

Committee: Human Rights Council

Issue: Strengthening the protection of internally displaced persons (IDPs)

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INTRODUCTION

People are being forced to flee their homes every single year due to the push-factors such as armed conflict, violence, natural and human-made disasters, development projects, etc. Their case is particularly tricky because they remain within the country's border, and the United Nations has neither power nor authority to intervene. However, the United Nations has made many efforts to create viable standards and foster international cooperation to assist Internally Displaced Persons as much as possible. The United Nations recognizes the economic and social plights they are facing, and their prolonged efforts to aid them are still underway.

The main problem surrounding their protection is the lack of a strong institution responsible for their protection and needs and the absence of additional environmental, structural, and political supports, especially for countries with a significantly large number of IDPs. Moreover, internal displacement has many different causes, and therefore there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Lastly, each nation has various problems and different backgrounds, making it hard for the United Nations to find viable solutions, applicable to most cases at least.

On the other hand, Internally Displaced Persons are often much discriminated against and excluded from workplaces and children from schools likewise. Their main problem, though, is the elevated mortality rate compared to the general population. They are at high risk of physical attack, sexual assault, abduction, and are quite frequently deprived of adequate shelter, food, and health services, which render them vulnerable. These are the main reasons that the United Nations has been trying to help them, but much more needs to be done and can be done. It is fundamental that all the issues are resolved, which will have significant impacts on the country's sustainability. Last but not least, helping displaced

populations to return and reintegrate will help identify and address the major causes of conflict and prevent further displacement.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Internally Displaced Persons (IDP)

An **internally displaced person** (IDP) is someone who is forced to flee his or her home but who remains within his or her country's borders. They are often referred ¹to as refugees, although they do not fall within the legal definitions of a refugee.

Recession

A period of temporary economic decline during which trade and industrial activity are reduced²; under most of the circumstances, an economic recession is usually accompanied by the general drop in terms of productivity, average income, and Gross Domestic Product (GDP), together with the rise in unemployment, inflation, as well as fiscal deficits, etc.

Demographic Change

The term “demographic change” refers to any change or shift in the population of a specific country, region, or community, in which it can be seen in terms of average age, dependency ratios, life expectancy, family structures, as well as birth rates, etc. The general theory of demographic change states that a society with high birth rates and infant mortality rates are often accompanied by low infrastructural and technological level, whereas

Mental Disorders

The mental disorders, also called as mental illness, is a series of psychological symptoms that can severely disorientate the temperament, personality, as well as the general well-being of

¹United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. “Internally Displaced People.” UNHCR, www.unhcr.org/internally-displaced-people.html.

² “Recession: Definition of Recession by Oxford Dictionary on Lexico.com Also Meaning of Recession.” Lexico Dictionaries | English, Lexico Dictionaries, www.lexico.com/definition/recession.

an individual, in which the most notable ones are anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder as experienced by many IDPs after their displacement.

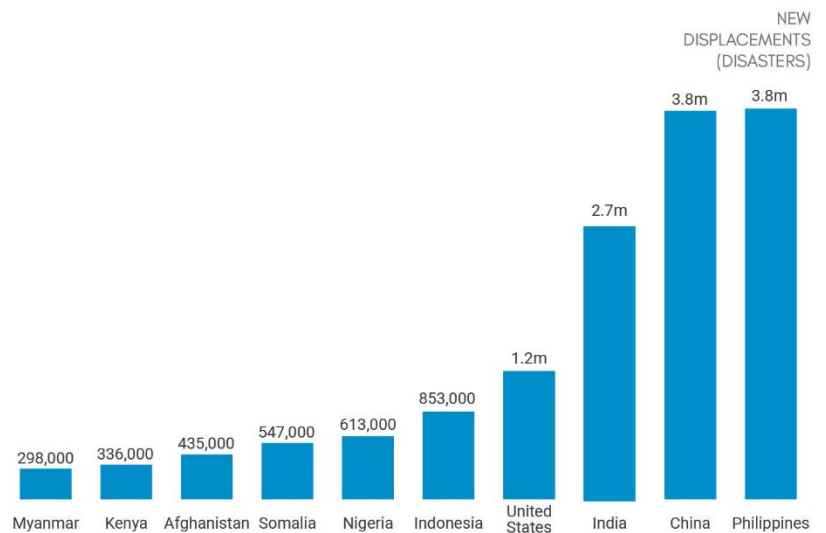
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

An internally displaced person is a person forced to move out of their homes to avoid the impacts of conflict, natural disasters, violence, and other human rights violations. Their status is different from that of the refugees because they remain within the country's borders and retain their citizenship status. They also have protection as a citizen of their country under human rights and international humanitarian law.

