

HUMAN RIGHTS ENGAGEMENT: BASIC CONCEPTS AND THE PROCESS OF ENGAGEMENT



KEY POINTS:

- Human rights engagement is a process – it is part of the broader advocacy/ protection strategy
- Human rights engagement does not have a fixed form
- There is a range of UN human rights mechanisms, and several ways in which protection clusters can engage with them.



WHY SHOULD PROTECTION CLUSTER MEMBERS ENGAGE WITH HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS (AS PER REALITIES OF GIVEN CONTEXT AND COUNTRY)?

Engagement with human rights mechanisms provide an opportunity for protection clusters to:

- Use additional means and avenues to achieve protection outcomes - not additional work, but rather a useful process for the cluster
- Address the realities from human rights angle - (for example: include human rights angle in HCT protection strategies)



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- Strengthen the rights based approach
- Advocate more strategically
- Engage in confidential dialogue on sensitive issues
- Create and mobilize in-country networks, as well as global level stakeholders
- Raise more awareness on human rights (HR) of IDPs
- Showcase the links between human rights recommendations and the broader themes such as 2030 Agenda, Secretary General's call to action for HR, links to development actors



WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT UN HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS AT GLOBAL LEVEL?

- Human Rights Council
- Universal Periodic Review
- Special Procedures Mandate Holders
- Treaty Bodies



WHY IS HUMAN RIGHTS ENGAGEMENT AN ONGOING PROCESS AND NOT A ONE-TIME PROCEDURE?

Human rights engagement is defined by certain elements:

- Normative frameworks: domestic norms prescribing human rights; regional and international treaties on human rights
- Institutional frameworks: human rights mechanisms at national, regional and international levels
- Stakeholders who are active in the space of human rights protection.

These elements come together in several steps or components of this process:

- Human rights analysis
- Engaging with affected populations on their human rights
- Mapping of stakeholders
- Advocacy and communication
- Support to implementation
- Human rights monitoring

Human rights engagement happens at several levels:

- Organizational level: every organization defines its own protection objectives, methods in which they decide to leverage the human rights system, available courses of action;
- State level: Government prepares its participation in the different human rights mechanisms or is prompted to collaborate with the human rights mechanisms;
- Protection Cluster level: (NGOs, national human rights institutions, other UN entities, other stakeholders): participate and cooperate with the human rights system as a whole.

The process can be different for each actor. Each actor decides how to carry out its human rights engagement depending on its own advocacy objectives, resources, partnerships, context etc. The engagement may also vary depending on timelines (e.g. there are particular rules determining the participation of NGOs, NHRIs, and UN entities in the sessions of the human rights mechanisms).

These processes are not separate from each other; they intersect in many ways and can influence each other. It is not a linear process, but rather an ongoing one on different levels at the same time.

