



Fostering protection and durable solutions through legal aid in humanitarian settings

A webinar co-organized by INTERSOS and ICVA

4 March 2021 (11:00-12:30 CET)

Concept Note

Background:

A year ago, at the December 2019 Global Refugee Forum, the international community made a number of pledges focused on Protection Capacity and Solutions. Some of those committed to promoting legal aid and representation of asylum seekers and stateless people, especially through free legal aid services; promoting local integration of refugees via legal aid and the exercise of legal rights; and improving access to justice¹.

INTER SOS a non-governmental organization (NGO) and member of ICVA, pledged to “*Conduct a research into the provision of legal aid in humanitarian settings based on operational experiences from different operational contexts*”. The rationale for the pledge argued that: “*Providing legal protection to different groups and individuals impacted by situations of conflict or natural disasters is essential, particularly in situations where the lives of communities and individuals are disrupted by conflicts and violence, including for those that are forcibly displaced. The need for legal aid provided in such contexts is quite wide, ranging from challenges linked to supporting victims of sexual and gender-based violence, or domestic abuse, to a lack of legal documentation, the denial of rights or of access to services, lengthy, expensive and unclear procedures related to status in host countries, as well as risks of being illegally detained or deported with no due process*”².

INTER SOS **fulfilled its pledge** with the publication of a “***Provision of Legal Aid in Humanitarian Settings Lessons Learned Paper***” accessible [here](#), an important achievement given that Legal Aid often attracts **inappropriate attention and funding**.

INTER SOS is now partnering with ICVA to promote this important paper and contribution from the NGO community, through a dedicated **webinar** targeting key stakeholders. This webinar is focused on ***fostering protection and durable solutions through legal aid in humanitarian settings***. It is framed in the context of the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees, the follow-up to the Global Refugee Forum and the roadmap for the High-Level Officials Meeting in 2021³. It also reflects INTER SOS’ and ICVA’s engagement in those processes.⁴

About the Provision of Legal Aid in Humanitarian Settings Lessons Learned Paper:

Based on INTER SOS operational work on legal aid, the research examines *what is legal aid in humanitarian settings* and *what legal aid in different contexts means*. The paper also describes the various types of legal services including for those that are forcibly displaced and reviews INTER SOS approach in providing legal aid. While the report highlights the main challenges and constraints to access to legal aid, it also *offers recommendations* for Member States, humanitarian agencies and leadership as well as donors.

Providing legal aid to forcibly displaced populations is an essential requirement to ensuring protection and achieving durable solutions, for instance in granting residency status, avoiding statelessness,

¹ *Global Compact on Refugees Digital Platform*, as of February 2021: <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/channel/pledges-contributions>

² *Ibid*

³ See: UNHCR, *Preliminary considerations for the high-level officials meeting*, January 2021: <https://www.unhcr.org/6001b5274>

⁴ Further INTER SOS pledge can be consulted through the Digital Platform. ICVA’s pledge to help equip NGOs to engage with the Global Compact on Refugees implementation is available here: <https://www.icvanetwork.org/resources/icvas-pledge-2019-global-refugee-forum>



detention or deportation as well as getting legal representation for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence or other forms of violence.

Objectives of the Webinar:

The webinar will be an opportunity to pursue three interrelated objectives:

- Highlight the realization of INTERSOS' pledge and present lessons learned on providing legal aid in humanitarian settings that can be used by all interested stakeholders, including Member States, International Organizations, and NGOs.
- Present and discuss the importance of humanitarian legal aid as a foundational support for ensuring protection and achieving durable solutions for forcibly displaced populations whether for local integration, resettlement or voluntary repatriation. Indeed, beyond access to humanitarian assistance, legal challenges have direct impacts on durable solutions for refugees and resonates with the objectives of putting an end to statelessness.
- Provide perspectives to galvanize further pledges in the area of legal aid in the lead to the High-Level Officials Meeting and the next Global Refugee Forum.

Agenda:

1. Welcome remarks and moderation by Mr. Jerome Elie, Head – Forced Migration, ICVA
2. Opening remarks by Ms. Cecilia Jimenez Damary, UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs)
3. Fostering protection and durable solutions through legal aid in humanitarian settings: the INTERSOS experience by Ms. Christina Nisha, Global Protection Advisor, INTERSOS
4. Intervention by Mr. William Chemaly, Global Protection Cluster Coordinator
5. Intervention by Ms. Carole Dahan, Senior Legal Adviser (Judicial Engagement), Division of International Protection, UNHCR
6. Discussion with participants
7. Concluding remarks

Invitation will be sent to the following audience:

- State Representative from Permanent Missions in Geneva.
- UNHCR and other relevant UN Agencies and International Organizations, NGOs.

Format and follow-up:

The webinar will be held **fully virtually** on **4 March** from **11:00 to 12:30 (CET)**, for 90 minutes, via *BlueJeans* Platform.

Connection details will be provided to registered participants ahead of the meeting.

Please **RSVP by Wednesday 3 March CoB** to: secretariat@icvanetwork.org

A summary of the exchange will be produced by ICVA and made available to participants in the weeks following the webinar.