Today, we are calculating 52.4 million Internally Displaced Persons with Syria leading the crisis (7.6 million), followed by Colombia (6 million), and followed by Iraq (3.6 million), with more than 78% being women and children. There have been internal displacements since the beginning of time because of the aforementioned reasons. Their forced displacement is being done for their safety, but such actions can have devastating effects on their health, livelihood, economy, and, ultimately, their entire community.

Economic Problems

Displaced Persons



do not only lose their household but also their assets and jobs. Pursuant to this, it could be hard to continue their former work, leading to unemployment, underemployment, in which both can contribute to a significant drop in income. This livelihood loss can lead to reduced access to food, and therefore malnutrition. The reduced income may also lead to the inability to afford healthcare and other necessary services.

Moreover, children may be deprived of education because they cannot afford it since they are sent to work by their parents or simply because they face extreme discrimination. In

the future, this limited school can undermine future access to well-paid jobs due to knowledge gaps.

For the governments, the economic effects are also devastating, depending on the gravity of the crisis. Mostly, the unemployment caused will cause a recession and low levels of socioeconomic development.

Political Problems

The main problem for governments is demographic change, which is any change in the population in terms of average age, dependency ratios, life expectancy, family structures, birth rates, etc.² From a multi-ethnic community, almost mono-ethnic communities are created with little intermingling with the rest of the population. These people need food, clean water, sanitation, as well as access to health services, and since they were forced to flee their homes, economic problems also arise.

Moreover, the forced displacement of people causes mistrust, intolerance, and lack of community-level integration, which will result in the failure of reconciliation efforts for the community and at an international level. The divisions that are being fomented generate a political instability that will take prolonged efforts to be fixed.

Social Problems

Internally Displaced Persons are being separated from home, family, friends, workplace, service providers, while at the same time, their social environment is abruptly disrupted, which can trigger mental disorders such as anxiety, depression, and even substance use. These relationships are fundamental to stability, business, and well-being.

The knowledge gap between the children of the IDPs and other regular juveniles is also an unignorable problem. When having to halt your life and move against your will, you might reside in things that will be granted for the rest of the population. Basic technological advances, such as smartphones, are not accessible to everyone, and their function is unclear. This causes a social setback that might be detrimental to mental health.

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<https://www.tutor2u.net/economics/topics/demographics#:~:text=Any%20change%20in%20the%20population,family%20structures%2C%20birth%20rates%20etc.>

Children also stay behind in education. Their education is being interrupted by their displacement, and they are separated from their classmates and teachers, which they usually share a bond with. In the future, when they are eventually able to go back to school, they will have to make up for the lost time while managing the stress and trauma associated with their displacement. This also encourages social cohesion and increases gender inequalities, damaging social life in the short as well as long term. It can also reduce children's opportunities as adults, creating a poverty trap.

Safety and Security

Taking into account that 78% of the IDPs are women and children, safety and security is another alarming issue. People often lose their livelihood, identity documents, and support networks during displacement, which increases vulnerability to abuses, violence, and exploitation. According to security needs and international law, affected populations require specific mechanisms and investments to establish a safe environment.

The main reason for the violence is financial strain and stress, as underlined in various reports since they might undertake dangerous income-generating activities to survive.

Health Problems

Although people are being forced to flee their homes to preserve their lives and well-being, such orderless and chaotic movement of mass populations can have adverse effects on people's physical health as well as mental health.

Studies reveal elevated mortality rates amongst IDPs in comparison with the rest of the population. Some of the diseases include malaria, malnutrition, diarrhea, acute respiratory infections, and mainly sexually transmitted infections. Mental health issues could include post-traumatic stress disorder and aggravate depression because of the disruption of social networks. Additionally, there is a fear of abuse or discrimination that can also negatively affect their mental health.

Generally, the transmittance is high due to the poor conditions that are being forced to survive, in the short term, which renders them vulnerable. They have no contraception, no vaccination, and no immediate and easy access to healthcare facilities. Moreover, the overcrowding and lack of sanitation and clean water increase the prevalence of communicable diseases. This, along with pre-existing disabilities and inadequate shelter and infrastructure, can cause health conditions to deteriorate. This can have long-term adverse

effects, affecting livelihood, social life, education, security, and access to housing and infrastructure.

