



**UNHCR**

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

**Internship in the Human Rights Liaison Unit  
(Division of International Protection)**

**Terms of Reference**

<b>Duty Station:</b> Geneva, Switzerland
<b>Unit/Division:</b> Human Rights Liaison Unit, Division of International Protection
<b>Duration:</b> (6 months), full-time
<b>Starting date:</b> 1 December 2016 (tentatively)

**A. Duties and Responsibilities**

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Under the supervision of the Head of Unit, the intern will undertake the following responsibilities:

- Contribute to the compilation of information and preparation of UNHCR submissions to the different treaty bodies;
- Monitor sessions of treaty bodies as observers on behalf of UNHCR;
- Prepare feedback to the concerned field offices on the deliberations and outcomes of the interactive dialogue on country reports by treaty bodies;
- Participate as an observer in the sessions of the Human Rights Council, as well as in informal meetings organized in parallel to the Council sessions, or any special Council meetings throughout the year and prepare related reports as relevant;
- Contribute to the compilation of information and preparation of UNHCR submissions on countries to be examined under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism;
- Contribute to the preparation of summaries of UPR submissions to be used for advocacy purposes ahead of the UPR sessions;
- Participate as an observer in the sessions of the Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Reviews and prepare related feedback reports;
- Undertake legal research on human rights issues relating to refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR;
- Search for and analysis of documents produced by the UN human rights machinery;
- Edit position papers and other legal documents.

In addition, where occasions arise, interns may participate in bi- and multilateral meetings of UNHCR with government and other agency partners, as well as in training seminars or briefings offered by UNHCR colleagues.

**B. Learning opportunities**

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The focus of the internship is the ongoing legal protection work of UNHCR. Through the internship, interns will: (i) gain a deeper knowledge of the work of UNHCR; the international legal framework

governing the organization's interventions, namely international refugee law, human rights law and the international standards relating to the prevention and reduction of statelessness; and the way UNHCR uses the UN human rights machinery at large to further the protection of persons of concern and (ii) practice and develop 'professional working skills', such as time management, prioritization, management of tasks, team work, presentation skills etc. The work of an intern is not confined to a single research project (of an academic nature) as may be the case with other internships, but it rather involves direct engagement with operational aspects of the work of the Unit although it might also encompass some elements of routine (e.g. compilation and preparation of seminar folders) at times.

Interns may occasionally be asked to offer support to other Units within the Division of International Protection.

### **C. Operational Context**

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The Human Rights Liaison Unit is part of the Division of International Protection (Policy & Law stream). The Unit aims at promoting the effective use of international human rights law and UN human rights mechanisms to strengthen the protection of persons of concern to UNHCR.

#### *Goal:*

The goal of the Human Rights Liaison Unit is three-fold: firstly to contribute to the development of international human rights law and to the strengthening of the refugee legal framework by including issues related to refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs, stateless persons and returnees into legal instruments, policy documents, recommendations and other outcome documents of the Human Rights Council, the Human Rights Treaty Monitoring Bodies and the UN Special Procedures. Secondly, to contribute to the mainstreaming of human rights into all areas of UNHCR's work and promote the effective use of human rights law, procedures and standards for advocacy and as complementary protection tools in the respective UNHCR operations. Thirdly, to function as the liaisons between UNHCR and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to strengthen human rights approaches and ensure continuous exchange of relevant information.

#### *Objectives:*

In support of the above-mentioned Goal, the Unit leads and supports DIP's efforts, as appropriate, to ensure that:

- Refugee protection is complemented and strengthened through human rights standards.
- Substantial resolutions of the Human Rights Council, reports and recommendations issued by Special Procedures, as well as General Comments and General Recommendations of Treaty Monitoring Bodies and other standard setting instruments are in line with and contribute to the progressive development of international refugee law and to the enhancement of the protection of persons of concern.
- Asylum-seekers, refugees, IDPs, returnees and stateless persons, and information about the extent to which they enjoy their rights, are systematically included in Treaty Body Concluding Observations and Recommendations, General Comments and General Recommendations by the Treaty Monitoring Bodies, UPR recommendations, reports of Special Procedures mandate

holders, by OHCHR and by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in statements and interventions.

- Human rights law and standards, as well as human rights mechanisms are effectively used as protection tools by colleagues for UNHCR advocacy and interventions.
- The cooperation with the diverse human rights bodies results in the adoption of specific concluding observations, recommendations, resolutions and reports, which benefit country operations and specific protection situations.
- The rights of asylum-seekers, refugees, stateless persons, internally displaced persons and returnees, as set out in the international human rights treaties, are promoted in a non-discriminatory manner.
- In close partnership with OHCHR and in cooperation with UN agencies, human rights strategies and approaches are consolidated and joint advocacy and interventions are taken, when appropriate and relevant.

