

Working with National Human Rights Institutions Overseas: The Role of Canadian Expertise and Resources

- Progress Report -

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Canadian Human Rights Foundation

Summary:

Despite playing important roles played in national efforts to promote and defend human rights, such as in Indonesia, Mexico and Latvia, among others, several concerns remain about independent national human rights institutions and their capacity to continue in these endeavours. Canada has been increasingly involved in supporting these institutions, for instance, by providing resources directed at strengthening their capacity. The topics discussed focused on issues arising from Canada's experiences in this regard, the variety and breadth of Canada's involvement, challenges faced by national human rights institutions, and recommendations for effective action.

Policy Recommendations:

- continuation of Canadian involvement in and support of national human rights institutions, alongside and in balance with existing efforts to strengthen the rule of law, democratic institutions and civil society;
- engage NGOs and other participants of civil society in Canada and in the target country;
- the development of criteria for working with national human rights institutions, such as mandate of the institution, its independence, and availability of Canadian resources and skills to be effective and for disengagement in the event that a national institution lose its credibility, requiring on-going evaluation of Canadian initiatives in this regard;
- development of a strategic framework by Canadian organisations/institutions involved in these endeavours
- financial commitment on behalf of the Canadian government.