

Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions/Brookings Institution – SAIS  
Project on Internal Displacement

**National Human Rights Institutions  
and Internally Displaced Persons**

**Visit of Three Member Team to the Philippines  
26<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2004**

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## INTRODUCTION

1. At the sixth annual meeting of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF) held in September 2001, APF's member institutions highlighted their potential in ensuring that the human rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs) were respected in their respective countries. They called upon the APF secretariat to provide them with assistance on this issue.
2. Accordingly, a three-member team visited the Philippine Commission on Human Rights (CHR) from 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2004. The team consisted of Ms Pip Dargan from APF, Mr David Fisher from the Brookings Institution-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement, and Dr. Mario Gomez, a human rights lawyer from Sri Lanka. The visit to the Philippines was part of a larger project which will include visits to five other countries (India, Nepal, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand) to look at the role that those national institutions could play with regard to internal displacement. The program for visit is at Attachment 1 and biographies of the APF/Brookings Institution team members are at Attachment 2.
3. The purpose of the visit was to engage with the CHR, governmental agencies, international and local non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders to discuss the role that CHR could play with regard to IDPs.
4. Within the CHR, the team met with a number of Commissioners, the Executive Director, staff in Manila, as well as with regional staff in Cotabato and Davao City. The team also met with local and international NGOs, representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and a member of Congress.
5. This report presents some ideas for consideration by CHR.
6. The team was struck by the quality of the interaction it had with the CHR. Commissioners and staff, both in Manila and in Mindanao, had in depth discussions with the team on a wide range of issues pertaining to both conflict and development induced displacement. Also very valuable were the roundtable discussions organized by CHR staff both in Manila and Catabato City with representatives of government, NGOs and other relevant parties.
7. The team was impressed by the willingness shown by the CHR to reflect on a number of the issues relating to IDPs, to solicit suggestions and constructive criticism of its own role in public fora, and to address the challenge of developing capacities within the Commission to respond to internal displacement. It was clear that the Commission understood the magnitude of the problem. The challenge for the Commission, as it was expressed to the team, was how should the CHR go about integrating IDPs into its already substantial agenda? Secondly, how could it generate the human and financial resources to do this?

8. A notable feature of the mission was the opportunity the team had to meet with staff from a variety of 'levels' in both Manila and in Districts 11 and 12 in Mindanao. The opportunity to interact with this broad range of staff provided the team with a myriad of perspectives on the problems of displacement in the Philippines, the work that the CHR is already doing in this area and a sense of what needs to be done.
9. The team was also able to meet privately with local and international NGO representatives. A number of these representatives expressed frustration with what they saw as weak responses by the Commission to human rights abuses, particularly by the military, and their perception that the CHR had failed, as yet, to truly engage with the issue of internal displacement. On the other hand, a number of positive experiences with CHR were also shared with the team, and NGOs emphasized that the CHR had the potential to make a difference on how internal displacement is addressed in the Philippines, particularly by serving as an ambassador on the human rights dimensions of the issue to other branches of government and to the general public.

## **BACKGROUND**

10. Displacement in the Philippines has been caused by natural disasters, development projects and internal conflict. According to NGOs counter insurgency operations and other military activities remain the main cause of internal displacement within the Philippines since 1997. The main area of fighting is in Mindanao, the second largest island in the country. Many of the displaced are in what are referred to as 'evacuation centres' while others are with friends and family.

11. Accurate statistics on the numbers displaced are difficult to obtain. According to NGO estimates there were as many as 1 million IDPs in 2000 due mainly to armed conflict in Mindanao. By the end of 2002, all but 85,000 of these had reportedly returned home, according to statistics cited by the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons in his report of November 2002. However, renewed fighting beginning in February 2003 again displaced hundreds of thousands of persons.

12. While the great majority of those displaced by last year's fighting have returned their situation remains unstable. There is a widely held perception that violence could easily erupt again in Mindanao and other areas of the country and many still exist 'on the edge of displacement'.

13. The CHR had previously identified IDPs as a priority area of its work. This was reiterated most recently in the CHR Chair's address to the 60<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights held in April 2004. In 1996, the CHR also listed IDPs as a national priority in the Philippines National Human Rights Plan. However, as Commissioners and staff candidly noted, the CHR has not yet been able to pay sustained attention to this issue.

