the Korea Elder Protection Agency. Subsequently, in order to evaluate human rights education in 2022 and set the direction for education in 2023, the Commission held discussions with representatives from the Ministry of Health and Welfare, the Health and Welfare Human Resources Development Institute, and the Korea Elder Protection Agency.

In 2022, the Commission established the Korean Human Rights Education Forum, which brought together 32 individuals from academia, experts, administrators, teachers, activists, and journalists who possess a deep understanding of school curricula and school-based human rights education. The forum conducted three sessions focusing on the topic of “Systematizing and Activating School-based Human Rights Education through the Curriculum.” Based on

the outcomes of discussions, the Commission published the “2022 Korean Human Rights Education Forum Issue Paper” in three parts (I, II, III).

On September 21, the Commission organized the Human Rights Education Expert Committee meeting to discuss various topics, including the “Status of Human Rights Education by the NHRCK in 2022,” “Improvement of the Human Rights Instructor Training System,” and “Review of Policies to Strengthen Human Rights Education in the National Assembly.” The Commission gathered diverse opinions to enhance tasks and include policy recommendations. The Human Rights Education Expert Committee is actively promoting continuous and specialized collaboration in various aspects, including task identification, work plan development, addressing key issues, and performance evaluation processes.

3. Promoting Human Rights Education through Enhanced Awareness and Expertise

A. Current Status of Human Rights Education Implementation

To meet the increasing demand for human rights education, the Commission has taken several initiatives, including strengthening the Cyber Human Rights Education Center and developing a remote education system, providing dedicated spaces for human rights education centers within human rights offices and ensuring their smooth operation, and improving the instructor training system to appoint qualified human rights instructors.

In 2022, efforts were made to improve the delivery methods of human rights education by combining in-person and online education. The goal was to diversify the pathways for both online and offline education. As a result, various forms of human rights education, including specialized courses, visiting programs, cyber human rights education, and special lectures, were conducted a total of 5,804 times, reaching 582,733 individuals. Particularly noteworthy is the increase in the number of institutions participating in content sharing, with 58 more institutions compared to the previous year. This contributed to a significant growth in the number of individuals completing cyber human rights education, reaching 433,244, which represents a 52.5% increase compared to the previous year’s figure of 227,506.

[Table 3-3-1] Human Rights Education Conducted in Recent Five Years

(in number of cases)

Classification	Total		Educational courses		Visitation program		Cyber training		Special lecture		(Nara Learning Center) Shared platform training	
	Sessions	Participants	Sessions	Participants	Sessions	Participants	Sessions	Participants	Sessions	Participants	Sessions	Participants
Cumulative	47,919	3,679,150	4,432	194,730	4,141	86,224	10,643	1,630,714	19,953	1,242,200	8,750	525,282
2022	5,804	582,733	214	5,947	423	6,488	2,419	433,244	1,076	46,837	1,672	90,217
2021	4,607	351,463	257	6,279	322	4,332	1,677	205,738	1,012	33,669	1,339	101,445
2020	3,443	362,459	150	5,011	163	2,700	1,131	220,392	733	29,846	1,266	104,510
2019	6,282	445,807	330	12,527	556	10,694	1,363	261,505	2,699	107,372	1,334	53,709
2018	5,189	344,562	427	19,957	484	8,542	1,133	166,183	2,116	106,189	1,029	43,691

* The cumulative data includes the period from the establishment of the Commission on November 25, 2001, until December 31, 2022.

B. Specialized Human Rights Education Programs

1) Public Sector Human Rights Education

Since 2010, the Commission has been implementing human rights education programs designed for public officials. The objective is to integrate human rights principles and practices into policy formulation and implementation processes. From 2016 onwards, these programs have been jointly organized with local governments and relevant agencies. The collaborative approach ensures efficient delivery of education and strengthens the human rights education capacity of local governments.

In response to the establishment of human rights ordinances in all metropolitan local governments and the implementation of various human rights policies, enhancing the human rights-based job performance capacity of local government officials has become an essential task. Thus, the Commission conducted capacity-building programs for human rights education officials in local governments. These programs were focused on understanding human rights

administration and the content of human rights education that should be addressed at the local government level, aiming to enhance practical skills applicable in the field. Acknowledging the crucial role of local council members in promoting legislation that upholds and safeguards human rights, the Commission partnered with the Human Rights Offices to develop and execute human rights leadership programs tailored for local council members. The programs were divided into three regions: Seoul, Incheon, Gyeonggi; Daejeon, Sejong, Chungbuk, Chungnam; and Gangwon. A high participation rate was observed among first-term local council members. The programs focused on enhancing their practical skills and capabilities for conducting legislative activities that promote human rights. This was achieved through discussions on their roles, addressing human rights issues within local governments, and reviewing ordinances and amendments related to human rights.

There is growing recognition of the significance of public officials' human rights capacity in policy formulation and implementation at both the national and local government levels. This recognition is driven by the obligation to conduct child impact assessments and develop and implement child policies with a focus on children's perspectives. To address this, the Commission has been offering education programs on child rights protection for local government members and relevant officials since 2020. In 2022, a two-day education session was conducted as part of this initiative. The primary objective of the program was to deepen understanding of child rights and facilitate the practical application of a child rights perspective in ordinances pertaining to the roles of local councils. The aim was to equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively incorporate child rights considerations into their work.

2) Human Rights Education in Schools

To foster a human rights-friendly school culture, it is crucial to implement meaningful human rights education that empowers school members to clearly understand their rights and develop a consciousness of respect for human rights. Teachers, as agents capable of implementing human rights education through their classroom instruction and guidance, play a significant role in realizing substantive human rights education in schools. Accordingly, the Commission arranges a variety of programs within schools to strengthen the awareness and competence of teachers, vice-principals, and principals in the field of human rights education.

The 2022 School Administrator Human Rights Leadership Training Program was jointly organized by the Human Rights Education Division and the Human Rights Offices in Busan, Gwangju, Daegu, Daejeon, Gangwon, and Jeju. The program expanded its sessions from the previous year, with 11 sessions in 2022 compared to 7 sessions in 2021. It aimed to enhance participants' ability to address various human rights issues in educational settings and foster their capacity for human rights practice. Key topics covered in the program included understanding human rights, school-related cases of human rights violations, understanding student rights and teacher authority, strategies for practicing human rights leadership, and developing action plans to promote a school environment that upholds human rights values.

To explore the implementation of human rights education through play, the Research Group for National Elementary School Teachers' Practice of Human Rights Education was established. The group consisted of 29 elementary school teachers from 17 provincial education offices across the country. The group conducted various activities, including a pre-training session on the significance of school-based human rights education and human rights education through play (February 22). They also organized a first workshop to directly experience play, grasp the values of human rights embedded in it, and explore ways to incorporate these approaches into student-centered classes (May 13-14). A second workshop was held to share teaching experiences and discuss strategies for integrating human rights values into the classroom (June 11). Lastly, a case presentation seminar took place (July 22-23), where each group presented their practices of human rights education and shared the values of human rights discovered through play.

