

Green Advocates 2025 Annual Report

Commitment to the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights

1. Describe how you have engaged in the Voluntary Principles Initiative over the past year.

Green Advocates, a board member of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, has continued to advocate for promoting, protecting, and respecting human rights across the three pillars of the VPs and actively participates in call meetings of the NGO Pillar and also the regular meetings for members of the Steering Committee for the NGO Pillar that includes Pact and New Nigeria Foundation. Green Advocates participate in call meetings with the VPI Board of Directors.

Green Advocates participated in the VPI plenary in London on March 21, 2025. John N.. Brownell of Green Advocates prepared a presentation on (i) Security and Human Rights Risks, and risks to successful implementation of the VPs in Liberia, including ownership structured risks, as determined by Green Advocates; (ii) Assurance processes; and (iii) innovative approaches and lessons learned. However, this event was canceled at the last minute due to low attendance.

Green Advocates participated in the Annual Strategy Retreat of the VPI Steering Committee held in Houston, Texas, at the headquarters of BP, and discussed the following activities:

- Updates: Members received an update from James McQuilken of the Search Committee regarding the Executive Director search.
- Members received an update on the work of the Mapping and Implementation Working Group, including the draft of the Guidance on Security-Related Human Rights Due Diligence.
- Members were updated on the Network, on the quarterly meetings requested by Working Groups, and a new project sponsored by the UK and implemented by DCAF, which seeks to capture some lessons learned.
- Members agreed that the Board should explore amending the governance rules to allow for a time-limited Associate Government Membership category. They also agreed that engagement with government members should be included in the 2026 Strategy.
- Members agreed that the new expansion strategy should focus first on 4 eligible categories, including energy and mining companies, which are implementing the VPSHR through other performance standards and industry associations.
- Steering Committee Meeting (Steering Committee members only);

2. Describe efforts to increase transparency, both internally and externally, regarding your efforts to implement or support implementation of the Voluntary Principles.

Green Advocates features the VPSHR by making its Annual Report to the VPI publicly available. Regularly publicized the VPSHR in lectures and panel discussions related to issues such as corporate accountability and environmental impact assessments, multi-stakeholder platforms, and at the community level partnerships. Green Advocates reports publicly on security and human rights issues across Liberia and the entire African region

Green Advocates believes in transparency and has fostered collaboration across the NGO Pillar, local communities, the security sector, and relevant national government bodies. Green Advocates became a member of the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA) in September 2025.

List of provided meeting reports within this reporting period:

- Report of the Advocacy Engagements with the Security Expert Guard Agency of Liberia (SEGAL) held on 25th 2025.
- The Report of the meeting with the Liberia National Police held in Monrovia on July 7, 2025.

3. Describe any efforts to engage in dialogue with other participants of the Voluntary Principles Initiative.

Green Advocates and members of the NGO Pillar hold regular bilateral dialogue to discuss issues affecting the VPI and also promote the VPI. Green Advocates introduced the VPI Jamaica Resources of Kenya and regularly discuss the implementation of the VPI. Green Advocates has held meetings with Saviour Akpan of Comppart Foundation and Okereke Chinwike of African Law Foundation, members of the NGO Pillar on the VPI implementation and collaboration. Green Advocates also engaged directly with Dr. Adriano Nuvonga of Centro para Democracia e Direitos Humanos (CDD) of Mozambique, virtually, and Caleb Wanga of Usalama of Kenya

Green Advocates is a member of the African Coalition for Corporate Accountability, International Advocates Working Group, and the Coalition of Human Rights Defenders in Development, Environment Rights Africa, African Climate Platform, Mano River Union Civil Society Platform, and the Public Interest Lawyering of West Africa, working alongside other participants of the NGO Pillar of the Voluntary Principles Initiative, and uses the zoom call meetings and annual gathering of members' meetings to promote the VPI.

Procedures

4. Provide a summary of the findings of the verification process.

Green Advocates' verification process of the Voluntary Principles was postponed at the Annual Plenary in London in 2025, and no other verification process was conducted.

Promotion of the Voluntary Principles

5. Describe your efforts to raise awareness of and promote understanding of the Voluntary Principles with both internal and external stakeholders.

