



THE IDP-INITIATIVE

QUARTERLY UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 2020

Solutions are the focus of this Quarterly Update on UNHCR's Initiative on Internal Displacement (2020-2021). Included within the content are real-time examples drawn from several IDP settings. Certain themes are also highlighted, including the importance of **partnerships**, the criticality of **data**, the primacy of **consultation**, the added-value of UNHCR's **tri-cluster coordination synergies**, and the necessity to create an **enabling environment**.

This is the second Quarterly Update on UNHCR’s Step-Up on Internal Displacement¹ – focused on Solutions.

UNHCR is committed to being decisive, predictable and effective in situations of internal displacement. The [2019 Policy on UNHCR’s Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement](#) provides updated guidance on our role in Preparedness, Operational Delivery, Coordination Leadership and the Search for Solutions, in cooperation with States and within the interagency framework.

While UNHCR is engaged in internal displacement response in 33 country operations, the IDP-Initiative demonstrates this Step-Up through thematic, strategic and operational dimensions in nine target operations – **Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Iraq, Sudan, South Sudan and Ukraine.**

Five solutions-related themes are emphasized:

1 First, partnerships bring comparative advantage which is key in unlocking solutions opportunities. The transition to a self-reliant, normal life following displacement is a complex process, during which many need assistance, empowerment and protection. Partnerships are necessary for a comprehensive, lasting approach that encompasses humanitarian, development and peace stakeholders as well as most notably affected and supportive governments. UNHCR’s efforts to leverage its experience with private sector partnerships, and to advance innovative financing for IDP solutions, have shown great promise.

2 Second, accurate data, including microdata, opens possibilities for evidence-based analysis, planning, response and communications. Within this Update, a promising example is highlighted from **Sudan**, where the UNHCR and UNDP co-led Durable Solutions Work Group is coordinating a substantial effort on data collection under the Peacebuilding Fund for Darfur and CERF Programming. The work combines area-based comparative profiling among displaced and non-displaced communities, intention and perception surveys, and multisectoral profiles of target localities within an innovative methodology that builds on past efforts, also within the UN Country Team.

The evidence allows for evidence-based Local Action Plans for Solutions and informs broader Humanitarian-Development-Peace interventions.

3 Third, as stressed also within the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement², it is vital that communication is undertaken with communities related to decisions which have direct impact on their current lives – and their future. However, such consultation does not systematically occur at ground level. IDPs may seek options outside of organized programmes and initiatives and involuntarily be once again on the move. Through UNHCR’s leadership of the Global Protection Cluster, we continue to promote protection mainstreaming across all clusters, and in all 33 IDP operations where we are engaged, thereby ensuring that interagency response through solutions is shaped by protection considerations.



45.7 million internally displaced people worldwide in 2019*



57% of the world’s displaced remain within the borders of their own country*

* Source: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre.

1 Update from June 2020 can be accessed here: <https://reporting.unhcr.org/idp-initiative>

2 See Principle 28 (2).

4 **Fourth**, IDPs are often constrained by a lack of available housing when returning to their area of origin, or when integrating in other areas. **Leveraging UNHCR’s tri-cluster leadership** in shelter, protection and camp coordination/camp management (CCCM), together with other clusters, **can lead to an effective housing, land and property response** in an IDP-solutions setting, including in health and human security. Mechanisms for restitution and compensation require strengthening to be accessible to the most vulnerable.

5 **Fifth**, it is necessary to take **actions towards solutions from the onset of displacement**, including to create an environment conducive to staying safe and to future solutions – with activities in **community engagement, IDP law and policy, documentation, secure land tenure, livelihoods, peaceful co-existence and conflict resolution required accordingly**.

Examples of recent solutions initiatives

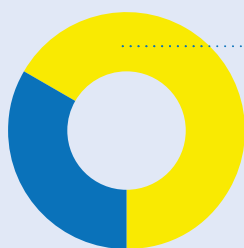
Globally, UNHCR continues to co-chair the GP20 Initiative, launched in 2018 in response to the General Assembly’s call to mark the 20th anniversary of the [Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement](#). As part of this plan of action, **Niger** adopted comprehensive national legislation on internal displacement. In June 2019, **South Sudan** acceded to the [African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa](#) (Kampala Convention), the world’s only regional legally binding instrument for IDPs. The GP20 Initiative is co-led by UNHCR, UN OCHA and the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs. The GP20 Plan of Action calls on stakeholders to step up efforts on four interrelated priorities: engaging IDPs in decision-making processes; promoting, developing and implementing national laws and policies; enhancing the quality of data and analysis; and addressing protracted displacement while seeking durable solutions.