With the revision of the Higher Education Act, the installation of human rights centers within universities has become a mandatory requirement. These centers are expected to play a crucial role in promoting human rights among university members. Since 2019, the Commission has been actively supporting the enhancement of professionalism and the establishment of networks among university human rights centers.

During the 2022 Workshop for Enhancing the Capacity of University Human Rights Centers, which took place on February 10 and was attended by 154 participants, a representative from the Ministry of Education explained the key contents of the partial revision of the Enforcement Decree of the Higher Education Act regarding the mandatory installation of human rights centers, and answered questions. Furthermore, the Commission shared plans for implementing

pilot projects with leading universities that have human rights centers and sought input from universities.

The 2022 Human Rights Capacity Building Program for University Human Rights Centers was jointly organized by the Human Rights Education Division, and the Human Rights Offices in Busan, Gwangju, Daegu, and Daejeon. The program was held in Seoul (July 18-20), Busan (June 29-July 1), Gwangju (July 27-29), Daegu (June 22-23), and Daejeon (July 6-8). The number of participants who completed the program significantly increased compared to the previous year (81 participants in 2021, 130 participants in 2022). The program aimed to enhance participants' understanding of human rights work and improve the practical skills required for operating university human rights centers. It focused on various topics, including the legal knowledge that human rights investigators should possess, a comprehensive review of regulations governing the operation of university human rights centers, the roles and challenges faced by these centers, understanding the process of handling human rights violations, and engaging in practical exercises.

The Ministry of Education, in partnership with the Chungnam National University Human Rights Center, hosted the National Workshop for University Human Rights Center Directors (November 29-30). The workshop aimed to enhance the human rights awareness of directors of university human rights centers and support their expertise in human rights work. The program focused on the roles and responsibilities of university human rights centers as human rights institutions, conducted Q&A sessions on the establishment and operation of university human rights centers, and discussed criteria for determining human rights violations in cases of workplace harassment.

3) Human Rights Education in the Civil Society Sector

To expand the accessibility of human rights education in the civil society sector, various training courses were conducted in collaboration with human rights offices, operating regional education programs. A total of 100 sessions were held, with 3,275 participants completing the courses.

To protect the rights of both users and practitioners in social welfare facilities, training courses on human rights were conducted 20 times, targeting facility administrators, human rights

officers, and trainers in the field of social welfare. A total of 568 individuals completed the training.

In addition, specialized training courses were conducted for specific professional groups to enhance their capacity to perform their duties with human rights awareness. These courses targeted public officials responsible for human rights management in public enterprises, counseling experts in the field of migrants rights, elderly human rights educators, and journalists. A total of 28 sessions were held, with 663 participants completing the courses. Furthermore, the Commission has been at the forefront of improving awareness regarding the protection of the rights of the elderly in the field of health and medical care. Starting with the recommendation for the introduction of a human rights education system for the protection of elderly rights in nursing homes in 2020, the Commission developed the “Human Rights Textbook for Elderly Patients” in 2021 and promoted human rights education for professionals in the medical field. The field of healthcare is an area where human rights education has not been well-established, and there was a particular need to prioritize the rights of vulnerable elderly individuals in terms of their health rights. In 2022, the Commission continued to conduct education targeting healthcare and medical law professionals, and 23 individuals completed the five-day training. Continuous attention is needed to institutionalize human rights education in the healthcare field.

Furthermore, in accordance with Article 20 of the Homeless Welfare Act, the Commission has been conducting human rights education for personnel working in homeless facilities since 2013. In 2022, a total of 52 mandatory education sessions were conducted nationwide, with 2,046 individuals completing the training.

4) Special Lectures and Commission Visit Programs

The Commission organizes special lectures to cater to the demand for human rights education from diverse institutions in our society, with the objective of enhancing awareness and expand the reach of human rights education. In 2022, a total of 1,076 lectures were conducted, attracting 46,837 participants. This marked an increase of 64 lectures and 13,168 participants compared to the previous year, as the gradual return to normalcy from COVID-19 social distancing measures took place.

The Commission also operates visitation programs to local human rights experience centers. These programs primarily target public institutions, schools, social welfare facilities, human rights organizations, and civil society groups. In 2022, there were no visitation program to human rights libraries due to the impact of COVID-19. However, a total of 423 sessions of the experience center visitation program were carried out. These visitation programs play a significant role in increasing the familiarity and effectiveness of human rights education through hands-on programs, while also enhancing the overall human rights sensitivity within our society.

C. Training and Capacity Building for Human Rights Instructors

To ensure the integration of human rights education as a regular practice and uphold the right of everyone to receive such education, the Commission provides training, appointments, capacity-building programs for human rights educators, and discloses relevant information about educators. In 2022, there was a specific focus on strengthening human rights education for facility administrators and staff in the social welfare sector. Furthermore, new training programs were conducted for human rights educators in the public sector, where private initiatives face challenges. The training program for human rights educators consisted of a 12-day course conducted twice, resulting in the selection of 80 participants out of 343 applicants. Following evaluations, including teaching demonstrations, 32 individuals were appointed as human rights educators from the pool of 66 graduates of the advanced course.

In 2021, all educational programs were conducted exclusively through real-time remote learning due to the spread of COVID-19. However, as the COVID-19 situation improved in 2022, a combination of real-time remote learning and in-person education was implemented. This approach increased the integration of learning at different stages. The basic courses (Level 1 and 2), specialized courses, and advanced courses were organized in a continuous cycle, with a focus on enhancing the coherence of content and incorporating learning, assessment, and retraining.

Appointed human rights educators are required to attend an annual capacity-building program that spans 50 hours, aimed at enhancing their abilities to deliver effective education. In 2022, this mandatory program, consisting of topics such as basic knowledge, teaching methodologies, lecture demonstrations, and specialized courses tailored to the local context, was conducted 33 times. A total of 1,222 participants successfully completed the program.

In addition, personalized one-on-one consulting was conducted to develop effective strategies for improving the capabilities of human rights educators. Furthermore, a comprehensive survey was conducted among 350 institutions that sought the assistance of human rights educators, with the goal of gathering basic data to improve the effectiveness of how educators are utilized.

D. Establishing an On-Demand Learning System Through Cyber Human Rights Education

In order to improve the accessibility of human rights education, enhance human rights awareness through self-directed online learning, and strengthen knowledge and professional skills in the field of human rights, the Commission established the Cyber Human Rights Education Center in 2005 and has actively conducted online human rights education courses since 2006.

In addition to the Cyber Human Rights Education Center, the Commission operates training programs for government officials on the “Nara Learning Center for Public Officials” platform (<http://humanrights.nhi.go.kr>), managed by the National Human Resources Development Institute. Furthermore, to improve accessibility for educators, the Commission conducts cyber job through the Education Love Training Institute(<http://edulove.co.kr>).

