

SUPPORT TO RIGHTS PROGRAMME **RIGHTS** **BASED APPROACH**



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HAKLARA DESTEK
İnsan Hakları Örgütlerini
Destekleme Programı

WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

Human rights are universal standards necessary for all people to live with dignity, freedom, equality, and justice. These rights belong to everyone, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or any other status, and they are inalienable.

Human rights emerged from struggles against slavery, genocide, discrimination, and state repression; as a historical achievement, they today form the foundation of international law.

WHAT DO HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS DO?

Human rights organisations are civil society organisations that work to protect and advance rights, document violations, ensure accountability, and promote justice.

These organisations monitor state and government practices, make violations visible, provide support to victims, advocate for policy change, and contribute to the rooting of a human rights culture in society. They address not only individual cases but also structural problems and systemic patterns.

WHAT IS THE RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH?

The Rights-Based Approach (RBA), as defined by the United Nations, is a conceptual framework that grounds human development processes in international human rights standards and aims to translate these standards into practice.

The RBA places the analysis of inequality, anti-discrimination, and the questioning of power relations at the centre of development and social change processes. It aims to make visible the structural violations directed at groups that are systematically excluded and exposed to rights violations, to strengthen the claims of rights-holders, and to enhance the accountability of duty-bearers.

The Support to Rights Programme adopts this approach both as its own operating principle and aims to embed this understanding within the organisations it supports.

GENERAL FRAMEWORK

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) defines human rights as the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action emphasises that democracy, development, and respect for human rights are mutually reinforcing and inseparable concepts.

Since its 1997 Reform Programme, the UN has called on all its agencies to integrate human rights into their programmes and activities. The Common Understanding Statement adopted within the UN in 2003 established shared criteria for the RBA in development cooperation.

GENERAL FRAMEWORK

The European Union endorsed its Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy in 2012, and with its RBA document published in 2014 adopted this approach as the basis for all external assistance and development processes. The key elements of the EU RBA are as follows:

- 🔥 Reflecting the indivisibility of human rights and respect for human dignity across all work
- 🔥 Alignment with the principles of ownership, transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness
- 🔥 Bringing rights-based methodology to development processes
- 🔥 Commitment to human rights obligations by all parties
- 🔥 Addressing multiple discrimination in line with the principle of “leaving no one behind”

THE RIGHTS SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Support to Rights (Haklara Destek) is a sub-grant programme implemented in partnership by Hafıza Merkezi and Heinrich Böll Stiftung, with funding from the European Union Delegation to Turkey. It aims to strengthen the institutional capacities of rights organisations in Turkey and to support their contribution to the development of human rights and democracy.

The programme is open to all applicants on the basis of fair competition, equal opportunity, and transparency.

Turkish context: Support to Rights operates in a period when civil society space in Turkey is steadily narrowing, rights organisations are working under severe pressure, and structural violations are deepening across many rights domains. This context moves the programme's rights-based approach beyond an abstract set of principles and into a concrete working ground: the programme aims not merely at the survival of rights organisations, but at strengthening their advocacy capacity and impact.

OUR RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

The Support to Rights Programme is grounded in the UN Common Understanding Statement and the EU RBA framework. The standards set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments guide all programme activities. Rights-based organisations focus on peacefully advocating for and protecting the rights of others — often marginalised groups. Rights-based organisations are defined by their defence of universal rights on behalf of all.

CORE PRINCIPLES

Universality and Inalienability | Human rights are universal and inalienable. All people everywhere possess these rights; they cannot be taken away, nor can a person renounce them. As stated in Article 1 of the UDHR: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

Indivisibility | Human rights are indivisible. Whether civil, political, economic, social, or cultural in character, every right is an indispensable part of human dignity. No hierarchy can be established among rights.

Interdependence and Interrelatedness | The realisation of one right often depends on the realisation of others. The right to health is intertwined with the rights to education and information; freedom of expression is intertwined with freedoms of assembly and association; the right to a fair trial is intertwined with access to legal aid.

CORE PRINCIPLES

Equality and Non-Discrimination | Every person holds human rights without distinction on grounds of race, colour, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, language, religion, political opinion, national origin, disability, property, or similar grounds. The recognition of multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination is an inseparable part of this principle.

Participation and Inclusion | Every person has the right to freely and meaningfully participate in, contribute to, and benefit from the civil, economic, social, cultural, and political processes that enable the realisation of their rights. Removing barriers to participation is a requirement of this principle.

Accountability and Rule of Law | States and other duty-bearers are responsible for upholding human rights. Rights-holders have the right to seek remedy through competent mechanisms when violations occur. Accountability encompasses monitoring, documentation, and advocacy work.

RIGHTS AREAS SUPPORTED BY THE PROGRAMME

Civil and Political Rights | Access to justice ♦ Right to a fair trial and fair enforcement ♦ Freedom of expression, press, and access to information ♦ Freedom of assembly and association ♦ Protection against torture and ill-treatment ♦ Liberty and security of person ♦ Digital rights · Rule of law ♦ Protection of human rights defenders

Socio-Economic Rights | Labour and workers' rights ♦ Right to health ♦ Right to education ♦ Right to the city and housing

Equality, Anti-Discrimination, and Identity Rights | Right to equality and non-discrimination ♦ Women's rights and gender equality ♦ LGBTI+ rights ♦ Minority rights ♦ Refugee and migrant rights ♦ Rights of persons with disabilities ♦ Children's rights ♦ Youth rights

Cultural and Collective Rights | Cultural rights and cultural identity ♦ Right to peace and protection from conflict ♦ Memory, transitional justice, and the right to accountability ♦ Climate justice and ecological rights

EXPECTATIONS FROM APPLYING ORGANISATIONS

The Support to Rights Programme seeks not merely declarations of commitment to certain principles, but concrete evidence that these principles are reflected in organisational practice.

The general approach and activities of applying CSOs are expected to be consistent with the following:

- 🔥 Conducting rights advocacy without commercial purpose
- 🔥 Acting independently from states, governments, and political parties
- 🔥 Upholding the universality and indivisibility of human rights
- 🔥 Opposing all forms of discrimination on grounds of race, language, religion, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or similar
- 🔥 Defending the right to life, the right not to be subjected to torture or ill-treatment, and freedom of expression and association under all circumstances

EXPECTATIONS FROM APPLYING ORGANISATIONS

- 🔸 Supporting the rule of law, access to justice, and the right to a fair trial
- 🔸 Opposing war and militarism; advocating for peace and tolerance
- 🔸 Recognising and defending freedom of thought and belief as an unconditional right
- 🔸 Unconditionally defending gender equality
- 🔸 Recognising the rights of national, minority, and local identities
- 🔸 Providing a safe, dignified, and discrimination-free environment within the organisation for all — including staff, volunteers, and event participants; maintaining a clear stance against harassment and violence and placing the survivor's testimony at the centre

Applications found to contain activities contrary to these principles will be excluded from consideration.



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