

Concept Note

ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment Side Event

People Displaced by Conflicts and Disasters : Improving principled delivery of aid

With NRC/IDMC, the British Red Cross, the Kenya Red Cross Society and the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons

New York, 24 June 2014
18:15-19:30

This side-event will bring together a high-level panel from governments, independent experts and operational humanitarian organizations, to discuss how the international community can improve the quality of humanitarian response for internally displaced persons, and how humanitarian principles can be utilized more effectively to enhance humanitarian action.

Background

The global number of people internally displaced by conflict, generalized violence and human rights violations is on the rise, with new displacements each year adding to unresolved situations. Compared to an estimated 25 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in 2001, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) estimates a record 33.3 million people were living as IDPs at the end of 2013. In most of the same countries where people are displaced by conflict and violence, exposure to natural hazards such as floods and droughts adds to the complex mix of displacement drivers, compounding impacts on the vulnerability of people already displaced.

As of May 2014, the humanitarian community was engaged in responding to three Level 3 emergencies in Syria, Central African Republic and South Sudan - all of which include large scale displacement crises. The humanitarian community also continued to respond to the aftermath of the Typhoon Haiyan disaster in the Philippines. Meanwhile many countries are struggling to reduce the impact of frequent, smaller-scale crises which erode resilience and increase the risk of further disaster. Moreover, the environments in which humanitarian actors are responding to the growing needs caused by internal displacement are becoming increasingly complex. The compounding impact of multiple risk drivers, together with global trends such as population growth, urbanization, and increasing disaster risk and climate change, are changing the frequency and depth of these crises.

Operations based on humanitarian principles are becoming more important than ever before, particularly in conflict-related situations or complex emergencies. The principles serve as essential tools for guiding humanitarian action and enhancing acceptance of humanitarian actors. However, the challenges to principled humanitarian action are many. As we have seen in various crises in 2014, the impact of humanitarian operations can be seriously curtailed by limitations on the ability of actors to operate according to the humanitarian principles of *humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality*. **Creative principled approaches are needed if solutions are to be implemented for the large numbers of internally displaced people.**

In addition, strategies to support durable solutions for internally displaced populations need to be developed in early stages of crises. These strategies need to take into account the needs and rights of the majority of IDPs living outside of camps, and the families and communities hosting them. When disasters affect urban areas, solutions strategies should be sensitive to the housing economy and urban-rural dynamics. Housing land and property rights and unlawful evictions are of growing concern and require attention and advocacy. **Human rights protection for all displaced persons remains essential to progress towards durable solutions to displacement.**

At this Side Event, case studies will be discussed on humanitarian response in contexts affected by both disaster and conflict, to consider what specific response capacities and mechanisms are required to meet needs. The panel will also consider how humanitarian principles can be utilized more effectively in practice and supported by States, to enhance response and access to displaced populations.

Specifically, the following issues will be addressed, and recommendations will be developed around these :

- Supporting affected States' preparedness to better respond to situations of displacement
- Strengthening human rights protection of displaced persons
- Developing strategies to meet the needs of IDPs living outside of camps, and host families/communities
- Supporting humanitarian actors to apply humanitarian principles more systematically to improve protection and assistance to displaced populations

Objectives

This side-event will consider and recommend measures to be taken by States and humanitarian actors to reinforce capacity and preparedness, strengthen resilience and to improve the quality of responses to address the needs and rights of displaced people, through the application of the humanitarian principles.

Outcomes

The main themes of last year's Segment were two of the four themes of the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS): Managing Risks and Humanitarian innovation. This year, the HAS Segment will focus on the two

remaining themes, in its high-level panel discussions (**Serving the needs of people in conflict** and **Humanitarian effectiveness**) in order to provide Member States with an opportunity to contribute to dialogue leading up to the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. A two-page outcomes paper will be produced from this side-event discussion, to contribute to WHS discussions and feed into the ECOSOC Resolution on “*Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations*”.

