

1 SEPTEMBER 2018

**RÉTTUR - AÐALSTEINSSON & PARTNER'S COMMUNICATION ON
PROGRESS TO THE UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT**

*Réttur Aðalsteinsson & Partner's fourth annual report on the implementation
of the United Nations ten global compact principles and sustainable
development goals.*



INTRODUCTION

As a responsible global citizen, Réttur has long been committed to environmentally, economically and socially sustainable practices. During the last 12 months, we remained dedicated and focused in our efforts to advance on our sustainable initiatives and the implementation of United Nation's ten global compact principles, which are deeply embedded in our culture and business operations.

We are therefore pleased to contribute our fourth communication on progress, highlighting some of the most positive steps taken during the reporting period in furtherance of our sustainability goals.

WHO WE ARE

Réttur traces its origins back to 1969 when Ragnar Aðalsteinsson, one of Iceland's leading attorneys started his private practice in Reykjavík. Today, Ragnar's partners at Réttur include; Supreme Court Attorneys Sigríður Rut Júlíusdóttir, Sigurður Örn Hilmarsson as well as District Court Attorneys, Sigrún Ingibjörg Gísladóttir, Kári Hólmar Ragnarsson and Friðrik Ársælsson.

Réttur is internationally recognized for professionalism and the highest quality legal services and is ranked as a top-tier firm by The Legal 500. Réttur is also ranked by Creditinfo in 2017 as one of Iceland's leading companies in terms of its strength and stability. In addition, Réttur received during the reporting period an award for excellence from the Icelandic Financial News (*Icel. Viðsiptablaðið*) and Keldan. The Keldan award is granted to only 2% of Icelandic companies that fulfil the strict conditions by Icelandic Financial News and Keldan to qualify as Excellent in Iceland.

WHAT WE DO AND WHO WE HELP

Our attorneys have extensive experience in litigation and have worked on complex cases in numerous areas of law. The firm remains true to the philosophy Ragnar Adalsteinsson, the firm's senior partner, started with; giving members of the public a fair chance to pursue their rights. We therefore work for companies and individuals alike.

Our main areas of expertise include; human rights law, immigration and refugee law litigation, copyright law, constitutional law, property rights law, insolvency law, tort law, competition law, company law and contract law.

For decades Réttur has worked in close cooperation with our highly knowledgeable counterparts in Scandinavia, the UK, Germany and the United States to provide our

clients with appropriate advice regarding their legal situation in the respective country or region.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Company Name	Réttur- Aðalsteinsson & Partners ehf.
Address	Klapparstígur 25-27, 101 Reykjavík.
Telephone/website	+354-511-1206/ www.rettur.is
Number of Employees	12

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

Réttur has been a participant of the United Nations Global Compact since 2014.

Réttur is reporting according to the UN Global Compact “GC Active level” and describes herein how it implements the United Nations ten global compact principles and sustainable development goals.

This document furthermore includes a letter from our CEO and Senior Partner, Ragnar Aðalsteinsson, Supreme Court Attorney, reaffirming our continued support for the United Nations Global Compact ten principles and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

“As a global citizen, Réttur - Aðalsteinsson & Partners firmly believes that advancing on our sustainability practices is essential to our growth and longevity. We have therefore taken various steps throughout the reporting period, 2017-2018, with the aim to further integrate the ten principles of the UN Global Compact into our business strategy, culture and operations.”

Yours sincerely,

Ragnar Aðalsteinsson
Senior Partner, CEO
Réttur - Aðalsteinsson & Partners

IMPLEMENTING THE TEN PRINCIPLES INTO STRATEGIES AND OPERATIONS

I. HUMAN RIGHTS- PRINCIPLES 1 AND 2

- Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights
- Make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuse
- Measurement of Outcome

As a leading law firm in the practice of human rights law in Iceland, we pride ourselves in the supporting, respecting and protecting human rights for all persons. We are honoured to play a vital role in the advancement and the respect for human rights for all, both within our own organisation and the community at large. Recognising that the very nature of our operation is guided by the respect for human rights, we continued throughout the reporting period to proudly demonstrate our support and demand for the highest human rights standards and remained non-complicit with human rights abuse by utilizing every resource at our disposal.

