


Optional Module: Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

A module developed
by
The Global IDP Project
of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

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Objectives

- Outline the key components of the IDP definition;
- Distinguish between the description of an IDP and the definition of a refugee;
- Outline who has a role and responsibility in relation to the protection of IDPs;
- Describe how the Guiding Principles can be used as a framework for protection.

IDPs outnumber refugees

Year	Refugees	IDPs
1970	9 million	5 million
1980	14 million	9 million
2000	16 million	22-25 million
2004	13.2 million	25 million

Sources: UNHCR website for refugee figures and NRC/Global IDP Project for IDP figures

Who is an internally displaced person?

The UN definition

"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 recognised State border."

A special vulnerability

- May be forced towards unhealthy or inhospitable environments;
- Social organisation destroyed or damaged;
- May experience profound psychological distress;
- Removed from sources of income and livelihood;
- Schooling disrupted;
- May lack identity documents;
- Lack of access for international organisations.

Comparison: The Refugee and IDP «definitions»

Refugees

- Have crossed an international border;
- Have lost the protection of their own country;
- Have a special status under international law.

IDPs

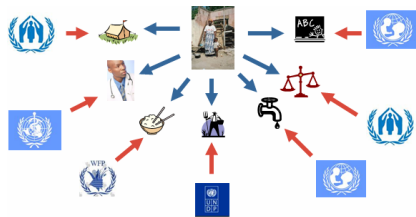
- Are displaced within their own country;
- Causes of flight: violence, war, human rights violations, disasters;
- Country still in charge of their protection;
- Do not have a special status under international law but should enjoy same rights as other citizens.

Who is responsible?

Guiding Principle 3

"National authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to IDPs within their jurisdiction."

IDPs have cross-cutting needs



A collaborative response is required

The role of the UNHCR

- UNHCR has a predisposition to protect IDPs;
- The UNHCR mandate does not include those who have fled from natural or man-made disasters;
- In 2004, only 5.4 million IDPs were of concern to the UNHCR out of a total of 25 million IDPs worldwide;
- UNHCR leads protection effort of UN Country Team as part of collaborative response.

Comparison: The protection regime for refugees and IDPs

Refugees

- State authorities in host country;
- The UNHCR has a global mandate for refugees worldwide.

IDPs

- National state authorities;
- Collaborative response under the leadership of the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator;
- IDPs of concern to the UNHCR in some countries only.

The Guiding Principles (GP)



The Guiding Principles - objectives

- Identify the rights and guarantees relevant to the protection of the internally displaced in all phases of displacement;
- Not binding - but derived from binding international law;
- Provide guidance to **all** actors dealing with IDPs, including national and international actors.

The Guiding Principles - content

Content:

- Introduction - Scope and Purpose

Principles relating to:

- Section I - General Principles
- Section II - Protection from displacement
- Section III - Protection during displacement

IDPS have the right to seek asylum (GP 15)!

- Section IV - Humanitarian assistance
- Section V - Return, resettlement and reintegration

Comparison: The legal framework for refugees and IDPs

Refugees

- The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol,
 - Creates a specific legal regime for those in need of international protection;
- Human rights law;
- International humanitarian law.

IDPs

- Human rights law;
- International human rights law;
- Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement,
 - Restate international legal standards that are relevant to the specific needs of IDPs
 - Refugee law by analogy.

Conclusions

- Guiding Principles restate the rights of IDPs and duties of responsibilities;
- They are consistent with international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and refugee law by analogy;
- States have increasingly used the GP as a reference tool.

This module on IDPs was developed by
the Global IDP Project
of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

To find out more about their training materials and
resources on IDPs by country (database), please visit:

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