

Safeguarding Policy

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I. Introduction and Policy Statement

The Safeguarding Policy of I Have Rights (hereinafter: IHR) collects all organisational **definitions, principals and preventive mechanisms** taken by IHR to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone that comes in touch with IHR. IHR fully recognizes its responsibility for safeguarding and promoting welfare in the working environment of IHR. We recognize our special responsibility toward children, young people, adults, and other groups who have been made vulnerable by existing systems and structures.

We believe that IHR as an organisation, as well as everyone working and volunteering at IHR, **has a responsibility to promote the welfare** of all persons interacting with IHR. Within their

designated roles and responsibilities all individuals working at IHR are to prevent and mitigate any negative impact of their actions on others. This includes awareness of social, cultural, and professional contexts and hierarchies, as well as of the inherent power imbalances between those supplying and those making use of the legal information or other services IHR offers.

II. Scope, Responsibilities and Definitions

This policy applies to employees, volunteers, clients, stakeholders, and any external parties interacting with IHR in any capacity. It is the responsibility of all IHR team members to be concerned about the safety of any individual.

The **Classification and Safeguarding Committee** of IHR has the primary responsibility over the implementation of this policy. The **Steering Committee** of IHR as a whole is ultimately **accountable for** ensuring that IHR abides in full of its legal and regulatory safeguarding obligations. This policy should be understood in conjunction with IHR’s Founding Statement, Code of Conduct and Complaints and Incident Handling Policy.

Definitions

Safeguarding

An organisation’s responsibility to ensure that no harm is caused to individuals resulting from its own actions or omissions. This means both a **proactive role** in preventing individuals’ exposure to harm as well as a **reactive role** in identifying cases where harm has already been inflicted. Safeguarding efforts protect both the organization’s staff and the people it works with, including clients and external individuals.

Individual

A **single person** who can be part of a wider community or shared group identity. While vulnerabilities are often ascribed to groups or communities of individuals, safeguarding is very much concerned with individual cases (not excluding multiple cases arising within the same

	group of persons).
<i>Harm</i>	Any form of physical and/or psychological ill-treatment including all hereafter defined forms of abuse, neglect, negligent treatment and exploitation resulting in negative effects on a person’s survival, mental and physical health, development, sense of self or dignity.
<i>Vulnerability</i>	<p>A state of reduced capacity to anticipate, respond to, and recover from potential or actual harm.</p> <p>When IHR addresses the social exclusion of people, we emphasize that the issue lies within the system rather than framing vulnerability as an inherent trait of individuals. Whenever possible, it is important to specify which actor is creating vulnerability in a given situation to highlight responsibility.</p>
<i>Adult</i>	A person verifiably above the age of 18.
<i>Child</i>	A person confirmed or expected to be under the age of 18.
<i>Physical Abuse</i>	<p>The use of force which results in pain or injury. The non-accidental infliction of physical force that results in bodily injury, pain or impairment.</p> <p>Examples of this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical injuries, which have not been adequately explained and suspicion that they have been inflicted intentionally - Bullying - Prolonged physical restraint - etc.
<i>Sexual abuse</i>	<p><i>Sexual abuse</i> is the direct or indirect involvement of an adult individual in sexual activity or relationships, which they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not want or have not consented to, including if they are not able to give consent to - Have been coerced into because the other person is in a position of trust, power or authority (for example a care worker)

