

# ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC)

## Topic 1: Responding to the emergency needs of IDPs in conflict areas

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## 1. Definition of Key Terms

**IDPs:** according to the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, internally displaced people are "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border."

**Conflict areas:** Conflict areas are areas where Conflict is prevalent. The area may be a region, a country, an area within a country, or an area that crosses one or more country boundaries.

**Emergency:** a serious, unexpected, and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action.

## 2. Introduction

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are people who are forced to flee their homes due to armed conflict, generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made disasters, but who remain within their own country. Internal displacement is often a protracted situation – many people remain in limbo for years in IDP camps, urban slums, or other areas of refuge. Most protracted displacement is due to prolonged or frozen conflicts that have not yet reached a political solution.

Some 40.5 million new people became internally displaced by conflict and disasters worldwide during the course of 2020. Of these people, 30.7 million were displaced by violence and conflict, and 9.8 million by natural disasters. In total, there were more than 55 million IDPs worldwide as of 31 December 2020, the highest number ever recorded.

There are two main reasons why these people are displaced:

1. It is often politically and logistically challenging to provide humanitarian assistance to IDPs. A majority of them do not live in camps but are dispersed among local communities, making it difficult to identify IDP populations and their needs. IDPs may also be inaccessible to humanitarian organizations due to factors such as their fear of being identified by authorities, or their continuous movement from place to place.

2. Displacement has a particularly traumatic impact on children, often placing them in high-risk circumstances that put them in need of specific protection measures. Women and girls are particularly exposed to the risk of sexual violence while many internally displaced children lose access to education, and many are also forced to join armed groups.

### 3. Background Information

Public health for refugees, internally displaced persons and other conflict-affected populations has evolved as a specialised field with its own policies, procedures, manuals, indicators and reference materials. Displacement of a population always affects health status and health care. In April 1999, Angola suffered the largest polio epidemic ever recorded in Africa. After 30 years of war and the destruction of health infrastructure and services, massive population displacement and the consequent overcrowding, poor sanitation and inadequate water supply created an ideal environment for the spread of the poliovirus. In Colombia, almost 2 million people have been obliged to move away from their places of origin to protect their lives. The situation is made more difficult by the fact that much displacement occurs "silently", and people simply merge unnoticed into the host population. Only 22.1% of them are reported to have access to medical care.

In Burundi, the under-5 mortality rate increased from 108 x 1000 in 1992 to 190 x 1000 in 1998; in Afghanistan and Sierra Leone, maternal mortality rates are as high as 1,700 or 1,800 x 100,000 live births, respectively. Polio eradication faces daunting challenges in all countries affected by conflicts or severe crises. Malaria is endemic in 80% of countries undergoing complex emergencies in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The interactions between social instability, violent conflicts, human displacement and HIV/AIDS are of paramount concern. Sub-Saharan Africa, the region with the most IDPs is also the most severely affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, accounting for almost 70 per cent of HIV-positive people and 83 per cent of cumulative AIDS deaths.

To address the plight of the millions of people displaced throughout Europe during the Second World War, the Allies established, in 1944, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) to provide emergency relief to the displaced. At the end of the War, the agency organized the return of millions of refugees to their homes, but many refugees were reluctant to repatriate as their countries of origin had undergone major ideological transformations.

### 4. Major Parties Involved

- Ukraine

5,914,000 people were estimated to be internally displaced in Ukraine as of 5 December 2022. Since the escalation of conflict in Ukraine on the 24th of February, the humanitarian impact of this crisis has been immense. People in areas directly affected by conflict are in immediate need of life-saving support, lacking food, energy and utilities, and facing a breakdown in the provision of basic services. They also face the risk of environmental disasters because of proximity to hazardous infrastructure (such as energy-producing facilities and transit infrastructure), a risk that extends well beyond conflict-affected areas.

- Syria

The United Nations Refugee Agency registered about 6.57 million internally displaced persons in Syria in 2020. Most live in houses, often badly damaged by the war. Due to security concerns, poor access to areas of need and unpredictability, humanitarian efforts were directed at emergency aid. The complexity of administrative procedures and the limited capacity of NGOs permitted to operate in Syria are also cited as challenges to assistance.

- Ethiopia

As of March 2022, an estimated 5,582,000 persons were displaced within the country due to armed conflict

and natural disasters. Ethiopia continues to face a massive chronic displacement situation fused by layers of new forced population movements throughout the country due to conflict, inter-communal violence, natural hazards, and impacts of climate change notably in southeast Oromia, Benishangul Gumuz and Somali regions. At the same time, IDP returns have been recently recorded in parts of the Amhara, Tigray, and Somali regions.

- Afghanistan

The number of people internally displaced by conflict in Afghanistan has risen by 73% since June 2022, including at least 230,000 over the last two months. Men, women and children are among those forced to abandon their homes and seek safety as violence throughout the country has dramatically increased. The international community must recognise the urgent need to deliver aid to those who need it most.

- Venezuela

As of November 2019, Response for Venezuela, an Inter-Agency coordination platform for supporting refugees and migrants from Venezuela estimated the number of Venezuelan migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers at 4,626,968, with a majority fleeing to neighbouring countries including Colombia, Peru, Chile, and Argentina.

## 5. Timeline of Events

- 2005- Addressing Internal Displacement: A framework for national responsibility
- 2006- The Great Lakes IDP Protocol (The Protocol on the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons, adopted by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region)
- 2008- IDMC and the International Refugee Rights Initiative published a guide for civil society to use the Great Lakes Pact to promote IDP rights.
- 2010- ASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons
- 6 December 2012- The Kampala Convention

## 6. UN Involvement

The importance of addressing internal displacement is also highlighted in several global agendas, including the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework, and the New Urban Agenda. The United Nations Police (UNPOL) also play a key role in protecting internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, who are increasingly concentrated in or around the settings we serve. The UN Secretary-General established a High-Level Panel on internal displacement which focuses on addressing protracted displacement and achieving durable solutions for persons displaced in the context of armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations, as well as disasters and the adverse effects of climate change. The High-Level Panel was established to deliver concrete recommendations to Member States, the United Nations system, and other relevant stakeholders on how to better prevent, respond, and achieve solutions to internal displacement. The report shall make recommendations in the following areas:

1. Strengthening the capacities of Member States, the UN system and other relevant stakeholders to ensure adequate protection and assistance for internally displaced persons, to prevent such displacement and reduce it in view of achieving durable solutions, in a manner that is in line with international law and standards, and as reflected in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and other relevant frameworks;
2. Advancing collaboration between humanitarian, development, and peace actors to better support affected Member States in addressing internal displacement and facilitating the exchange of lessons and good practices among affected states and other relevant actors;
3. Advancing the participation and inclusion of IDPs and displacement-affected communities in the realization

of the 2030 Agenda, and in doing so being conscious of the specific needs of those who may be particularly vulnerable, including women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities;

4. Improving the collection, analysis and use of quality data relevant to internal displacement taking into account gender considerations and age-sensitive approaches; and

The most involved party of the UN is UNHCR: as UNHCR's mission statement puts it, "UNHCR is mandated by the United Nations to lead and coordinate international action for the world-wide protection of refugees and the resolution of refugee problems."

## 7. Bibliography and useful links

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