The GP20 action plan has already enabled joined up and continued strategic action across four main areas which include addressing protracted internal displacement and fostering durable solutions. Solutions-related activities include a thematic event – “Protection Dimension of Solutions”, organized under the auspices of the Global Protection Cluster Forum 2020 on 28 September. The event will take stock of how coordination between the different actors occurs in the field; the main challenges and opportunities; how national governments, as main duty bearers, are mainstreaming protection in their programmes and in their search for durable solutions and how they are supported by stakeholders, including international organizations and donors, in the delivery of their responsibilities.

www.globalprotectioncluster.org/gp20

www.globalprotectioncluster.org/2020/07/08/protection-dimensions-durable-solutions

Displacement in and to urban areas continued throughout the decade. The geographic information available confirms that IDPs were predominantly located in rural areas at the start of the decade. By the end of the decade, the trend had reversed. Available data on IDPs indicates that the ratio of urban versus non-urban internally displaced populations was 2:1 at the end of 2019. In other words, where UNHCR was involved in situations of internal displacement in 2019, two out of three IDPs were in urban or semi-urban areas. Our solutions approach has been adjusted accordingly.



2/3 of IDPs live in urban or semi-urban areas

The largest IDP return movements between 2010 and 2019 took place in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** and **Iraq**. In the DRC, returns have taken place despite the risks of new displacement due to conflict, climate and health. In Iraq, more than five million IDPs returned to their place of residence during the decade, some 85 per cent of them in the past four years.

The **Platform on Disaster Displacement** is a state-led process to address the [protection needs](#) of people displaced across borders in the context of disasters and climate change. The Platform builds partnerships between policymakers, practitioners and researchers and constitute a multi-stakeholder forum for dialogue, information sharing as well as policy and normative development. In IDP settings, UNHCR continues to work in partnership with others to conduct comprehensive durable solutions analysis adapted to the local and country context to inform effective responses.

Fast, flexible and safe, cash support is being increasingly used by UNHCR to help internally displaced people rebuild their lives following displacement. Cash support in some IDP settings has been used in the form of direct, unconditional grants to purchase livelihood implements or buy construction materials to repair homes. In other locations, cash provision has covered the cost of legal representation, necessary to obtain civil documentation, or visit Government facilities. The provision of cash also enables financial inclusion, as IDPs and others benefit from the establishment of a working financial relationship where previously there had been none. Much more is needed, however, in order to help persons meet their basic needs.

In **Somalia**, the Durable Solutions Initiative (DSI) was agreed between the Federal Government of Somalia, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in 2016. The DSI is based on the premise that solutions to displacement can only be attained through strong Government leadership and collective efforts of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding partners, and with the inclusion of IDPs themselves. UNHCR continues to work towards the creation of conditions conducive for solutions through partnerships with the Government, United Nations and NGO actors in the sectors of health, education, livelihoods, legal assistance and law development.

Since 2015, UNHCR **Ukraine** and the Norwegian Refugee Council have partnered to repair and rehabilitate more than 5,000 homes destroyed during the conflict in the east of Ukraine, thanks to significant financial support of international donors. In Donetsk Oblast, UNHCR repairs to multi-story apartment buildings have enabled more than 180 households to return in 2020, via funding support provided by EU/ECHO.



© UNHCR/M. Bougma

Nafissatou proudly shows the ID card she recently received. Her baby also now has a birth certificate.

IDP enrolment in Burkina Faso has helped provide thousands of IDPs with documents

Nafissatou is amongst the thousands of those forced to flee who have received a birth certificate or a national identity card in Burkina Faso, an active UNHCR effort to prevent statelessness.

“I just received my national ID card!” she says proudly. “I am so relieved because I was often stopped and had to pay fines. My child also received a birth certificate. I will tell other mothers to register the birth of their children too as it opens so many more opportunities. My daughter will now be able to go to school, to easily get an ID card and earn a living when she grows up.”

Since 2017, UNHCR has supported the national authorities in Burkina Faso to produce and deliver 157,850 birth certificates and identity cards to those displaced by violence and their host communities in the regions of the Boucle de Mouhoun, Centre Nord, Nord and Sahel.

This year, some 45,000 national ID cards and 92,000 birth certificates have been produced and distributed to IDPs and to members of the local population living in the Boucle de Mouhoun, Centre Nord, Nord, Sahel and Est regions.

With these documents, internally displaced men, women, boys and girls can now access basic services, such as health and education, and enjoy fundamental rights, including freedom of movement and the right to vote – the latter being of particular importance with the forthcoming elections planned for November 2020.

These achievements were only possible thanks to the comprehensive data collected during the enrolment process which helped UNHCR better target the communities and the vulnerable who were most in need of documentation.

Since the early stages of the emergency in 2019, the UN Refugee Agency and the National Council for Emergency Response and Rehabilitation (CONASUR) embarked on a strategic partnership to strengthen the enrolment of the displaced. Through the donation of over 650 tablets, 250 power banks, laptops as well as trainings, UNHCR supported authorities in building a unique and robust system of electronic data collection. CONASUR's decentralized nature also enables the organization to easily reach people newly displaced, even in areas where humanitarian actors may not have access.

During enrolment, individuals are asked a wide range of questions, including about biographical information, the reasons why they fled and any protection concern which they may have, but also on their thoughts about possible durable solutions.

Improving the accuracy of data provides national authorities and humanitarian organizations with a better understanding of the population and its needs. This also facilitates the planning of programmes and targeting of assistance to where it is most needed.

