



GP2.0 Global Thematic Event

Bridging the Divide in Approaches to Conflict and Disaster Displacement: Norms, Institutions & Coordination in Afghanistan, Colombia, Niger, Philippines and Somalia

31 May 2022 - [Recording available here](#)

Summary

This event aimed to present and discuss the findings of the report *Bridging the Divide in Approaches to Conflict and Disaster Displacement*. This research was commissioned by IOM and UNHCR in 2019,¹ to look at the impact that disaster and conflict displacement have on the institutional, policy and coordination fabric of Afghanistan, Colombia, the Niger, the Philippines, and Somalia. The discussion brought together a variety of practitioners including national authorities, academia, UN, and NGOs as well as local civil society from over 20 countries.

Key messages:

1. The UN Secretary General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, the Guiding Principles and many other frameworks, emphasise the importance of national authorities in providing durable solutions. It is important to elevate the discussion on how conflict and disaster displacement impact the ability of states to do so at the policy and institutional coordination level.
2. Preparedness and prevention systems and measures tend to be more efficient in relation to disaster displacement, than in situations of displacement generated by conflict. There is a need to reconcile the different approaches and fill the preparedness and prevention gap also for conflict related displacement.
3. National ownership of legislative instruments to deal with internal displacement should not be seen as action led by states only, but also as processes driven by local civil society and groups. The inclusivity of policy processes can ensure a broader and more effective implementation, building on a shared understanding of internal displacement causes, challenges, and solutions.
4. States may create specific units are set up to deal with IDPs affected by conflict or disasters, or bodies that deal simultaneously with both populations in displacement. Coordination across sectors at federal level and across tiers of government is key to achieve results and reintegration. South-south cooperation and the support of the international community have been resourceful in ensuring that policy making processes and government responses remain holistic and sustainable in the long term.
5. As crises become protracted and more likely to intersect with climate change and disaster displacement the work to sustain government-led responses aimed at strengthening the resilience of displacement affected communities remains a global priority. Service delivery, housing, land and property, accountability, economic opportunities, access to justice and financing of early and long-term solutions are key priorities for national durable solutions instruments.

Opening Remarks – Samuel Cheung, Chief of the Internal Displacement Section within the Division of International Protection at UNHCR and GP2.0 Co-chair.

The GP2.0 Co-Chairs, IOM, OCHA, UNDP and UNHCR, are delighted to offer an opportunity for collective reflection on a very relevant topic such as the impact that drought and disasters have on national normative,

¹ The study was undertaken in the framework of the GP20 Plan of Action



institutional and coordination frameworks dealing with internal displacement and disaster risk reduction. When the report *Bridging the Divide* was commissioned in 2019, the number of countries affected by conflict and disasters, was less than half compared with the situation today. The review of how institutions, policies and coordination are impacted by displacement, is therefore timely, as more countries have to manage larger populations of internally displaced persons. Secondly, the international community is starting to take action on the recommendations of the report by the UN SG High Level Panel on Internal Displacement and on the commitments outlined in the UN SG Action Agenda. Both documents reiterate the importance of national responsibility in creating a conducive environment for durable solutions. By looking at how conflict and disasters influence national policy, institutions and coordination, the findings of the report provide important comparative insights and recommendations on the mechanisms that states can and should devise to fulfill their responsibilities towards displacement affected communities.

Mark Yarnell, GP2.0 Advisor, Framing the Discussion Topic

The report presents the context and normative instruments to address conflict displacement, climate change, and disaster risk reduction in Afghanistan, Colombia, the Niger, the Philippines, and Somalia. There are several implications for actors addressing displacement in contexts where disasters and displacement occur simultaneously. Data should inform a common understanding of multi-causal drivers of displacement. A shared understanding of the needs of populations impacted by conflict and disasters, has implications for humanitarian and development action. Coordination between actors should be multi-sectoral and involve professionals engaged in prevention and response to displacement, but also climate change a disaster risk reduction. These implications warrant five recommendations. Firstly, legislative, and normative processes must be supported to institutionalize response, prevention and protection for communities impacted by both by conflict and disaster displacement, and, simultaneously, to raise awareness on rights and circumstances of internally displaced persons. Secondly, Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Risk Management instruments should be included in frameworks dealing with internal displacement which address other displacement drivers (i.e., conflict). Thirdly, institutions and government leadership must be looked at holistically, across sectors, but also from national to local level. Thirdly, the report highlights the importance to include IDPs, communities affected by displacement, advocates, and independent bodies in normative and policy-implementation processes, particularly with a view to fill gaps generated by the misunderstanding or lack of awareness about specific displacement situations. Finally, coordination mechanisms remain essential to address effectively multi-causal internal displacements that occur both because of conflict and disaster.