14. The CHR has already initiated a number of projects in this area, including the training of military and police personnel. The training includes modules on International Humanitarian Law, including Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions, the Rights of Women, and the Rights of Children. Some of its staff in the Mindanao region also train and engage with members of the militant groups in that region.

15. The CHR has also issued a number of advisories on the 'Treatment of Non-Combatants Especially Children and Women in Armed Conflicts', on the 'Violation of International Humanitarian Law', and 'On the Full Respect of Human Rights Under the State of Rebellion'. Likewise, over the years the armed forces and the Presidential Human Rights Committee have issued a number of policy directives and guidelines on minimizing the effect of the conflict on civilians. This has included directives that have had as their focus the rights of women and children. The House of Representatives has also passed a number of resolutions calling for the observance of international humanitarian law.

16. The CHR provides a certain amount of financial assistance to victims of human rights violations caused by internal armed conflict. These funds come from the national government. The CHR has an annual budget of 7 million pesos (USD \$124,000) for victims of human rights violations.

17. In its discussions with the team CHR staff observed that there should be 'a paradigm shift' in the way IDPs are perceived within the Commission. Currently IDPs are viewed as a 'vulnerable group' and as a group that needs 'assistance'. The most commonly used terminology to describe IDPs in the Philippines is 'evacuees'. There is too little recognition of the idea that IDPs have rights.

18. Both in Manila and Mindanao, the team found that while some staff members were well informed about the situation of IDPs in the Philippines, others were not as familiar with the issue and the desire for greater exposure to the relevant human rights norms and the particular problems of IDPs was repeatedly expressed.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

19. The team had scheduled a meeting with the Commissioners and senior staff at the end of its mission. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss possible follow up activities to the team's visit. Unfortunately the meeting did not take place because of a flight delay. However, the team had the opportunity to meet with the Executive Director and some of the senior staff of the CHR to discuss the issue of follow up activities.

20. On the basis of these and prior discussions, the team makes a series of recommendations and nominates the following three projects as priorities for the CHR to undertake in the short term:

1. A National Forum on IDPs;
2. A Public Hearing in Mindanao; and
3. The Integration of IDP Rights into existing training modules and programs, including the Rights Based Approach (RBA) initiative.

In addition, to assist in the planning, coordination and implementation of these and additional recommendations it is suggested that the CHR consider the establishment of a focal point or team within the Commission.

### ***1. National Forum on IDPs***

21. It is recommended that the CHR take up the invitation extended by NGOs and government agencies participating in roundtable meetings during the Team's visit to take a leadership role in organizing a National Forum on IDPs. Convening such a forum was one of the recommendations made by the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons upon his visit to the Philippines in 2002. The Forum could bring together representatives from:

CHR  
Government Agencies  
Upper and Lower Houses of Congress  
NGOs (including those with a focus on indigenous, women and children's rights)  
Academia  
Media

22. The objective of this Forum would be to explore the current situation of IDPs in the Philippines, the legal and policy framework with which the Government addresses the issue, solutions to outstanding problems of those still or recently displaced, and means to prevent displacement in the future. One potential outcome would be to provide substantial input and political momentum for a proposed new law on IDPs currently being discussed. In the course of its deliberations, the Forum could also explore how CHR could collaborate with NGOs, governmental agencies and other stakeholders to share information and develop common responses to internal displacement.

23. The first step towards such a Forum took place while the team was in Manila. On the second day in Manila the CHR arranged for the team to meet with a representative group of local and international NGOs and research institutions. This meeting provided an opportunity to lay the groundwork for the Forum. Many participants indicated that they would lend support to the Forum and one participant made a specific monetary pledge. On the afternoon of that day a second meeting was held with representatives from governmental agencies including representatives of the police and the army. Representatives from the government and military also agreed to be part of the Forum. As a result of these two meetings, a committee of parties interested in pursuing the National Forum was formed and appears ready to serve as a springboard for further planning.

24. The CHR staff also suggested that focus group meetings with key stakeholders might be held prior to the National Forum to bring out the major issues and better focus discussions at the larger meeting. This might indeed be a valuable exercise, both for purposes of the National Meeting and for further exploring CHR's own role in addressing issues of internal displacement.

25. It is further recommended, as suggested at the roundtable meetings, that CHR prepare (either through its own staff or with the help of outside expertise) an analysis of existing law and policy affecting the internally displaced in the Philippines as a background document for the National Forum.