In advancement of these objectives, we continued throughout the period to improve our efforts to integrate and disseminate the global compact principles and its sustainable goals in all areas of our operations and business strategy. In so doing, we placed significant focus on the enhancement of our best practices regarding how we contribute to the development of the best human rights standards in Iceland, regionally and internationally. Our main method of execution is through continued, respect for the relevant laws and regulations governing human rights in Iceland, advocating for legislative and policy changes affecting human rights, encouragement and support for the active participation of our employees in all initiatives aimed at maintaining and enhancing knowledge in the field. For each action, we measure the outcome, by identifying areas of success and areas for improvement.

A. Highlights from our main activities during 2017-2018

i. Réttur's efforts to improve human rights legislation and policies

The Icelandic government has long been criticised, by human rights bodies, including by the European Commission Against Racism & Intolerance ECRI in its 2017 report, for not having a comprehensive non-discrimination legislation. Réttur has throughout the

years, including during the reporting period, advocated for and raised the attention of the Icelandic government to the importance of implementing two key pieces of legislation on non-discrimination, i.e. Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin and Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.

At Parliamentary inaugural ceremony hosted by the Icelandic Ethical Humanist Association on 14 December 2017, one of our team members delivered an address to ministers of parliament emphasizing the need for the implementation of the aforementioned Directives. On 11 June 2018, the Icelandic parliament, Althing, passed legislation implementing the aforementioned directives (Act no 85/2018 and Act no 86/2018), which are aimed at improving the human rights situation of all persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin and ensure for them equal treatment in employment and occupation.

Following the 28 October 2017 general elections in Iceland, the new coalition government formed by the Left-Green Movement, Independent Party and the Progressive Party. On 30 November 2017, the government introduced in its manifesto, the government's policy and focus on human rights and equality, stating that *"the government places emphasis on gender equality"*. While Réttur remains fully supportive of the government's agenda on gender equality, we also believe in equality for all. Guided by those beliefs, we use every opportunity, inside and outside the courtroom, including engaging in public discourse on non-discrimination reiterate that stance.

ii. Immigrant issues and the Metoo movement

During the height of the MeToo campaign, our teammates engaged in direct and indirect dialogue with the government, highlighting the need for policy reform, which entails a broader approach to addressing equality issues in Iceland, given the vulnerable position of other groups, including but not limited to women of foreign origin. During the MeToo campaign, women of foreign origin revealed extreme levels of sexual harassment and violence toward them, within their homes and workplace.

Our teammates took active role in the public discourse, appearing on several news medias, including the national media, and took active part in events, including the One Billion Rising Event hosted by Un Women and delivered address alongside First Lady of Iceland, Ms Eliza Reid, with the aim of shedding light on equality situation of women

of foreign origin. The Prime Minister on 28 January 2018 made a public declaration that she would review the situation of immigrant women by placing it as an item on the agenda of the New Council of Ministers for Gender Equality.

During the local government elections in Reykjavík in spring of 2018, one of our teammates was elected the spokeswoman for immigration issues on behalf of candidates of the Independence Party.

On 6 June 2018, we were received a grant from the Immigrant Development Fund to conduct a research on the, "The Equal treatment of immigrants on the labour market: Possibilities for employment within the public sector as qualified professionals ". We anticipate the conclusion and publishing of our findings in 2019.

iii. Continued cooperation with the Icelandic Bar Association

During the reporting period, Réttur continued to encourage and fully support other voluntary contributions by our team members to the human rights initiatives of both governmental and non-governmental entities both in Iceland and abroad.

