

Forum: Special Conference on Conflict Realities (SPECON)

Issue: Enhancing protection, reintegration and resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in conflict zones

Student Officer: Yiannis Gkoudis

Position: Deputy President

INTRODUCTION

Wars and internal conflicts are known to have a detrimental impact on the lives of civilians, often leaving them without access to adequate resources, such as food, water, medication, shelter, etc. People are then forced to flee their own countries, usually failing to do so. Sometimes, people can be displaced to other parts of their own country, often leaving them in refugee-like conditions.

The issue of internal displacement has always been prevalent, but was only taken into consideration when planning for refugees during times of war came to countries' attention. Efforts to specifically address and mitigate internal displacement only started during the late 20th century.¹

Until recently, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) did not have the ability to turn on any international organization for aid, leaving them extremely vulnerable. Reasons for internal displacement can vary, but in cases where IDP (Internally Displaced People) numbers are high usually happens due to internal conflicts. There are a variety of ways to aid IDPs, such as improving infrastructure through organizing programmes for integration and resettlement, building monitoring initiatives to identify key issues in situations of internal displacement, and restructuring laws to also include IDPs.

Taking into consideration this year's theme, "Conflict Realities", enhancing the protection and resettlement of IDPs is required to address the brutal realities of armed conflicts. The current state of the realities faced in wars is not ideal, with thousands – or even millions – of deaths, and destroyed infrastructure.

¹ Schnyder, Felix. "Reference Paper for the 70th Anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention - Internal Displacement." *UNHCR*, https://www.unhcr.org/people-forced-to-flee-book/wp-content/uploads/sites/137/2021/10/Samuel-Cheung_Internal-Displacement-UNHCR-and-the-International-Community.pdf. Accessed 6 August 2024.

DEFINITION OF KEY-TERMS

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

“Internally displaced people (IDPs) have been forced to flee their homes by conflict, violence, persecution or disasters, however, unlike refugees, they remain within their own country.”²

Forced Removals

“Forced removals happen when a country’s government forces people to go from a place where they have been living to another place. [...]”³

Resettlement

Resettlement is “the act or process of helping someone move to another place to live, or the act of moving to another place to live.”⁴

Integration

“The action or process of successfully joining or mixing with a different group of people.”⁵

Refugee

“A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries.”⁶

² Abdul. “Internally Displaced People.” *UNHCR*, [www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-protect/internally-displaced-people#:~:text=Internally%20displaced%20people%20\(IDPs\)%20have%20been%20forced%20to%20flee%20their%20homes%20by%20conflict%2C%20violence%2C%20persecution%20or%20disasters%2C%20however%2C%20unlike%20refugees%2C%20they%20remain%20within%20their%20own%20country.](http://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-protect/internally-displaced-people#:~:text=Internally%20displaced%20people%20(IDPs)%20have%20been%20forced%20to%20flee%20their%20homes%20by%20conflict%2C%20violence%2C%20persecution%20or%20disasters%2C%20however%2C%20unlike%20refugees%2C%20they%20remain%20within%20their%20own%20country.) Accessed 01 July 2024.

³ “Forced Removals.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., kids.britannica.com/kids/article/forced-removals/602021#:~:text=Forced%20removals%20happen%20when%20a,during%20the%20era%20of%20apartheid. Accessed 05 July 2024.

⁴ “RESETTLEMENT definition | Cambridge English Dictionary.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/resettlement>. Accessed 14 July 2024.

⁵ “INTEGRATION | definition in the Cambridge English Dictionary.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/integration>. Accessed 14 July 2024.

⁶ “What is a Refugee? Definition and Meaning.” *USA for UNHCR*, <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/>. Accessed 14 July 2024.