26. The Brookings-SAIS Project and the APF are willing to explore sources of funding to support a National Forum.

## ***2. A Public Hearing in Mindanao***

27. It is recommended that CHR undertake a Public Hearing in Mindanao, the region with the largest number of IDPs.

28. This hearing to be organized in collaboration with governmental agencies and NGOs in the region would listen to the views of IDPs, local and international NGOs, government agencies, the military and police, and other relevant stakeholders and CHR could then publish a report containing a situational analysis of the IDPs. The report might include recommendations on actions relevant stakeholders should take to protect and realize the rights of IDPs.

29. To CHR such an initiative would help build capacity within the Commission by providing it with updated information from a range of stakeholders and also assist the institution to develop other initiatives in the area. The hearing might also serve as a pilot for potential hearings in other parts of the Philippines.

***3. The Integration of IDP Rights into existing training modules and programs, including the Rights Based Approach (RBA) initiative.***

30. One of the primary activities of the CHR is training and awareness raising on human rights issues among government agencies, military, police, and the general public. It is recommended that CHR examine its training modules and see how issues relating to IDPs might be integrated into its several programs.

31. The Brookings-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement and the APF would be ready to provide any technical assistance desired by the CHR in undertaking this review. Potentially, meetings for this purpose might be arranged incident to the recommended training discussed below.

## **ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES**

**There are in addition several important steps that the Commission could take to strengthen its understanding, approach and capacity with regard to the problem of internal displacement.**

***4. A Paradigm Shift: Generating Greater Awareness***

32. CHR has a role to play in creating awareness of the issue of internal displacement among the public, within government agencies, including Congress, and within the military and police.

33. As noted above, it was emphasized to the team that the prevailing use of the term 'evacuee' by the Philippine Government and the general public to describe IDPs has had a negative impact on their treatment. It was also alleged that attitudes among military forces toward humanitarian and human rights issues relevant to displacement needed change. The CHR could contribute to changing these perceptions of internal displacement and to infusing a rights dimension into the ways IDPs are perceived. It is

recommended that the CHR use the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as a framework to articulate the rights of IDPs and to frame relevant policy and legislation.

34. As a first step, CHR may want to consider issuing an Advisory on IDPs using the Guiding Principles as a framework. It may also want to consider how it could most effectively disseminate this advisory in the media and to relevant stakeholders. The team was told that many of the CHR advisories do not receive media attention. One possibility would be to issue the Advisory subsequent to the Public Hearing and to issue it in Mindanao. Moreover a press conference could be planned to be held at the conclusion of the public hearing to publicise its outcomes and to raise the profile of the CHR. As a follow-up after the meeting, the Advisory could be sent to all relevant government agencies (including the military and police), to NGOs and other interested stakeholders.

35. It is further recommended that the CHR consider dedicating an issue of its Human Rights Journal to the issue of internal displacement. This issue might, for example, follow the proposed National Forum, reprinting some of the papers and background material delivered there and reporting on the results in addition to other original work by CHR staff or outside experts. To promote this issue, it is suggested that the CHR could consider hosting a public “launch” of the journal and invite all relevant stakeholders to attend. In this way the CHR continues to publicise its activities and promote a greater public awareness of IDP issues. In addition, this “promotional” event could also serve the CHR by further developing key relationships with stakeholders. The Brookings-SAIS Project and the APF would be willing to seek necessary funding for printing.

### **5. Monitoring**

36. One of the CHR’s primary purposes is to monitor violations of human rights and to expedite complaints to appropriate government agencies. In its travel in Mindanao, the Team learned that IDPs are sometimes unwilling to submit complaints of violations of their rights for various reasons, including fear of reprisals. It is recommended that, as an element of prioritizing the issue of internal displacement (and with due regard to staffing and resource constraints), the CHR should encourage its regional offices to take a proactive and innovative approaches to internal displacement, including making visits to IDP evacuation centers to evaluate conditions, interview residents and hear their complaints, maintain regular contact with the Department of Social Welfare and Development, NGOs and other actors working to assist IDPs, and remain abreast of incidents of development-induced displacement to ensure that those affected are aware of the available avenues for recourse.