As with the previous year, we continued our efforts to increase cooperation between our firm and the Icelandic Bar Association. As noted in our last communication, several members of our team were elected members of the Icelandic Bar Association's Working Group on asylum seekers in Iceland. The working-group operated from spring of 2017 to September of 2017 and was tasked with drafting a report identifying legal issues affecting the human rights of asylum seekers in Iceland and propose recommendations. The group published its finding in October of 2017 and a resolution was passed by the Icelandic Bar Association meeting held on 5 October 2017, stating that:

"A meeting of the Icelandic Bar Association held on 5 October 2017 resolves that the established procedure in this country regarding the processing of applications for applicants of international protection could be in violation the fundamental rights of the applicants.

The meeting therefore challenges the Minister of Justice to guarantee for all applicants of international protection access to effective legal remedies and access to an independent lawyer from the commencement of the procedure and that this legal assistance will be paid by the State Treasury."

Another report, drafted by a working group appointed by the Icelandic Bar Association, of which one member of our team was appointed, published its report on legal aid, on

26 April 2018. The report proposed changes to the rules on legal aid which were accepted by the Minister of Justice who subsequently amended the rules on legal aid, to increase per annum income criteria, which criticised as not being compatible with basic consumer standards in Iceland. This is a welcome change, and a step in the right direction of ensuring the rights of more citizens to access to court.

At the last annual general meeting of the Icelandic Bar Association, held on 25 May 2018, one member of our team was elected as a substitute member and secretary of the Board.

iv. The rehearing of historical Guðmundur and Geirfinnur case

As reported in last our communication on progress members of our team argued one of the most controversial public cases in Iceland's history. The case concerns the Supreme Court of Iceland's ruling in the case concerning the disappearance and assumed murder of Gudmundur and Geirfinnur in 1974 and the conviction of six individuals in 1980. Ever since the convictions, there have been loud voices that the case involved coerced confessions and other serious breaches of the defendants' fundamental rights and there is a general consensus in society about a real doubt as to whether those who were convicted in the case had anything to do with the disappearances. Ragnar Adalsteinsson, the firm's Senior Partner, never gave up on the case, since his first attempt in 1997 to have it reheard. Following an official investigation in 2013, the Ministry of Interior's Rehearing Committee concluded in February 2017 that the case shall be reheard by the Supreme Court. Leading the charge in these proceedings is Ragnar Aðalsteinsson, who argued successfully for the rehearing of the case, *inter alia*, on the grounds that the human rights of the convicted were violated by the authorities during the initial proceedings. The rehearing at the Supreme Court is scheduled for September 2018.

A documentary about the case entitled "Out of thin air" was released in the spring of 2017 on Netflix.

- v. *The right of a disabled person to due process, non-discrimination and access to parenting role*



Photo credit: visir.is/Vilhelm

During the period members of our team litigated in a landmark case concerning a disabled person's right *inter alia* to, due process, non-discrimination and access to the parenting role. The suit was filed against the Government Agency for Child Protection (*icel. Barnaverndarstofa*), who rejected the application of Ms. Freyja Hardardottir, 30-year-old woman with *osteogenesis imperfecta*, to become a foster parent on the grounds of her disability. Our team members represented Ms. Hardardottir, citing a number of human rights violations both under the Icelandic Constitution and international human rights conventions, including the European Convention on Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The Reykjavík District Court found in favor of the Government Agency for Child Protection.

Ms. Hardardottir has since appealed the case to the Court of Appeal (*icel. Landsréttur*) and a hearing is pending.

vi. Continued cooperation with law schools in Iceland and contribution to education

As with the previous year, our team of professional and knowledgeable attorneys in human rights and constitutional law, undertook various active roles as adjunct professors and taught courses at law schools and universities, namely Bifröst University, University of Iceland, Reykjavik University and the University of Akureyri.