In 2022, a total of 2,419 sessions of 30 courses, including “Understanding Human Rights,” were conducted. The number of participants who completed the courses reached 433,244 (excluding shared platform utilization), showing a 52.5% increase of 227,506 compared to the previous year. This growth can be attributed to 58 additional institutions collaborating in content sharing, resulting in an additional 219,157 participants. The development of human rights education content is crucial for establishing infrastructure in various fields of human rights education. The effectiveness of human rights education varies based on content composition and teaching methods. Since 2002, the Commission has continuously developed and disseminated education content to expand public awareness and promote education. In 2022, the Commission developed 13 specialized cyber education content targeting various groups, including children, adolescents, working professionals, and the elderly. These initiatives aimed to provide better access to educational opportunities for marginalized individuals. Additionally, sign language videos were produced for seven subjects to improve access for people with disabilities, and

English subtitles were added to six subjects to meet the demand for multilingual content due to the mandatory installation of university human rights centers in 2022.

In particular, efforts were made to foster greater interest in cyber human rights education by diversifying and expanding the institutions engaged in content sharing, which included an additional 92 public agencies, 47 university human rights centers, and six private companies. The objective of content sharing is to meet the growing demand for continuous online education and facilitate flexible implementation of human rights education by leveraging available cyber education infrastructure. Since 2017, there has been greater content sharing. In 2022, content was provided to 145 institutions, leading to a total of 331,495 participants successfully completing the courses.

E. Special Lectures and Education On Military Human Rights Conducted By Military Human Rights Protector

The Military Human Rights Protector gave special lectures on military human rights to various audiences, including the Military Prosecution of the Ministry of National Defense, Naval Cadets, Air Force Cadets, the Three Military Academies, the Army Noncommissioned Officer Academy, and Brigadier Generals (promotable) in the Ministry of National Defense. This initiative was implemented in July 2022, following the establishment of the Military Human Rights Protector system.

In 2022, monitoring was conducted to enhance military human rights education, focusing on instructors and educational programs. The goal was to assess the status of military human rights education and identify future directions. Capacity-building courses were provided to appointed instructors in the military field with the aim of enhancing their understanding of the distinctive characteristics of the military and strengthening their planning and execution capacity. Advanced programs targeting officers at the O-4 rank and above were introduced to enhance their sensitivity to human rights issues, while advanced training was conducted for military human rights instructors to reinforce awareness among active-duty military personnel. Additionally, the Commission organized the Military Human Rights Education Consultative Committee twice, in June and December 2022. The Committee included representatives from the Ministry of National Defense, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Defense Media Agency, and experts

in civilian human rights education. Its purpose was to share current issues in human rights education and facilitate discussions on collaboration and development strategies.

4. Development and Distribution of Human Rights Education and Promotional Content

A. Human Rights Education Content

Human rights education content used to convey the fundamental concepts and values of human rights can have a greater educational impact when it is relevant, comprehensive, and practical. Recognizing the importance of human rights education content from the outset, the Commission has made consistent efforts in its development and dissemination.

By 2021, the Commission had produced a wide collection of 260 human rights education materials, encompassing 122 textbooks, 94 online resources, and 44 lesson plans. These materials have been carefully developed to cater to the diverse demands and needs of human rights education, taking into account the ever-changing educational landscape and the specific requirements of educators and learners. For ease of accessibility, the education content is widely distributed and disseminated to relevant organizations, institutions, human rights instructors, as well as public libraries and online platforms.

In 2022, the Commission developed and disseminated three types of educational materials for human rights education in schools, focusing on the climate crisis and human rights. These materials included four instructional videos and supplementary materials for classroom use, expert lecture videos for teachers, videos on the practical implementation of human rights education in schools, and a guidebook on utilizing human rights through play-based learning.

Furthermore, the Commission published several publications, including “Caregiving and Human Rights,” which explores caregiving through the lens of human rights theory; “Human Rights Textbook: Dignity, Freedom, Equality, and Solidarity,” which provides user-friendly introduction to human rights for young audiences; and “Practice Guide to Human Rights Practice for Child Welfare Facility Staff,” which presents tailored theories and case studies in the context of child welfare facilities. Additionally, the Commission conducted research on the

development of a textbook on old age and the right to self-determination, aimed at ensuring the autonomy of elderly individuals who are physically and mentally vulnerable. This publication is scheduled to be released in 2023.

B. Human Rights Promotional Content

1) Web Dramas and Human Rights Films

The Commission is engaged in producing human rights web dramas and films to make current human rights issues, such as discrimination and human rights violations in everyday life, more relatable to the public. Until 2017, it produced five feature films, including *Criminal Juveniles*, *Fourth Place*, *Maeggi* as well as 45 short films (nine omnibus films), including *If you were me: Anima Vision*. From 2018 to 2021, it produced web dramas such as *Calm Down*, *The Secret of Secret*, *Chatagongin*, *Teaming*, which were distributed through YouTube. In 2022, the Commission is currently producing a feature film titled *Finding Strength in Time*, which tackles human rights issues among young people engaged in popular culture. The film is set to be released in 2023.

2) Human Rights Artwork Contest

The Commission has been organizing annual contests with the aim of promoting the understanding that human rights are universal values that should be embraced in all aspects of life.

In 2022, the human rights artwork contest expanded its theme to cover a range of human rights topics, including human rights violations, discrimination, hate speech, and the promotion of a culture of respect for human rights in every aspect of life. The contest was divided into two categories, posters and videos, taking into account participation, popularity, and practicality. Separate competitions were held for the youth and elementary divisions. The integration of human rights education into social studies classes in schools led to a significant increase in participation in the elementary division. A total of 1,602 posters were submitted in the elementary division, along with 34 in the youth division and 88 in the general division. In the video category, a total of 1,780 entries were received, representing a 34% increase compared to

the previous year. This included 33 submissions from the youth division (including elementary school students) and 23 submissions from the general division. Among these submissions, 30 works that addressed various human rights issues such as the importance of human rights education, school violence, online hate speech, and military human rights were selected as award-winning works. The award-winning posters were produced as calendars and postcards for distribution to human rights offices and citizens in 2023. The award-winning videos were utilized as educational and promotional materials through the Commission's YouTube channel and other new media outlets.

5. Disseminating Information Through Human Rights Libraries

The Human Rights Library, established in 2002 as the Human Rights Resource Center under Article 27 of the NHRCK Act, was the sole library in the country dedicated to human rights. In 2012, it was renamed as the Human Rights Library.

The Human Rights Library conducts research, collects, organizes, analyzes, and preserves information and materials related to human rights. It offers services such as access to and borrowing of materials, information services, and human rights film screenings. The library also manages the registration and preservation of publications by the Commission, and promotes collaboration and exchange with domestic and international libraries. Additionally, it provides a website called Library Nuriyip through which it offers a wide range of human rights information.