### **6. Staff Training**

37. It is recommended that the CHR obtain training on IDP issues and the relevant normative framework and explore the possibility of initiating training programs for its staff, both in Manila and in the regional offices. Such training would aim to:



- A. Provide an understanding of the global phenomenon of internal displacement.
- B. Provide an understanding of the international normative framework, principally the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.
- C. Enhance the understanding of the local contexts in which displacement is taking place.
- D. Explore in an interactive environment some durable solutions to the crisis of internal displacement.
- E. Train a pool of resource persons who could continue to provide training to other stakeholder groups on the issue of internal displacement.

38. The Brookings-SAIS Project and the APF are willing to initiate a process of collaboration on the question of training between the CHR and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). The NRC has over a period of time developed a special expertise in training on internal displacement. The Brookings-SAIS Project and APF would also be willing to look for sources of funding to ensure that materials are translated into local languages and to support some of the training activities in local languages.

39. As a first step, it is recommended that the CHR consider reviewing existing NRC training materials. It would also be valuable to explore the possibility of integrating local legal and IDP experts, particularly from the academic and NGO communities, into the training program.

40. It is further recommended that the CHR distribute generally among its staff and volunteers – including Barangay Human Rights Action Officers -- printed materials relevant to internal displacement. Such materials might include (depending on the recipients envisaged): (1) the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (available in English, Cebuano, Maguindanaon and Tagalog), (2) the Balay Rehabilitation Center's Primer on Internal Displacement in the Philippines, (3) the Handbook for Applying the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, (4) the 2003 report of the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons on his mission to the Philippines, and (5) the Norwegian Refugee Council training modules on internal displacement and the Guiding Principles.

## **7. Outside Training**

41. In addition to obtaining IDP-specific training for its own staff, it is recommended that the CHR consider expanding its existing training programs to include training of government staff, particularly at the Department of Social Welfare and Development and

to Civilian Armed Force Geographical Units in humanitarian and human rights norms relevant to the internally displaced.

#### ***8. Establishment of National and Regional Taskforces and Fora***

42. It is recommended that the CHR form task forces or working groups on IDP issues at both the Manila and regional levels. At the national level, the group gathered to plan the proposed National Forum could serve this purpose. In Mindanao, government, NGO, and other participants in a roundtable called for the CHR to arrange for regular meetings of stakeholders to discuss IDP issues. Such taskforces might be valuable in other parts of the country as well as a means of gathering information and stimulating collaboration in finding solutions for issues of displacement.

43. The CHR should also consider taking the lead in setting up a forum for those providing training on IDP issues and humanitarian law. Apart from CHR many NGOs also engage in training on these issues. An opportunity to share experiences and information, including experiences about methodologies would be beneficial for all groups involved. To this end, the CHR might consider holding a meeting of trainers to strengthen their collaboration and information sharing.

#### ***9. Designation of a Focal Point***

44. It is recommended that the CHR consider designating a focal point at the national level within the Commission staff and/or among the Commissioners themselves to coordinate programs in relation to IDPs, to serve as a contact for outside actors wishing to interact with the Commission on this issue, and to help build the overall institutional capacity of the Commission to address internal displacement. This focal point would also ensure that other program activities are sensitive to the issue of displacement. This step would facilitate the Commission's activities with regard to all of the other recommendations included in this report.

#### **10. Engagement with the Joint Monitoring Committee and other Peace Processes**

45. The team was told that the Joint Monitoring Committee would be consulting the CHR in the near future. The Joint Monitoring Committee was established subsequent to an agreement between the Government of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (including the Communist Party and the New People's Party). The primary role of the Joint Committee would be to monitor the 'Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law' signed by the two parties.

46. In its engagements with the Joint Monitoring Committee the CHR may want to explore the possibility of raising the issue of internal displacement and drawing attention to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as providing a framework for protecting and promoting the rights of the IDPs. The Guiding Principles were themselves developed from existing principles of human rights and humanitarian law, many of which are found in the agreement between the two parties.

#### **11. Law Making and Policy Formulation**

47. There have been prior initiatives to incorporate the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement into the domestic law of the Philippines. Although a draft bill was presented before Congress, it has not yet been passed. Discussions are ongoing among interested actors about drafting legislation that would set up a comprehensive national policy on internal displacement and make use of international human rights and humanitarian norms included in the Guiding Principles. There are also parallel discussions occurring around legislation to integrate international humanitarian law into the domestic framework. Moreover, discussions are ongoing on the possibility of a new national policy on natural disasters that would include a rights-based approach.