Our team members also delivered guest lectures and public lectures at the same universities, including a lecture hosted by the School of Business at the University of Iceland in February 2018, entitled “Race and Ethnicity in the Workplace in Iceland”, taught a “Refresher course in Jurisprudence” at the University of Reykjavík, taught constitutional law at the University of Reykjavík and held a lecture basics in human rights for all 1st year students in health science at the University of Iceland.

In 2017, one of our team members and expert in refugee law introduced a new course in the curriculum at the University of Reykjavík Law School on refugee law, which is now being taught biannually.

During the period Réttur also sponsored the Project Girls, for girls in Iceland. Project Girls is a mentorship program originating in Harvard for young girls between the ages 18-25. One our team members and mentor, is responsible for establishing the project in Iceland and alongside the project manager in Harvard Kennedy School.

In addition, we endeavoured to provide financial support to employees, to the extent possible, for participation in continued education programs and research initiatives.

vii. Lectures, symposiums and other activities

As with the previous reporting year, members of our team organized and participated in various seminars and symposium both in Iceland and in international forums where they discussed human rights issues as well as constitutional developments in Iceland. These include:

- Extensive work for the Disability Association of Iceland in lobbying for changes to a new legislation on the service for disabled people with extensive needs for assistance.
- Participated in creating a united front among the biggest NGOs in Iceland that fight for rights of disabled people as well as the academic community which resulted in success in changing proposed legislation towards a more progressive human rights-based focus, held an inspirational talk for all

managers at the Icelandic Social Insurance Administration, held talks and articles to support Visual Artists in their quest of getting paid for exhibitions in Icelandic galleries. Lead to positive changes in contracts.

- An International Conference in Berkeley University on the Icelandic Constitutional Project (one of organisers/speakers).
- Extensive involvement in civil society as the chairperson of the Icelandic Constitutional Society, including academic events, lobbying, talks and actions.
- One member of our team pitched a new TV series for the National Service Broadcaster of Iceland which aims at explaining basics of law to the general public. Work has started and estimated premier is early 2020.
- One member of our team held a talk entitled “Where is the Constitution”, organised by the Constitutional Council on 17 October 2017.
- Our CEO and most senior partner, Ragnar Adalsteinsson, held a talk at the Museum of Photography about the Geirfinnur and Gudmundur Case, entitled “Characters and Players” on 8 December 2017 and another talk about the Constitutional Procedure at the Cycle Art Festival on 22 September 2017.
- One member of our team held a lecture at the University of Iceland on “The United Nations Constitutional Assistance and Human Rights Protection in Post-Conflict Situations”, on 3 November 2017.
- Members of our team delivered talks at the bi-annual conference on Gender Equality, hosted by the Ministry of Welfare in spring 2018.
- One member of our team held a talk at the annual Brádadaga, a conference for Emergency healthcare providers, hosted by Landspítali, The National University Hospital of Iceland, in spring 2018.

Further to the above, we continue to work with our counterparts abroad, sharing information and ideas on human rights and constitutional developments in Iceland as well as our best practices in the same area. Some of our activities include:

- Lecture in Harvard Law School about the new Crowd Sourced Constitution of Iceland.
- Lecture on basics in human rights on the international Nursing day at the National Hospital of Iceland.
- Lecture at an International Conference on Disability Rights in Stockholm on the Icelandic jurisprudence in relations to fighting for the rights of disabled people: <https://lagensomverktyg.se/2017/lawasatool2018/>
- Lecture in Edinburgh's Story Tellers Centre on the Icelandic Constitutional Process (Nordic Horizon).

In addition to the foregoing, members of our team continued their efforts to advance human rights here at home, through writing numerous articles published by various news outlets as well as in various law journals and books. These include, but are not limited to articles published in the Icelandic Lawyer's Association Law Journal in 2017-2018, entitled:

- "Right to liberty and security of person under the European Convention on Human Rights", (Revised,) The General Principle, Implementation and Impact of Icelandic Law, pp. 135-188. Reykjavík 2017.
- "Administrative Procedures of the Supreme Court"- Afmælisrit Jóns Steinar Gunnlaugssonar, 2017, pp. 321-335
- Articles published on www.rumor.is „Environmental benefits of choosing locally grown vegetables“, “How housing shortage increases social problems in Reykjavík”, “Commuting via bike in Reykjavík”, “Recent judgements of the ECHR on freedom of speech” and “Best and worst ECHR judgements of 2017”.

