

**Review Conference 2010, Warsaw, 30 September - 08 October 2010**

**Statement by Human Rights First**

**‘FORWARD-LOOKING DISCUSSIONS’:**

**Intolerance against Migrants**

Immigrants and citizens of immigrant origin face particular problems of racism and xenophobia. Singled out because of race or ethnicity, language, culture, and often religion, immigrants and those perceived to be immigrants are often highly visible even in multicultural societies. Xenophobia has been on the rise in many parts of the world. Anti-immigrant rhetoric is increasing, as newcomers are blamed for political, economic, and societal ills. This applies equally to external migrants (from Africa, Latin America or Asia) and internal migrants (within OSCE region), with or without legal authorization. Refugees and asylum-seekers from Africa, Central Asian migrant workers, Roma and Sinti, and Muslim immigrants are among many groups affected by this violence, which takes the form of attacks on individuals and property, such as temporary housing for refugees.

Though the most visible and brutal of hate crimes—such as the murder of a Muslim woman in a German courtroom, the beating to death of a Kyrgyz labor migrant in Moscow, the murderous assault on a Congolese refugee in Ukraine—may make the news headlines, the large majority of cases of violent attacks and day-to-day harassment remains under the radar screen. Underreporting of hate crimes is endemic as refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants may be afraid to identify themselves to local government authorities due to fear of deportation or mistrust of local law enforcement authorities.

Discrimination and racist violence against immigrant foreign nationals is generally both underreported and underrecorded. People without or with uncertain legal residence status may fear that reporting will not only result in retaliation on behalf of the attackers, but will also draw the attention of immigration services, set in motion by the very authorities from which they seek protection. Accordingly, people with no legal residence status are far more likely to suffer discrimination and violence in silence.

Governments must make particular efforts to ensure that hate crimes are reported to the appropriate authorities so that action can be taken to hold the perpetrators responsible in individual incidents, and to better measure the response of governments over time. Governments can increase confidence in their response to hate crime by speaking out publicly against incidents, responding to instances of abuse by law enforcement officials against victims of hate crimes, developing

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systems of third party reporting, and enhancing outreach to civil society groups that have regular and direct contact with hate crime victims.

Migration flows will likely continue to increase in the coming years, and participating States must implement commitments to combat hate crimes as one of many steps to ensure that these individuals can thrive in contribute to their new communities.