

# **LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR THE EU GUIDELINES ON HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS UGANDA**

## **1. Introduction to the EU Guidelines and definition of Human Rights Defenders**

### **A – The EU Guidelines**

The EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders provide a practical template to improve EU action in support of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) on the ground. While the EU Guidelines are not a binding legal document, they represent a strong political commitment by EU Member States at ministerial level to advancing the work of HRDs in the EU's external relations and provide a benchmark for EU<sup>1</sup> Missions' (Embassies and Consulates of EU Member States and European Union Delegation) work with HRDs in Uganda. They, along with 7 other sets of guidelines on human rights issues, provide a framework for positive action on human rights in the EUs external relations:

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.aspx?id=1681&lang=en>

### **B – Human Rights Defenders**

The definition of human rights defenders in the EU Guidelines is a broad one based on that of the UN Declaration on human rights and defenders<sup>2</sup>. HRDs are those individuals, groups and organs of society that promote and protect universally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms. This includes civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights. The definition does not cover those individuals or groups who commit or propagate violence or those who seek to destroy the rights of others. Some of their work may require simply financial and moral support. The work of HRDs often involves criticism of government policies and actions. Encouragement of Government institutions to involve HRDs in consultation on policies, strategies and legislation can provide invaluable support to the effectiveness of their work. The work of HRDs can also make them the target of attacks and ensuring their safety is a crucial part of the Guidelines.

The activities of HRDs can be very broad including:

- documenting violations
- seeking remedies for victims of such violations through the provision of legal, psychological, medical or other support
- combating cultures of impunity which serve to cloak systematic and repeated breaches of human rights and fundamental freedoms
- mainstreaming human rights culture and information on HRDs at national, regional and international level
- advocacy for the respect of human rights.

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<sup>1</sup> Norway has also undertaken to promote the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and has guidelines quite similar to those of the EU. The Norwegian embassy in Kampala has therefore joined forces with the EU and wishes to associate itself with this Local Implementation Strategy. The Norwegian embassy will strive to fulfil the expectations aimed at “EU missions” in this strategy.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.unhcr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/A.RES.53.144.En?Opendocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/A.RES.53.144.En?Opendocument)

## **2. Actions implementing the EU Guidelines on HRDs in Uganda**

**The following suggested actions constitute a Local Implementation Strategy (LIS) for Uganda for the EU Guidelines on HRDs. The LIS will be reviewed on an annual basis by the HRD Focal Group to ensure its continued effectiveness.**

**Before deciding on any course of action, the EU Missions must consider the possible consequences / do a risk assessment. The approach taken must be tailored to the actual case at hand. EU Missions should seek the advice of HRDs, both local and international as to what course of action is most appropriate in each case.**

### **A - Monitoring, reporting and assessment**

- A focal group of representatives from EU Missions, referred to as HRD Focal Group, will monitor and assess the situation of HRDs in Uganda, reporting regularly to EU Mission focal persons for HRDs and the HRWG<sup>3</sup>.
- Meetings with the HRD Focal Group will be arranged as necessary and appropriate to allow HRDs to express their views and concerns and feed into the monitoring process.
- Where appropriate, HRDs will be invited to share their views with the HRWG on particular issues.
- The HRD Focal Group will distribute their contact details to and maintain regular contact with local, national, European and international HRDs concerning the general situation for HRDs as well as specific cases.
- EU Missions are encouraged to maintain contacts with HRDs and to share information on their HRD-work with the HRD Focal Group.
- The HRD Focal Group will maintain regular contacts with UN agencies in Kampala such as the OHCHR and UNHCR to exchange views on the situation of HRDs in Uganda.
- The HRD Focal Group will seek to establish relevant contact points on HRDs in the central administration and to foster dialogue with JLOS institutions including UHRC, and other relevant institutions in relation to the general situation of HRDs in Uganda and, where appropriate, on specific case.
- EU Missions' annual reporting mechanisms (such as the EU HR Fact Sheet) will include a section on the situation of HRDs and trends based on the regular reporting.
- The HRD Focal Group will draw the attention of EU Missions and HoMs to urgent issues relating to HRDs together with recommendations for actions at the local or Headquarters level.
- The HRD Focal Group will maintain a database of HRDs with whom they have had contacts which will be available for reference for EU Missions.