Green Advocates continues to promote the VPSHR directly with communities who are not currently aware of VPSHR at the project and raise VPSHR issues at the corporate level with ArcelorMittal Liberia. Green Advocates established structures in three counties (Nimba County, Bong County, and Grand Bassa County) of Liberia to lead advocacy against Human rights violations by multinational corporations. Nimba has the Nimba County Natural Resources Rights Alliance (NCNRRA) and the Nimba Women's Resources Rights Platform (NWRRP); Bong has the Bong County Railroad and Resources Affected Communities (BCRRAC) and the Bong County Women Railroad and Resources Platform (BCWRRP), and Bassa has the Grand Bassa Coastal Resources and Communities Alliance (GBCRCA) and the Grand Bassa Women Resources Rights Platform (GBWRRP).

Green Advocate provided awareness on the VPSHR at the Global Convening Workshop on Indigenous Peoples on Audit, Certification, and verification Systems Impacting Indigenous Peoples' Rights from 10 - 12 March 2025 in Jakarta, Indonesia

Green Advocates provided awareness on the VPSHR at the Members Gathering of the Coalition of Human Rights Defenders in Development held in Nairobi, Kenya, from July 8 - 11, 2025.

Green Advocate provided awareness on the VPSHR at the Independent Accountability Mechanism (IAMnet) and CSO Annual Meeting held in Bridgetown, Barbados, in October 2025.

Green Advocates provided awareness on the VPSHR at the Members Strategy Meeting of the Fair Steel Coalition held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from October 12 - 17, 2025.

6. Describe efforts to engage and facilitate participation of non-member CSOs, affected communities, and other relevant stakeholders in the Annual Plenary Meeting or workshops.

Green Advocates and partner organizations, the Alliance for Rural Democracy, Natural Resource Women Platform, and the Mano River Union Civil Society Natural Resources Rights and Governance Platform have engaged directly with local communities and civil society organizations throughout Liberia. Some

communities in Bong County are Zoweinta, Green Hill Quarry, and Lamco Camp. Nimba County communities include Gbobayee, Zortapa, Yelowee, Liagbala, Bonla, and Sanniquellie. Grand Bassa County communities include Big Fanti Town, Moore Town, and Barconie Town.

In addition, Green Advocates has identified civil society organizations that are not members of the NGO Pillar and will create awareness of the VPSHR as well as encourage them to join the VPI. Those organizations include **Human Rights and Governance Organizations in Liberia**

1. Civil
Society Human Rights Advocacy Platform (CSOHRAP) – A network of human rights organizations working on advocacy, monitoring, and accountability.
2. National
Coalition of Civil Society Organizations of Liberia (NACCSOL) – A nationwide coalition promoting citizen participation, accountability, and human rights.
3. Foundation
for Human Rights and Democracy (FOHRD) – Works on governance, environmental justice, land rights, anti-corruption, and human rights advocacy.
4. Foundation
for International Dignity (FIND) – Promotes peacebuilding, democratic governance, access to justice, and human rights.
5. Center
for Law and Human Rights – Provides legal representation and advocacy to advance human rights and the rule of law.

Green Advocates leverages opportunities to raise awareness and promote understanding of the Voluntary Principles and their importance at meetings it has participated in as relevant. For Example, attendance at the Annual General Meeting of ArcelorMittal held in Luxembourg in May 2025.

7. Describe your efforts to promote the adoption of the Voluntary Principles into relevant government of corporate policies, as well as international standards and/or guidelines.

Liberia transitioned to a new government in 2024 and a lot of changes has occurred thereby slowing efforts to implement the VPSHR. Green Advocates is seeking working relationship with Liberian government agencies and extractive companies to do risk assessments to develop guidance on the use of public and private security forces.

Country Implementation

8. Describe efforts to strengthen the rule of law in the countries where you work.

Liberia has three distinct and independent branches of government. The Legislative branch makes the laws, the Judicial branch interprets the laws and the Executive branch executes the laws.

The courts are functional adjudicating cases from all levels and there are 16 judicial circuit courts with the highest court in the land being the Supreme court

Liberia is a state with a dual legal system. Traditional chiefs and elders in rural areas enjoy jurisdiction over family law, land disputes and petty crimes. Formal courts cover these issues in all areas (albeit more accessibly in cities and towns) and enjoy exclusive jurisdiction over serious crimes, such as rape and murder. The rule of law still remains a major challenge in Liberia despite these efforts to build confidence in the justice system.

Green Advocates has been engaging the Liberia National Police to embed the VPSHR training in its Vital Installation Training which curriculum includes human rights issues, conflict resolution and the appropriate use of force.