Recontextualization

“Recontextualisation is a process that extracts text, signs or meaning from its original context and reuses it in another context.”⁷

Apartheid

“The term ‘apartheid’, an Afrikaans word, derived from the French term ‘mettre à part’, literally translated to “separating, setting apart.” Apartheid is a policy that is founded on the idea of separating people based on racial or ethnic criteria.”⁸

African Union

“The African Union (AU) is a continental body consisting of the 55 member states that make up the countries of the African Continent.”⁹

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historical Overview of Internal Displacement during the 20th Century

Armenia in WWI

The First and Second World Wars, along with other international conflicts of the 20th century left countless populations across Europe displaced. One of those was the Armenian population, which suffered under the rule of the Ottoman Empire during and after the First World War (WWI). The results were tragic, leaving thousands of Armenians displaced within the empire, and thousands of others dead. Those who survived attempted to flee to the Syrian Desert without enough supplies. Unfortunately, most of them died at the hands of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰

WWII

Internal Displacement became a more apparent phenomenon during the Second World War (WWII). It was during that conflict that the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) was founded. This was the first time in history that planning for refugees had occurred during times of war. Its main goal was to assist Displaced Persons (DPs) by providing them with basic necessities, such as shelter, food, clothing, and health services. However, UNRRA’s jurisdiction only applied to people who were displaced within areas under the control of the United Nations, which meant that those held in countries outside the UN or internally displaced in countries part of the Axis Powers weren’t covered by UNRRA. Even after the end of WWII, UNRRA continued assisting hundreds of thousands of DPs all over Western Europe. In

⁷ “Recontextualisation.” *Wikipedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recontextualisation>. Accessed 6 August 2024.

⁸ “apartheid | Wex | US Law | LII / Legal Information Institute.” *Law.Cornell.Edu*, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/apartheid>. Accessed 6 August 2024.

⁹ “About the African Union.” *African Union*, <https://au.int/en/overview>. Accessed 6 August 2024.

¹⁰ “Armenian genocide.” *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_genocide. Accessed 12 July 2024.

1946, the International Refugee Organization (IRO), a temporary organization of the UN, assumed all operations of UNRRA up until 1952, the year of its disbandment. During a convention on refugees in Geneva in 1951, the Refugee Convention was adopted, which laid the foundations for protecting displaced individuals.

South African Apartheid Period

A more recent instance of internal displacement occurred in South Africa during its time under Apartheid. The apartheid system was designed to maintain the white minority's power in politics by controlling the large black population inhabiting South Africa. They managed to achieve this through various social mechanisms including forced removals. This prevented the black population of South Africa from relocating to urban areas, as those were reserved for the white population. Some of the earliest forced removals took place during the 1950s when the Group Areas Act was signed.¹¹ This resulted in many African workers being forcibly removed from urban environments. Despite the apartheid system coming to an end, its long-lasting effects remain an obstacle regarding the socio-economic empowerment of the African population in South Africa.

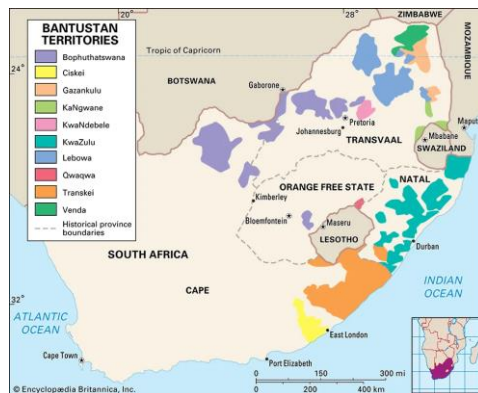


Figure 1: South Africa’s Split Territories Based on Race During Apartheid¹²

Developments in International Attention

The issue of internal displacement became more evident following the drastic rise of IDPs during the 1990s, with research showing that from 1982 to 1995 the number of IDPs grew from

¹¹ “forced removals - Kids.” *Britannica Kids*, <https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/forced-removals/602021#:~:text=The%20Group%20Areas%20Act%20of%201950%20increased%20the%20power%20of%20the%20South%20African%20government.%20It%20allowed%20the%20government%20to%20force%20different%20population%20groups%20to%20live%20in%20separate%20places>. Accessed 6 August 2024.

