



**Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' (OHCHR) Chairmanship  
Summary Report  
1 July – 31 December 2010**

On 1 July 2010, OHCHR assumed the Chair of the GMG for the second semester of 2010. During the period of its Chair, OHCHR chose to focus on the human rights of all migrants, particularly those in an irregular situation.

On 30 September 2010, OHCHR convened a GMG Principals Meeting on the theme of “Irregular Migrants: Ensuring the effective protection of their human rights”. At this meeting, GMG Principals accepted the request of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and UN Women to join the Group. The Principals Meeting was followed by a press conference which generated significant media coverage of the issue of irregular migration.

At their meeting in September, a joint statement on the human rights of migrants in an irregular situation was adopted by the GMG Principals.<sup>1</sup> The statement called on the international community to end human rights violations against migrants in an irregular situation, noting that such migrants are disproportionately vulnerable to discrimination, exclusion, exploitation and abuse at all stages of the migration process and making the important point that the irregular situation which international migrants may find themselves in should not deprive them either of their humanity or of their rights. While recognising that States have legitimate interests in securing their borders and exercising immigration controls, it stressed that such concerns cannot, and indeed, as a matter of international law do not, trump the obligations of the State to respect the internationally guaranteed rights of all persons, to protect those rights against abuses, and to fulfil the rights necessary for them to enjoy a life of dignity and security.

A one-day open-ended Experts Meeting on the human rights of irregular migrants organized by OHCHR in October also generated policy recommendations on the issue of human rights and irregular migration that were widely disseminated. This meeting brought together GMG member agencies and entities, UN human rights mechanisms, non-governmental organisations, trade unions, and academic experts to explore ways to further the protection of the human rights of migrants in an irregular situation. Issues addressed included; how the various human rights and related instruments address irregular migration

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<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=10396&LangID=E>

including in relation to their monitoring by expert bodies; applicable civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of irregular migrants; and assessments of particular areas of focus namely, children, women, asylum, trafficking, and labour. Participants also discussed good practices and joint strategies to address the issue of irregular migration. The key recommendations from the Experts Meeting were disseminated through the e-discussions on HURI-TALK (Human Rights Talk) hosted by UNDP. Among other things, the meeting aimed to support States and other stakeholders to prepare for the Global Forum on Migration and Development meeting which would take place in Mexico in November 2010.

As Chair of the GMG, the High Commissioner for Human Rights addressed the fourth GFMD which was held in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico between 8-10 November 2010. In her statement, the High Commissioner called for an end to the criminalization of irregular migrants, and urged all States to ratify and effectively implement the core international human rights instruments protecting the human rights of migrants, and particularly the ICRMW. On 8 November, the High Commissioner presented keynote remarks at a GMG side event to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. The High Commissioner also convened a GMG Press Conference with Mrs. Pilar Alvarez Laso, ADG of UNESCO, and Dr. Otaviano Canuto, Vice President of World Bank. On 10th November, the High Commissioner, as Chair of the GMG, participated in a panel discussion on “Improving public perceptions of migrants” within the first “Common Space” session.

OHCHR also convened three Working Level meetings of the GMG during the period of its Chair between July – December 2010.