Firmin Sindaye, international UN Volunteer Human Rights and Protection Officer with OHCHR in Guinea during a training session on monitoring and reporting cases of human rights violations.

Advocating for human rights and access to justice for communities in Guinea

For Firmin Sindaye, a native of Burundi, his motivation to serve as a UN Volunteer was fuelled by his desire to serve the cause of human rights wherever he is. Holder of a Master’s Degree in international and European human rights, Firmin has 15 years of national and international experience with local human rights organizations and the United Nations in the area of human rights protection, reporting and advocacy.

Serving as a UN volunteer offers me more practical experience, confidence in my work and more willingness to continue working for the promotion and protection of human rights. --Firmin Sindaye (Burundi), UN Volunteer Human Rights and Protection Officer, OHCHR

Assigned to the office of OHCHR in Guinea as UN Volunteer Human Rights and Protection Officer, Firmin is particularly active in the planning of activities for the defense of human rights, the monitoring of detention centres and cases of human rights violations, awareness-raising and capacity-building on human rights in the country.

In a context marked by high political tensions, with repeated resort to illegal
and prolonged detention, the excessive use of force, street protests and strikes, Firmin is very much involved with communities and authorities to facilitate access to justice and to protect lives.

Firmin's work has a direct impact on local communities. Through his intervention, for example, he has managed to secure the release from prison of people who were arbitrarily and illegally arrested. He was also able to help others to recover their property, which was confiscated unfairly.

The UN Volunteer gives an example: "An old man who had been forced by the police to pay US $150 to get back his bike was given back both his money and means of transport. After recovering his money, he came to the office to thank me and my colleague for our assistance."

Andrea Ori, OHCHR Regional Representative for West Africa and former UN Volunteer himself, recognizes and welcomes the remarkable contribution of UN Volunteers towards the mandate of his agency to protect and promote human rights in the region. He declares:

"With UN Volunteers, victims of injustice of all kinds find a sympathetic ear and a helping hand, ready to accompany them in the recovery of their rights and their dignity. This year, thanks to their support, the OHCHR could protect and evacuate to Europe 25 young homosexuals of Gambian and Senegalese origin, persecuted for their sexual orientation. OHCHR is very pleased with the support provided by UNV in its priorities and looks forward to mobilizing more volunteers in future projects. --Andrea Ori, OHCHR Regional Representative for West Africa"

As for Chanel Kavabushi from Rwanda, also an international UN Volunteer Human Rights officer with OHCHR in Guinea, his main motivation is to serve populations living in precarious conditions through awareness-raising activities on their rights.

With 11 years of experience in the promotion and protection of human rights,
Chanel lists the main challenges in her work: "We need to ensure better protection of human rights, including a weak enforcement of laws, violence against women, corruption, youth migration and illiteracy".

Concretely, Chanel is working on establishing the link between human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals in Guinea. She is targeting raising the awareness of students at high school and university, to enable them to support their communities in defining a vision for development and promoting youth initiatives.

"In a post-Ebola context, my work requires taking initiatives to build community resilience. I need to be involved in developing joint programmes for effective response to multiple community solicitations, of which human rights issues are a priority. I encourage the denunciation of cases of gender-based violence, and ensure a good framework for dialogue between the legal actors. -- Chanel Kavabushi (Rwanda), UN Volunteer Human Rights Officer, OHCHR"

As a result, thanks to the implementation of local development plans, a change in behavior is taking place progressively, Chanel observes. For Chanel, being a UN Volunteer is a means to strengthen her experience in coordinating development initiatives linked to the promotion of human rights and working in emergency situations.
Social mobilization session on the participation of women and youth in the management of their community in Guinea.

Sub-Saharan Africa

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Sustainable Development Goal: SDG 10: Reduced inequalities, SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions, SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals