

Human Rights Defenders Advocacy Programme (HRDAP)

Distance Learning Course – 5th April – 25th June 2021¹

Please read the information below before completing the application form, which can be found [here](#).

Applications must be submitted before midnight in Geneva on Sunday 3 January 2021, and will **ONLY** be considered if 2 recommendation letters have been attached to the application form.

1) Programme description

Human rights defenders play a vital role in pushing for sustainable human rights improvements. A free and vibrant civil society is essential to assist States to respect, protect and fulfil all human rights for all and to hold them to account when they fail to do so.

ISHR conducts regular training courses on the use of the main human rights mechanisms, including the Human Rights Council, the special procedures, the UN treaty bodies and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The **Human Rights Defenders Advocacy Program, (HRDAP)** equips human rights defenders with the knowledge and skills to integrate the system into their existing work at the national level in a strategic manner. The programme also provides an opportunity for participants to engage in lobbying and advocacy activities at the UN with the aim to effect change back home.

Due to travel restrictions and changes in modalities of the UN Human Rights Council Sessions related to COVID-19, HRDAP21 will take place fully **online**, through a 12-week distance learning course and remote coaching and advocacy support, enabling participants to conduct advocacy and lobbying activities at the UN remotely.

Click [here](#) to find out how this worked for HRDAP20 and what defenders shared about their experience taking part in the online course.

2) Distance Learning Course (online, 5th April – 25th June 2021)

The HRDAP21 programme consists of the following elements:

- a) A **12-week distance learning course** to support participants to consolidate existing knowledge and develop advocacy objectives, which includes access to:
 - ✓ ISHR Academy modules, including on the [Human Rights Council](#), [Special Procedures](#) and [Treaty Bodies](#)
 - ✓ Recorded webinars defenders can listen to at their own pace
 - ✓ live Q&A sessions with human rights experts
 - ✓ Other tools and resources to support defenders' advocacy work

¹ Please note that these dates can be subject to change.



*Approximate number of study hours

b) **Advocacy support and coaching**, focusing on ways to use international human rights mechanisms effectively and to influence outcomes:

- ✓ Receive **individual support** from ISHR’s Training and Advocacy Support Manager, throughout the duration of the course
- ✓ Each participant will receive **individual and group coaching** sessions with a dedicated ISHR staff, through regular meetings held via videoconference
- ✓ Complete individual assignments in order to develop an “Advocacy Roadmap” (concrete advocacy objectives as a part of a **theory of change**) and receive individual **feedback** and **coaching** on each submission from a dedicated coach

c) Be part of a **global community** of human rights defenders:

- ✓ Meet and work with other defenders from around the world, and exchange with others in **forum** discussions, meet each other during **live webinars and Q&A sessions** and work together in a virtual **scenario-based exercise**
- ✓ Receive **weekly newsletters** informing defenders of what’s coming up and learn more about other defenders taking part in the course
- ✓ Integrate **ISHR’s Alumni Network** – with regular updates on advocacy opportunities, calls to action, and other key communication related to the international human rights space

d) Receive **support and advocacy accompaniment** to conduct advocacy (remotely or plan for future in-person advocacy) during Human Rights Council sessions and other relevant meetings.

The HRDAP Distance Learning Course allows activists to benefit from tailored, long-term advocacy coaching and support, enabling them to develop their knowledge and skills, as well as an “advocacy strategy roadmap”, to make strategic use of the international human rights system in their national advocacy strategies.

ISHR will provide support and advocacy accompaniment to support defenders to engage (remotely or when possible, in-person) with key advocacy opportunities during the 47th session (June 2021) and the

48th session (September 2021) of the UN Human Rights Council. Such opportunities include (*please note that this list is neither exclusive nor exhaustive*):²

- Report of the Working Group on business and human rights – providing a key opportunity to engage with the members of the Working Group, as well as the report of the Forum on Business and Human Rights (HRC47).
- Reports by key special procedures mandates (UN experts) in the area of human rights defenders, including sexual orientation and gender identity, freedom of expression, summary executions, violence against women, contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and on the human rights of migrants (HRC47).
- Discussion of human rights situations and reports by experts on Eritrea (HRC47), Belarus (HRC47), Cambodia (HRC48) and by the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (HRC48).
- Discussion of human rights situations and reports or oral updates by the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Ukraine (HRC47) and on systemic racism, violations of international human rights law against Africans and people of African descent by law enforcement agencies (HRC47).
- Annual debate on women's rights, as well as resolutions in this area and in the area of migration (HRC47); annual debates and resolutions in the area of business and human rights, including the rights of indigenous peoples (HRC48).

3) Objectives

The objectives of the course fall into the following three broad categories:

- a) Supporting human rights defenders:
 - Develop human rights defenders' advocacy skills and expertise.
 - Enhance the ability of human rights defenders to engage strategically with the Human Rights Council, as well as to develop diplomatic and civil society networks;
 - Improve the quality of NGO participation in the Human Rights Council, with a view to exert a greater influence on human rights foreign policy;
 - Share tools and knowledge, which human rights defenders can use to ensure their voice is central in international human rights decision-making.
 - Develop advocacy strategies for specific issues, and to ensure follow-up and action on the Human Rights Council's resolutions;
 - Increase human rights defenders' understanding of the short, mid and longer-term opportunities provided by human rights mechanisms in Geneva;
 - Explore and compare the benefits of engagement with the Human Rights Council, the special procedures, the OHCHR, the UPR and the treaty bodies, and examine how advocates can use them to bolster their work at the national level;
 - Develop strategies and lobbying techniques to increase the potential of human rights defenders' national and regional advocacy work
- b) Influencing the substantive outcomes of international human rights mechanisms in a positive manner, including Human Rights Council resolutions and the work of UN thematic and country specific human rights experts (the Special Procedures).
- c) Creating a peer group of human rights defenders working on a diverse range of issues, identifying best practice in advocating for human rights change, and exchanging lessons and experiences in conducting international advocacy.

4) Participant profile

This programme is directed at experienced human rights defenders in non-governmental organisations, who have existing advocacy experience at the national level and some prior knowledge of the international human rights system.

² Please note that the Council's calendar and content is subject to change.

ISHR supports, and promotes solidarity with and between, defenders working in the following areas or contexts, which we recognise as intersectional and interdependent:

1. Equality, dignity and non-discrimination³
2. Environmental justice and sustainability⁴
3. International accountability for repression of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs)⁵
4. Transparency and rule of law⁶

Final decisions regarding participants will be based upon the following criteria:

- Match between applicants' area of work/expertise and ISHR's strategic priorities and/or the opportunities provided by the 47th and 48th Sessions of the Human Rights Council;
- Applicants' knowledge of human rights and their experience and willingness to engage with the UN human rights system and integrate it effectively into domestic level advocacy;
- Applicants' experience of carrying out advocacy at the national and/or regional level;
- Applicants' advocacy responsibilities and role within their organisation;
- Applicants' willingness to contribute to peer education in a diverse group of participants;
- Applicants' demonstrated commitment to the principles of human rights, including the principles of universality and non-discrimination;
- Communication, language and organisational skills;
- The potential for a strategic partnership between ISHR and the applicants' organisation;
- Whether applicants or their organisations have been recommended by a strategic partner.

The course will be carried out in English. ISHR cannot provide translation.

In identifying and selecting participants, ISHR will work closely with leading human rights organisations in each of the specific respective focus areas and across the world.

5) Course requirements

In order to complete HRDAP21, participants will be required to:

- Complete approximately **5 hours of work/week**, which includes completing pre-reading resources, including ISHR Academy modules and pre-recorded webinars
- Take **part actively and consistently** in live webinars, Q&A sessions, a virtual scenario-based exercise and forum discussions
- Attend and participate in individual and group **coaching** sessions, which will be held via videoconference
- Develop and submit a set of personal advocacy objectives by submitting short **individual assignments** every two weeks, as well as a **final submission** at the end of the course which will outline the defender's "Advocacy Roadmap" (i.e theory of change).

As the course will take place online, through online learning and communication platforms, participants will need to have a **stable internet connection** throughout the duration of the course. Please indicate

³ Such defenders may include women HRDs (WHRDs), defenders working on issues of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics (SOGIESC), migrant rights defenders, and anti-racism and Black, indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC) defenders, and other HRDs dismantling patriarchal, racist, capitalist, and other oppressive agendas

⁴ Such defenders may include environmental HRDs (EHRDs), climate activists, corporate accountability activists, indigenous HRDs

⁵ Such contexts or environments may include defenders working in or in relation to countries such as China, Venezuela, Egypt, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Burundi

⁶ Such defenders may include those working in deteriorating environments such as the US, India, Poland, Hungary or Guatemala, where there is a need to safeguard democratic institutions and accountability mechanisms, as well as those working in environments where there is an opportunity to strengthen protection and accountability mechanisms, such as in a number of West African and Asian countries

in your application form if you anticipate having internet connectivity issues, and what solutions could help resolve these, which ISHR will evaluate and consider avenues to provide additional support.

Defenders will receive a **certificate** of completion on the condition that they participate actively throughout the course and submit their assignments on time.

6) Application process

By midnight Geneva time on Sunday 3rd January 2020 each applicant must:

- Submit a completed application form available [here](#);
- Attach 2 letters of recommendation to your application form

Applications will ONLY be considered if the two letters have been attached to the application.

7) Cost

ISHR relies on contributions from partner organisations and donors to be able to deliver HRDAP to a set number of participants. As HRDAP21 will be delivered entirely online, there will be no participation costs incurred by participants directly.

However, participants may need to secure funding from other sources to ensure stable and reliable internet access and connectivity throughout the duration of the course. Please indicate in your application form if you anticipate having any issues related to internet connectivity; what solutions may help resolve these, and whether you or a third-party will be able to bear the costs.

8) Timeline

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis starting immediately and applications will close at **midnight Geneva time on 3 January 2021**. Participants will be advised in February on whether or not they have been selected.

You will be contacted to confirm your participation in HRDAP21 and asked to complete a short pre-training survey. The course will start on Monday 5th April 2021.

Selected participants will need to ensure they secure the time and commitment to complete all of the course requirements, for the entire duration of the course (5th April – 25th June 2021).

Please direct any questions relating to the program or on the application process to hrdap2021@ishr.ch. Applications for [HRDAP21](#) will be accepted until midnight Geneva time on Sunday 3rd of January 2021.