6. Promotional Efforts to Raise Human Rights Awareness

A. Media Coverage

On October 28, the Chairperson appeared on an EBS talk show to discuss the Commission's past achievements and future plans. The appearance led to a reevaluation of the Commission's role in addressing current issues, including the enactment of the equality law, and generated renewed media interest. Additionally, an interview with the Chairperson was published in the Spring 2022 issue of the "Criminal and Legal Policy Research Newsletter." The interview focused on various Commission-related topics, such as the establishment of the military

human rights protection officer position, the importance of enacting the equality law, and the establishment of the Human Rights Education Institute. These endeavors aimed to cultivate public understanding and support.

Furthermore, working with the media and internal staff, the Commission conducted special coverage to highlight the launch of the military human rights protection officer. Several media reports were initiated, featuring the establishment of this new position in publications such as “Weekly Kyunghyang” (July 1), “Women News” (July 21), and the official government promotional magazine *Gonggam* (issue 664). Additionally, the Commission partnered with KBS for the program *Sisa Jikgeok* (April 1, KBS 1), aiming to raise awareness about the importance of enacting the equality law and provide coverage of approaches taken in other countries. The Commission actively pursued media planning and promotional activities, including contributions from Commission officials through articles and op-eds, to strengthen the local human rights protection system.

In addition, the Commission increased its engagement with journalists to enhance their understanding of its activities, policies, and landmark cases. This effort enabled in-depth reporting on a variety of timely and relevant human rights issues, including migrants rights, women’s rights, human rights in the context of COVID-19, and children’s rights.

B. Promotion through Various Media Channels

The Commission continued online promotion through various media channels and newsletters to foster a greater understanding of human rights culture and enhance sensitivity through new media platforms.

The Commission created “Human Letters” in user-friendly and easily readable format. The letters were distributed to over 40,000 recipients every month, informing them of key decisions and various activities.

In 2022, the Commission collaborated with the Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) Documentary Prime Team to produce the program “Do You Know the Anti-Discrimination Act?” and reach a wider audience. The program was broadcasted on the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia on May 17. During Climate Justice Week in September, the Commission created promotional videos and artwork addressing the intersection

of the climate crisis and human rights. Additionally, to introduce the Commission's new role following the establishment of the Military Human Rights Protector, various promotional materials such as emblems, posters, leaflets, banners, and advertising videos were produced and distributed through diverse platforms including television networks (MBC, KBS, SBS, YTN, tvN), YouTube, Naver TV, KakaoTalk, apartment media boards, KTX, SRT, and buses. Throughout the planning and implementation process, the Commission actively sought input and incorporated feedback from organizations, relevant institutions, and advisory meetings.

The Commission strengthened the promotion of key human rights issues through online platforms and YouTube. In particular, it actively promoted its own campaigns and events, such as the discussion on the independent report on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (May), the Equality Law Campaign during the Seoul Queer Culture Festival (July), the Climate Crisis and Human Rights Campaign (September), and the 2022 Human Rights Advocates Conference (November), through new media. It also operated an online supporters group called Byeolbyeol Reporters, consisting of citizen journalists who supported on-site coverage of events such as the discussion on the Independent Report on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Seoul Queer Culture Festival, Human Rights Art Contest award ceremony, and Human Rights Day events. To promote human rights culture, the Commission selected human rights books and films, created easily understandable card news content, and broadcasted them as videos. It also produced the *Wise Human Rights Living* short video series with subtitles, focusing on key human rights issues such as human rights education, workplace harassment, cultural diversity, and family rights.

The Military Human Rights Protector actively engaged in nationwide media activities, including appearing on a military radio program to introduce his role and the background of the military human rights protection officer system. Furthermore, he personally visited various military training centers to provide guidance on the military human rights protection system to enlistees and received positive feedback.

The Commission also prioritized the promotion of military human rights through impactful media channels, including TV advertisements, internet platforms such as Naver, Kakao, YouTube, outdoor advertising at bus terminals, train stations, and media boards, as well as mobile apps.

C. Events Commemorating the Human Rights Day

On December 9, the Commission held a ceremony to commemorate the 74th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, known as the 2022 Human Rights Day. Unlike previous online events necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, this ceremony took place in person. Its purpose was to underscore the significance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reaffirm South Korea's international commitments in this regard. Distinguished speakers, including the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court, and the Prime Minister, delivered speeches. Additionally, Ban Ki-moon, the 8th Secretary-General of the UN, and Rosalind Croucher, Chairperson of the APF, delivered congratulatory remarks. The event was also attended by ambassadors from 19 countries, providing an opportunity to reflect on the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In conjunction with the commemorative ceremony, the Commission presented the 2022 Human Rights Awards. Each year, the Commission recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to the protection and promotion of human rights, honoring their achievements and efforts in fostering a culture of human rights.

D. Magazine *Ingwon*

The Commission publishes the bimonthly magazine *Ingwon* (Human Rights) to promote human rights awareness and prevent discrimination. It presents human rights issues in an accessible and relatable manner through engaging essays, photographs, illustrations, and comics. The magazine is available in both print and web formats, and selected articles are made into online card news and newsletters. Every year, the Commission also publishes a braille book for individuals with visual impairments. The magazine delves into key human rights topics, providing in-depth coverage and featuring the Commission's major decisions and news updates.

E. Human Rights Reporting Award

To foster enduring media interest in human rights issues and encourage the voluntary production of human rights content that advances the cause of human rights protection and promotion, the Commission partnered with the Journalists Association of Korea to establish the

Human Rights Reporting Guidelines in 2011. Since 2012, they have collaborated in organizing and presenting the prestigious Human Rights Reporting Award to recognize exceptional achievements in human rights journalism.

The 11th Human Rights Reporting Award in 2022 had a judging panel composed of seven members, including five external members from academia, the media, and civil society, along with two internal members. The Commission actively promoted the award to media organizations, journalists' associations, and academia, which led to a total of 51 submissions. These submissions included 33 entries from daily newspapers, 13 from broadcasting, and 5 from online media. Ultimately, six exceptional works were chosen as the award winners.

F. Videos on Key Human Rights Decisions

The Commission produces and distributes video materials on significant human rights decisions to effectively convey the decision-making process and its importance to the general public. This initiative started in 2014 and aims to provide easily accessible information on cases related to human rights violations and discrimination. Initially, the videos were produced in a drama format, but in 2020, the Commission transitioned to a talk show-style program called *Story of Those Who Cross the Line (Seontalk)*. In 2022, four episodes were created on military rights, workplace harassment, and discrimination against irregular workers. These videos are available on YouTube and other online platforms, and are also distributed as educational resources in schools, welfare facilities, and public institutions.

Chapter 4 **Domestic and International Exchange and Cooperation**

Section 1. Overview

The Commission is dedicated to advocating for and promoting human rights by working together with national and international human rights organizations, civil society groups, and relevant international and foreign human rights institutions. This commitment is grounded in the principles that govern the status of national human rights institutions and the provisions outlined in subparagraph 8 and 9 of Article 19 of the NHRCK Act.

