

# FOUNDING STATEMENT OF I HAVE RIGHTS

This statement expresses our association's fundamental values and beliefs. It describes what and who we want to be in the context of our political and organisational objectives. IHR commits to a learning process guided by this document, and we expect the same from our team members, employees, and volunteers.

Our work is bound to the realisation of our purpose and it abides to our values.

# OUR PURPOSE

IHR provides independent legal information and legal support to people-on-the-move including asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants on Samos. We share information about the situation on Samos while also advocating for the change of policies and practices that are responsible for human rights violations at the EU's borders. We believe it is important for the public to hear about the lives of people-on-the-move and we want to inspire solidarity between the public and people-on-the-move.

IHR deeply condemns human trafficking and smuggling and sees itself as an actor in the fight against human trafficking and smuggling. Our primary goal is to protect vulnerable individuals, following all applicable laws.

# OUR VALUES

## **We are a political and legal NGO**

### Migration is a political topic

The situation on Samos is not a humanitarian crisis, but the result of a long term EU and Greek policy. As the work of IHR navigates through this political setting, and because we advocate for change, we are both a political and legal NGO, not an apolitical humanitarian one.

## We acknowledge global injustices

The colonial past and neo-colonial present of the Global North, and Western European states in particular, results in ongoing exploitation and global inequalities. We believe that overcoming these structures and thereby achieving a life in dignity for all is impossible within our current system of borders and nation states. The differentiation between (economic) migrants and refugees in this context is unfit to provide justice for people suffering from the effects of economic exploitation by the Global North. The effects of the climate crisis, poverty and precarity should be recognised as reasons for asylum.

## We acknowledge our privileged position

To achieve our aims, we work in cooperation and solidarity with local civil society, NGOs, people-on-the-move and other actors. We want to listen and learn from various perspectives. The situation at the EU's external borders concerns not only the societies that live there. As a European NGO we are responsible to act on European policies and the injustices they create.

## We act in solidarity with marginalised groups

We act in solidarity with asylum seekers, migrants, and refugees, as well as with all marginalised and discriminated individuals and groups.

We do not tolerate any form of direct or indirect discrimination. The power to decide what is discriminatory behaviour rests with the survivors of discrimination. We aim to dismantle and fight the power structures that uphold discriminatory systems. Different discriminatory systems, such as racism, classism and the patriarchy, not only uphold each other, but also combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege. We commit to continuously working towards overcoming discriminatory structures in our association. We want to reflect on our own privileges and act accordingly.

## **Human Rights are non-negotiable**

### Freedom of Movement and the Right to Asylum

The right to asylum is a human right and must be respected, protected, and fulfilled. Every asylum seeker should have access to independent, individualised, and confidential legal counselling.

We believe that freedom of movement is a human right. Understanding that in our current system access to territory is a prerequisite for access to asylum, safe and legal routes for migrants and refugees need to be established. Search and rescue missions should be decriminalised and instead funded and organised by States. Europe must stop the 'externalisation of migration' i.e. the extension of border and migration controls beyond the so-called 'migrant receiving nations' in the Global North and into neighbouring countries or sending states in the Global South. Pushbacks must stop immediately.

## Dignity and human rights can never be compromised

All humans have a right to a dignified living. We demand that all individuals have access to work, education and health care, including psychological support, regardless of their legal status. Vulnerable individuals deserve special protection and care.

We oppose all forms of detention. No one, regardless of their legal status especially in the context of migration, should be detained.

We oppose the hotspot system and isolated living conditions.

Those responsible need to be held accountable for any actions that violate human rights and effective and appropriate remedy and reparation must be put in place.

## **Our working practice is driven by our values**

### Everybody deserves access to legal support

Everybody deserves equal access to legal support. Our services are open for all asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants on Samos, regardless of their legal status, origin, religion, social and educational background, gender, sexual orientation, and regardless of our sympathy.

Our services are free. We aim at overcoming any obstacles in accessing our services. In our work, we take into account the different social and cultural backgrounds of our beneficiaries, as well as their individual experiences including their level of education and traumas.

## We support and respect our beneficiaries

We work to support our beneficiaries. We take our beneficiaries seriously and treat them as equals. Everybody deserves a chance to express themselves. We are not in the position to judge our beneficiaries. We reject the framing of “helping”. Instead, we respect people's agency to make their own decisions.

## Protection of our beneficiaries

We are aware of the powerful position that we hold as team members of IHR towards our beneficiaries. We will not exploit this power and we will act in accordance with our policies on safeguarding.

All information received from beneficiaries is to be held confidential and we treat personal information in accordance with our policies on data protection.

## Ensuring the quality of our work

We are aware of the responsibility we have towards our beneficiaries. Our first priority is always the quality of our work, that we ensure via training and supervising our team members. Our services are limited to our field of expertise. We aim to manage the expectations of our beneficiaries by clearly communicating the scope of support that we can give.

IHR is carried by a team of paid employees and trained volunteers. We aim to build long-term and professional structures to provide effective and qualified legal support.

To ensure the quality of our work, we expect all team members, including volunteers to be trained and qualified in their respective working fields and to have knowledge of the situation on Samos. We embrace being a heterogenous team in regard to skills and political awareness. We want to listen to and learn from each other.

### Diversification of the team

We aim for the diversification of our team by including people with different backgrounds. That means that we take action lowering barriers for individuals with a refugee and migrant background, or experiences of discrimination, as well as Greek people, to work with IHR. We commit to ensuring our working environment is inclusive and we are ready to change our practices.

### Independence

We are independent from political parties, governmental institutions, other state actors or religious organisations. Our work should not be influenced by our donors.

## **We work as a Team**

### Reliability, accountability, and transparency

We aim for reliability, accountability, and transparency in doing our work. We commit to a proper hand-over of tasks, responsibility and knowledge when leaving the team.

## Working and taking decisions as a team

We want to create an atmosphere of mutual trust in our team. We are aware of the differences in personal and cultural backgrounds of our team members and the privileges and experiences (of discrimination) that come with them.

We are open towards suggestions and change, while also acknowledging the thought, work and experience that lead to certain policies and practices. We aim for low hierarchies and collective decision making. Our aim is that all team members understand and support the decisions that influence their work. In our decision making we consider the concerns of all team members.

While maintaining flexibility, we commit to the decisions that have been taken by the core group and we abide by our own policies and guidelines.

We aim that our policies and practices leave enough space for task forces, the team on Samos, and individual team members to make independent decisions in their field of expertise, to react to new situations, and to be creative in doing their work.

We have collective responsibility in ensuring the different parts of IHR work well.

## Learning and developing as an organisation and as individuals

We want to learn and develop as individuals, as a team and as an organisation. We aim to create a positive work environment and a constructive and appreciative Feedback culture.

We aim to lower the barriers to ask for support and help from other team members. We want to share knowledge, responsibility and power. We want to avoid that knowledge rests with a single person.



## We care for each other and ourselves

We are aware of the challenges of IHR's working environment, and we want to take care of each other's and our own mental health. We respect the boundaries, limitations, and capacities of team members. We are aware that these boundaries, limitations and capacities vary between individuals, and we acknowledge the different backgrounds and experiences that define them.

We take responsibility for the wellbeing of the team - collectively and individually.



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