

POLICE SENSITIZATION PROGRAMME CUM INTERACTION SESSION

PS UTTAM NAGAR

05.04.2016

There is no domestic law or national policy for refugee protection in India. Refugee issues are dealt with on an ad hoc basis such as the Foreigners Act 1946, the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920, and the Passport Act, 1976 that governs their entry, stay and departure from the country. Owing to their legal status as refugees/asylum seekers, PoCs face hurdles in accessing legal system or when caught in the legal system due to lack of specific legal tool conducive for refugees.

Objective: In such situation, it becomes imperative to mitigate protection risk of PoCs by imparting them on legal procedures and Indian laws so that they are empowered to initiate engagement with police and authorities in case of need or crisis. The sensitization programme for police aims to minimize the gap of communication between refugees and authorities (police) and encouraging them to avail the legal provision and also to achieve the comfort level in interacting with police.

In this backdrop, SLIC conducted a sensitization programme for the police on refugee protection on 5 April, 2016, at Uttam Nagar police Station. Thirty two (32) police personnel attended the programme including the SHO, K.P. Malik. SLIC was represented by Saud Tahir, Belover Hutten, Sunil Kumar, Murshed Mussarraff, Chharaliana and Hujzeat Islam. Khoi Sian Pau, President of Zomi Refugee Association also attended the programme.

Main Discourse: The role of UNHCR and SLIC was briefed including the services provided to PoCs in legal matters. Plight of PoCs in the host country and the protection issues faced by them were highlighted. Special emphasis was made on the principle of *non refoulement* that refugees must be protected from threat of deportation.

Discussion was on the general population of UNHCR registered refugees in India and other refugees recognised by Government of India such as Tibetans and Sri Lankans. Information on the issuance of LTV by FRRO to refugees and the ID cards issued by UNHCR were shared and samples were shown. They were explained on the difference between refugees from African countries (like Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan) and other foreigners from the same

continent like Nigerians. The police were informed that they can differentiate registered refugees from other foreigners through the ID cards issued by UNHCR and they can verify the same from UNHCR office in case of any doubt or for any clarification.

During the discussion, the police was also informed about the presence of ethnic chin refugees and Burmese Muslims (Rohingyas) residing in Uttam Nagar area. Request was made to police for their cooperation in case of any matter relating to refugees. Brief protection issues such as harassment, exploitation, assault including sexual exploitation reported by PoCs were highlighted and how SLIC provides assistance in addressing the issues for redressal in the Indian legal system.



Very interestingly the SHO came up with some queries. He wanted to know if all foreigners could be considered as refugees and whether Nigerians are refugees. He also cited about the issue of Boko Haram in Nigeria. Clarifying his queries, SLIC explained to him the definition of a Refugee as provided by the UN convention emphasising on the term well-founded fear of **“persecution”** and also the differences between refugees and economic migrants/foreigners.

The SHO was very receptive and assured full cooperation in future. The beat officers of Uttam Nagar area were particularly directed by SHO to be vigilant in the area. He also asked them whether they have received any refugee’s cases in the past. Contact numbers of the SHO and beat officers were exchanged and the same were provided to the refugee representatives for future reference.