The Head of the UN Refugee Agency in Burkina Faso, Ms. Ioli Kimyaci, notes: “The data collected by CONASUR includes a wealth of information that can help us better understand the dynamics behind the movements of people. Even as the emergency continues to unfold, already collecting information on intentions linked to durable solutions is helping us start proactively planning for these.”

With its experience in data collection and protection analysis, UNHCR will continue to foster its strategic collaboration with development partners, in particular the World Bank, and engage in activities under the framework of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus.

The fastest growing humanitarian and protection crisis

Increased violence and insecurity have led over a million people to flee their homes in search of safety in Burkina Faso. This represents 5% of the country's population or some 2,000 individuals forcibly displaced every day since the start of 2020 – making Burkina Faso the fastest growing humanitarian and protection crisis in the world.

The on-going COVID-19 pandemic and its socio-economic impact have further exacerbated existing vulnerabilities, and needs remain critical in the areas of shelter, food,

water, protection, health and education. While host communities have generously shared the limited resources they have, they need further support.

In June, UNHCR launched a [\\$ 186 million](#) appeal to provide lifesaving protection and assistance to refugees, IDPs, returnees and host communities in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. So far 44 % of the funds are available for the response in Burkina Faso. More is urgently needed to ensure that those most vulnerable are protected.

Colombia: Legalizing informal settlements for IDPs in urban areas

In Colombia, internally displaced persons have access to national services and rights as efforts to legalize informal settlements show results.

Over past decades, hundreds of thousands of persons displaced from rural areas of Colombia have taken shelter in informal settlements located on the outskirts of Colombia's largest cities. These informal settlements await legal recognition by State authorities and access to basic services, including electricity and water.

Since 2015, UNHCR is supporting the Government and efforts by partners in the legalization of these informal settlements. For 2020, with a budget of \$ 150,000, UNHCR has supported the legalization process at 16 settlements, benefitting 6,159 households, representing 24,638 persons.

UNHCR's partner *Opción Legal*, a national NGO, is leading the implementation of the project, which is funded by KOICA through the end of 2020. In 2019, 13 settlements were similarly legalized, benefitting 4,185 households (16,125 persons).

The below story explains the impact of legalization on the situation of one internally displaced household in *La Victoria*.

Members of the Local Community Board and UNHCR staff worked hand in hand for the legalization of La Victoria. Now the community have access to energy and a sewage system, among others.



A better future for IDPs in *La Victoria*, Colombia

Internal armed conflict uprooted Ana Gabriela Chalá when she was 13 years old.

Already by that time, her mother had passed away and her father had moved out. Without family, personal possessions or any idea where to go, Ana searched for safety, and her native village of Rio Arquía in Antioquia-Chocó became a part of her past.

In 2000, Ana reached the city of Quibdó, more than 50 kilometres from her hometown. Thanks to the community of catholic nuns that took her in and raised her, she received shelter and food for the following years.

“It was hard because I was used to another life. I had everything, but when one is displaced, one has to settle for very little. Displacement is something I had never experienced before, it’s a very difficult situation due to the humiliations one has to go through”, said Ana.

In her twenties, Ana became independent and met a man with whom she had Marilyn, her daughter. After struggles with her partner and difficulties paying rent, she packed her bags and left home a second time. Once again, Ana found herself on the streets, without a home and with a baby in her arms. “Where should I go?”, she asked herself, “I knew I had to be careful to find a way out of this”.

In *La Victoria*, an informal settlement in Quibdó, Ana found a place where she could rebuild her life. With the help of the host community, she got what she had been waiting for since she was 13: a home of her own. A while after Ana and Marilyn had settled into their place, Ana began to reach out to her neighbours to help them as she had been helped. Over time, Ana became more involved in her community. With their support, she became the vice-president of the Local Community Board (LCB) which, in 2017, approached UNHCR for support in legalizing the settlement of *La Victoria*.

Residents of *La Victoria* were unable to access energy, a sewage system, garbage collection and telephone services because of the settlement’s informal status. Many residents worried, however, that legalizing their settlement would result in taxes and hence heavier burdens. To address their misconceptions, Ana dedicated herself to raising awareness on the benefits of living in a legalised settlement.

“I showed them all the pros and cons so that they could have enough information when making a decision”, explained Ana, who also facilitated the exchanges between UNHCR and the community.

Now 80% of *La Victoria*’s residents have a title deed, and the remaining 20% are expected to receive theirs before the end of 2020.

Legalization has furthermore promoted a positive perception of the settlement, with the residents feeling less stigmatized. For Ana, having facilitated the legalization of *La Victoria* changed her life for the better.

“I understood there’s nothing impossible in this life, when one fights for what one desires, it can become true”, concluded Ana.

“During the legalization process, I accompanied the community and made them conscious about the opportunities of having a title deed. I provided them information that refuted their misconceptions. That was the most challenging part, because many people were afraid about the idea of being deprived from receiving subsidies from the State or humanitarian aid by having a property and living in a legal neighbourhood”, said Ana.

Ana’s outreach helped build ties and enhance trust between the community and UNHCR, the City Hall and local authorities involved in the legalization process. Ana personally accompanied the architects and topographers through *La Victoria*, helping them to understand the layout and specific features of the settlement.

