

**The Kyiv Declaration on  
the Role of National Human Rights Institutions in Conflict and Post-Conflict  
Situations**  
**International Conference on the Role of National Human Rights Institutions in Conflict and  
Post-Conflict Situations**  
**Kyiv, Ukraine**  
**21-22 October 2015**

The representatives of National Human Rights Institutions, convened in Kyiv at the International Conference on the Role of National Human Rights Institutions in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations,

*Reaffirming* that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interrelated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing, and that all human rights must be treated fairly, equally and with the same level of attention,

*Recalling* that human rights, development, and peace and security are interrelated and mutually reinforcing,

*Recognizing* the Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions for the Promotion And Protection of Human Rights (The Paris Principles - adopted by General Assembly resolution 48/134 on 20 December 1993) as international standards guiding the work of National Human Rights Institutions,

*Recalling* the most recent resolutions on National Human Rights Institutions by the General Assembly<sup>1</sup> and the Human Rights Council<sup>2</sup>,

*Recognizing* that National Human Rights Institutions play a major role in addressing human rights violations, disseminating information about human rights and providing education on human rights, especially in conflict and post-conflict situations,

*Recognizing* the importance of the collaboration between National Human Rights Institutions in addressing issues related to conflict and its consequences, as well as their collaboration with civil society,

*Recalling* the Merida Declaration on the Role of National Human Rights Institutions in Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Goal 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels,

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<sup>1</sup> A/RES/68/171

<sup>2</sup> [A/HRC/RES/27/18](#)

*Acknowledging* that in conflict and post-conflict situations National Human Rights Institutions face particular difficulties and challenges,

*Taking into account* that in conflict and post-conflict situations the political, judicial and other systems often fail in settling disputes,

*Considering* that in conflict and post-conflict situations the actions required of a National Human Rights Institution differ from usual activities of human rights promotion and protection in peace time, and that the Paris Principles do not provide sufficient guidance on National Human Rights Institutions' role in conflict or post-conflict situations,

*Considering that* National Human Rights Institutions may be subject to criticism by State authorities for underlining and advising on the State's human rights actions and obligations, which should be in compliance with international and regional standards,

*Insisting* on the need to strengthen international cooperation between National Human Rights Institutions, including through the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC), and the regional cooperation between the National Human Rights Institutions, including through the regional networks of National Human Rights Institutions, especially in conflict and post-conflict situations,

Established that National Human Rights Institutions in conflict and post-conflict situations, guided by the principles of humanity, impartiality, independence, objectivity, in cooperation with civil society, and aiming to ensure the respect and protection of human rights are required to:

- Take measures to identify early signs of possible conflict and steps to prevent conflict, including through addressing the violations of human rights;
- Monitor the situation of human rights in accordance with international and regional human rights standards, documenting and responding to violations regardless of which party in the conflict allegedly committed the relevant acts or omissions, and report thereon to international, regional and national human rights mechanisms;
- Objectively and impartially assess the human rights situation and advise on the respect, promotion and protection of human rights and humanitarian law in conflict and in post-conflict periods;
- Take measures for the prevention of human rights violations, including against the most vulnerable, marginalized and minorities groups in fragile situations;

- Carry out systematic communications with authorities with the aim of providing information and recommendations on the measures required to ensure the promotion and protection of human rights in accordance with international and regional standards;
- Promote a dialogue between and with conflicting parties aiming to ensure the promotion, protection and respect of human rights, with particular attention to vulnerable and marginalized groups;
- Establish close partnership with civil society organizations, engage with relevant state institutions, and establish communication with representatives of authorities and non-state actors who *de facto* act on behalf of the parties to the conflict;
- Take steps to ensure human rights are placed at the center of negotiations between the conflicting parties, including in peace agreements, and monitor their implementation;
- Advise and advocate for the promotion, protection and respect of the rights of refugees and IDPs (displaced as a consequence of conflict),
- Take measures to overcome the consequences of conflict in society, address past human rights violations that occurred in the context of conflict(s), contribute to the fight against impunity, promote transitional justice processes, facilitate access to justice for those affected by the conflict, including through effective investigations and reparations, to build peace, reconciliation and strengthen social cohesion;
- Hold information campaigns, undertake human rights education, training and awareness raising, including for armed forces and law enforcement agencies and monitor compliance with standards of international human rights and humanitarian law in the context of conflict;
- Involve international organizations in ensuring the protection of human rights in a conflict area; and
- Support the development of equality and human rights, including economic and social rights, in building a peaceful and just society.

In no way do the above objectives limit National Human Rights Institutions in taking other measures they consider necessary for the promotion and protection of human rights. However, the guarantees of fulfillment by National Human Rights Institutions of the above-mentioned obligations should be supported as follows:

- International bodies, national authorities, and representatives of the conflicting parties should support the activities of National Human Rights Institutions in a conflict or post-conflict situation;
- National Human Rights Institutions should not be subject to reprisals nor any other form of intimidation as a result of their mandated activities and enjoy freedom from interference and continue to enjoy functional immunity to perform their functions in conflict areas;
- National Human Rights Institutions should be provided with sufficient resources to carry out the important role of promotion and protection of human rights in conflict areas, including financial and human resources, capacity building, and training for staff;
- National legislation should provide adequate guarantees and support for the work of National Human Rights Institutions during conflicts, and allow for their internal structures to reflect the context in which they operate in line with the Paris Principles; and
- The ICC and its regional networks, as well as their partners at the United Nations – building on the UNDP-OHCHR-ICC Tripartite Strategic Partnership - should continue to support NHRIs' cooperation, capacity building, and sharing of experiences in relation to conflict and post-conflict situations.