¹² “forced removals - Kids.” *Britannica Kids*, <https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/forced-removals/602021>. Accessed 12 July 2024.

1.2 million to as much as 25 million, and as of 2023, that number has reached 75.9 million.¹³ One of the first efforts to address the issue was made in 1998 by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR), which established the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (GPID).¹⁴ The reason for the treaty's cruciality is that it was designed specifically for IDPs since there was no IDP-specific treaty up to this point in time.

The success of the GPID was then followed by many other frameworks and protocols, designed to address and deal with the lack of protection and rights for IDPs. Building on the GPID, the Kampala Convention was formed by the African Union in 2009 and entered force in 2012. Its importance is due to the fact that it is the first legally binding treaty regarding the protection of IDPs. It is currently regarded as the most important treaty regarding the issue of internal displacement. The Kampala Convention adopted many new legislations and policies that help address the effects of internal displacement and recognize key issues.¹⁵ The African Union has been able to provide humanitarian aid for IDPs across the continent of Africa since the Kampala Convention was signed by almost all Member States of the African Union.

Figure 2: Signatories of the Kampala Convention¹⁶



Causes of Internal Displacement

The reason for a group's internal displacement can be due to multiple factors that force a certain group to relocate within their home country, usually not within ideal circumstances. Acknowledging the complexity of a situation regarding IDPs and understanding how different factors can be related to it is a crucial step required for tackling the issue.

Furthermore, internal displacement during natural disasters and environmental degradation has become more prevalent in recent years, due to the effects of climate change.

¹³ "75.9 Million People Living in Internal Displacement in 2023: IDMC Report." *International Organization for Migration*, 14 May 2024, <https://www.iom.int/news/759-million-people-living-internal-displacement-2023-idmc-report>. Accessed 12 July 2024.

¹⁴ "Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement | IDMC." *Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre*, <https://www.internal-displacement.org/internal-displacement/guiding-principles-on-internal-displacement/>. Accessed 6 August 2024.

¹⁵ Triggs, Gillian. "Kampala Convention at 10 years: African Union leadership can deliver for IDPs." *UNHCR*, 6 December 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/news/announcements/kampala-convention-10-years-african-union-leadership-can-deliver-idps>. Accessed 12 July 2024.

¹⁶ Bradley, Megan. "Kampala Convention on Internal Displacement in Africa: One Year Later." *Brookings*, 4 December 2013, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/kampala-convention-on-internal-displacement-in-africa-one-year-later/>. Accessed 12 July 2024.

The causes of internal displacement in these scenarios include the destruction of infrastructure, pollution leading to uninhabitable conditions, and loss of habitat due to large-scale construction.¹⁷ This has been one of the leading factors as to why IDPs have significantly increased over the past few decades, as seen with the 2010 Haiti earthquake where more than 300 thousand people lost their lives and countless others were displaced,¹⁸ and the Middle East’s water scarcity situation forcing displacement throughout the region.¹⁹