“I was able to build new horizons, open new doors and better myself. I learned to have more self-confidence, to be stronger and to seek a better future for my daughter.”

In La Victoria, an informal settlement in Quibdó, Ana found a place where she could rebuild her life.

Ana and her daughter Marilyn live in La Victoria, an informal settlement in Quibdó. With UNHCR support and a strong commitment by the community, La Victoria is being legalized.



Internally displaced Congolese woman found refuge in Tshikapa in the Kasai region of south-central Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) after being displaced during the conflict in 2017.

Empowering displaced survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in Greater Kasai, DRC

At the height of the 2017 conflict in the Greater Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Marie and her two daughters fled the violence that cost the life of her husband.

The conflict in DRC's Kasai began in 2016, when local tensions escalated into a widespread conflict. Entire villages have been burnt down; and much-needed health facilities, schools and other public buildings have been destroyed.

On their journey to safety, Marie and her daughters were attacked and raped by armed men in a forest. The use of rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) has become sadly widespread in DRC's Kasai, exposing survivors to long-lasting physical and psychological trauma. IDP women, especially when travelling alone, are at an increased risk of SGBV – be it from participants in the conflict or from other individuals, for example when resorting to survival sex.

Support SGBV survivors to be resilient

Arriving in Kananga, the capital city of Kasai Central province, the three women were nevertheless determined to set about rebuilding their lives. Marie first found the strength to make bread and earn a small income. But she soon realized that she lacked the skills and money to help her business grow. To make things worse, she also faced discrimination and was excluded from the community.

This is when a UNHCR project for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence provided her with a lifeline.

Through such projects, SGBV survivors receive a monthly cash allowance to meet basic family needs, while they are also provided livelihood training. This allows them to become self-reliant and integrate better in their host communities.

“This training will enable us to become independent, to avoid begging. It protects us from survival sex and exposure to diseases including AIDS.”

Marie participated in a socio-professional reinsertion project developed by UNHCR and partners for SGBV survivors in the DRC.

Marie is one of 198 survivors of sexual and gender-based violence referred by UNHCR’s partners for a project which combines psycho-social support with income generation training. Marie was provided training in baking and small business skills in a local training centre in Kananga, where she also received counselling.

Today, hope has replaced disappointment: “I have already started working, I am now very strong! This programme is an eternal help; I will not be short of money again, I hope”, says Marie.

Marie is now a voice for women who have faced similar obstacles. She works closely with UNHCR and partners to share her colleagues’ achievements and reflect on the challenges she could overcome.

“This training will enable us to become independent, to avoid begging. It protects us from survival sex and exposure to diseases including AIDS”, she says.

Marie hopes that others can be given the same opportunity to become part of a community again and that they too can pass on what they have learnt to others.

Empowered survivors give back to the community during COVID-19

The spread of COVID-19 in the DRC has not only brought health risks but also aggravated socio-economic challenges. With border closures and scant livelihood opportunities, the most vulnerable are at risk. This situation has inspired the participants in the project to take an active role in the COVID-19 response. Following consultations with participants, UNHCR and AIDES are now enabling SGBV survivors to produce essential COVID-19 prevention materials.

Through this project, 87 women received materials to sew reusable masks and produce soap. So far, with the support provided, they have been able to produce 750 masks and 9,000 bars of soap that have been distributed to local communities.

As the situation in the Greater Kasai region has further deteriorated with the displacement of 25,000 people in the Kasai Central (Demba) and Kasai (Mweka) provinces in August, UNHCR has stepped up its actions by providing core relief items (such as kitchen kits, tarpaulins, blankets, mosquito nets, jerry cans) to assist the newly displaced and help address urgent needs. However, health care and hygiene remain poor and soap is too often in short supply. The close partnership with IDP women who survived SGBV through the project is vital, not only for themselves, but also for their communities.

UNHCR will start a new project for 500 survivors of SGBV in the Greater Kasai region, adding new trainings, such as mechanics, to existing programmes. Former beneficiaries who want to share their knowledge with the new participants will be included – as was Marie.



UNHCR and partner AIDES are enabling SGBV survivors to produce essential COVID-19 prevention materials such as soap in Greater Kasai, DRC. ©AIDES/Jeanot Bangbelu

Achieving solutions: Projects in Iraq facilitate social cohesion between IDPs and host communities

After years of conflict, thousands of vulnerable displaced families in Iraq are in a precarious situation, with limited access to some of the most basic services and continued need for humanitarian assistance.

In the current post-conflict scenario, UNHCR is increasingly focused on supporting solutions for those affected by displacement. This includes improvement of the situation of host communities that have extended support to IDPs who return, locally integrate or settle elsewhere in the country.


These interventions have quickly become an integral and critical aspect of the operation benefitting a large number of IDPs, returnees and members of the host community. Through a participatory, community-based approach, UNHCR prioritizes interventions that strengthen social cohesion, including by supporting the capacity of local authorities to help IDPs and host communities access government services.