In our continued effort to influence legal and policy reforms affecting human rights in Iceland, we have made various submissions to the Parliament in respect of bills or amendments to existing laws as well as draw the attention of the Parliamentary Ombudsman to various practices of administrative bodies we deemed to be potentially inconsistent with administrative laws and principles.

B. Pro bono work, other voluntary contributions and recognition

As with the previous year, during the year 2017 the Legal Aid Committee continued to reject applications for legal aid from asylum seekers. This made access to court practically impossible for those asylum seekers who sought to challenge a negative final decision at the judicial level. Despite these challenges, we continued our work in defending the human rights of immigrants and asylum seekers against the Icelandic authority on a pro bono basis. We also offered more pro-bono services to applicants of international protection at the administrative level than the previous year.

We furthermore continued our pro-bono efforts in other fields. As with the previous year, a significant portion of these cases were in the field of criminal justice, as the team brought several tort cases for unlawful, arrests, unlawful deportation cases and alleged police brutality. Another important area has been the right to privacy, family life and opinions, the team having taken on cases concerning the right to non-intervention of the government into these spheres of freedoms.

During the period, we continued our work as members of various committees dealing with human rights issues, which include, re-election for a seat on the Representative Council of SOS- Children's Village Iceland. Another member of our team was elected as the chairman of the Icelandic Refugee Committee, which oversees the process of welcoming quota refugees to Iceland and works in close cooperation with the United Nations Refugee Agency, UNCHR.

As with the previous years, our team members continue to garner recognition for their valuable contributions to the development of human rights in Iceland and have been invited on various occasions by local medias and international media to give their views from a legal standpoint where public discourse concerns potential human rights violations.

II. LABOUR STANDARDS- PRINCIPLES 3-6

- **Businesses should uphold freedom of association & effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining**
- **The elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour**
- **The effective abolition of child labour**
- **Eliminate discrimination in respect of employment and occupation**
- **Measurement of Outcome**

A. Our internal policy on labour standards

At Réttur - Aðalsteinsson & Partners, we believe that to ensure the highest labour standards within our community, we must start at home. Thus, our internal policies are designed to guarantee for all our employees an equitable and respectful working environment. This position and commitment remain unchanged during the reporting period, and we have taken even further steps to ensure respect for these rights guaranteed for all our employees. Further, it is our belief that maintaining the highest labour standards provides our company with new opportunities and responsibilities that we readily explore.

Essential to our objective to guarantee for our employees the highest labour standards, we continue to promote teamwork, good health and wellness, welcome diversity among our employees and hold equality as well as the respect for family life at a high standard.

Our company encourages healthy lifestyle, with a focus on both good mental and physical health. In support of that initiative, we offer reimbursement of a fraction of

gym memberships, as well as offer one free session with a massage therapist per month. Réttur recognises its responsibility to ensure a healthy working environment for all members of staff and will continue to take the necessary steps in adherence of that responsibility.

We also guarantee our employees' rights to compulsory and non-compulsory benefits which include, paid parental leave, paid leisure, paid scheduled family-oriented leisure activities, year-end bonuses as well as annual appreciation items.

Further, we are committed to ensuring that all our employees have the right to freely join associations and undertake collective bargaining.

Our mission is to continue to improve on these initiatives and further integrate the United Nation Sustainable Standards into our everyday operations.

i. Our team members' contribution to our labour standards

At Réttur - Aðalsteinsson & Partners we foster inclusion and employees are guaranteed a work environment free of any form of discrimination based on gender, race, gender identity, origin, background, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or age. Our team is comprised of 12 members from various legal and cultural background.