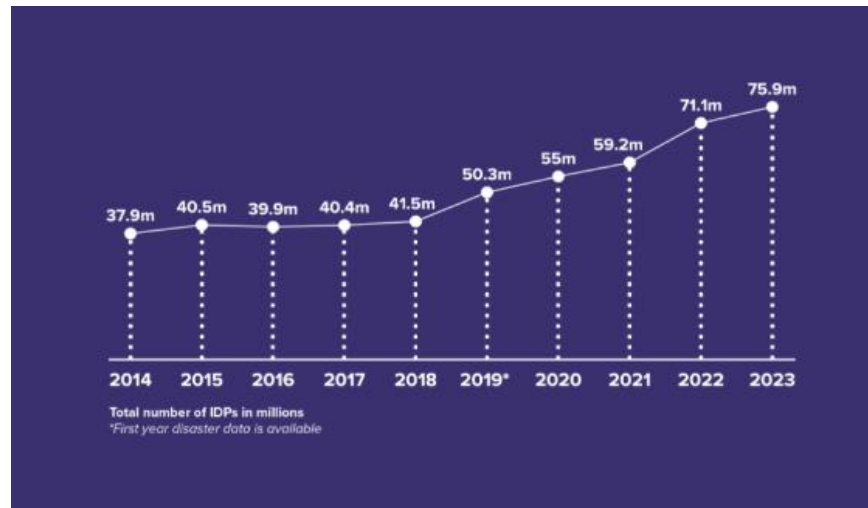


Figure 3: Graph showing the rise of IDPs in the years 2014-2023²⁰

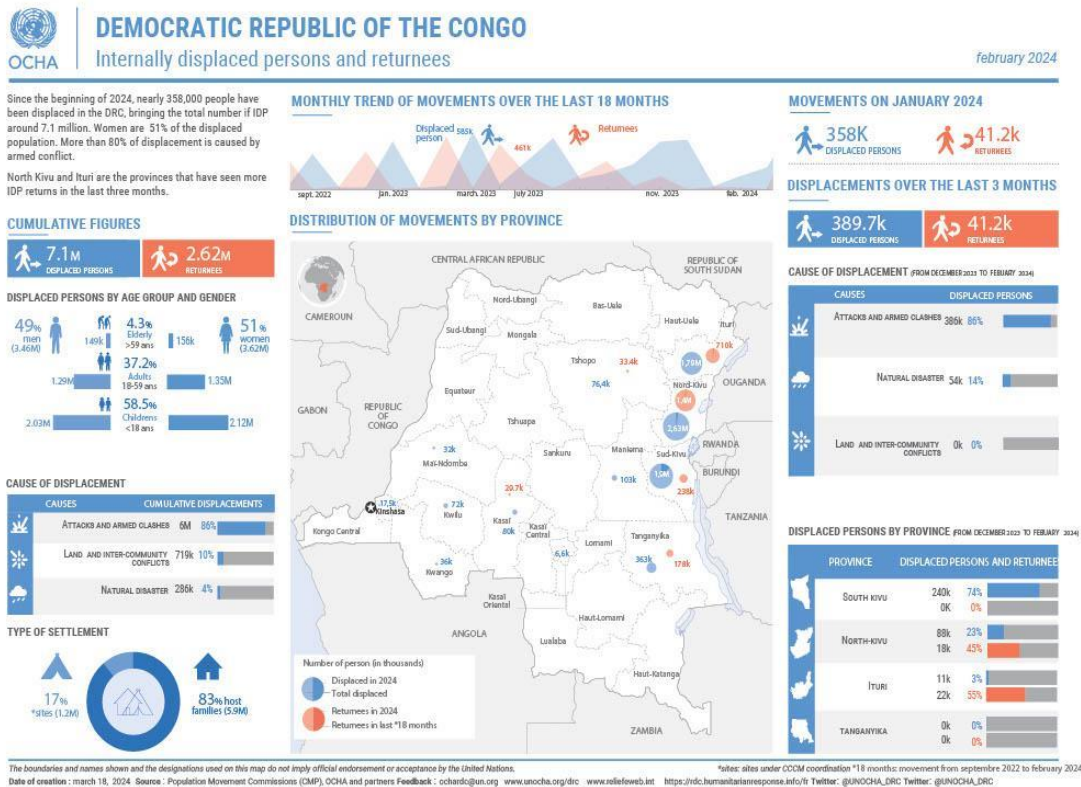
¹⁷ “Displacement Caused by the Effects of Climate Change: Who Will Be Affected and What Are the Gaps in the Normative Framework for Their Protection?” *Brookings Institution*, 10 October 2008, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/displacement-caused-by-the-effects-of-climate-change-who-will-be-affected-and-what-are-the-gaps-in-the-normative-framework-for-their-protection/>. Accessed 12 July 2024.