Dr. Chaloka Beyani, Assistant Professor of International Law at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

The importance of including provisions that raise awareness and prompt action in internal displacement instruments is obvious. There is fragmentation in the response to conflict displacement on one hand and disaster and climate induced displacement on the other. In Mindanao, Philippines, where there is conflict there was a more elaborate response to support persons displaced by typhoons, than those displaced by conflict. Similar considerations apply to Nigeria, looking at persons displaced by Boko Haram in the north of the country and at IDPs in the Niger Delta who were affected by environmental degradation. The responses from the Governments of Philippines and Nigeria to armed violence by militia has resulted in internal displacement and encampment. The responses related to environmental, or climate related disasters has led to evacuation or relocations of affected populations. The difference in the approaches used to deal with conflict or disaster displacement highlights a gap in the level or preparedness and prevention. Preparedness and prevention are usually more advanced in relation to disaster displacement.

There is also a lack of coordination across tiers of government, with federal structures that are set up at national level creating parallel systems to those already in place at sub-national level.



On the second recommendations regarding DDR and DRM instruments, these usually do not include or reference actions and responses to conflict displacement. Climate change policies can likewise lack references to internal displacement. Zambia and Uganda, for example, had policies and frameworks on internal displacement, but did not have provisions on internal displacement in the Disaster Management policies or climate adaptation laws. This shortcoming was addressed in Fiji and Colombia, which made reference to internal displacement in policies and legislation on climate adaptation between 2014 and 2016. In Kenya the IDP Act sets forth provisions for persons displaced by conflict and disaster, but the disaster management act does not necessarily address displacement, and both pieces of legislation are enforced by different entities. The Disaster Management Act falls within the purview of the Office of the President, whereas the Ministry of Devolution leads on the implementation of the Internal Displacement Act. In South Sudan and Ethiopia, the legislation on internal displacement refers to both conflict and disaster displacement, in line with the provisions of the AU convention on Internal Displacement. The 2010 Cancun agreement also sets forth provisions for response and action on climate induced displacement.

With reference to the preparation of instruments at cross-sectoral and sub-national level, in Somalia and South Sudan, several ministries, as well as local authorities, dealing with both conflict and disaster displacement were included in the law and policy-making processes. Participation of and ownership by national authorities are as important as the type of provisions included in these instruments.

A challenging element for policy making and implementation is the turnover in government institutions. In Kenya for example the formulation of the IDP Act began under the lead of the Office of the President but then transitioned at ministerial level after some changes in the constitutional framework, splitting the implementation of the Act across several government ministries. Conversely, in South Sudan there was a deliberate effort by several ministries and MPs to create a common normative response in relation to IDPs. In Somalia, Ethiopia and Burkina Faso, the government included several tiers of authorities across multiple sectors, as well as UN, NGOs, and civil society in the preparation of policy and legislation.

To this effect, national ownership is important, as is consulting beyond Government authorities. Inclusivity can ensure a broader implementation of the law. Inclusion of other stakeholders such as UN, local civil society and groups that represent women and children is not only important for representation but also for attaining a common understanding of issues related to protection, assistance and durable solutions. In Honduras this broad consultative effort was triggered by the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs and is still going on. On the gaps on policy implementation, and particularly the role of civil society organizations, in Georgia there is scope for support to the government in actioning recommendations of the Supreme Court that called for reconciling the various laws and decisions on internal displacement.

A challenging element for the institutional coordination on internal displacement is the competition among authorities. Institutional and coordination mechanisms must be seen as systems of governance for IDP. In Ethiopia and Somalia there are several mechanisms that national policies and legislation are trying to reconcile. There are mixed results related to the implementation of the New York declaration regarding matching whole of government approaches with whole of society approaches, and inclusion of development and peace actors in these processes.

Mr. Ramón Alberto Rodríguez Andrade, General Director of the Unit for Victims in the Government of Colombia. This intervention refers to the law that has entered into force 10 years ago and will be enforced for another 10 years in order to reach the 9.3 million people victims of the conflict. A large percentage of these victims, 92%, are also internally displaced. Victims are mostly displaced by conflict and violence, as well as by disasters. At



national level there are two units, one dealing with reparations to the victims of conflict, and one dealing with disaster prevention and climate change. The Victim's Unit provides support to displaced persons impacted by conflict, but it ensures that all persons affected by displacement can find remedies. Firstly, the Victim's Unit raises awareness about internal displacement in the work on contingency planning for humanitarian emergencies carried out with municipalities and mayors. The Unit in this regard ensures that funds are available to support IDPs who need basic services such as housing, health, water, children education etc. In relation to disasters, we need to look at displaced populations that are affected by violence, disasters, by the challenges of integrating communities as migrants. In cases of persons "doubly affected" by conflict and disasters, and in some cases, persons who are also impacted by the challenges of cross-border migration, the Victims Unit works with the international community through a centralised registry. The Office of the Attorney General releases a certificate that enables the Unit and other entities to start a process of case management, support, and reparation. At local level the reparations are individual and collective. 1.3 million people have benefitted from individual reparations and there have been 50 instances of collective reparation. Collective and individual reparations were essential to rebuild the social fabric and address reconciliation issues. Humanitarian interventions and early action are central to response and prevention.