International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law (IHL)

IDPs are protected by the International Human Rights Law, Domestic Law, and in some cases of armed conflict, by International Humanitarian Law. They make clear that States have to provide IDPs with the lasting return, resettlement, and reintegration solutions. It also helps prevent displacement by only allowing it for necessary military reasons and protecting civilians themselves. It is imperative to understand that IDPs enjoy the same human rights as the rest of the people articulated by international law and customary law.

International Human Rights Law protects civilians during displacement. It ensures treatment from severe attacks, abuses, violations and illnesses, accessibility to health care, and other essential services such as sanitation. It protects civilians from exacerbated hardship and tensions between them and host communities.

Despite these legal protections under the framework of International Human Rights Law, as mentioned above, the IDPs, as well as the government and host communities, still need to face many other problems. Logistically it is hard to provide assistance. Many do not live in camps but among local communities making the identification of populations in need an arduous task to accomplish.

Right of Return

This is one of the primary principles in international law, which guarantees everyone's right to return to their origin and retain their citizenship status. This is the so-called 'post-conflict' situation where IDPs return to their *status-quo*. Since IDPs, never lose their citizenship, they also have reinstatement rights that take care of all technical and legal aspects of housing, land, property, etc.

However, more emphasis must be given to clarify all the rights of IDPs concerning the right to return. Moreover, better organization is needed as it might take months for the government to sort out property disputes in some cases.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Azerbaijan

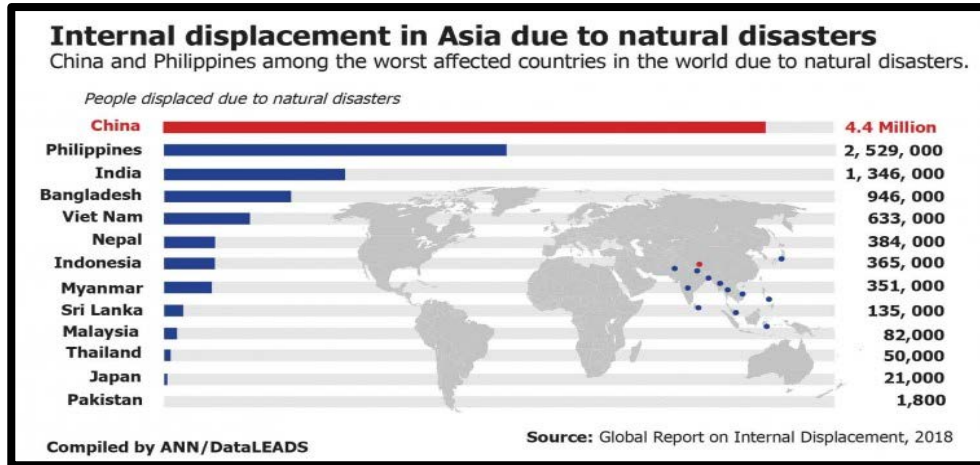
Azerbaijan has the second-highest number of IDPs per capita in the world. They are presented in all of the 76 administrative districts and add up to 7% of the total population. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict started in 1992, and there was a ceasefire in 1994. There has been progress during the last few years in attempting to return IDPs to their homes. 600,000 out of 2.7 million have already returned and have been reintegrated into society. However, they have managed to maintain peace among communities by keeping IDPs occupied. They have increased transparency, for example, and streamline processes for reporting incidents of corruption and violations. This has helped reduce crime. Also, mono-ethnicity has been avoided by having held elections for municipal councils in temporary residence places. This has also increased cooperation.

At this point, the government is in an excellent position to begin exercising the right of return and help IDPs return home. However, the situation within camps is peaceful, and the mortality rate and illnesses have decreased dramatically.

African Union (AU)

There have been many efforts to help African countries who are all facing many difficulties with internal displacement. The African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance on Internally Displaced Persons that took place in 2009 establishes a legal framework for preventing internal displacement and assisting IDPs.

Many humanitarian needs need to be addressed, and the African Union ensures that. They have solved disputes and stopped the exploitation of some natural resources. It has also been successful in returning IDPs to their homes and assisting financially as much as possible. However, resources are limited and international cooperation is required to ensure their work will continue to be successful.



China

China has a vast population, and as a result, it has very high vulnerability levels to a range of natural hazards. Some include storms, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, and landslides that have caused more than 4 million displacements in 2019, with most of them being as precautions. Since 2008, China has recorded the most number of internal displacements due to disasters because of its geographic location and large population. China has made many appeals to the United Nations and various inter-governmental organizations for assistance to accelerate poverty reduction in more impoverished regions and communities that most need financial support and healthcare facilities. China has been implementing national programs since 2001 to relocate populations living in areas considered environmentally fragile.