¹⁸ Pallardy, Richard. “2010 Haiti earthquake | Magnitude, Damage, Map, & Facts.” *Britannica*, 18 June 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/event/2010-Haiti-earthquake>. Accessed 12 July 2024.

¹⁹ *Water scarcity in the Middle East: Beyond an environmental risk*, 6 May 2021, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/water-scarcity-middle-east-beyond-environmental-risk>. Accessed 12 July 2024.

²⁰ Murphy, Matt, and Handsome Frank. “2024 Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID) | IDMC.” *Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre*, <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2024/>. Accessed 12 July 2024.

Figure 4: The Situation of Internal Displacement in the DRC²¹



Key Challenges IDPs Face

IDPs experience numerous challenges during the period of their displacement, and more often than not, displaced individuals struggle to survive in refugee-like conditions. The problem arises from the fact that since the displacement is internal, in most cases, IDPs are not entitled to any protection since the international systems in place only allow protection to people who cross borders, which means IDPs cannot turn to any international organization to acquire humanitarian aid. Their lack of status in international law only leaves them with one option – seeking help and protection from their government. The issue with this is that the phenomenon of internal displacement usually happens because of the governments themselves. For example, the situation in Kosovo has been the cause of over 300,000 internally displaced Albanians. Those who managed to flee to neighboring countries were able to receive the appropriate assistance.

²¹ 2024, 18 March. “Democratic Republic of the Congo: Internally Displaced Persons and Returnees, February 2024.” *Front Page*, 18 Mar. 2024, www.unocha.org/publications/report/democratic-republic-congo/democratic-republic-congo-internally-displaced-persons-and-returnees-february-2024. Accessed 01 July 2024.

Albanians who were unable to flee Kosovo are now hidden in the country and are not able to seek aid from a government that discriminates against them.²²

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

United States of America (USA)

The USA was one of the first countries that began to address the issue of internal displacement in the 1990s, through the United States Agency on International Development's (USAID) Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons Policy of 2005. At the time of the policy's creation, USAID conducted research concluding that IDPs were double the amount of refugees. Through this policy, the USA has managed to assist IDPs in over 73 countries, providing them with essential needs for resettlement and legal protection, and by using the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as a reference, the USA has provided humanitarian assistance to conflicts such as the Syrian Civil War.²³

Germany

Germany is a known advocate for the rights of IDPs worldwide, providing humanitarian aid through its Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and addressing many ongoing conflicts that have put the lives of thousands of displaced individuals at risk, such as the war in Ukraine and the Syrian civil war. Through BMZ, Germany has contributed €5,5 billion to assist displaced people by providing them with necessities and protections and ensuring their safe reintegration, by working closely with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Program (WFP), and various other international organizations.²⁴ In addition to that, BMZ runs multiple programs and initiatives to ensure security for IDPs.

South Africa

South Africa has played a vital role in assessing the situation of IDPs in Africa. The Disaster Management Institute of South Africa (DMISA) is able to respond to disasters causing internal displacement and aid the affected individuals through its National Disaster Management Framework, with its assessment methodology stating that the impact of civil conflict more often than not leads to countless cases of internal displacement.²⁵ In collaboration with the Southern African Development Community (SADC), South Africa can address the issue on a regional level and promote practices that may potentially assist member states of the SADC with assessing

²² Cohen, Roberta. "The Global Crisis of Internal Displacement." *Brookings*, 11 November 1998, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-global-crisis-of-internal-displacement-2/>. Accessed 12 July 2024.

²³ "ASSISTANCE TO INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS POLICY." *DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE CLEARINGHOUSE | PDF Server*, https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACA558.pdf. Accessed 11 July 2024.