#### *Activities:*

Given the importance of international human rights law to the protection of refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR, the Human Rights Liaison Unit continuously cooperates with the Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and monitors the work of the Human Rights Treaty Monitoring Bodies, the Human Rights Council, including the Universal Periodic Review and its Special Procedures, and contributes, if and when relevant, to ensure that the rights and needs of persons of concern to the Office are systematically considered in the discussions, country visits and other activities and reflected in the respective reports, decisions, conclusions and recommendations.

Due to the intensity of the work of the UN Human Rights mechanisms and the large number of sessions and events to be monitored or requiring active participation, the Human Rights Liaison Unit, in addition to the work of the Head of Unit, one Associate Legal Officer (Human Rights) and two Assistant Legal Officers (Human Rights), relies on the support of three interns at each given time.

The following are some of the regular activities and services of the Human Rights Liaison Unit:

#### General information and advice:

- Provide constant guidance and advice to staff on how to effectively and strategically use the UN human rights mechanisms and standards
- Keep colleagues informed about developments in the area of human rights of relevance to UNHCR. New international and human rights instruments are promptly analysed as to their potential value for the work of UNHCR.

#### Contribution to standard-setting exercises:

- With the support of, and in consultation with thematic and country-specific focal points, provide input into new legal instruments in the area of human rights during the drafting process, including Human Rights Council resolutions, Treaty Body General Comments/Recommendations, Special Procedures reports and OHCHR guides and studies.
- Provide legal and doctrinal advice on human rights standards.
- Prepare papers, statements and speeches, as well as other contributions into global and regional human rights processes which promote UNHCR's position.

#### Cooperation with Treaty Monitoring Bodies:

- Assist colleagues in the preparation and finalization of Confidential Comments for submission to the human rights treaty monitoring bodies.
- Monitor and provides feedback to colleagues from treaty body sessions, highlighting concluding observations and recommendations of particular relevance to UNHCR's mandate and advising on how these can be used as protection advocacy tools.
- Review findings and recommendations of Treaty Monitoring Bodies, the Human Rights Council and Special Procedures as to their standard setting, promotional or COI value and systematically disseminates for use in UNHCR's protection and promotion efforts.

#### Contribution to the Universal Periodic Reviews:

- Assist colleagues in the preparation and finalization of contributions to the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism, in the form of written contributions the OHCHR Compilation Reports or in the context of reports prepared by UN country teams.
- Monitor UPR sessions and provide feedback to colleagues on adopted recommendations of particular relevance to UNHCR's mandate, including advice on how these can be used in the context of protection strategies and as advocacy tools.

#### Cooperation with the Human Rights Council:

- Monitor regular and special sessions of the Human Rights Council, and inform colleagues about discussions, reports, decisions and resolutions of particular interest to UNHCR, which can complement or reinforce UNHCR's positions and protection strategies.

#### Cooperation with the UN Special Procedures:

- Provide input into thematic, country-specific and mission reports and studies by relevant Special Procedures mandate holders, in collaboration with field-based colleagues and thematic and country-specific UNHCR focal points.
- Inform colleagues about relevant recommendations by Special Procedures and how these can be used as protection advocacy tools.

#### *Key internal relationships:*

All of DIP; Bureaux Regional Legal Advisers/Policy Officers; Department of Operations; Media Relations and Public Information Service; LOV Vienna, LO New York, Regional Protection Hubs and colleagues in UNHCR Country Offices.

#### *Key external relationships:*

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Human Rights Council, UN Treaty Monitoring Bodies, UN Special Procedures mandate holders, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Permanent Missions in Geneva, Geneva-based human rights actors, several universities and academies.

#### **D. Required qualifications**

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Interns working with the Human Rights Liaison Unit must in principle have a legal background, with knowledge of international law, including human rights law, and preferably should be in the last year of a master or postgraduate programme or recently have completed studies. Knowledge and/or experience in the field of refugee law will be highly valued. Fluency in English (excellent oral and written skills) is a prerequisite, and knowledge of another UN language would be an asset. While not being a formal requirement, any relevant work experience will be taken into account in the selection process.

#### **E. Financial conditions and employment**

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This internship is unpaid. All expenses connected with it, including travel, accommodation and others, must be borne by the intern or his/her sponsoring Government or institution. Also, there is no expectation of employment at the end of the internship. Moreover, the intern cannot apply for a post with UNHCR, including any consultancy positions, during the period of the internship and for a period of six months immediately following the expiration date thereof.

#### **F. Contact details**

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Please submit your personal History Form (P11) (downloadable at [http://www.unhcr.org/recruit/P11\\_UNHCR.doc](http://www.unhcr.org/recruit/P11_UNHCR.doc)), motivation letter and CV by email with "LAST name – Internship" in the subject line to [humanrights@unhcr.org](mailto:humanrights@unhcr.org) by **15 November 2016**. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for a phone interview.