Following military operations against extremist groups, as of the end of June 2020, over 1.38 million people remain internally displaced throughout the country. Many IDPs have expressed the desire to return to their areas of origin but cite significant obstacles – such as destroyed shelters and infrastructure in areas of return; lack of access to livelihoods, particularly for women and young

people; security issues; increased community and sexual and gender-based violence, particularly against women and girls; and lack of access to civil, housing, land and property documentation.

Some IDPs report that they are unable or unwilling to return to their areas of origin due to communal tensions and security concerns linked to perceptions of their alleged affiliation with extremist groups. The absence of an effective process or procedure to address these tensions or legally remedy unproven allegations regarding their affiliation with extremist groups is a significant hindrance to solutions.

While the new Iraqi government has expressed its intention to prioritize the closure of IDP camps, UNHCR remains committed to ensuring that returns take place in a sustainable manner and are conducted voluntarily, in safety and dignity, while the full range of solutions is available to IDPs who are unable or unwilling to return. The durable solutions strategy pursued by the international community in Iraq, including UNHCR, aims to tackle protracted displacement as well as to support



An IDP woman receives civil documentation in Hassan Sham Camp in Ninewa Governorate, Iraq. Thanks to the generous contributions from donors such as EU Civil Protection & Humanitarian Aid – ECHO, UNHCR is implementing Civil Documentation projects to support thousands of Iraqis who lost civic status, residency & identity documents due to conflicts.



Rehabilitation of a Water Treatment Plant by UNHCR in Baghdad Governorate, Iraq.

voluntary return and reintegration where feasible, while also pursuing local integration and settlement elsewhere in the country. The United Nations, along with the international community in Iraq (humanitarian, development, stabilization, and social cohesion actors), are working to support the Government of Iraq in advancing durable solutions to internal and protracted displacement.

As part of the efforts to support the return of displaced families in a sustainable manner, UNHCR has been implementing a series of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) and Community-Support Projects (CSPs) throughout Iraq – with a particular focus on enhancing access to basic services for IDPs, refugees, returnees and local communities.

In line with the 2019 IDP Policy, UNHCR is also implementing its IDP enrolment for the necessary collection of information, including biometrics at household or individual levels, for the purpose of delivering and monitoring services and assistance, including cash assistance.

QIPs and CSPs benefit the local community in the long run while prioritizing social cohesion in the immediate term. In 2019, UNHCR implemented 37 projects focusing on access to public services, including the rehabilitation of water treatment plants, electricity restoration, and the rehabilitation of communal facilities such as parks and recreational facilities. In addition, UNHCR Iraq embarked on formulating an area-based approach to protection and solutions. The primary objective of this area-based approach is to focus on inclusion through supporting areas and communities that are hosting refugees, IDPs and returnees.

By bringing Civil Affairs Directorates to IDPs in their areas of displacement, over 37,500 individuals have secured documentation in 2019 and 2020.

An important priority for UNHCR in the identification of durable solutions is to increase access to civil documentation. According to the Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment conducted in 2019, nearly 2.9 million individuals, including camp-based and out-of-camp IDPs as well as returnees, are missing at least one form of civil documentation. Due to the prolonged conflict, many Civil Affairs Directorates (CADs) and national identification centres were destroyed, which has prevented IDPs and returnees from obtaining or renewing their documentation. Without civil documentation, access to education and health care is not possible, while restrictions on freedom of movement are imposed and people are facing an increased risk of arrest and detention. Access to government assistance and compensation programmes, or to recovery and reconstruction benefits, is further hindered. Without civil documentation, parents are unable to register the birth of their children, which puts them at risk of statelessness.

In cooperation with the government and civil society partners, UNHCR has implemented and supported projects to promote the access of IDPs and returnees to civil documentation. Since 2018, UNHCR has rehabilitated two CAD offices in Kirkuk Governorate and three CAD offices in Ninewa Governorate, with additional projects ongoing to support CAD offices in conflict-affected areas. UNHCR is collaborating with the Ministry of Interior in conducting civil documentation mobile missions across the country to enable IDP documentation – and overcome obstacles linked to civil documentation procedures that are limiting applications to areas of origin only. UNHCR and its partners also provide legal assistance to IDPs and returnees. By bringing CADs to IDPs in their areas of displacement, over 37,500 individuals have secured documentation in 2019 and 2020.



© UNHCR/Aziz Rahjo

A well providing water to the community in the village of Selea in Jebel Moon. Access to improved sources of drinking water is among one of the many factors to be considered in the data collection and analysis to create an understanding of obstacles facing communities with regards to durable solutions in Darfur, Sudan.

Planning in Partnership for Solutions in Darfur, Sudan

Protracted displacement is a major obstacle to implementing solutions in Sudan's Darfur, home to 1.6 million internally displaced men, women and children.

Families forced to flee are often prevented from returning to their areas of origin due to disputes over property and land, concerns over safety, scarce resources or a lack of access to basic services, looping them into an endless cycle of violence, displacement and deprivation.