48. The CHR's stature positions it well to make a substantial input when legislation or policy of this nature is being formulated. It is recommended that CHR actively participate in the discussions currently ongoing on the draft legislation noted above. For its own internal mobilization, the CHR could consider the possibility of establishing a Working Group consisting of outside experts (from academia and NGOs) and senior staff of the Commission to make recommendations to the CHR on relevant legislation or policy.

## **CONCLUSION**

49. The team was very encouraged by the candour and determination it encountered among the Commissioners and the staff of the CHR. It was struck by the high level of interaction it had with all staff at all levels.

50. It was grateful to have had the opportunity to visit and hopes that its observations, recommendations, and ongoing engagement in any capacity building initiatives (including efforts to locate funding, expertise, or other resources) requested by the Commission will be of practical assistance. The team would like to express its deep appreciation to the Commission and its staff, including the staff in the Mindanao region, for their extraordinary help in organizing the visit and for the warm welcome it received.

## **ATTACHMENT 1**

### **SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES Five Day Assessment Program on the IDPs April 26-30, 2004**

**April 26**

#### **Meeting with CHR Commissioners & Staff**

**9:00am – 10:00am**

#### **Opening**

Invocation  
Philippine National Anthem  
Welcome Remarks  
Introduction  
Briefing on the IDP Project  
Commissioners Calamba, Mallari, Cueto.

- Ms. Pip Dargan  
Deputy Director  
APF Secretariat
- Mr. David Fisher  
Consultant, OHCHR
- Mr. Mario Gomez  
Program Associate  
Berghof Foundation

**10:00am - 10:15am**

#### **Break**

**10:15am – 12:00noon**

Discussion involving Directors/  
Division Managers of concerned offices

**12:00nn – 1:30pm**

#### **LUNCH BREAK**

**1:30pm – 3:00 pm**

Meeting with the Working Group for the IDP Project

Evening

Dinner with Lou de la Cruz, BALAY & NGOs

**April 27**

**Roundtable discussion on the Collaboration Roles of the  
CHRP, NGO and UN Agencies for the Protection and  
and Promotion of the Human Rights of IDPs**

**AM – (with NGOs)**

**9:00am – 9:10am**

Welcome Remarks

**9:15am - 12:00nn**

Briefing on the APF IDP Project and  
the Guiding Principles on  
Internal Displacement

NGO/UN updates and Initiatives for the Protection and  
Promotion on the Rights of IDPs.

Participants included, amongst others, Balay Rehabilitation  
Centre, Philippines Task Force Detainees, Medical Action  
Group, Task Force Bondoc Peninsula and ICRC.

Discussion on :

- a. strategic/practical ways the CHRP can collaborate with  
NGOs/UN Agencies
- b. Possible areas of cooperation and
- c. Next steps

**PM – ( with Government Agencies)**

**2:00pm – 2:10pm**

Welcome Remarks

**2:15pm - 5:00pm**

Briefing on the APF IDP Project and  
the Guiding Principles on  
Internal Displacement

GO/UN updates and recent Initiatives for the  
Protection and Promotion on the Rights of IDPs.

Participants included: Office of the President for the Peace  
Process, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino  
Women, the Philippines National Police, Civil Relations  
Service - Armed Forces of the Philippines, Department of  
Social Welfare and Services, J7 Human Rights Desk.

Discussion on:

- d. strategic/practical ways the CHRP can collaborate with NGOs/UN Agencies
- e. Possible areas of cooperation and
- f. Next steps

Evening Meeting with Legislator – Representative Roseller Barinaga

**April 28** - Travel to Cotabato City, Mindanao region.

PM - Briefing on the APF Project with CHR Reg. XII (Cotabato), RDCS and NGOs

PHRC Regional Director Reg X11 – Atty Rose Tolosa

The team spoke at a large meeting (40-50 people) which included ICRC, NGOs and government agencies including the police and military.

Evening: Dinner with NGOs including Mindanao Peoples Congress, Balay.

**April 29** AM - On site visit to resettlement area

PM - Travel to Davao City by car

**April 30**

**8:30am – 9:30am** - Informal meeting with Region XI Director and concerned Officers

PHRC Regional Director Reg X1 – Atty Alberto Sipaco

**1:00pm** - Back to Manila (1:10pm flight – delayed)

6.00pm We were to meet with Commissioners and Working Group at 4pm, however due to the late arrival of plane from Davao and Manila traffic we were delayed and therefore were only able to meet with the PHRC Executive Director, Jake Meija, and the staff working group.