Section 2. Key Progress

1. Exchange and Cooperation with Domestic Human Rights and Civil Society Organizations

A. Daily Cooperation with Human Rights and Civil Society Organizations

During the first half of 2023, the Commission convened a meeting with human rights and civil society organizations on April 5 to draft the budget proposal and determine which surveys to conduct on the human rights situation. Feedback were collected online from March 17 to 31. In the second half of the year, on November 17, another meeting with human rights and civil society organizations took place to prepare the 2023 business plan, during which the perspectives of human rights experts and activists were heard. The Commission also visited human rights organizations to hear their views on current issues and address their requests. The Commission also participated in events, co-hosted activities, and provided endorsements as needed.

B. Funding (Subsidies) of Human Rights Promotion Activities by Human Rights Organizations

Since 2003, the Funding Program has been implemented annually to foster human rights activism in civil society and support various projects for the advancement of human rights.

In 2022, the Commission made efforts to identify and develop projects that were in line with its long-term goals. It introduced four designated topics associated with its key strategic tasks to facilitate the exploration of projects and initiatives. These topics included promoting human rights in the context of global disasters like infectious diseases and climate crises, creating awareness about the equality law and combating hate speech, strengthening the capacity of human rights activists, and advancing human rights at the regional level.

C. Exchange and Visits to Human Rights Sites

The Commission made dedicated efforts to visit significant human rights sites to gain a comprehensive understanding of the situation and listen to the perspectives of those involved. In 2022, visits were made to the Wednesday rally advocating for the victims of Japanese military sexual slavery, the 8th memorial service for the three women in Songpa, the nationwide protest site advocating for the rights of disabled individuals, the hunger strike site in support of the Anti-Discrimination Act, and the rally against the THAAD deployment. Visits were also made to the Gwangju Korean-Chinese community, the Yongsan Senior Daycare Center, the Hanawon facility for North Korean defectors, the transitional housing facilities for people with disabilities leaving institutional care, as well as the 4.16 Institute of Democratic Citizenship Education and the Danwon High School in support of their activities.

D. Networking and Collaboration with Local Governments

The Commission strives to promote and protect human rights in local communities through networking and collaboration with local governments.

The Commission networked and collaborated with local governments to promote and enhance human rights protection at the regional level. The Special Regional Human Rights Committee, established in 2018, aimed to explore ways to promote human rights in local areas

and strengthen the capacity of human rights offices. In 2022, the committee met three times and successfully completed its first term of activities. Plans are currently underway to form the second term of the committee. During these meetings, discussions focused on various topics, including local government human rights ordinances, local human rights committees, human rights civil society organizations, and the development of local government human rights systems, policies, and strategies. The aim was to improve the role and effectiveness of human rights offices. Additionally, the committee conducted policy research projects in 2022 to strengthen and establish a local human rights protection system.

As discussions on local government and human rights have progressed, with the establishment of human rights ordinances and the creation of dedicated Human Rights Committees within local autonomous bodies, focus was placed on enhancing the expertise of regional human rights offices. In 2022, significant support was provided to foster collaboration among human rights offices, including the 3rd Conference on Business and Human Rights with the Community organized by the Busan Human Rights Office, and the Human Rights Advocates Workshop by the Daejeon Human Rights Office aimed at strengthening local human rights institutions in the Daejeon, Sejong, and Chungcheong regions. These strategic endeavors were designed to promote locally-focused human rights work, foster mutual understanding, and enhance cooperation and collaboration among human rights offices, local autonomous bodies, and human rights and civil society organizations operating in the region.

The 2022 Human Rights Defenders Conference, celebrating its 5th edition, took place over two days (October 31 to November 1) at Seoul Olympic Parktel. Over 140 participants attended, including representatives from metropolitan and local governments, educational authorities responsible for human rights, local government human rights committees, and human rights activists. With the theme “10 Years of Local Human Rights Institutionalization: Current Status and Future Outlook,” the conference featured a series of sessions and activities. The first day kicked off with a keynote lecture by Professor Han Sang-hee titled “Why Local? Why We Need to Start Again in Our Neighborhoods.” This was followed by the first session on “Memories of Ten Years of Local Human Rights Institutionalization” and the second session on “Current Status and Responses of Local Human Rights Systems.” Additional highlights included a “Talk on the Equality Law: Discussing Equal Rights Again” and a cultural performance titled “The Last Night of October.” On the second day, the third session was dedicated to sharing best

practices in the field of human rights and a comprehensive session to present the outcomes of the 2022 Defenders Conference. Notably, at the conclusion of the conference, participating activists adopted a declaration expressing concerns about the regression of human rights administration in local governments.

2. Exchange and Cooperation with International Human Rights Organizations and Associations

A. Cooperation with GANHRI and APF

1) Cooperation with GANHRI

The GANHRI is an international cooperation network consisting of NHRIs from 118 countries. It aims to facilitate exchange and cooperation among NHRIs and collaborate with international human rights mechanisms, including the UN, to promote and protect human rights.

As the regional representative for the Asia-Pacific region in GANHRI, the Commission actively engaged in annual meetings and executive council sessions, where it voiced its opinions and exercised voting rights. It also participated in GANHRI's annual meetings and executive council meetings, sharing important initiatives and contributing to collaborative efforts. Moreover, as the chair of the GANHRI Working Group on Ageing, the Commission organized regular working group meetings. By participating in the 12th UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing and stakeholder dialogues facilitated by the UN Human Rights Council and the OHCHR, the Commission strongly advocated for the development of an international convention on the rights of older persons, representing GANHRI on the global stage. Notably, discussions within the GANHRI Working Group on Ageing focused on enhancing the participation of NHRIs in key international conferences concerning the rights of older persons, underscoring their significance. Additionally, deliberations took place on the draft convention on the rights of older persons and the formulation of the work plan for the GANHRI Working Group on Ageing in 2023. As the chair of the GANHRI Working Group on Ageing, the Commission actively contributed to the 12th UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, delivering statements on behalf of all NHRIs, presenting in key sessions, and showcasing its

expertise in the field of older persons' rights. The Commission also put forth proposals on the role of NHRIs in promoting the rights of older persons during stakeholder dialogues organized by the UN Human Rights Council, leading the way in advancing the agenda on older persons' rights.

2) Cooperation with APF

The APF is a network of NHRIs in the Asia-Pacific region. Its main activities revolve around facilitating exchange and cooperation among NHRIs, providing support for the establishment and functioning of these institutions, and fostering collaboration with international human rights bodies and governments to address current human rights challenges. The Commission has been recognized as an exemplary NHRI in the international community and the Chairperson of the Commission was elected as the Chair of the APF during the 27th APF Annual Meeting in September 2022. In this role, the Commission actively advocated for the promotion of human rights and tackled pressing issues in the Asia-Pacific region. Moreover, the Commission organized training programs for NHRIs from other countries, contributing to the advancement of human rights in the region. It also engaged in active collaboration with UN agencies and other relevant stakeholders.