In December 2019, the Government of Sudan signed a \$ 20 million programme with the United Nations Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) to help address this protracted situation. The first phase of funding under the programme was made immediately available, and currently

provides support for project interventions in three priority areas, namely Rule of Law, Durable Solutions and Peacebuilding at the Community Level.

In 2020, UNHCR has on-going operational programming in each of the above priority areas – on Solutions, UNHCR has further stepped-up in a coordination function, as co-chair of the Durable Solutions Working Group (DSWG) with the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS).

The approach towards Solutions in Darfur is innovative, and benefits from lessons learned from past initiatives in Sudan and elsewhere. Consultation is at the centre of the Solutions approach, as it is through consultation supported by evidence-based data, information management and analysis that project selection and implementation decisions are made.

Under the Durable Solutions Working Group, plans for data collection have been launched in eight prioritized locations, namely Assalaya, Gereida, Jebel Moon, Nertiti, Sheiria, Tawilia, Undukum and Yassin. Both the questionnaire and the methodology were developed in close consultation with local authorities and the communities to be surveyed.

The first data collection surveys are expected to be launched in October 2020, with considerations for pandemic-related precautions. Data collection will be followed by an analysis and the design of Locality Action Plans.

These Locality Action Plans will also benefit from the data collected at household level on IDPs' future intentions to return and their socio-economic situation. The data sets will then be combined with community-level data on the rule of law infrastructure, land and resource management, the existence of conflict resolution mechanisms, the capacity of local services and with considerations related to social cohesion.

The Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS) is providing technical support with the design and methodology of the tools, along with quality assurance. The process builds on best practices and learning from a pilot study carried out with the Government in El Fasher in North Darfur between 2016 and 2019.

The data collected will flow into a baseline for a range of indicators which will be used to inform programming and measure the impact of projects on durable solutions. The data will also be made freely available to decision-makers in institutions and Government, as well as to humanitarian stakeholders and others in the international community.

With the withdrawal of the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), an innovative approach was needed to support the region's IDPs in moving towards a stable and prosperous future, in line with one of the government's top priorities. Comprehensive data collection and processing in this initiative will help Sudan and its international partners move away from the provision of humanitarian assistance to more long-term, sustainable programmes for communities affected by displacement.

There are 67 localities affected by displacement in Darfur. The current funding will allow for data collection interventions and the drafting of Locality Action Plans in eight locations. More international support, particularly from development actors, will be needed to scale-up this initiative, and to facilitate the achievement of lasting solutions throughout the Darfur region.



© UNHCR/Farzana Wahidy

UNHCR's Cash for Shelter project was piloted with 600 vulnerable displaced and returnee households in 2019. In 2020, UNHCR has expanded the project to build houses for 300 families.

“All I ever wanted was a home of my own” – UNHCR helps displaced Afghans build permanent shelters

For 40-year-old Yaseen, owning a home was once a distant dream. He was only 10 years old when his parents fled fighting and insecurity in Afghanistan and sought refuge in neighbouring Pakistan, where they rented a small accommodation.

As he grew older, Yaseen supported his family to pay rent by working at a bakery. He returned to Afghanistan in 2017 with his wife, mother and nine children amid severe financial difficulties. In Afghanistan, they were unable to return to their village – in Sawkai, Kunar, due to ongoing insecurity in the area – and the family was displaced to Malik Bela, Behsud, more than 70 kilometres away. Again, they lived on the margins, with Yaseen scraping together his meagre earnings every month to cover the rent for a house that barely had enough space for the family of 12.

Yaseen and his family are now the proud owners of a home through UNHCR’s Cash for Shelter project, which provides families with a \$ 3,300 cash grant and technical assistance to construct a two-room shelter that also includes a bathroom. The cash is provided in three instalments as building progresses.

Yaseen recalls the severe difficulties he has faced in past years. “I work as a daily labourer. I barely had enough money to feed my family, because all my earnings went towards rent. We were always hungry, and my children were becoming malnourished. But now I don’t worry about rent and I can finally feed, clothe and take care of my family.”

More than 440,000 people were internally displaced by conflict in Afghanistan in 2019 alone, in addition to thousands driven from their homes by natural disasters. In addition, more than 122,000 people have been displaced by conflict in the first seven months of 2020 itself. Some can move in with relatives who are already stretched, but most must make do with ramshackle shelters or tents in informal settlements – or cramped and over-priced rental accommodation that often lacks water and toilets. Conditions are especially difficult during Afghanistan’s scorching summers and freezing winters.

Across the country, displaced Afghans report the need for shelter as one of their biggest priorities, second only to food.

This is often true of the nearly 6 million former refugees who have returned to Afghanistan over the last two decades. The Cash for Shelter project was piloted with 600 vulnerable displaced and returnee households in 2019. In 2020, UNHCR has expanded the project to build houses for 300 families. This project is part of a wider area-based approach implemented by UNHCR and falls under the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees, a regional initiative that was launched in 2012.

Another family – Zakirullah, his wife and eight children – have also built their own home through the Cash for Shelter project. Like Yaseen, 32-year-old Zakirullah spent decades living in ramshackle rented accommodation. He was born in exile in Pakistan, where he met his wife. His children are now between the ages of three and 15. One of his daughters is diagnosed with autism and requires special care.