²⁴ Schulze, Svenja. *Displaced people | BMZ*, <https://www.bmz.de/en/issues/displaced-people>. Accessed 11 July 2024.

²⁵ "Disaster Management Act: National Disaster Management Framework: Review." *South African Government*, 30 June 2023, https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202307/48874gon3635.pdf. Accessed 11 July 2024.

situations of internal displacement.²⁶ Some of South Africa’s peacekeeping missions include operations conducted in the DRC, where it helped stabilize the region and consequently reduce internal displacement²⁷, and in the Burundi crisis, in which South Africa helped bring an end to the conflict and ensure the security of IDPs.²⁸

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The IOM is one of the leading intergovernmental agencies in the sector of internal displacement and migration. Its approach to situations of internal displacement is encompassed by response teams who carry out disaster risk reduction and peacebuilding operations, with some of its most notable successes being in Yemen and Nigeria, providing protection and relief services. Additionally, in collaboration with the UNHCR, the IOM organizes the Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster, operating in 26 countries, with the main goal of ensuring the rights of IDPs and providing them with effective and immediate protection and services.²⁹

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	DESCRIPTION OF EVENT
24 April 1915	Initiation of the Armenian Genocide by the Ottoman Empire.
1 September 1939	Start of WWII.
9 November 1943	The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) was founded.
2 September 1945	End of WWII.
20 April 1946	The International Refugee Organization (IRO) was founded and assumed all UNRRA operations.

²⁶ “SADC Member States partner with the African Development Bank and UNHCR to address forced displacement, fragility, and climate resilience in Southern Africa.” *UNHCR*, 10 November 2023, <https://www.unhcr.org/africa/news/stories/sadc-member-states-partner-african-development-bank-and-unhcr-address-forced>. Accessed 12 July 2024.

²⁷ “Could a Southern African military force help bring stability to DRC?” *Al Jazeera*, 15 February 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/2/15/can-a-southern-african-military-force-help-bring-stability-to-drc>. Accessed 12 July 2024.

²⁸ “Burundian Civil War.” *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burundian_Civil_War. Accessed 12 July 2024.

²⁹ “Home Page.” *CCCM Cluster*, <https://www.cccmcluster.org/>. Accessed 12 July 2024.

1950	The South African government signed the Group Areas Act.
25 July 1951	The Refugee Convention was signed.
15 February 1952	Disbandment of the IRO.
4 October 1967	The 1967 Protocol was introduced by the Economic and Social Council.
5 March 1992	Resolution E/CN.4/1992/73 was signed.
29 April 1994	The African National Congress (ANC) came into power, overthrowing South Africa's apartheid system.
17 April 1998	The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (GPID) were introduced by the Commission on Human Rights (Human Rights Council).
22 December 2003	Resolution A/RES/58/177 was signed.
6 December 2012	The Kampala Convention entered into force.

RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

E/CN.4/RES/1992/73³⁰

Introduced on March 5th, 1992, resolution E/CN.4/RES/1992/73, also called “Internally Displaced People”, was the Human Rights Council's (HRC) first effort to combat the issue. The resolution's main focus was to strengthen the rights of IDPs by conducting thorough research on human rights and refugee law to identify their applicability to the protection of IDPs through the help of member states and various intergovernmental organizations. The goal is to discover any existing laws on protecting and assisting IDPs, ways to strengthen those laws, and also innovate new ideas for areas that aren't covered by those laws.

³⁰ “Untitled.” *ohchr*, 5 March 1992, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/IDPersons/E_CN.4_RES_1992_73.pdf. Accessed 13 July 2024.

A/RES/58/177³¹

Adopted on December 22nd, 2003, following the 58th session of the General Assembly, resolution A/RES/58/177, also called “Protection of and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons” is known as one of the most important resolutions the General Assembly has introduced regarding the rights of IDPs. The most notable solutions it offers include the strengthening of policies and frameworks by promoting the GPID and enhancing international cooperation by encouraging the cooperation of alliances and organizations that have initiatives addressing the challenges IDPs face.