	Sexual abuse also relates to any direct or indirect involvement of a child in sexual activity or relationships.
<i>Emotional and Psychological Abuse</i>	<p><i>Emotional abuse</i> includes actions or behaviour that have a harmful effect on the emotional health and/or development of any individual. For example, threats, deprivation of contact, shouting, ignoring, cruelty, bullying, humiliation, coercion, negating the right of the individual to make choices and undermining self-esteem.</p> <p>Further examples of this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Humiliating someone in private or public - Rejecting or ignoring them - Making someone afraid - Making someone unnecessarily dependent - Abuse through social media and cyberbullying
<i>Neglect and Acts of Omission</i>	<p><i>Neglect and acts of omission</i> refer to the failure of any person, who has responsibility for the charge, care or custody of an individual, to provide the amount and type of care that should reasonably be expected and that are needed by the entrusted individual. Neglect can be intentional or unintentional.</p> <p>Examples of this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Depriving someone of everyday essentials like food, clothes, warmth and hygiene needs - Depriving someone of a service - Depriving someone of care and emotional support
<i>Self-neglect</i>	<p><i>Self-neglect</i> is a behavioural condition in which an individual neglects to attend to their basic needs such as personal hygiene, feeding or tending appropriately to any medical conditions they have.</p>
<i>Self-harm and suicide ideation</i>	<p><i>Self-harm</i> is deliberate injury to oneself, typically as a manifestation of a psychological or psychiatric disorder. Suicide ideation, or suicidal thoughts refer to thinking about committing suicide. These thoughts may or may not include concrete plans. They may not always be verbalised, but instead show in the behaviour of the individual.</p>
<i>Discriminatory</i>	<p><i>Discriminatory abuse</i> occurs when power is misused to deny opportunity to some groups or individuals. It can be a feature of any</p>

Abuse

form of abuse (s.a.), but can also be motivated because of age, gender, sexuality, disability, religion, class, culture, language, and race or ethnic origin etc.

It can result from situations that exploit a person's vulnerability by treating the person in a way that excludes them from opportunities and human rights, for example regarding education, health, justice and access to services and protection.

Institutional abuse

Institutional abuse is the mistreatment, abuse or neglect of a person at risk **by a regime or individuals**. It can take place within settings and services that adults at risk live in or use, and it violates the person's dignity, resulting in a lack of respect for their human rights.

Institutional abuse occurs when the routines, systems and regimes of an institution result in poor or inadequate standards of care and poor practice. It can take the form of an organisation failing to respond to or address examples of poor practice brought to their attention. It can take place in various places, for example day care, care homes, hostels, supported housing, hospitals, and detention centres. It can be difficult to identify the difference between poor service and institutional abuse.

Structural dimension of violence and discrimination, situational inequalities

The *structural dimension of violence and exploitation* refers to the fact that certain forms of violence and discrimination, such as racism, don't only manifest through the acts of individuals or groups of individuals, but also through **structures that by default create disadvantage for individuals or groups of individuals**. As IHR, we acknowledge that power structures such as racism or misogyny are systematic and violent. Accordingly, the reflection on these power structures are an integrative part of recognizing, acknowledging and addressing violence and exploitation.

Situational inequalities result not from overarching power dynamics and systematic discrimination, but from the **individual position of an individual**, e.g. persons in lower or unpaid positions or with less experience in the organisation, but also persons not speaking the working language are more vulnerable to violence and exploitation.

Violence often happens at the intersection of both structural and situational inequalities.

(Sexual) Exploitation

Exploitation means any actual or attempted **abuse of a position** of vulnerability, different privileges, or trust, for the purpose of benefiting from the other person. This includes, but is not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the exploitation of another. It includes but is not limited to exchanging money, employment, goods or services for the acts of the other person.

It can also appear in the form of sexual exploitation. In this case one person is profiting from the sexual exploitation of another. This includes transactional sex regardless of the legal status of sex work in the country. It also includes any situation where sex is coerced or demanded by withholding or threatening to withhold goods or services or by blackmailing.

III. Principles

The Safeguarding Policy is guided by these principles:

1. General Principles	
<i>Acknowledgement of Vulnerability</i>	We acknowledge that our clients are, as asylum seekers, migrants, and refugees on Samos, in a specifically vulnerable situation . Many of them have experienced violence and continue to experience violence in Samos. We acknowledge the specific vulnerabilities of children and young people, as well as adults who have been made vulnerable, and we respond to their needs for protection. We are aware that due to power imbalances, calling out abusive behaviour can have high barriers for individuals who are being made vulnerable by existing power structures, and we aim to lower these barriers .
<i>Acknowledgement of different kinds and dimensions of violence and</i>	Violence takes many forms and harm can be caused through actions, and inactions of individuals as well as collectives. This includes physical and sexual, as well as emotional and psychological abuse. Violence is present in acts of omission or neglect . Violence can also materialise