EU countries and the European Union

Although there are estimated to be 2.5-2.8 million IDPs in Europe, the problem is inexistent. 98% of the IDPs are displaced due to natural disasters such as fires and earthquakes. However, their return is being done efficiently, safely, and as soon as possible.

Despite not having such a grave problem, the EU countries and the European Union are assisting economically. They are the main international donors, and they are ensuring with that money that everyone has access to healthcare, housing, and it is safe. They recognize their responsibility and make sure that human rights are not violated. Along with the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe), the EU is also assisting in terms of finances and safe transportation.

Global Protection Cluster (GPC)

This was established in 2005 and is the main inter-agency forum at the global level for standard and policy setting, including collaboration and coordination of activities to support the protection response in humanitarian disasters, including IDPs. This organization is working closely with the Human Rights Council to ensure all IDPs' rights are not violated, and all laws in the International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law (IHL) are in compliance with the displacement. This cluster is mostly for humanitarian emergencies, and the IDPs crisis qualifies.

Ukraine

Ukraine is facing a grim problem in terms of IDPs. It is ranked 9th in the world, and it all began with the fierce conflict in eastern Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea in 2014 where, especially women and children (the men were fighting the war), were forced to displace within the country for safety reasons. Although they are still under the protection of the government, Ukraine still reports 1.5 million IDPs. Ukraine lacks the necessary means to exercise the right of return. IDPs are said to have all of their rights and protections under the international human rights law, but this is a case where armed-conflict has taken a severe toll on the government that they cannot protect IDPs in this situation. This is why international cooperation is required.

Syria

The IDP crisis started in 2012 with the civil war. Syria ranks first in numbers of IDPs with those being 7.4 billion. These people are amongst the most vulnerable in the world. They have been forced to flee because of armed conflict, generalized violence, and human rights violations, but they do not remain under the protection of their own government. The government is facing severe economic problems because of the conflict that is not in a position to support the IDPs. The situation in communities is extremely hard as well. Despite having fled for safety, abuses, violations, and rapes are happening continually in those communities. The situation is challenging for all parties, and viable solutions are needed. Funding requirements are high in building resilience and enhance protection.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
1947	The International Refugee Organization, as the first international agency responsible for the refugee affairs, was officially established in the same year, setting the foundation for the international refugee relief over the next seven decades.
1950	The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was authorized by the General Assembly Resolution 428 (V) of 14, in which it aimed to “lead and coordinate international action for the worldwide protection of refugees and the resolution of refugee problems ¹ .”
1951	The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, also known as the 1951 Refugee Convention, was conducted.
1967	The Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees was ratified, which was marked as a milestone in the completion of the International Refugee Law.
1992	The United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali appointed Francis Deng as the special envoy on behalf of the IDP populations.
1998	The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, a general summary that set out additional regulations on the prevention of the IDPs, was adopted by the Commission on Human Rights.
2007	The 21-page handbook titled “Refugees, Asylum-seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons”, was published by UNHCR, raising the awareness of the IDP problems among the public.
2018	The 3-year plan of Action for Advancing Prevention, Protection and Solutions for Internally Displaced People 2018–2020 was launched by multiple states and organizations, marking the 20th anniversary since the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement went into effect.

¹ “Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.”

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 14 Dec. 1950.

UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

The United Nations has been highly active in dealing with this issue. In 2004 the UNDG sent a guidance note that explained the need for durable solutions for Internally Displaced Persons. It underlined certain measures that can be taken to strengthen the protection of IDPs as well as the importance and problems of their situation.

UNHCR Handbook for the Protection of Internally Displaced

In 2007, a framework for durable solutions was also created for Internally Displaced Persons for when the displacement ends. This policy framework was further emphasized by the creation of an implementation strategy for UNHCR's role to support an enhanced humanitarian response; an exclusively elaborated handbook was also published in the same year.

UNHCR's Role in Inter-Agency Response to Internal Displacement

Furthermore, in 2008 the United Nations Human Rights Council established a second framework along with an implementation strategy, underlining the importance of supporting the return of IDPs and their reintegration to society. Some key features were primarily the safe return and secondly ways to deal with discrimination. Additionally, there was much commotion in the central African regions in 2008, when the UN found it necessary to protect conflict-induced IDPs and took the necessary actions to ensure that. Many workshops have also been held by the UN Human Rights Council to emphasize the need to protect IDPs and inform the rest of the world of their responsibilities as an inter-agency towards them. Later on, the Security Council published another handbook for the protection of Internally Displaced Persons and makes recommendations for strengthening action through resolutions.