“I can finally feed, clothe and take care of my family.”

Yaseen was determined to find a permanent home for his family when he returned to Afghanistan.

He talks about the anxiety he experienced owing to the lack of a permanent home for his family. “In Pakistan, I went from one rented shelter to the next. I once lived with my parents, but after some time, they too were unable to support me and my family. Most days, I worried about where we would sleep at night.” Zakirullah says he was determined to find a permanent home for his family when he returned to Afghanistan. “All I ever wanted was a home of my own.”

Upon return to Afghanistan, Zakirullah and his family were again displaced from Pech Dara, Kunar, to Tangi, in Nangrahar, due to insecurity. In 2019, he built a house in Tangi with the help of UNHCR’s Cash for Shelter project and has enrolled his children in the local school.

The spread of coronavirus in Afghanistan has amplified the need for people to have shelters with adequate space, water and toilets. The Cash for Shelter project is offering those benefits while the cash component has provided some help to families faced with the financial fallout of lockdown.

“I am so grateful that my family and I have a place to call our own,” says Zakirullah. “I can breathe easier now and focus on bettering myself and being a good father to my children.”



© UNHCRv/Mulat Zergaw

Abebech standing in front of her improved shelter with her children.*

UNHCR's support gives Ethiopia's IDP returnees a chance to rebuild

Tuesday, 10 April 2018, was a day like any other for Abebech* and her family of nine. The 36-year-old resident of Bilida Kojowa Badiya locality, in Ethiopia's Oromia region, had a busy day attending to her seven children and preparing the family's meals, while her husband worked in the farm.

Around midnight, the family was abruptly awoken by an unexpected commotion in their otherwise peaceful neighbourhood "People were attacked, and houses were reduced to ashes," she recalled: "Without knowing it, we found ourselves running for our lives in different directions".

In 2018, Ethiopia experienced the highest number of new conflict-related internal displacement in the world, with violence spreading to areas previously untouched.

Inter-communal violence, driven by ethnic tensions and competition over scarce resources, broke out in the south of the country in both the West Guji zone of Oromia and the Gedeo zone in the

Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's region (SNNP), resulting in over 3 million people being displaced by March 2019.

Abebech*, like many others in her village, is originally from the SNNP region, but lived most of her life in the adjoining Oromia region among the Guji community. "My children were born here, and Guji is their world – the only place they know," she said, adding that she never imagined that they would be estranged from their own community.

Similarly, thousands of ethnic Oromos were also forced to flee the SNNP region and were accommodated in congested collective IDP sites in the Oromia region.

In July 2018, UNHCR, as part of a joint inter-agency response effort, deployed two emergency teams in Guji and Gedeo to respond to the crisis, undertaking protection monitoring and distributing critical humanitarian aid items in overcrowded collective IDP sites such as schools and churches. Staff also supported shelter construction and site management following the establishment of UNHCR offices in Dilla (SNNP) and Bule Hora (Oromia).

While still reeling from her traumatic flight, Abebech received news that her husband had been killed. “I was devastated and overwhelmed with grief”, she said.

Amidst the congestion and limited humanitarian assistance in the collective IDP sites, news of chronic malnutrition started to emerge, alongside the Government of Ethiopia’s decision to organize a return operation in May 2019. A month later, the Government reported the return of 1.8 million people.

However, for many Ethiopian IDPs, including Abebech, the ordeal was not over. Returning home, families were essentially internally displaced in their areas of origin and forced to seek shelter in new collective IDP sites within their villages.

“I was transferred from a collective IDP site in Gottiti and accommodated in another site in Bilida Kojowa Badiya – this time inside a crowded church compound,” Abebech recalled. Unable to stand the level of overcrowding, she left the church and started living in the ruins of her previous house, covering the roof with plastic sheets and banana leaves.

Looking back at this time, she recalled: “You wouldn’t call this a shelter that protects from the elements, but I guess this is better than the suffocation of the collective centre.”

“Having shelter is a cornerstone of rebuilding a life interrupted.”

- Vincent Parker, UNHCR Deputy Representative in Ethiopia

UNHCR supported the Government’s reintegration and recovery efforts, shifting its focus to supporting IDP returnees as well as affected communities who had specific needs in the areas of return, and who have never been internally displaced. UNHCR collaborated with local NGO partner – Action for the Needy in Ethiopia (ANE) – to reconstruct and rehabilitate 850 of the damaged houses, including 350 in the Gedeo and 500 in the Guji zones, supporting those with the most critical specific needs among the returned IDPs, including female-headed households such as Abebech’s.

“Having shelter is a cornerstone of rebuilding a life interrupted. UNHCR and ANE worked together to support those with critical and urgent specific needs by providing them a home and a chance to feel safe again. As part of this, returning IDP families participated and contributed to the reconstruction of their houses,” said Vincent Parker, UNHCR Deputy Representative in Ethiopia. “This is both cost effective and gives people a sense of ownership.”

Abebech has now moved into her newly reconstructed house with her children and is relieved to have a proper roof over the family’s head.