## **ATTACHMENT 2**

### **Ms Pip Dargan**

Ms Pip Dargan is the Deputy Director of the Secretariat, Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF). Ms Dargan has expertise in the area of national human rights institutions (NHRIs), human rights project management and operational management. In 1996 she helped establish the APF Secretariat including its transformation into a not for profit public company in 2002. Along with Secretariat managerial responsibilities, Ms Dargan has primary responsibility for capacity-building projects with NHRIs including i) internally displaced persons ii) human rights investigation training iii) anti-trafficking iv) Jordan & Palestine institution-building and v) the APF Advisory Council of Jurists. In 2002 and 2003 Ms Dargan provided training on women's rights in five provinces (West Sumatra, Lombok, South Sumatra, Central Sulawesi and East Kalimantan) throughout Indonesia. Ms Dargan has seven years of experience in organising and managing the APF's annual meetings, human rights thematic workshops and the Advisory Council of Jurists. She has represented the APF at international and regional fora. Ms Dargan also assists the Director in providing strategic advisory services and building partnerships with NHRIs, governments and civil society. Her recent missions to provide advisory services to NHRIs and government include Mongolia, South Korea, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste. In April/May 2004, Ms Dargan led the APF/Brookings Institution IDP Team to the Philippines and Indonesian National Human Rights Commissions.

Prior to assisting in the establishment of the APF, Ms Dargan worked at the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and has ten years experience in the operations of a NHRI, particularly in the areas of conciliation, public education and human rights policy. During her time at the Australian Commission Ms Dargan worked closely with the former Federal Human Rights Commissioners Professor Brian Burdekin and Associate Professor Chris Sidoti. Ms Dargan has a Bachelor of Arts Degree (Double Major in History and Politics) from the University of Sydney.

### **Dr. Mario Gomez**

Dr. Mario Gomez is a Program Associate at the Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies. The Foundation supports key influentials with regard to the transformation of the conflict in Sri Lanka. It does this through problem solving initiatives that incorporate dialogue work, capacity building and research. He is also a member of the Law Commission of Sri Lanka.

Previously he was a lecturer in law in the University of Colombo for 10 years. He lectured in jurisprudence, administrative law and constitutional law and was the Founding Director of the University's Legal Aid Centre. He was a Visiting Fellow at the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, Harvard University in 2001/2002.



He has published in the areas of economic and social rights, women's rights, national institutions, internally displaced persons and public law. He has been involved in training programs for staff of national institutions, for members of the armed forces and for judges. He has developed and participated in training programs on economic and social rights for activists in Cambodia, Malaysia and Sri Lanka.

As a consultant he worked with the Sri Lankan Human Rights Commission to develop a program on internally displaced persons in 2001. In 2003 he assisted the Commission to develop an initiative on minority rights.

In 2000/ 2001 he worked with women's groups to develop a draft law on domestic violence. Among his recent publications is '*National Human Rights Commissions and Internally Displaced Persons: Illustrated by the Sri Lankan Experience*'.

Mr David Fisher

David Fisher is the Senior Legal and Research Officer at the Brookings Institution-Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies Project on Internal Displacement. He is based in Geneva, Switzerland, where he additionally serves as a consultant at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in support of the mandate of the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons. Fisher represents the mandate in inter-agency fora within the United Nations, assists with the planning of missions, preparation of reports, and organization of intergovernmental conferences, and undertakes research in the areas of institutional and legal approaches to internal displacement. Fisher is an attorney and researcher who has published in the areas of migration, human rights, national security and constitutional law. He is admitted to the bar in California and Hawai'i and has practiced civil and criminal law in addition to serving as a judicial clerk at the Supreme Court of the State of Hawai'i. Fisher obtained his J.D. cum laude from the University of California Hastings College of the Law in 1997, an LL.M with distinction in International and Comparative Law from the Georgetown University Law Center in 2002, and a Certificate in Refugees and Humanitarian Emergencies from the Institute for the Study of International Migration that same year.

