

SERBIA | Belgrade Conference of Ombudsman/National Human Rights Institutions: Human Rights Challenges in Refugee/Migrant Crisis

The unprecedented migrants and refugees' crisis and serious concerns regarding the respect of human rights of these vulnerable groups, has gathered more than 100 representatives of ombudsman and NHRIs, international organizations and civil society organizations at the international conference organized by the Protector of Citizens of the Republic of Serbia in Belgrade, on November 23-24, 2015.

The participants have emphasized the importance of the international and regional instruments in order to safeguard the human rights and fundamental freedoms of migrants and refugees, in particular in providing the appropriate procedures for determining the right to seek and enjoy asylum, treatment of migrants and refugees and the obligation to ensure that the principle of “*non-refoulement*” is respected.

Strongly condemning the recent attacks in Paris, the conference participants have confirmed that terrorism and other security concerns cannot reduce the fulfilment of all human rights, including those of migrants and refugees, and that terrorism must not be attributed to any specific religion, nation or ethnic group.

The Conference participants restated and supported the key segments of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UNGA 70/1) which pertain to the rights of migrants, refugees and of displaced persons.

It was agreed that special attention has to be given to the most vulnerable refugees and migrants, such as children (accompanied, separated and unaccompanied); victims of torture, sexual violence or human trafficking; persons at risk of statelessness; LGBTI; traumatized persons; persons with intellectual and/or physical disabilities; and older persons.



In accordance with their mandate, the ombudsman and NHRIs expressed their commitment to promote the possibility to lodge complaints and encourage refugees and migrants to use this opportunity, utilize as much as possible visits and presence on the spot, engage in awareness raising and in dissemination of accurate information, strongly oppose any

From the proceedings of the Belgrade Conference



public statements of state officials and politicians which constitute or encourage hate speech and discrimination practices. Also, they expressed readiness to establish regional, transnational and global cooperation and action to promote and protect the human rights of migrants and refugees.

The representatives of Ombudsman and NHRIs emphasized the importance of collaborating with CSOs and collaborating with relevant international and regional human rights mechanisms, and making the use of the available support and assistance.

The Conference resulted in the adoption of the [Belgrade Declaration](#), which was signed by all present representatives of national NHRIs and ombudsman institutions.

For more information and resources from the Belgrade Conference, please visit the dedicated website: <http://www.zastitnik.rs/index.php/lang-sr/component/content/article/4467>.