Durable solutions processes and particularly the implementation of measures that are necessary for return and reintegration are part of the broader assistance and reparation action. Here the engagement with the international community is extremely important particularly on dialogues related to intergenerational displacement, employment, education for the youth. Investing in durable solutions for the victims of displacement and conflict is investing in the sustainability of any place, ensuring that displaced persons can rebuild a life project in the location of their choice. 9.3 million people are victims of conflict which is 18% of the total population in Colombia. 2.5 million victims have overcome a situation of vulnerability.

Colombia is also supporting through south-south cooperation, the exchange of practices on public humanitarian response, prevention, durable solutions, and registration. An exchange on how to address persons affected by conflict and disaster, and by migration across international borders, has taken place with States in Central America and in Mexico with support from the international community. The capacity of local authorities to act on the four components of the reparation process is key to ensure that in the next ten years the majority of the victims, including those of forced displacement, obtain redress and compensation for the violation against their rights.

Ms. Zahra Abdi Mohamed, Director for Solutions in the Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development and Co-Chair of the National Durable Solutions Secretariat in the Federal Government of Somalia

The Government of Somalia and its partners have devised a national strategy on durable solutions which addresses conflict and disaster displacement. Conflict has an adverse effect not only on displacement but also on natural resources management, enhancing the competition to access them, perpetuating subsequent cycles of conflict. Since 1991 Somalia has experienced 12 severe droughts, some of which turned into a famine. The same situation is affecting the country today. One of the strategic objectives to tackle internal displacement caused by disaster focuses on addressing the root causes. The National Durable Solutions Secretariat and the line ministries which are part of it are working together to prevent displacement related to recurring floods occurring along the banks of the Shabelle River. In 2017 the Drought Impact Needs Assessment estimated the impact of the 2016/17 drought and a 2.3 billion Resilience and Recovery Framework was drafted by the Ministry of Planning for preventative action against future droughts. To date only a small percentage of the plan is being funded. At policy level, Somalia addresses conflict and disaster displacement through the National Development Plan, the National Durable Solutions Strategy, and the National Disaster Management Policy. The National Durable Solutions Secretariat coordinates on the implementation of the National Durable Solutions strategy.



The Government coordinates international partners who support the National Development Plan through the Somalia Development and Reconstruction Facility. The Social Development Pillar of the SDRF has two sub working groups on resilience and durable solutions. In Federal Member States, resilience and durable solutions working groups have been set up. The Ministry of Interior – a key member of the Durable Solutions Secretariat – is concerned with issues related to conflict displacement. It is addressing them through the elaboration of a Social Cohesion Policy and through prevention of conflict related to natural resources.

Closing Remarks – Vassiliy Yuzhanin is the Head of the International Migration Law Unit, International Organization for Migration.

Internal displacement is a multi-faceted issue, and it has become an increasingly protracted phenomenon affecting more countries worldwide. Current trends reveal that crises are becoming protracted, and when they intersect with incidents related to climate change and slow onset displacement, internal displacement increases as result. It is fundamental that rights and the evolving needs of communities affected by displacement are protected over time. There is a growing body of normative and legal tools, institutional mechanisms, and platforms. Despite the achievements and a deeper understanding of the vulnerabilities linked to the displacement generated by conflict and disasters, more remains to be done to create a holistic, flexible, and multidisciplinary approach needed to reverse the current displacement trends. The combined effects of disasters and conflict on displacement have undermined efforts for prevention, preparedness, and recovery, eroding people's resilience and reversing efforts by states. Authorities should be focusing on building resilience and sustainable recovery through protection and durable solutions. A better understanding of displacement challenges in situations where conflict and disasters converge remains very important to spark investments in innovative, holistic, and participatory approaches. There is need in this regard for coherent and coordinated responses, systems and processes, and work to support states in these efforts remains a priority. Looking forward the objectives of national durable solutions strategies should prioritize resilience of displacement affected communities. Delivery of services such as housing and tenure security, stronger accountability between Government and affected populations, economic opportunities and livelihoods, guaranteeing access to justice and rule of law to IDPs and finally sustaining early and long-term solutions through appropriate and sustainable financing are all necessary to reverse the current trends.