
Individual Contractor (IC) – UNOPS
Associate Protection Officer, LICA-9

Title: Associate Protection Officer, Individual Contractor (UNOPS)

Contract type: Local ICA

Contract level: LICA-9

Department/office: Nassau, Bahamas

Duration: ASAP – 31 December 2020 with possibility of renewal

Application period: 28 January to 11 February 2020

General Background

UNHCR is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people. We deliver life-saving assistance like shelter, food and water, and develop solutions that ensure people have a safe place to call home where they can build a better future. Every year, millions of men, women and children are forced to flee their homes to escape conflict and persecution. We are in over 125 countries, using our expertise to protect and care for millions.

Operational Context:

Given its location in the northern Caribbean, The Bahamas is subject to complex mixed migration flows and protection-at-sea challenges and natural disasters. While a majority of refugees and migrants moving through the islands originate from within the Caribbean, an increasing number of extra-continental individuals are reaching The Bahamas. This makes identifying persons in need of protection – including refugees and stateless persons, as well as victims of human trafficking and other vulnerable groups, such as unaccompanied minors – particularly challenging.

The Bahamas acceded to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol in 1993. Despite its accession to the Refugee Convention in 1993, the Bahamas has not yet adopted an asylum/refugee legislation, nor is there any policy or regulatory framework to govern the treatment of asylum seekers and refugees. The Bahamas is neither a signatory to the 1954 nor the 1961 Statelessness Conventions, however it is party to a number of other human rights conventions that guarantee the right to nationality, namely the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. As a result, asylum seekers, refugees and stateless people transiting through or living in the Bahamas, often find themselves in a precarious and vulnerable situation. The Bahamas is also one of only two countries in the Western Hemisphere (and one in 25 globally) that retains gender discrimination in its Constitution and nationality laws. Citizenship in The Bahamas is acquired mainly in accordance with the principle of *jus sanguinis* – meaning Bahamian citizenship is largely acquired by descent. Without safeguards to prevent statelessness amongst those born in and outside the territory who otherwise do not acquire citizenship at birth, there are several situations in which statelessness can arise.

The position:

UNHCR is looking for an Associate Protection Officer to join its Caribbean Protection team, managed and coordinated from UNHCR's regional office in Washington DC.

Since May 2014, UNHCR established a local presence in the Bahamas, staffed with one local Associate Protection Officer. In September 2019 following Hurricane Dorian, UNHCR increased its presence as part of the overall humanitarian response to assume its coordination and leadership role in the critical area of protection. A key objective in maintaining local presence in 2020 will be to promote the government's effort in developing a legal framework for the protection of asylum seekers, refugees, and stateless people, as an integral component of UNHCR's regional strategy for the Caribbean. In mid-2019, the Office of the Attorney General (Law Reform Commission) published a draft Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Bill (2018). Upon its release, UNHCR engaged in a commentary of the proposed law. The draft Bill if enacted in 2020, will be an important legislative

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development on issues relevant to UNHCR's mandate and to its persons of concern. Furthermore, this position will continue the work of the emergency mission team who were deployed to assist in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian.

Duties and Responsibilities:

Under the direct supervision of the Senior Regional Protection Officer based in Washington DC, the successful candidate will:

- Support in the implementation of UNHCR's protection strategy for the Caribbean, including through capacity building initiatives with regards to key aspects of refugee protection (such as developing protection sensitive entry mechanisms, screening of persons in need of international protection, promotion of alternatives to detention, access to a fair and effective asylum procedure etc.) and the Global #IBelong Campaign launched by UNHCR with the aim to end Statelessness by 2024;
- Provide protection-sensitive guidance to the Government in its emergency preparedness and response policies, plans and procedures for natural disasters;
- Establish a protection monitoring system and train partners on its appropriate use throughout the country;
- Engage in advocacy interventions with the Government to adopt refugee legislation and to institutionalize asylum procedures;
- Contribute to advisory opinions to the authorities on individual cases to ensure the effective protection of refugees;
- Liaise with the Migration Task Force, Refugee Unit, Attorney General's office and other government counterparts on areas of mutual concern;
- Facilitate and support the resettlement process of refugees recognized by the Government and/or UNHCR;
- Provide capacity-building of Government officials and civil society actors on the topics of asylum and statelessness;
- Facilitate nationality solutions for those identified as stateless, through partnership and advocacy with the authorities and assist individuals confirm nationality on a case-by-case basis through obtaining necessary documentation.
- Monitor status and situation of asylum seekers and refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR, including individual protection cases as necessary. To achieve this, the incumbent will need to build and maintain effective interfaces with persons of concern, authorities, protection and assistance partners as well as a broader network of stakeholders who can contribute to enhancing protection of persons of concern.
- Represent UNHCR within the United Nations agency meetings and fora.

Support in any other activities identified and perform other related duties as required.

Required qualifications and experience:

The ideal candidate will have:

- 3 years relevant work experience with undergraduate degree in the areas of Political science; International relations; law; or other relevant field (or 2 years relevant experience with Graduate degree; or 1 year relevant experience with Doctorate degree);
- Experience in engaging with government authorities, NGOs or other external stakeholders on refugee protection and human rights,
- Field experience, including in working directly with communities.
- Excellent writing, reporting and analytical skills;
- Fluency in English is essential, good command of French and Spanish is an asset (to facilitate dialogue and interaction with Persons of concern);
- Strong interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills.
- Flexibility and adaptability and ability to work with remote management and support.

Location:

The successful candidate will be based in Nassau, The Bahamas, and will conduct periodic protection monitoring visits. Office co-located with IOM in Nassau.

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Legal Status:

- Applicants must have legal residence and the capacity to work legally in the Bahamas for the duration of the contract period.

Application deadline: 11 February 2020 by close of business, 5 p.m. (Washington DC time).

Receipt of application will not be acknowledged and only short-listed candidates will be contacted for interview. Interested candidates meeting the above requirements are requested to submit 1) UNHCR Personnel History Form available at: www.unhcr.org/recruit/unhcr-phf.docm, for extra space Supplementary Sheet available: www.unhcr.org/recruit/unhcr-phf-sup.docm; and 2) a letter of motivation by e-mail to usawaadm@unhcr.org quoting “**Associate Protection Officer -BAHAMAS**” in the subject line of the email. Shortlisted candidates may be required to sit for a written test and/or oral interview.

UNHCR does not charge a fee at any stage of the recruitment process (application, interview, processing or any other fees). UNHCR strongly encourages qualified female applicants for this position. UNHCR seeks to ensure that male and female employees are given equal career opportunities. UNHCR is committed to achieving workforce diversity including in relation to gender, nationality and culture. All applications will be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.