Our policy is to ensure equality with respect to recruitment, promotion and work conditions within our organisation.

Our small workforce continues to create a unique opportunity for employees, who each have an opportunity to influence and structure the company's policy in terms of our sustainability efforts. During the period, we introduce anti-bullying policy to ensure that every member of our team feels safe and free from any form of discrimination. Réttur - Aðalsteinsson & Partners also permits flexible working hours as well as remote work whenever feasible.

While we continue to be ambitious in our aim to provide the best labour standards, we recognize that we cannot achieve this objective alone. We therefore continue to encourage active communication with employees in respect of work conditions and or any other work-related concerns. At Réttur - Aðalsteinsson & Partners, we regularly consult with employees on operational changes and or any internal decisions. We therefore welcome suggestions from our employees aimed at achieving this objective.

Our aim for 2017-2018 is to continue to improve our corporate culture. We believe that improving on our firm's best practices is vital for our firm's outstanding reputation and continued success.

B. Our internship program

Réttur-Aðalsteinsson & Partners have a long-standing relationship with the law departments of Reykjavik University and University of Iceland and have through internship programs invited law students to work at our firm as paralegals.

As with the previous years, during the reporting period, we invited qualified law students to work at our firm, with the aim of providing them with valuable legal training and experience in our main practice areas.

III. ENVIRONMENT- PRINCIPLES 7-9

- **Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges**
- **Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility**
- **Encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies**
- **Measurement of Outcome**

In our previous reports, we made a commitment to restructure our environmental policy with the aim of minimizing significantly our operational footprint. We reaffirm that commitment and are pleased to report that we continue to honour our commitment and have taken even further steps to meet our targeted goals.

During the period, we adopted a more comprehensive environmental policy, with our "Green our Office" agenda, the aim of which is to improve on our eco-friendly initiatives within the office. Under this policy we aim to increase our green purchasing, minimize waste and their disposal, increase our recycling efforts, minimize energy use and further increase awareness of our staff and stakeholders on environmentally friendly practices.

We continued our efforts to encourage environmentally responsible and friendly behaviour among our employees by offering incentives, such as commuter stipends for use of public transport. As with the previous year, we are pleased to report that more of our employees used public transport during the reporting period. In addition,

some of our employees opted for other pollution-free modes of transport, by cycling or walking to work.

In accordance with our environmental policy, we continued to discourage the use of disposable food and drink containers, and refrain from offering clients bottled beverages. By investing in a new online filing system and lap tops, we have been able to reduce the use of paper significantly and continue to discourage printing unless strictly necessary. During the last reporting period 2016-2017, we changed the font used in our correspondence from Calibri to the more environmentally friendly Calibri light. We furthermore continued our efforts to rely solely on eco-friendly products for office use, such as stationary and other supplies. At present we only use eco-friendly paper provided by eco-friendly suppliers and will increase those efforts under our green our office agenda.

We proudly continued these practices during this reporting period and have seen a steady decline in related expenditure as well as our carbon footprint. We have also utilized to an even greater extent electronic invoicing to clients as well as the safe storage and disposal of toxic wastes. Our goal for the next reporting period is to adhere to the responsibilities outlined in our green our office policy.

IV. ANTI-CORRUPTION- PRINCIPLE 10

- **Businesses should work against all forms of corruption, including extortion and bribery**
- **Measurement of Outcome**

As with the previous years, we remain dedicated to our commitment to work against all forms of corruption. At Réttur Aðalsteinsson & Partners, we have a zero-tolerance policy for any form of corruption, which applies in our own organisation, to our stakeholders as well as our clients. Recognizing our position within the community, as officers of the court who are held to a high legal and ethical standard, we continue to strive to provide the best quality legal services to our clients in full compliance with all applicable laws, including but not limited to laws on anti- corruption and the Attorney's Code of Ethics.