

### **Summary Report**

Side Event : “*People Displaced by Conflicts and Disasters : Improving principled delivery of aid*”, 24 June 2014, 18:15-19:30

Hosted by the Permanent Missions of Norway and the Philippines to the United Nations, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

Chaired by H.E Ambassador Tine M. Smith, Deputy Permanent Representative of Norway to the UN

#### Speakers

- H.E Ambassador Libran Nuevas Cabactulan - Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the UN
- Mr. Chaloka Beyani - Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons
- Mr. Ahmed Irshad Idris - Head of Policy and Advocacy, Kenya Red Cross Society
- Ms. Amelia B. Kyazze - Senior Humanitarian Policy Adviser, British Red Cross
- Mr. Arvinn Gadgil - Director of Partnerships and Policy, Norwegian Refugee Council

#### **Introduction**

This panel discussion on internal displacement and principled delivery of aid, included the perspectives of governments, international NGOs, Red Cross/Red Crescent national societies, and the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons.

The number of people internally displaced by conflict, generalised violence and human rights violations is on the rise, with new displacements each year, adding to unresolved situations. **At the end of 2013, there were a record 33.3 million people living in internal displacement.** 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 complex drivers of displacement** and has compounding impacts on the vulnerability of affected populations. **The majority of displaced people live in protracted displacement, and more than half of displaced populations live outside of camps** - in both rural and urban settings - where their location and needs are often not as easily identifiable as in camps. States have the primary responsibility to assist and protect IDPs. Preparedness, coordination, leadership and accountability are important. Furthermore, humanitarian actors need to be able to access and respond to the needs of displaced people, which is enabled through adherence to core humanitarian principles (*humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality*).

Panellists addressed the following issues:

- How to strengthen States' preparedness to better respond to situations of displacement
- How to improve principled delivery of aid to displaced persons
- The application of humanitarian principles for more effective delivery of aid to IDPs, and for improving acceptance and access

#### **Preparedness**

The Philippines Government shared its experience in preparing for and responding to situations of large displacement. The Government recently responded to displacement needs caused by the devastating typhoon Haiyan (“Yolanda”) in December 2013, which was declared a level-three emergency, Bohol earthquake in October 2013, and conflict in Zamboanga in the south of the Philippines, in September 2013. During Haiyan, the government managed a huge international emergency response in the spirit of “*Bayanihan*” (communal unity and cooperation). The Ambassador highlighted the need for a **holistic approach**, with the Government taking the lead, while recognizing the different mandates and ways in which local, national and international entities operate. **Preparedness** includes investment in logistics, including warehousing and good evacuation plans. During Haiyan, many provisions in place were destroyed and communication lines were severely affected. Awareness by the population of risks and response to natural hazards is crucial, and the Ambassador considered that academic institutions and civil society organisations can play an important awareness-raising role. The Ambassador also remarked that mitigation and adaptation mechanisms need to take into account IDPs' different specific needs, and that good area planning is needed related to services, education and livelihoods, for durable returns.

In conflict situations, preparedness can be complicated by different factors including lack of foreseeability, resources and fragility of institutions.

In both conflicts and natural disaster contexts, **strong legal frameworks** are essential, and can contribute significantly to early warning, as part of preparedness frameworks. The Philippines IDP law is in the process of being finalised. Several speakers emphasized the importance of strong national laws and policies on IDPs. The *Kampala Convention* - which codified the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* - was considered by the panellists to be an important model.

### **Principled delivery of aid to displaced persons**

Humanitarian action should be **impartial**, and needs-based approaches are reliant on **reliable data about IDPs, including vulnerabilities and risk factors**. The Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs considered that lack of documentation for IDPs can reduce their access to essential services, such as hospitals and schools. In Côte d'Ivoire, the government has enacted a law to issue birth certificates to children born in the aftermath of the 2010 election crisis – many of them IDPs and returnees - to overcome this challenge. The Special Rapporteur also remarked that the worst health impacts from conflicts are often felt by IDPs, in particular respiratory illnesses from cramped living conditions, and prevalence of HIV/AIDS due to limited access to family and reproductive healthcare. The Norwegian Refugee Council remarked that the **primary responsibility for providing protection and assistance to IDPs**, including provision of data, **lies with governments**. It is also important to ensure that **IDPs' voices are heard and prioritized in the identification of durable solutions**.

### **Humanitarian principles as tools to improve protection and assistance to IDPs and access**

The Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) highlighted the real **protective value of humanitarian principles and their utility in facilitating access**. The KRCS recalled that in the aftermath of the 2007 national elections in Kenya, 1,300 had died and 600,000 had found refuge in other parts of the country. Ahead of the 2013 national elections, the KRCS aspired to expand its work to prevention activities. Its leadership engaged with all presidential candidates to ask them to publicly commit to refrain from activities that could cause displacement. Applying a principled approach has enabled the national society to gain acceptance across actors, and the KRCS maintains access to all areas, including rural and urban communities, across Kenya. It also recently provided emergency support to victims of the 2013 terrorist attack in Westgate Mall.

The British Red Cross (BRC) collects evidence on how the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement **Fundamental Principles practically improve access and acceptance by local communities and the quality of response**. In Lebanon, the Red Cross Society, with its 2,500 volunteers, worked across up to 50 different internal conflict lines during the civil war, and today runs the only emergency ambulance service with access to all communities. In Somalia, the Red Crescent Society is the only organization with reach to populations throughout the country. It delivered food aid to over 1 million people and promoted the neutrality of a major hospital throughout the conflict. In Uganda, Pakistan, Sweden and Northern Ireland, national societies continue to apply the principles in innovative ways, and to document different approaches that enable principled and effective delivery of aid. The application of the principles is strengthened through training of staff and volunteers, recruitment that is non-discriminatory and representative, integration of the principles in decision-making processes, and dissemination.

### **Summary of main points :**

- States have a responsibility to prevent and avoid conditions on their territory that might lead to displacement;
- Failures by different parties to conflicts in upholding international humanitarian law, in particular principles of distinction and proportionality, can lead to massive forced displacement;
- The importance of preparedness to situations of displacement, including through the adoption of national frameworks on internal displacement and effective data collection;
- Assessing the needs of IDPs along with those of surrounding communities, including host families/communities, to ensure a comprehensive response to humanitarian needs;
- Prioritising needs-based responses and supporting principled humanitarian action, including balancing local and international response and improving proximity to affected populations.
- Applying humanitarian principles in all stages of decision-making. Documentation and dissemination on how principles work in practice, can contribute to enhancing their implementation more consistently;
- Supporting durable solutions from the outset of the crisis.

### **Links to documents referenced by the panel :**

NRC/IDMC, Global Overview 2014: people internally displaced by conflict and violence  
BRC/LRC 2012, Principles in Action in Lebanon  
BRC/SRC 2013, Principles in Action in Somalia  
CRED, 2013, People affected by conflict (executive summary)