9. Describe efforts to conduct and monitor risk assessments for potential human rights violations in the areas where you work.

Green Advocates engaged communities on the benefits and processes for conducting and monitoring risk

assessments in their communities and companies' areas of operations for potential human rights violations and reporting cases of human rights violations. Consultations and trainings were carried out in the Salala Rubber Corporation, where Green Advocates represent 22 affected communities in a case of land grab, forceful displacement of indigenous people, SGBV, pollution, and bad labor practices against the International Finance Corporation. Security training was also offered to these communities to spot potential threats and harms and how to avoid and prepare themselves.

In Nimba County, communities affected by the operations of ArcelorMittal continue to commend the private security firm, Security Expert Guard Agency of Liberia (SEGAL), after a damning initial report that puts the private security in complicity with state security for human rights abuses. This security working practice change occurred after the meeting of SEGAL and Green Advocates and was verified by a second assessment visit to the communities.

Green Advocates International, representing numerous inhabitants and residents of customary and Indigenous communities in Grand Cape Mount County—such as Kinjor, Jikando, and Larjor formally requested the presence of Bea Mountain Mining Corporation at a forthcoming conference held on their behalf. The assembly will present direct testimonies concerning the detrimental effects of your operations' toxic and industrial effluent discharges in the Marvoe Creek and the Mafa River, which have caused significant injury and harm to these communities.

10. Describe your efforts to strengthen policies, procedures and guidelines related to the implementation of the Voluntary Principles.

Green Advocates was not able to strengthen policies, procedures, and guidelines related to the implementation of the Voluntary Principles in its engagements with private security and public security in Liberia.

11. Describe your efforts to engage with or support engagement with the public security sectors and/or private security sectors in the countries where you work.

Green Advocates has made use of the library of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR) using resources to support implementation of the VPSHR. Green Advocates also developed a tool on the VPSHR in simple Liberian pidgin English cartoon stories for use by communities to easily understand the VPSHR in Nimba County. Our work has been focused on communities affected by multinational corporations operating in Liberia. This Bottom – Up approach is crucial to ensuring peace and stability within the communities in relation to frequent protests that often turn violent.

Green Advocates was labeled by a previous Liberian government as “Anti – Development” and our offices closed down in 2017. Our efforts with both public and private security have been to build a new relationship, working together to promote the VPSHR in Liberia. Green Advocates continues to consult regularly with various public and private security institutions to discuss security sector challenges and consider strategies for improvement.

12. Describe efforts to hold Voluntary Principles participants accountable for upholding their roles and responsibilities as members of the Voluntary Principles Initiative.

Green Advocates asks questions in board meetings, NGO Pillar meetings, and at the annual plenary about participants' accountability for upholding their roles and responsibilities as members of the Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI). In 2025, Green Advocates participated in meetings with OMV at the plenary to ask questions on allegations that Senior executives OMV AG stand accused of aiding and abetting large-scale war crimes in Sudan between 1999 and 2003, including systematic and deliberate targeting of civilians, the destruction of the

means necessary for survival, and enslavement. Eventually, OMV was accepted as an Engaged Member of the VPI.

Lessons, Effective Strategies, Innovative Approaches, and Additional Reporting

13. Lessons or issues from this reporting year, as well as plans or opportunities to advance the Voluntary Principles for the organization.

- FUNDING is the major obstacle to implementing the VPSHR in Liberia;
- Lack of resources to reach out to communities affected by companies and security forces;
- The termination by USAID by the US State Department continues to impede work in the communities;
- Government and companies are reluctant to meet Green Advocates to discuss the VPs after receiving letters and several follow-ups;
- Provision of pro bono services for community members is not readily available;
- Obtaining FOI and litigation process can be overwhelming and takes very long time;
- Private securities request for training on the VPSHR was not implemented.
- Many communities, companies, government, public, and private securities are not aware of VPSHR;
- Companies (ArcelorMittal Liberia) made false declaration in their annual report about implementing the VPSHR in Liberia;
- Adequate documentation on Risk Assessment is not available by private securities;
- Local communities are more receptive to learning about the VPSHR;
- Public and private securities use disproportionate force to quell protests, leading to deaths in some areas;
- Media engagement is needed to promote the VPSHR.

