

HRDAP20 | Launch of the remote Human Rights Defender Advocacy Programme 2020

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ISHR's flagship Human Rights Defenders Advocacy Programme (HRDAP) began remotely on Tuesday 2 June, with 19 inspiring activists from around the globe participating in their first webinar as a part of an innovated and adapted programme.



HRDAP20 Cohort attending a Welcome Webinar, through the videoconferencing tool Jitsi Meet.

On Tuesday 2 June, ISHR launched its first remote, online HRDAP to ensure that human rights defenders continue to receive support and access to UN human rights bodies and mechanisms, despite the COVID-19 related global travel restrictions which impeded our ability to host our flagship [2-week, in-person training](#).

In its place, ISHR is offering tailored and long-term coaching and advocacy support to 19 human rights defenders, through a brand new 12-week online distance learning course which will equip participants with the knowledge and skills to make strategic use of the international human rights system.

"ISHR is committed to ensuring that human rights defenders have continued access and opportunities for engaging with the UN human rights system, even in crisis situations," says ISHR's Programme Director Pooja Patel. "Providing advocacy support to defenders, including those who aren't able to travel to Geneva is vital," she continues.

The defenders will complete [ISHR Academy](#) modules, access webinars on the UN human rights mechanisms and on advocacy and lobbying strategies, and attend live Q&A sessions with leading human rights advocates. ISHR will work with each participant to develop their advocacy strategies, providing them with regular feedback and coaching, as well as opportunities for peer-to-peer learning. The activists will also be supported to outline concrete results they aim to achieve through future advocacy opportunities in Geneva.

The defenders called in from Botswana, Brazil, Costa Rica, Egypt, Hungary, India, Kenya, Liberia, Mexico, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Ukraine and Zimbabwe.

They work on many key human rights issues, including advancing women's rights, defending the rights of LGBTI persons and migrant and refugee rights, bringing about change in restrictive environments, and working on business and environmental issues and their impact on indigenous communities.

"It is critical that we ensure these essential workers get the support and knowledge they seek, including opportunities to engage with experts and UN staff," says ISHR's Training and Advocacy Support Manager Hannah Sobocinski, "but also that they feel part of a wider community of defenders, which is at the heart of the programme and perhaps more important than ever in such uncertain times."

We look forward to seeing the exchange of knowledge, skills building and the joint commitment from defenders and ISHR staff to foster a more connected human rights movement over the next 12 weeks.