As the Chair of APF, the Chairperson of the Commission represented the region and presented its views at the GANHRI Bureau and other forums. It expanded its leadership within GANHRI by engaging in discussions with the APF Secretariat on key issues. The Commission shared its accomplishments and experiences in various meetings hosted by the APF, focusing on the role of NHRIs during the COVID-19 pandemic and the rights of persons with disabilities. Through these engagements, the Commission demonstrated its role as an exemplary NHRI within the APF membership. Moreover, it organized an invitation-based training program for NHRI staff from other countries, including Thailand, Bangladesh, Samoa, India, Mongolia, Maldives, and Malaysia. The invited participants fostered a cooperative network by sharing insights on human rights issues, activities, and best practices on addressing discrimination within their respective institutions. This program contributed to enhancing the capabilities of NHRIs in developing countries and expand the international human rights network. It provided a valuable opportunity to showcase and share models of effective and independent NHRI operation, thus contributing to the development and capacity-building of APF member institutions in the promotion of human rights in the Asia-Pacific region.

B. Cooperation with International Organizations, Foreign Government Institutions, and International Human Rights Organizations

The Commission engaged in diverse partnerships and collaborations, expanding its outreach and fostering multi-faceted international cooperation.

To promote the enactment of the equality law, the Commission engaged in consultations with key diplomatic missions such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and the European Union. It attended meetings of the New York City Commission on Human Rights to share and discuss the experiences and practices of local governments in combating hate discrimination. Discussions were also held with major international human rights organizations, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, on cooperation strategies for improving human rights in North Korea during the COVID-19 pandemic. Regarding the group assault against female Mongolian students in Gyeongsangnam-do Province and retaliatory assaults against Korean residents in Ulaanbaatar, the Commission cooperated with the Mongolian National Human Rights Commission on monitoring and investigating judicial responses, and facilitated the visits and investigative activities of the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights. The Commission also actively responded to information exchange requests from UN agencies, foreign governments, and other NHRIs. It provided materials related to human rights issues to the OHCHR and exchanged information in relation to the US State Department's Human Rights Reports. The Commission also shared its key decisions with the Thai Human Rights Commission.

3. International Conference on Human Rights Issues

On January 23, the Commission held an International Human Rights Conference in partnership with the EU and the APF. The purpose of the conference was to engage in discussions with domestic and international experts in the field of older persons' rights regarding the draft Convention on the Rights of Older Persons, which was drafted by the Commission. The conference was conducted in both online and offline formats and saw the participation of around 100 attendees, including international organizations, foreign diplomatic missions in Korea, civil society organizations, researchers, and activists.

During the conference, which occurred during the COVID-19 crisis when there was heightened

awareness of the importance of protecting vulnerable older individuals, the Commission, as the chair of the GANHRI Working Group on Ageing, presented a draft Convention on the Rights of Older Persons that it had developed. This presentation sparked discussions among domestic and international experts, including those from the UN, EU, NHRIs, and civil society organizations. The discussions focused on various provisions of the draft, addressing issues such as elder abuse and neglect, the right to health and social protection, autonomy and independence, and the right to a dignified life and care. Building on the discussions from the conference, the Commission plans to refine the draft based on the feedback received, while also raising awareness about the need for an international Convention on the Rights of Older Persons and facilitating ongoing public discourse on the specific content.

Chapter 5 Human Rights Offices

Section 1. Overview

To enhance and safeguard the rights of local residents and ensure swift remedies, the Commission operates five regional Human Rights Offices in Busan, Gwangju, Daegu, Daejeon, Gangwon, and Jeju. The establishment of these offices commenced in October 2005 with the inauguration of the Busan Human Rights Office and Gwangju Human Rights Office. Subsequently, the Daegu Human Rights Office opened in July 2007, followed by the office in Daejeon in October 2014, the office in Gangwon in June 2017, and finally the office in Jeju in October 2019.

[Table 3-5-1] Location and Jurisdiction of Regional Human Rights Offices

Name	Location	Jurisdiction
Busan Human Rights Office	Busan	Busan Metropolitan City, Ulsan Metropolitan City, and Gyeongsangnam-do
Gwangju Human Rights Office	Gwangju	Gwangju Metropolitan City, Jeollanam-do, Jeollabuk-do
Daegu Human Rights Office	Daegu	Daegu Metropolitan City and Gyeongsangbuk-do
Daejeon Human Rights Office	Daejeon	Daejeon Metropolitan City, Sejong Special Self-Governing City, Chungcheongnam-do, and Chungcheongbuk-do
Gangwon Human Rights Office	Gangwon Wonju	Gangwon-do
Jeju Human Rights Office	Jeju	Jeju-do

Operating within their respective jurisdictions, the regional human rights offices perform various tasks, including providing consultations on human rights issues, investigating and addressing cases of human rights violations and discrimination against persons with disabilities (excluding the military), and collaborating with national institutions such as the National Assembly, courts, Constitutional Court, National Intelligence Service, prosecution, as well as local governments, public agencies, educational institutions at all levels, detention facilities, and facilities for promoting mental health. The offices are also involved in human rights education, fostering cooperation and exchange with human rights-related organizations and groups, and organizing activities to address specific needs of local communities, such as operating Human Rights Experience Centers.

Section 2. Key Activities

1. Receipt of Petitions, Counselling Requests, Complaints and Inquiries

In 2022, the Human Rights Offices received a total of 1,369 petitions, 5,639 counseling requests, and 2,071 public complaints and inquiries. Compared to the previous year, there was a 13.8% decrease in petitions (219 cases), a 42.5% decrease in counseling requests (4,170 cases), and a 48.5% decrease in complaints and inquiries (1,948 cases). The significant increase in

the number of cases in 2021 was mainly due to the prolonged COVID-19 situation and public discomfort. However, in 2022, with the easing of social distancing measures and a decrease in collective complaints, there was an overall reduction in the number of cases received.

2. Receipt and Processing of Face-to-Face Petitions

In 2022, the Human Rights Offices received a total of 1,461 face-to-face petitions, and 1,593 cases were successfully resolved. Among the resolved cases, 189 cases (11.9%) were filed as petitions, 739 cases (46.4%) resolved through counseling, and 665 cases (41.7%) withdrawn by the applicants. Compared to 2021, there was a decrease of 263 (18.0%) in the number of face-to-face petitions received and a decrease of 94 (5.9%) in the number of resolved cases.

3. Processing of Petitions

In 2022, 4,120 petitions were assigned to the regional offices, of which 3,856 were processed. A total of 419 were remedied, with 183 resulting in recommendations, 11 closed by agreement, and 225 resolved during investigation. Compared to 2021, there was a 15.4% increase in the number of petitions assigned to the offices, and the number of resolved cases increased by 18.0%, representing a total increase of 634 petitions.

