



Ms. Ipshita Sengupta, Policy Associate (UNHCR India)

The Centre for Post Graduate Legal Studies at TERI University, New Delhi, hosted Ms. Ipshita Sengupta, Policy Associate (UNHCR India), for a guest lecture on 6th September on international refugee protection.

The lecture was the first in the series of guest lectures delivered at the Centre. Ms. Ipshita talked about the refugee protection regime at the international level and how it is applied in municipal spheres.

Ms. Ipshita stated that international refugee law is primarily outlined in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol. The definition of “refugee” remains the same as that from the 1951 Convention. To receive refugee status, there should be forceful displacement from one’s country and well-founded fear of persecution. But the interpretation of the grounds of refugee protection under international law has broadened keeping in mind related historical developments and evolution in international human rights and humanitarian law.



She emphasized upon the principle of *non-refoulement* that is mentioned under Article 33(1) of the 1951 Convention. She also indicated that the protection of refugees is the prime responsibility of the host State. The UNHCR advocates for refugee rights and supports States in ensuring refugee protection

Having explained the international status of refugee law, Ms. Ipshita talked about the situation in India. She mentioned that India is neither a signatory to the 1951 Convention nor does it have a national law specifically in this respect. However, supportive laws and policies do exist within the country's framework. She observed that India is meeting a majority of the international obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention in this manner.

In conclusion, she stated that although the refugee protection environment in India was positive and was a good example globally, the absence of a uniform national law on refugees had led to different groups of refugees being treated differently. Therefore, a national law on refugee protection is desirable in India in light of the challenges presented by "mixed migration" and "national security concerns."