Commission on Human Rights Resolution 1999/47

Moving on with resolutions, in 1999, the Commission on Human Rights published a resolution numbered 1999/47, underlining that the highly elevated numbers of IDPs are alarming to the United Nations, and immediate action must be taken to protect them and reduce their numbers.

General Assembly Resolution 70/265

In 2009, with IDPs numbers rising dramatically, the United Nations Human Rights Council took the most crucial action. A GA resolution was passed numbered 70/265 that emphasized the already existing status of internally displaced persons in countries with the highest number of IDPs and found viable solutions that promptly aided Afghanistan, Syria, Georgia, China, and Cyprus mainly². Some of the solutions involve the right of return of all IDPs and their descendants regardless of ethnicity. Moreover, it calls attention to the need to respect all IDPs' property rights and have access to humanitarian activity. Finally, it intensifies the Geneva Convention to establish durable peace and commit confidence-building measures.³ In September 2009, Bam Ki-Moon (UN Secretary-General 2007-2016) personally congratulated the Member States for their outstanding performance.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

The international conference on internally displaced persons' rights for their respect and protection is being hosted in Krakow each year. Their discussions are profound and cover every aspect of the issues in order to strengthen the protection of Internally Displaced Persons. Each year 161 states attend, and all of the decisions are well-respected.

Furthermore, there was an IASC framework created on durable solutions for IDPs. It recognizes that competent authorities have primary duty and responsibility as well as the means for IDPs to return voluntarily in safety and with dignity. Their efforts are highly appreciated and successful, and because of this framework, many former IDPs have returned home.

The 1951 refugee convention, ratified by 145 states, analyses states' legal obligations to protect IDPs. This ensures that the rights of IDPs are respected and protected, which further aids this problem.

³

<https://guam-organization.org/en/un-ga-resolution-70-265-status-of-internally-displaced-persons-and-refugees-from-abkhazia-georgia-and-the-tskhinvali-region-south-ossetia-georgia/>

²<https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/70/265>

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

To help strengthen the protection of Internally Displaced Persons, we need viable, durable, and applicable to all solutions. Although States have the most responsibility towards their ISP's, however, we need a collaborative approach to assist them. We can reinforce the responsibility of State actors on the issue, through a method called protection monitoring. We need to also re-establish international cooperation and ensure that all States comply with this resolution.

Re-establishing Security

IDPs require specific attention in peace processes and peacebuilding. This could involve re-establishing security by having specialized workers protecting the civilians, reconstruction, and economic rehabilitation as well as political transitions to create more reliable institutions and governance structures. Security is necessary as it will help prevent violence and human rights abuses. Also, if reconstruction and economic rehabilitation are not sufficient to enable IDPs to resume economic livelihood, their return will not be sustainable. Because of this, we can establish a funding institution that will provide monthly allowances to those who contribute to the community productively by building shelters. Political transitions will allow IDPs to actively participate in the political life of the community.

Urban Planning

States that have the most significant problems can also begin building homes and have designated safety areas where IDPs will be transported for their safety as well as well-being. These already built communities will include access to clean water, sanitation, a soup kitchen, a healthcare facility, and experts in each area.

Lowering Thresholds

Furthermore, we can help IDPs capitalize on a large number of economic opportunities available in urban areas. NGOs can help IDPs gain decent employment; governments can lower policy barriers such as needing legal permission to reside and work in certain areas, and businesses can be encouraged to hire IDPs. This will help support economic integration. The United Nations can provide job training and improved infrastructure in this matter. In every community, health care personnel will also be appointed to lower the mortality rate and help prevent certain situations.

Strengthening Education

Concerning education, books and necessary supplies must be provided to students upon displacement. Tutors can also be sent to communities to help children reach the required level before reintegrating into the school environment. We need to think about what will help each State advance socio-economically and sustainably.

Alleviating Tensions

Finally, we need a method in which disputes, discrimination, and the creation of mono-ethnic communities are limited. For example, central-level authorities can organize cooperation activities. Disputes can also be resolved through consultation by having elected representatives of each community and maintain well-being. If interventions are required by NGOs and State services, they must be better coordinated with information available from all the separate areas to allow prosperity. Nevertheless, we ultimately need to focus on finding a place for IDPs to settle, integrating them in the community where they will be based, and finding ways to return them home both safe and sound.

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