4. Human Rights Education

The Regional Human Rights Offices operated human rights education centers where they conducted a variety of regional educational programs, including capacity-building courses for appointed human rights instructors, training courses, on-site visits, and special lectures.

In 2022, the human rights offices conducted 1,271 human rights education sessions in total, with a combined participation of 39,335 individuals. Compared to the previous year, there was an increase of 74 sessions (5.8%) and 9,380 participants (23.8%). The education programs included 24 capacity-building courses for human rights instructors with 542 participants, 84 training courses with 2,194 participants, 423 on-site visit sessions with 6,488 participants, and 738 special lectures attended by 31,111 individuals. Special lectures were the most frequently conducted form of human rights education.

5. Expanding Local Human Rights Culture

■ Busan Human Rights Office

The Busan Human Rights Office maintained ongoing dialogue with local government agencies, including the local municipality, police department, and education office, to discuss various human rights issues. Additionally, it establishes and maintains channels of communication and collaboration with civil society organizations in the Busan, Ulsan, and Gyeongnam regions. These initiatives aim to strengthen human rights, foster a culture of human rights, and address local human rights issues through cooperative and responsive approaches. To facilitate these efforts, the office established a Civil Society Dialogue Forum, which involves key representatives from civil society organizations in the region.

■ Gwangju Human Rights Office

The Gwangju Human Rights Office expanded its collaboration with various institutions, including correctional facilities, public enterprises, and sports organizations, as well as local government agencies, education offices, and police institutions. The office strengthened its collaboration system through film screenings, seminars, meetings, and discussions with civil society organizations. As part of the Global Human Rights Forum, it organized special sessions on the theme of “Climate Crisis and Human Rights, National Responsibility.” It also conducted art exhibitions showcasing human rights-themed history, organized human rights campaigns in subway stations, and facilitated discussions on important topics like COVID-19 and disability rights, regulations to protect the rights of migrant workers in Jeollanam-do Province, and LGBTQ+ rights policies in Gwangju. These initiatives offered venues to discuss local human rights issues across various domains, including disability, migration, and sexual minorities.

■ Daegu Human Rights Office

The Daegu Human Rights Office developed regular consultation channels with relevant local institutions and forged partnerships to advance human rights advocacy. They sustained communication with human rights and civil society organizations, working together to foster a culture of human rights in the region through collaborative projects.

The Daegu Human Rights Office arranged a variety of lectures, seminars, and invited talks addressing local human rights issues. It planned human rights programs that made use of public libraries and produced monthly newsletters to distribute information. The office also organized local human rights field trip courses and implemented exploration programs to provide firsthand experience of human rights issues in the region.

■ Daejeon Human Rights Office

The Daejeon Human Rights Office collaborated with local government agencies, civil society organizations, and public institutions to promote a culture of human rights in the region. It actively participated in and operated various networks and councils, such as the Central-Western Human Rights Administration Network, Daejeon Human Rights Policy Consultation Body, and Chungbuk and Chungnam Human Rights Council, to enhance communication and cooperation on local human rights issues. The office organized workshops, forums, and joint meetings to facilitate communication and collaboration among stakeholders. In partnership with organizations like the Korea Railroad Corporation and the Daejeon Citizens' Media Center, the office conducted campaigns through the creation of human rights webtoons, posters addressing the climate crisis and human rights, and initiatives related to ESG management, with a focus on providing information and engaging students. It also conducted campaigns to protect the rights of emotional laborers, raise awareness of sports rights during local sports events, and jointly organized events to commemorate the 74th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Particularly in the second half of 2022, efforts were made to develop joint response measures with civil society organizations in response to concerns about the potential regression of the local human rights protection system, including the repeal of the Chungnam Human Rights Ordinance and the downsizing of human rights organizations.

■ Gangwon Human Rights Office

The Gangwon Human Rights Office actively engaged in communication with human rights and civil society organizations, local government agencies, and public institutions. It planned and implemented various projects to enhance cooperation, while maintaining active collaboration with committees such as the Communication and Cooperation Committee, Human Rights Management Council, Gangwon Human Rights Forum, and Rights Protection

Agency Network. Through this ongoing collaboration, the office successfully organized the Wonju Disability Rights Film Festival, Wonju Women’s Film Festival, panel discussions on the mobility rights of transportation-impaired individuals, Wonju Human Rights Expo, disability rights education seminars, events commemorating the 74th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and a memorandum of understanding with the Health Insurance Review and Assessment Service to facilitate effective and smooth operations.

■ Jeju Branch Office

In 2022, the Jeju Branch Office made proactive efforts to engage with human rights and civil society organizations, as well as advocacy agencies, in order to enhance communication and cooperation among the local human rights protection system, the Commission, and civil society. The office focused on being receptive to local human rights issues and worked towards strengthening collaborative platforms by incorporating diverse demands. Additionally, the office visited rights advocacy organizations focused on the elderly, children, and persons with disabilities to exchange information on human rights violations and collaboratively explore practical solutions to address the rights of local residents.

The Jeju Branch Office worked closely with local human rights organizations and relevant agencies to organize a range of activities, including the Human Rights Cafe -“People and People III,” sessions of the Jeju Human Rights Forum, and workshops for human rights activists in Jeju. These workshops were specifically designed for and targeted human rights advocates who are active in Jeju, with the aim of promoting communication and fostering solidarity among local activists.

PART

4

National Human Rights
Commission of Korea
Annual Report 2022





Appendices

Chapter 1 Commissioners and Senior Executive Officers (as of Dec. 31, 2022)



National Human Rights
Commission of Korea

Annual Report 2022

4

Appendices





Chapter 1

**Commissioners and Senior Executive Officers
(as of Dec. 31, 2022)**

A. Commissioners and Senior Executive Officers

■ Commissioners

Name	Profile	Nominating/electing authority (Term)
 <p>Chairperson Song, Doo-hwan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judge, Seoul Central District Civil Court • Judge, Seoul Central District Criminal Court • Human Rights Director, Korean Bar Association • President, Minbyun-Lawyers for a Democratic Society • Independent Special Prosecutor in North Korea Remittance case • Non-standing Commissioner, Civil Service Commission • Justice, Constitutional Court of Korea • Chairperson, Prosecution Reform Committee • Managing Partner, Hankyul Law LLC 	<p>Nominated by the President (Sep. 4, 2021 – Sep. 3, 2024.)</p>
 <p>Standing Commissioner Park Chan-un</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor, Ph. D., Law School, Hanyang University • President, Human Rights Law Society • Member, Police Reform Commission, National Police Agency • Commissioner, Seoul Metropolitan Human Rights Commission • Board member, Human Rights Policy Institute • Vice chairperson, Human Rights Committee, Korean Bar Association • Director General of Human Rights Policy Bureau, NHRCK • Chairperson, International Solidarity Committee, MINBYUN-Lawyers for a Democratic Society 	<p>Nominated by the President (Jan. 13, 2020 – Feb. 5, 2023)</p>

