

Protecting displaced and stateless persons: the role and experiences of NHRIs and opportunities for collaboration with UNHCR

Online event co-hosted by GANHRI, UNHCR and the Permanent Mission of Norway in Geneva

16 February 2021, 14.00 -15.30 CET

Concept

National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) play a crucial role in promoting and protecting human rights in countries in all regions worldwide. With constitutionally or legislatively entrenched broad mandates to protect and promote human rights, NHRIs are uniquely situated to influence policy, law and practice on the ground, being both part of the States' institutional framework and independent from State interference. Committed to uphold the human rights of all people without distinction or discrimination, they are particularly well-placed to engage with and support those who may face challenges accessing other State mechanisms and exercising their rights. This includes refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, returnees and persons who are stateless or at risk of statelessness.

UNHCR works strategically in partnership with GANHRI and NHRIs in many countries to enhance the protection of these groups and the well-being of their host communities. Key opportunities these partnerships present include:

- UNHCR can support and encourage NHRIs to use their broad mandates to promote and protect the human rights of all persons in their territory or under their jurisdictions, including persons who are in need of international protection, such as those forcibly displaced or stateless;
- NHRIs' expertise and competences are valuable strengths upon which UNHCR can call to advance legislation related to asylum, immigration, internal displacement, nationality or statelessness, handle individual cases, monitor cases of refoulement, monitor detention, facilitate access to redress mechanisms and advise public authorities on the inclusion of persons under UNHCR's mandate in national programmes, policies and services; and
- NHRIs, unlike other actors, make public their findings and recommendations to national authorities including parliament, as well as at regional and international levels, which can increase the visibility of issues related to the rights of refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced and stateless persons, and provide further basis for advocacy at local level.

Many positive examples of cooperation between NHRIs and UNHCR staff exist worldwide which UNHCR in partnership with GANHRI is now exploring to replicate in other contexts. In order to build on this

positive collaboration between UNHCR and NHRIs in the field, UNHCR in partnership with GANHRI is launching [UNHCR Guide on UNHCR's engagement with national human rights institutions](#) which will provide an overview of key features of national human rights institutions and suggests ways whereby UNHCR across all regions can concretely engage and leverage these institutions and their broad mandate and competences. It is also part of a broader effort to both mainstream human rights approaches in UNHCR's protection work, and to support colleagues to expand in an informed manner their advocacy opportunities related to human rights engagement at national, regional and international level. Following the launch of the Guide, UNHCR and GANHRI will launch a joint online community of practice, as well as conduct regional online events.

Objectives

The Guide on UNHCR's engagement with national human rights institutions in the context of forced displacement and statelessness will be launched during this online event co-hosted by UNHCR and GANHRI. The event will focus on the role and experiences of national human rights institutions in protecting and promoting the human rights of forcibly displaced and stateless persons. The event will also explore opportunities for strengthened collaboration between NHRIs and UNHCR in support of affected population, in collaboration with other stakeholders. The event will showcase examples of good practice of UNHCR-NHRI collaboration at local level, and discuss opportunities for such practice to be replicated in other contexts across all regions.

Specifically, the event will be an opportunity for NHRIs and UNHCR participants to:

1. Discuss the role and experiences of NHRIs in protecting displaced and stateless population and related consequences on their enjoyment of rights;
2. Showcase examples of good practice of UNHCR-NHRI collaboration at local level, and discuss opportunities for such practice to be replicated in other contexts across all regions;
3. Develop practical strategies for NHRIs to employ to address the situation displaced and stateless persons;
4. Draw from the guidance and experience from experts and identify opportunities for collaboration in support of displaced and stateless populations; and
5. Present the Guide and launch the online community of practice for NHRIs/ UNHCR.

Target audience

- Members and staff of NHRIs from all regions
- UNHCR staff at Headquarters and field offices
- States (including Permanent Missions in Geneva)
- NGOs
- UN agencies

The event will be moderated by Tine Mørch Smith, Ambassador of the Permanent Mission of Norway.

Agenda

1,5 hour is allocated for this webinar.

14.00-14.02	Opening of the webinar
14.02-14.12	Welcome by UNHCR and GANHRI <i>Gillian Triggs, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, UNHCR</i> <i>Freddy Carrión Intriago, GANHRI Chairperson</i>
14.15-14.20	Presentation of the UNHCR Guide on UNHCR's engagement with national human rights institutions (UNHCR) <i>Madeline Garlick, Chief of the Protection Policy and Legal Advice Section in the Division of International Protection, UNHCR</i>
14.20-14.36	Panel 1 <i>Maria Gavouneli, NHRI Greece</i> <i>Yamini Pande, UNHCR, Kenya</i>
14.36-14.50	Questions & Answers
14.50-15.05	Panel 2 - Good practice example <i>Luis Andrés Fajardo, NHRI Colombia</i> <i>Jozef Merckx, UNHCR, Colombia</i>
15.05-15.20	Questions & Answers
15.20-15.25	Summmary and closing <i>Katharina Rose, Geneva Representative, GANHRI</i>
15.25-15.30	Summary, closing and way forward <i>Grainne O'hara, Director of the Division of International Protection UNHCR</i>
15.30	End of webinar

Background material for participants

- *UNHCR Guide on UNHCR's engagement with national human rights institutions*

NHRI participants are encouraged to participate in the GANHRI-hosted community of practice for NHRIs on the human rights dimensions of COVID-19 which provides an opportunity for NHRIs to exchange experiences, discuss approaches and seek advice and assistance (for login please email: fuse@ganhri.org).

UNHCR participants can connect to the community of practices on human rights engagement, through a dedicated channel on collaboration with NHRIs.

- *Video on how to prevent and address statelessness- role of NHRIs:* <https://youtu.be/ZJCzsPlyFeE>

Date

16th February 2020 14.00- 15.30 CET.

Language

This webinar will be in English.

Registration

You can register here: <http://bit.ly/16f21gls>. An invitation link will be sent to registered participants.

Contact

At the GANHRI Head Office: webinars@ganhri.org

At UNHCR: svobodov@unhcr.org