

# Statutes of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee

– With amendments adopted at the Annual Meeting on 23 April 2026.

## Values and Basic Principles

- § 1 The Norwegian Helsinki Committee (NHC) bases its work on international human rights instruments adopted by the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE), including the 1975 Helsinki Final Act.
- § 2 NHC activities are based on the principle, which was agreed upon in the Helsinki Final Act, that “respect for human rights is an essential factor for the peace, justice and well-being necessary to ensure the development of friendly relations and co-operation among all states”.
- § 3 The NHC views international human rights as legal obligations, as well as moral and political commitments for all states of the world.

## Purpose

- § 4 NHC shall promote respect and protection of international human rights, and work in order to ensure that the ideal of the OSCE documents of free exchange of peoples, ideas and information crossing national borders shall be respected and implemented in practical actions. NHC shall document human rights violations, influence authorities to respect human rights, run and promote human rights education, and support human rights organisations.
- § 5 Based on its historic origin in the Helsinki Final Act, NHC shall promote human rights in North America, Europe and Central Asia. When addressing issues of relevance to other regions of the world, NHC may have activities related to these regions.
- § 6 NHC shall keep in contact with and co-operate with other organisations and groups which wholly or partly have the same purpose.
- § 7 NHC shall keep organisational and political independence.

## Organisation

§ 8 NHC decision bodies are the Annual Meeting, the Council, the Board and eventually a working body. The Annual Meeting is its highest body.

## The Board

§ 9 The Board consists of a chairperson, a deputy chairperson and four to eight members, elected by the Annual Meeting for one year at a time. The President of the Council, or the Vice-President in his or her stead, may attend Board meetings and exercise the full rights of a Board member. The Committee's Secretary General attends Board meetings without voting rights. The staff representative is a permanent member of the Board. The Board may grant others access to meetings without voting rights.

§ 10 The Board meets regularly and at least five times a year. Items of principal and economic significance for NHC shall be presented to the Board.

§ 11 The Board shall, each year before the end of November, decide on a plan of action for the subsequent year, and adopt an annual budget for the work of the NHC.

§ 12 The Board proposes new members for the NHC Council and changes to the NHC Statutes.

§ 13 The Board describes NHC activities in an Annual Report, which is presented to the Annual Meeting.

§ 14 If one or several Board members withdraw during their elected period, the Board may, if it so wishes, appoint a Board member for the rest of that period until the next Annual Meeting. If more than one-third of the Board members withdraw, the remaining members should appoint supplementing members at an Extraordinary Annual Meeting.

§ 15 The Board may establish a working body, to be headed by the Chairperson of the Board.

§ 16 The work of the Board is governed by the Board's terms of reference, which ensure that the Board discharges its responsibilities in accordance with applicable legislation, the Statutes of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee and best practice in the governance of non-profit organisations. The Board's terms of reference are adopted by the Board.

## The Council

§ 17 The NHC Council consists of 50 members, originally elected at the Constituent Meeting of the NHC, held in Oslo on 16 August 1977. The members of the Council are elected by the Annual Meeting for a period of three years. Consequently, one-third of the Council members are elected each year.

§ 18 The NHC Council is headed by a President and a Vice President, elected by the Annual Meeting among the members of the Council for one year at a time.

## **The Annual Meeting**

- § 19 The NHC Annual Meeting is arranged annually at the end of April and on the date which the Board decides. Invitations should be distributed at a minimum of three weeks' notice. The Annual Meeting consists of NHC Council members and NHC Board members, and is chaired by the Council President, the Vice President or the Board Chairperson.
- § 20 The Annual Meeting shall:
1. Decide to approve or not on the Board Annual Report on NHC activities during the previous calendar year.
  2. Decide to approve or not on the NHC Board proposal on annual accounts and the Audits report.
  3. Decide on draft amendments to the NHC Statutes.
  4. Conduct elections for Board Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and other Board members, based on a proposal from the Election Committee.
  5. Conduct election of President, Vice President and other Council Members, based on a proposal from the Board.
  6. Appoint an Election Committee
  7. Decide on draft NHC statements.
- § 21 In electing persons, ordinary rules of procedure are followed.
- § 22 The Board may invite to an Extraordinary Annual Meeting. An Extraordinary Annual Meeting should also be held if one-third of the NHC Council members request it.

## **Secretariat**

- § 23 The Secretary General is directing the NHC Secretariat. The Secretary General is appointed by the Board for a maximum of five years, renewable once.
- § 24 The Secretary General has a right and a duty to put forward proposals in all cases that do not pertain to the election of persons or where the right to put forward proposals is specifically granted to other bodies.

## **Amendments to the NHC Statutes**

- § 25 Proposals for amendments of the NHC Statute should be presented to the NHC Board by 1 January. The Board shall present draft amendments to the NHC Council at the same

time as it invites to the Annual Meeting. In order to adopt amendments to the NHC Statutes, two-thirds of those present should vote in favour.

### **Liquidation**

- § 26 Liquidation of the NHC is preconditioned by decisions by two-thirds of those present at two subsequent Annual Meetings, arranged with at least three months duration in between.
- § 27 By decisions based on the same majority at the Annual Meetings, NHC's remaining assets may be re-disposed.
- § 28 In the case that the NHC is liquidated, assets will be transferred to another entity or entities for exclusively charitable purposes.