Name	Profile	Nominating/electing authority (Term)
 <p>Standing Commissioner Nam, Kyu-sun</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretary General, MINKAHYUP Human Rights Group • Chairperson of Media Promotion, Committee of Private Groups for Just National Human Rights Organization • Head of Public Relations and External Cooperation, NHRCK Establishing Preparatory Planning Group • Director, Communications & Cooperation Div. of NHRCK • Director, Human Rights Education for Citizens, NHRCK • Director, Human Rights Policy Institute • Member, Special Committee on Civil and Political Rights, NHRCK • Standing Director, Korea Democracy Foundation 	<p>Elected by the National Assembly (Aug. 6, 2021 – Aug. 5, 2024)</p>
 <p>Standing Commissioner Lee, Choong-sang</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judge, Seoul District Court • Judge, Gwangju District Court • Judge, Gwangju High Court • Judge, Seoul High Court • Judicial Researcher, Supreme Court of Korea • Presiding Judge, Seoul Central District Court • Attorney, Barun Law LLC • Representative Attorney, Law Firm Daeho • Member, Standing Mediation Committee, Seoul High Court • Professor, Kyungpook National University Law School 	<p>Elected by the National Assembly (Oct. 21, 2022 – Oct. 20, 2025)</p>
 <p>Commissioner Lee, Jun-il</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor, Korea University Law School • Academic advisor, Constitutional Court • Member of Legislative Support, National Assembly Secretariat • Expert adviser, NHRCK 	<p>Nominated by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (Feb. 28, 2020 – Feb. 27, 2023)</p>

Name	Profile	Nominating/electing authority (Term)
 <p data-bbox="216 644 333 693">Commissioner Seo, Mi-hwa</p>	<ul data-bbox="383 460 906 662" style="list-style-type: none"> • President, Research Institute for Disabled Rights, Jeollanam-do • President, Yudal Self-reliance Support Center for Disabled persons • Member of Advisory Committee for Gender Equality, Ministry of Health and Welfare • Standing representative, Solidarity Against Disability Discrimination, Jeollanam-do • The 9th member of a Mokpo City Council 	<p data-bbox="976 511 1096 611">Nominated by the President (May 1, 2020 – Apr. 30, 2023)</p>
 <p data-bbox="197 1017 352 1066">Commissioner Seok, Won-jeong</p>	<ul data-bbox="383 875 913 1001" style="list-style-type: none"> • Director, Seongdong Global Migrant Center • Director, Association for Migrant Workers' Human Rights • Member, Human Rights Advisory Group, Ministry of Justice • Member, Expert Committee on Civil and Political Rights, NHRCK • Member, Human Rights Committee, Seoul Metropolitan City 	<p data-bbox="984 875 1089 999">Elected by the National Assembly (Jul. 3, 2020 – Jul. 2, 2023)</p>
 <p data-bbox="200 1390 347 1439">Commissioner Yoon, Seug-hee</p>	<ul data-bbox="383 1239 931 1385" style="list-style-type: none"> • President, Korea Women Lawyers Association • Non-Executive Director, Women's Human Rights Institute of Korea • Senior Vice President, Korean Bar Association • Member, Gender Equality Deliberation Committee, Seoul Family Court • Chief Lawyer, YOON&CO 	<p data-bbox="956 1239 1116 1385">Nominated by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (Feb. 19, 2021 – Feb. 18, 2024)</p>

Name	Profile	Nominating/electing authority (Term)
 <p>Commissioner Kim, Soo-jung</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lawyer, JIHYANG LLC • Commissioner at Deliberation Committee for Women and Child Policy, Ministry of Justice • Integrity Ombudsman, Ministry of Defense • Member, Human Rights Committee, Seoul Metropolitan City • Member, Expert Committee on Child Rights, NHRCK 	<p>Nominated by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (Aug. 27, 2021 - Aug. 26, 2024)</p>
 <p>Commissioner Han, Seok-hoon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Prosecutor at Gunsan Branch Prosecutors' Office, Jeonju District Prosecutors' Office • Vice Chief Prosecutor at Seoul Eastern District Prosecutors' Office • Chief Prosecutor at Gwangju High Prosecutors' Office • Director, Research Operation Committee, Korean Institute of Criminology and Justice • Professor at Sungkyunkwan University Law School 	<p>Elected by the National Assembly (Oct. 10, 2021 - Oct. 14, 2024)</p>
 <p>Commissioner Kim, Jong-min</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abbot, Samhwas Temple, Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism • Head of Department of Regulations, Headquarters of Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism • Abbot, Jogeyesa Temple, Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism • Representative Director, Bongeun Welfare Foundation, Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism • Representative Director, Association of Buddhist funeral ceremony • Co-Representative, Environmental Justice • Chair of Board, Yeojin Buddhist Cultural Foundation • Chair of Board, Korean Buddhist Temple Forest Research Institute • Chair of Board, Dongguk University • Member, National Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee • Abbot, Bongeunsa Temple, Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism 	<p>Nominated by the President (Nov. 22, 2022 - Nov. 21, 2025)</p>

Secretary General and Senior Executive Officers

Name	Profile	Name	Profile
 <p>Secretary-General Park, Jin</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time activist, Dasan Human Rights Center • Member of Human Rights Policy Advisory Group, Ministry of Justice • Vice-chairperson, Gyeonggi Human Rights Commission • Member of Board of Directors, Korea Democracy Foundation 	 <p>Director-General of Planning and Coordination Bureau Cho, Young-ho</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director, Investigation of Civil and Political Rights Division, NHRCK • Director, Rights of Persons with Disabilities Division 1, NHRCK • Director, Public Relations Division, NHRCK • Director, Human Rights Policy Division, NHRCK
 <p>Director-General of Policy and Education Bureau Lee, Suk-jun</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief, Migration and Human Rights Team, NHRCK • Chief Secretary, NHRCK • Director, Human Rights Policy Division, NHRCK • Director, Rights of Persons with Disabilities Division 1, NHRCK • Director-General of Planning and Coordination Bureau 	 <p>Deputy Director-General of Education Consultation Bureau Seo, Su-jeong</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director, Administrative and Legal Affairs Division, NHRCK • Director, Gwangju Human Rights Office, NHRCK • Director, General Affairs Division, NHRCK • Director, Discrimination Remedy Division, NHRCK
 <p>Director-General of Civil and Political Rights Bureau Ahn, Sung-yul</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director, Investigation on Civil and Political Rights Division, NHRCK • Director, Human Rights Policy Division, NHRCK • Director, Administrative and Legal Affairs Division, NHRCK • Director, General Affairs Division, NHRCK 	 <p>Director-General of Discrimination Remedy Bureau Yeom, Hyeong-guk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Director and Lawyer, GongGam Human Rights Law Foundation • Director, Pro Bono Support Center
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