<p><i>harmful acts</i></p>	<p>through institutional or discriminatory abuse.</p> <p>We acknowledge the structural dimension of violence through systems of discrimination and exploitation. We are aware of vulnerabilities that are created through situational power imbalances.</p> <p>This policy and our responsibility to safeguard individuals in the working environment of IHR also applies to self-harm or neglect.</p>
<p><i>Awareness of power imbalances and dependencies</i></p>	<p>We are aware of the inherent power imbalance between the person supplying a service or good and the person making use of this service or good because they need it. We are aware that this can affect the behaviour of both parties.</p> <p>We are aware that the lack of choice people on the move face in the environment we work in creates dependency of individuals on our services. We aim to take responsibility for our work and to be transparent with the limits of our services. We aim to provide information and to empower clients to reach their own goals and we reject the wording and framing of our activities as “help” and “helping”.</p> <p>Beyond the inherent dependencies, we aim to reduce and prevent the growth of dependency between IHR and its team members and clients. We acknowledge the special responsibility in the safeguarding and protection of those using our services.</p>
<p><i>Non-discriminatory application of this policy</i></p>	<p>We commit to ensuring that all individuals have the same protection regardless of legal status, age, class, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation and independently from our team’s sympathy.</p> <p>We acknowledge that discrimination has a structural dimension that perpetuates a system of power imbalances. We acknowledge that different discriminatory structures are intertwined and interdependent.</p>
<p><i>Collective learning and organisational development</i></p>	<p>We promote a reflective organisational culture that strives to understand individuals’ diverse cultural, political, and structural backgrounds. We commit to reflecting on our own structures, and to learning from and adjusting to new challenges and perspectives. We are aware that we need to develop not only good policies, but good</p>

practices as a team.

2. Principles in Safeguarding

Prevention

Wherever possible IHR commits to taking the **actions needed to prevent** violence and harmful acts within the working environment of IHR. We believe that prevention is the **most meaningful** element of safeguarding.

Transparency & meetings in written

We commit to making our safeguarding tools and procedures as transparent as possible. We **communicate transparently on actions we take** in connection to this policy. Attempts to cover up an act of wrongdoing are considered misconduct.

All meetings regarding incidents, allegations, and reports must be documented with notes/minutes. It is preferable for these meetings to be attended by at least two individuals who are responsible for handling these issues.

Confidentiality

In any incident falling under this safeguarding policy, IHR is committed to treating the incident, including the minutes from meetings, with the **utmost level** of confidentiality. The identity of individuals involved as well as the details of the incident stay confidential. As IHR is a relatively small NGO, confidentiality will be maintained as far as it is compatible with thorough fact-finding, an adequate response to the incident, and the provisions of applicable law.

Empowerment

IHR is committed to fostering a **positive safeguarding culture** where everyone feels empowered to report concerns **by reducing barriers to incident reporting**. We do not expect individuals to categorize incidents themselves but instead aim to empower everybody but especially those who have been harmed or potentially harmed within IHR's working environment to speak up. The determination of whether an action was harmful lies with the survivor, as intent does not define violence or harm, but the experience of the person who endured it. However, the wrongdoer's intention will be taken into account for determining the adequate consequence for their misconduct.