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<sup>3</sup> HRWG = Human Rights Working Group of development partners in Kampala. Reports to PDG (Partners on Good Governance and Democracy)

## **B - Support and protection of HRDs**

- EU Missions will work together to organise, at least once a year, an event demonstrating solidarity with HRDs and allowing HRDs to express their views and concerns to senior diplomats.
- EU Missions will include a link to information useful for HRDs on their websites. This information should include:
  - The UN Declaration on HRDs
  - Link to website of the UN Special Procedures including the UN Special Rapporteur on HRDs
  - The EU Guidelines on HRDs 2008
  - The Local Implementation Strategy
  - Emergency Contact Number
  - Key dates of interest to HRDs
  - Funding opportunities and prizes available to HRDs
  - International organisations providing support to HRDs
  - Articles regarding HRDs supported by the EU Mission
  - Programmes involving HRDs and reporting on successful projects.
- EU Missions should, where appropriate, give visible recognition to HRDs by, for example, visiting them at their place of work, engaging in field visits to projects, attending seminars, press conferences or other meetings organised by HRDs or inviting HRDs to events and meetings at EU Missions or Residences. Such actions should be planned in consultation with HRDs to ensure that any risks to HRDs of such visibility are taken into account.
- EU Missions can make public statements or demarches at local level, either collectively or individually depending on the circumstances or recommend actions at HQ level in support of HRDs.
- EU Missions will seek to engage in dialogue with relevant GoU agencies and the UHRC regarding their role in the protection of HRDs in order to improve the general framework for protection of human rights defenders in Uganda. Individual cases of concern may also be raised by EU Missions with the appropriate authorities when necessary.
- EU Missions will seek to highlight the work of HRDs in Uganda during High Level visits from Headquarters, where possible arranging meetings with HRDs and informing HRDs in advance of such visits
- Where EU Missions are informed about HRDs in custody or court cases involving HRDs, the HRD Focal Group will seek to coordinate follow-up which may include custody visits and trial-monitoring by diplomatic staff.
- The HRD Focal Group will establish a system for emergency contact with stakeholders regarding HRDs under imminent threat. Proper consideration will be given to the safety of the HRDs and their families in relation to the information requested and the confidentiality of the information provided.
- The HRD Focal Group will seek to coordinate with relevant international agencies such as the UNHCR and UN OHCHR as well as international and other NGOs on specific issues affecting individual HRDs or the situation of HRDs in general in Uganda in order to tailor responses to a situation appropriately.

- The HRD Focal Group or the EU Missions concerned will report back to HRDs who have requested assistance and support, informing them of any actions taken and possible follow-up.
- Where EU Missions are approached to provide swift assistance and protection to HRDs in danger in Uganda, human rights officers and consular officials in EU Missions will work together to ensure a fast, coherent and sensitive response to requests based on comprehensive information on the situation of the person or people concerned.
- The LIS applies equally to EU nationals and organisations conducting HRD work in Uganda and EU Missions will seek to support them, in particular through providing effective consular assistance.

### **C - Promotion of HRDs work in multilateral and regional fora**

- EU Missions will provide input, where relevant, to reporting mechanisms in multilateral and regional fora on the situation of HRDs in Uganda and will seek to support the work of the UN Special Procedure in Uganda.
- EU will, in their interactions with HRDs, inform HRDs of relevant upcoming reviews and of the work of UN special procedures.

### **Annexes**

#### **A – List of EU and EU MS available resources and projects relevant to HRDs**

#### **B – List of INGOs, IGOs and other Government or National Institutions relevant to HRDs**

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### European Funders

#### EU

[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/human-rights/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/human-rights/index_en.htm)

#### Private

<http://www.hivos.nl/english/Hivos-Virtual-Office/Welcome-to-Hivos-Virtual-Office>

<http://www.sigrid-rausing-trust.org/Grantees/Programmes/Civil-and-Political-Rights>

<http://www.soros.org/grants>

#### Women

<http://www.urgentactionfund.org/>

<http://www.mamacash.org/>

#### LGBT

<http://www.astraeafoundation.org/>

#### HRDs

<http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/>

<http://www.academic-refugees.org/>

<http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/cahr/defenders/index.html>

#### Information for Grant Seekers

<http://www.efc.be/NewsKnowledge/Pages/ForGrantseekers.aspx>

<http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/individuals/>

**B – List of INGOs, IGOs and other Government or National Institutions relevant to HRDs**

**European Parliament**

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/droi\\_home\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/droi_home_en.htm)

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/comparl/afet/droi/default.htm>

**EU Special Representatives**

**EU SR – Great Lakes**

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showpage.aspx?id=1212&lang=EN>

**EU SR – African Union**

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showpage.aspx?id=1397&lang=EN>

**Council Secretariat**

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.aspx?id=1634&lang=EN>

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.aspx?id=1676&lang=EN>

**European Commission**

[http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/human\\_rights/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/human_rights/index_en.htm)

**OHCHR**

[www.uganda.ohchr.org](http://www.uganda.ohchr.org)

[www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org)

**African Commission for Human and People's Rights**

<http://www.achpr.org/>

**UNHCR**

[www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)

**Uganda Human Rights Commission**

[www.uhrc.ug](http://www.uhrc.ug)

**Frontline**

[www.frontlinedefenders.org](http://www.frontlinedefenders.org)

**Amnesty International**

[www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)

**Media Legal Defence Initiative**

[www.mediadefence.org](http://www.mediadefence.org)

**Open Society Institute**

[www.soros.org](http://www.soros.org)