Action plans to implement the VPSHR in the coming year are as follows:

- Reach out to additional 5 additional private security companies to create awareness on the VPSHR;
- Continue collaboration and discuss with the Liberia National Police to provide VPSHR training;
- Reach out to 5 additional corporations to create awareness on the VPSHR;
- Continue communities' engagement and awareness on the VPSHR;
- Reach out to relevant Liberian Government ministries to create awareness on the VPSHR;
- Reach out to 5 Liberian Civil Society organizations to create awareness on the VPSHR;
- Reach out to United Nations organizations and Diplomatic Missions in Liberia to create awareness on the VPSHR;
- Plan a stakeholder workshop implementing the VPSHR in Liberia;

14. Human Rights Defenders - Describe initiatives, policies, procedures, programs, and/or activities related to the protection of human rights defenders, as set in the VPI's "Guidance on Respecting the Rights of Human Rights Defenders" (a copy is available on the VPI website's Resources page).

The VPI's *Guidance on Respecting the Rights of Human Rights Defenders* provides a framework that Green Advocates can use to strengthen the protection of environmental and community defenders in Liberia. Key actions include:

- **Adopting a Human Rights Defender Protection Policy**
that recognizes and safeguards the rights of defenders.
- **Monitoring and documenting threats and attacks**
against defenders through a risk-tracking and reporting system.
- **Establishing an early warning and rapid response mechanism**
that provides emergency legal, security, and relocation support.

- **Supporting community defender networks**
in mining and other high-risk areas.
- **Providing training**
on human rights, security, digital safety, and documentation of abuses.
- **Engaging companies and security providers**
to ensure security practices respect defenders' rights and prevent reprisals.
- **Strengthening grievance mechanisms**
that are accessible, confidential, and safe for complainants.
- **Offering legal assistance and strategic litigation**
to defenders facing criminalization, harassment, or rights violations.
- **Advocating for civic space protections**
, including freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly.
- **Convening multi-stakeholder dialogues**
involving communities, government, companies, and civil society to address risks to defenders.
- **Promoting human rights due diligence and defender impact assessments**
in corporate and development projects.
- **Raising public awareness**
about the important role of human rights defenders and reducing stigmatization.
- **Monitoring and evaluating protection efforts**
to measure impact and improve effectiveness.

For Green Advocates, the most practical priorities would be establishing a defender protection policy, creating a risk-monitoring and rapid-response system, supporting community defender networks in extractive-industry areas, providing legal aid and strategic litigation, and producing regular civic-space and human rights defender protection reports. These measures would align closely with the VPI Guidance and help create a safer environment for defenders in Liberia.

15. Participation in In-Country Working Groups - Describe your participation in the In-Country Working Groups, for example: which ICWGs you participated in this year, and information on in-kind support/contribution.

N/A

16. Gender - Describe specific initiatives, policies, and/or procedures that address the needs of gender and vulnerable groups in the provision of security, as set in the VPI's "IGT companion Tool – Operationalizing the Voluntary Principles Through the Lens of Protecting and Respecting the Unique Needs and Rights of Women and Other Disadvantaged Groups" (a copy of this tool is available on the VPI website's Resources page).

Green Advocates will address the needs of women and other vulnerable groups in security-related activities by adopting gender-responsive and inclusive policies and procedures consistent with the VPI's

IGT Companion Tool. Key measures include:

- **Implementing a Gender and Social Inclusion Policy**

that prohibits discrimination, harassment, and gender-based violence.

- **Conducting gender-sensitive risk assessments**

to identify security threats and barriers faced by women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups.

- **Ensuring inclusive community consultations**

that provide meaningful participation opportunities for vulnerable populations.

- **Protecting women human rights defenders**

through monitoring, legal assistance, emergency support, and security training.

- **Establishing accessible and confidential grievance mechanisms**

that safely address complaints, including gender-based violence cases.

- **Providing training**

on gender equality, human rights, non-discrimination, and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

- **Promoting women's participation**

in community security committees, stakeholder dialogues, and natural resource governance processes.

- **Facilitating access to support services**

such as legal aid, psychosocial counseling, healthcare, and protection services.

- **Collecting gender-disaggregated data**

to monitor impacts and improve programs.

- **Advocating for inclusive security governance**

by encouraging companies and security providers to incorporate gender considerations and accountability measures.

In practice, Green Advocates will support women affected by mining and land conflicts, strengthen the protection of women environmental defenders, ensure vulnerable groups participate in decision-making processes, and monitor gender-related human rights and security concerns in project-affected communities.