Moderator : *Government of Norway*

Panelists :

- ***Norwegian Refugee Council/Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Arvinn Gadgil, Director for Partnerships and Policy***
NRC will present latest global figures on the scale of displacement, trends and challenges which limit the ability of States and humanitarian actors to effectively protect and assist displaced populations, including obstacles to principled approaches.
- ***Government of Philippines, Libran N. Cabactulan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Philippines Permanent Mission to the United Nations***
The Government of Philippines, which, since 8 November 2013, is responding to the Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) disaster which resulted in over 6000 deaths and more than 4 million people being displaced, and which has strong experience in managing and responding to crisis situations induced by conflict and disaster, will share its experiences in managing a collective and sustained response to displacement and its solutions.
- ***Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS), Ahmed Idris, Head of Policy***
The Kenya Red Cross Society will speak about its work in preparedness for election-related violence, as well as its ongoing work in responding to small- and medium-sized disasters and ethnic conflicts throughout the country. The systematic and innovative approach to applying the Fundamental Principles is very important for the KRCS’ acceptance across all groups in Kenya as a neutral and independent humanitarian actor, the largest national organization of its kind.
- ***British Red Cross, Amelia B. Kyazze, Senior Humanitarian Policy Advisor***
The British Red Cross has led a three year research project looking at the practical application of the Red Cross/ Red Crescent Movement’s Fundamental Principles in Action. BRC will be presenting evidence from a range of humanitarian contexts in Europe, Asia and Africa to demonstrate how creative and innovative approaches help achieve better access and acceptance, non-withstanding a range of challenges.
- ***Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, Chaloka Beyani***
The Special Rapporteur will draw on recent missions to illustrate the importance of humanitarian principles to respond to the protection and assistance needs of IDPs, both in the emergency phase of the conflict and in the search for durable solutions.

Annex : About the Sponsors

- **Government of Norway**

The Norwegian Government is a strong supporter of humanitarian efforts aimed at saving lives, alleviating suffering and protecting those are in danger, without distinction based on ethnic background, gender, age, religion or political affiliation. Norwegian efforts are targeted at countries where there are unmet humanitarian needs and where Norway is particularly well placed to make a contribution, or where measures concerned support peace and reconciliation processes. Norway's humanitarian priorities include strengthening the protection afforded to internally displaced persons, including by reinforcing partnerships with affected countries, as well as partnering with UN agencies and the Special Rapporteur's Office, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs, addressing the risks associated with natural hazards, and finding durable solutions to protracted situations of displacement.

- **Government of Philippines**

Philippines has a strong record and experience in responding to needs of those affected by conflict, violence and disasters. In 2013, the Philippines experienced three major natural hazard-related disasters. The latest, Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) a Level-3 emergency, caused the tragic loss of 6,000 lives, destruction and the displacement of more than 4 million persons. The Government of Philippines has also continued to respond to the needs of over 115,000 persons displaced by internal armed conflict and violence in the southern Philippines. The Government's preparedness and response capacity, including well-developed mechanisms, coordination structures (12 clusters activated 2 days after Haiyan), and experience working with many humanitarian actors - all with different approaches - has enabled the government to effectively coordinate huge complex emergencies.

- **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

The IFRC and its network of 189 National Societies, provides humanitarian assistance to displaced populations at all stages of their journey; at the origin (including those that have been left behind and those contemplating leaving), in transit (with the most vulnerable who are often in limbo for many years) and after arrival (with those displaced and the local communities to ensure access to essential basic needs and services). As a global humanitarian organization, the IFRC has a mandate to address the needs of internally and internationally displaced persons. This mandate focuses on addressing the humanitarian concerns of the displaced, especially those living at the margins of society. All Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies have a mandate as auxiliaries to public authorities in the humanitarian field. As such they play a vital role in assisting governments to tackle the dilemmas they face in addressing the complexity of displacement and circular migration pressures and reducing the risk of injustice and inhumanity.