<p><i>Support for and Solidarity with survivors</i></p>	<p>The interest and needs of the survivor of violence or any harmful act are always and primarily considered in any organisational action taken by IHR. IHR aims to provide the survivor of a violent or harmful act with the highest possible level of support. If an allegation was made the benefit of the doubt rests with the person who was harmed or potentially harmed.</p>
<p><i>Timely and Thorough Fact Finding</i></p>	<p>If an allegation was made against any of our team members, we engage in responsible and thorough fact-finding through the responsible bodies. This will be conducted as soon as possible. For more details please see the Complaints & Incident Handling Policy.</p>
<p><i>Fairness and the right to be heard</i></p>	<p>Within our fact-finding, all individuals involved have the right to explain themselves and their perspectives will be considered.</p>

IV. Preventive safeguarding Mechanisms

Attentive hiring

Within our hiring guidelines and in interviews with potential new team members, we commit to due diligence. We only accept applicants who demonstrate awareness and self-reflection in accordance with our general principles as well as the willingness to follow our rules and regulations, and to engage in a critical learning process. To ensure this, [safe recruitment guidelines](#) are being applied in each recruitment process to ensure safe recruitment and that the importance of safeguarding is conveyed to each new team member. These guidelines include:

1

- The inclusion of IHR’s safeguarding commitment as well as fundamental values and code of conduct, into each recruitment call and advertisement
- An outline of specific safeguarding responsibilities of each role as applicable, in the job description and interview
- Safeguarding questions being asked to applicants
- The possibility to follow up on unusual aspects of a CV with a person’s previous employer
- The possibility to conduct criminal record checks

It is the responsibility of anyone involved in recruitment at IHR to ensure that these guidelines are upheld and implemented. Coordinators are responsible for following these guidelines during the recruitment of volunteers, while Board members responsible for employment are accountable for upholding and implementing them in that context.

A special [procedure](#) applies to the hiring process of researchers.

Rules and regulations

- 2 We believe that harm caused by our team members can in many cases be prevented through clear communication of our expectations, rules and regulations. Our Code of Conduct, as well as other regulations of IHR, such as this policy, need to be understood and signed by any team member when starting to work with us.

Training and awareness-raising

Before committing to join IHR, every new team member is provided with the Safeguarding Policy, the Code of Conduct, Complaints & Incident Handling Policy and the Founding Statement, which outlines our vision, mission, and values. This ensures that all team members have a clear understanding of the rules and regulations, allowing them to make an informed decision whether they would like to get involved with IHR.

- 3 Incoming team members arriving in Samos undergo a workshop that covers our vision, mission, and values, along with comprehensive training on the Safeguarding Policy and the Code of Conduct and the Complaints & Incident Handling Policy. Our goal is to offer training that raises awareness of power imbalances within the IHR working environment and to continually reinforce understanding of our core values and principles.

IHR is also committed to communicating the above-mentioned policies as widely as possible, in accessible languages spoken by the people it serves. Additionally, reporting channels are clearly and transparently shared—both in writing and, whenever possible, verbally—to ensure that clients and other external stakeholders know how to submit complaints.

IHR ensures that certain members in functions of responsibility, such as employees and board members especially when members of the Classification and Safeguarding Committee (CSC, see V. Safeguarding protocols), receive additional trainings on safeguarding principles and mechanisms, in order to ensure the implementation of the principles in practice.

Safeguarding Expectations in IHR Cooperation

IHR's engagement with organizations is guided by our commitment to safeguarding. We operate on the fundamental principle of good faith, assuming that organizations in the same or similar fields have established structures or are actively taking steps to create a safeguarded work environment. As part of this commitment, we proactively assess organizations, for example, by reviewing their websites and addressing safeguarding matters in meetings when appropriate.

4

We expect the NGOs we collaborate with to take responsibility for preventing harm to individuals, whether through their actions or omissions. This includes both a proactive approach to harm prevention and a reactive role in identifying and addressing cases where harm has occurred.

We support the efforts of multiple actors on Samos in developing common guidelines on shared safeguarding principles and best practices.

Measures and Policies to be developed

Our objective is to engage in a continuous improvement process, strengthening our organisational structures to prevent harm within the working environment of IHR and to implement practical solutions in the event of incidents. We are committed to constantly enhancing the team's awareness and transparency of our policy content. Furthermore, we pledge to develop and improve policies for various aspects of our work, including but not limited to safeguarding children.

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Feedback

Have you got feedback, comments, or criticism regarding this document?

Let us know at team@ihaverights.eu.

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