The Great Lakes IDP Protocol³²

Created on November 30th, 2006, by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the “Protocol on the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons” entered force in 2008 along with nine other protocols, part of the ICGLR’s commitment to improve and protect human rights. The IDP protocol implements the GPID and through consultation by IDPs, the ICGLR is more capable of addressing specific concerns regarding IDPs. The protocol also establishes mechanisms to monitor IDP protections and identify probable issues.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Boko Haram Displacement Response

The conflict caused by the jihadist organization Boko Haram in Nigeria has resulted in large-scale displacement all over the country’s northeastern region, affecting 2.2 million Nigerians. The government has taken measures to assist its IDPs through the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the Borno State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), which are immediately able to provide humanitarian aid to them. NEMA and SEMA in collaboration with the IOM have managed to provide over 300.000 IDPs with providing them with food, shelter, psychological support, and other necessities.³³ Despite all of the efforts they’ve made, the lack of funding has resulted in the inadequate provision of basic services and support. In addition to that, many IDPs faced severe hunger due to the WPF and SEMA shutting down camps, leaving thousands of IDPs helpless.³⁴

³¹“A/RES/58/177.” *UN DOCS*, <https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2FRES%2F58%2F177&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>. Accessed 12 July 2024.

³² “Protocol on the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons.” *Refworld*, 30 November 2006, <https://www.refworld.org/reference/regionalreport/radr/2006/en/94162>. Accessed 14 July 2024.

³³ “Displaced But Not Forgotten: Hope and Help for Victims of Boko.” *IOM Nigeria*, <https://nigeria.iom.int/stories/displaced-not-forgotten-hope-and-help-victims-boko-haram-nigeria>. Accessed 14 July 2024.

³⁴ ““Those Who Returned Are Suffering”: Impact of Camp Shutdowns on People Displaced By Boko Haram Conflict in Nigeria | HRW.” *Human Rights Watch*, 2 November 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2022/11/02/those-who-returned-are-suffering/impact-camp-shutdowns-people-displaced-boko>. Accessed 14 July 2024.

CCCM Cluster Operations In Haiti

Although the cause was because of natural disasters and not armed conflict, the operations of the Camp Coordination and Camp Management during the aftermath of Haiti's 2010, show that improper leadership and communication can lead to a response that suffers from slow integration. This happened due to Haiti not having a counterpart to CCCM, and not understanding how to implement it properly.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Capacity and Infrastructure Building

There are often situations where humanitarian efforts in helping IDPs resettle fail, due to issues such as the lack of funding, lack of resources, lack of personnel, etc. By providing local authorities with the appropriate training, they can then be informed on how to handle situations of internal displacement. This will also improve the cooperation of said authorities with other intergovernmental organizations, strengthening attempts to protect and resettle IDPs. Furthermore, infrastructure will be improved, but with a more remote-oriented approach.

Creation of an International IDP Database

Although the existence of IDP databases is nothing new, creating an online database including information on every situation of internal displacement worldwide will make a huge impact on how this issue will be tackled in the future. Countries will collaborate and contribute information to this database, and in this way, they can identify the needs and vulnerabilities of IDPs, and carefully assess how to approach each situation appropriately. The database will use in-transit encryption methods to protect unauthorized access to the data stored. Additionally, it will support various Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), which will enable its integration with other existing national and international data systems.

Community-Based Reintegration Programmes

In cases of long-term displacement, creating community-based reintegration programmes will help IDPs engage with their host community and better integrate themselves into them. Providing IDPs with opportunities such as job placements, will help them in becoming economically self-sufficient. Additionally, new housing projects will be developed, and in order to make them more affordable, they will be utilizing 3D printed materials. This will not only help in reducing the costs for the organizations running the reintegration programmes, but also in speeding up reconstructions for IDPs who require shelter.

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