**Other team members of the APF/ Brookings Institution-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement include:**

Ms Roberta Cohen

Ms Roberta Cohen is a specialist in human rights, humanitarian and refugee issues and a leading expert on the subject of internally displaced persons. Currently, she is a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, Co-Director of the Brookings Institution-Johns Hopkins SAIS Project on Internal Displacement, and serves as Senior Adviser to the Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons. Together with Dr. Francis M. Deng, she co-authored the first major study on internal displacement, *Masses in Flight: The Global Crisis of Internal Displacement* (Brookings, 1998) and co-edited the second volume, *The Forsaken People: Case Studies of the Internally Displaced* (Brookings, 1998). She also co-edited *The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the Law of the South Caucasus: Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan* (American Society of International Law, 2003) and has published numerous articles on the subject of internal displacement in journals such as *Foreign Affairs*, the *Harvard International Review*, the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, the *United Nations Chronicle*, and the *Forced Migration Review*, and in newspapers such as the *NYTimes*, the *Washington Post* and the *International Herald Tribune*. In 2002, she was awarded the DACOR (State Department Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired) Fiftieth Anniversary Award for Exemplary Writing on Foreign Affairs and Diplomacy, in particular for attention to “multilateral humanitarian issues, particularly refugees and internally displaced persons...non-traditional areas of concern for practitioners of diplomacy.”

Prior to joining the Brookings Institution, Cohen served as a Senior Adviser to the National Academy of Sciences, Senior Human Rights Adviser to the Refugee Policy Group and as a consultant to international organizations, governments and NGOs, including UNHCR, UNDP, the World Bank, and the World Health Organization. She also served as Honorary Secretary of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group, London, where she was chief operating officer of an all-party group in the British Parliament; directed the public affairs office of the American Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia where she received a USIA Superior Honor Award for reopening educational, cultural and media programs; served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights in the US Department of State where she participated in the formulation and implementation of human rights policy; served as Senior Adviser to the US Delegation to the UN Commission on Human Rights and General Assembly; and served as Executive Director of the International League for Human Rights where she played a major role in bringing international human rights issues to public attention and promoting the incorporation of human rights in US foreign policy. In 1998 Cohen served as a Public Member of the US Delegation to the UN Commission on Human Rights and in 2003 as a Public Member of the US Delegation to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

She is a Senior Fellow at the Ralph Bunche Institute of the City University Graduate Center of New York, serves on the Boards and advisory committees of various human rights and humanitarian organizations, and on the advisory committees of several journals on human rights and forced migration. She is a graduate of Barnard College (Columbia University) and received an M.A. with distinction from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (Washington DC/ Bologna, Italy).

Mr Jeevan Thiagarajah

Mr Thiagarajah is Executive Director, Consortium of Human Rights, Sri Lanka, and has a M.A. (South Asian Studies), School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London. (November 1995). Certificate from Summer School on Forced Migration, Oxford under Refugee Studies Programme – July 1998.

1. PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Consultant – International Centre for Ethnic Studies (1984 to date)
- Chairman / Board of Management – Institute of Human Rights (1994 – to date)
- Executive Director – Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (Nov. 1996 to date)
- Member, National Co-coordinating Committee on Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation (NCCR)– (June 2002 to date)
- Consultant (Subject matter: internally displaced persons in SAARC& ASEAN)- Brookings Institute (December 2002-)
- Member, Advisory Committee, Human Rights Commission (Sri Lanka), project on Minority Rights (November, 2002)

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OTHER AFFILIATIONS/ ASSIGNMENTS

Member of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies of the School of Advanced Study, University of London; Co-coordinator of Cambodian Human Rights Task Force (a project of UNTAC - United Nations Transitional Authority of Cambodia) to co-ordinate the work jointly, of Human Rights NGOs for Cambodian elections in May 1993; Co-coordinated fact finding missions for ICES in areas affected by massacres of civilians in North Central Province in Sri Lanka; Member core-group - Children: Zones of Peace. A call for action, UNICEF initiated project (ongoing); Regional Focal Point for PARinAC (South Asia), partners of UNHCR; Member, Presidential Task Force on Human Disaster Management, Member of Board of Directors, Hayleys Photoprint (pvt) Ltd.; Visiting Lecturer on Diploma in Human Rights '98/99 Course at the University of Colombo; Member of the Eminent Persons Group on Refugee and Migratory Movements, Sri Lanka (supported by UNHCR).