“I feel much safer here,” she said. “With my husband gone forever, UNHCR and ANE have provided me support and helped to restore my hope.”

** name changed for protection reasons*



© UNHCR/Sehil Chumakov

Chol (56 years old) poses with his children outside his shelter, provided by UNHCR in partnership with NGOs Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and Humanitarian Development Consortium (HDC).

Sheltering IDPs with specific needs in South Sudan's Upper Nile State

Chol and his children are among the thousands of South Sudanese internally displaced who had the possibility to return to their villages after years of displacement. War has changed the course of this 56-year-old's life, who fled his village in Baliet County, Upper Nile State, in 2013.

A nearby shell explosion took his ability to walk and, in a camp for internally displaced persons, sickness took his beloved wife. Today – a year after he returned to his village in July 2019 – Chol smiles hopefully. With his children giggling as they sit on their father's lap outside their own house. "In time, things will be all right," he says.

After the signing of the 2018 revitalized peace agreement, major armed conflict subsided and, despite the many challenges and difficult conditions that the country still faces, an increasing number of the 1.6 million South Sudanese internally displaced wish to go back to their areas of origin.

In a series of protection profiling surveys conducted from the end of 2018 through 2019, IDPs indicated safety as the main reason for remaining in their current location. This survey was carried out in the Protection of Civilian sites, managed by the UN mission in South Sudan – where only 13% of the IDPs are currently living – and in some urban settlements.

UNHCR uses protection profiling as a tool to enhance individual support, help identify protection risks, gaps in services and, most importantly, potential solutions to internal displacement.

The overall results of this exercise showed that more than 40% of surveyed IDPs were willing and ready to return as soon as essential conditions are in place – namely security as well as access to basic services in the area of return.

Upon their return, the first and most pressing issue for most IDP households is shelter. Being finally back in the area of origin does not necessarily mean having a home to go back to; since many properties were destroyed during the years of conflict.

Many spontaneous IDP returnees can often rely on families and neighbours to generously take them in. And this is exactly what happened to Chol* and his children, once they were back in their village. They ended up sharing a one-room tukul (mud structure) with other relatives. A far from ideal reality, especially with the current pandemic, possibly leading to further stretch of limited sanitation and hygiene facilities and resulting in congested living conditions for the extended families.

With the intervention of UNHCR and partners, this was only a temporary solution for Chol and his family who were assigned a place of their own early in 2020. Their new home is one of more than 350 accommodations UNHCR and partners have built for people with specific needs in the Baliet, Fashoda, and Panyikang Counties before the onset of the 2020 rainy season. And some more transitional shelters are still being set up.

A similar project is also ongoing in Wau, Western el Ghazal State, where nearly 320 households were provided shelter or saw their damaged one renovated, with the provision of corrugated galvanized iron sheets to reinforce it, before the heavy rains fall.

This is just one of the many projects UNHCR and partners continue supporting to ensure that IDPs returns are long lasting. Because the journey back home is not really complete if there is no safe place to put down roots and start living again, a place to call home.

UNHCR's approach to solutions in South Sudan

UNHCR interventions in South Sudan are designed to play a catalytic role in facilitating transitional pathways to solutions through linking the humanitarian response to sustainable development and peace building programmes that will improve collective outcomes – and increase accountability on the basis of comparative advantages and responsibilities. Solutions Working Groups (SWGs) have been established across the country, chaired by UNHCR together with development actors (UNDP), Food Security and Livelihood (WFP, FAO), Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Clusters.

The SWGs bring together stakeholders and are incubators of innovative approaches towards solutions. Besides advocacy and support to the development of a **legal framework** benefiting IDPs, UNHCR's activities are centred in creating **conducive environment** for returns through implementation of projects that improve the wellbeing of affected communities. These include support to the most vulnerable populations in areas of return, through **shelter, cash assistance** to cater for basic needs, support **livelihood initiatives including skills building**, small business start-up grants and the reconstruction of basic infrastructure. UNHCR also continues to undertake protection profiling and **data collection on protection needs and risks**, factoring in IDPs views and priorities. All these efforts will benefit from strengthening through human and financial resources to ensure continued generation of evidence-based information, particularly in hard to reach areas.

Strengthening regional capacities and community ownership in Mindanao, Philippines

Since early 2020, nearly 74,000 persons have been displaced across Mindanao due to armed conflict, clan feud, crime and violence. This displacement is compounded by the COVID-19 outbreak, flooding and calamities, confronting IDPs with worsened conditions. The absence of durable solutions to address the root causes of displacement, exacerbated by the pandemic, calls for more responsive approaches in addressing the needs of the forcibly uprooted families.

Amid the COVID-19 outbreak, the wellbeing of IDP families has been at the centre of UNHCR's prevention and response efforts – in pursuit of the High Commissioner's directives for a decisive, predictable and leadership role in situations of internal displacement. UNHCR has adopted a practical approach to mainstream the impacts of COVID-19 into the planning and designing of its regular activities. This means that, while responding to displacement remains the primary concern, UNHCR's activities also address the needs of the communities to curb the impacts of the outbreak.

In Mindanao, focus has been placed on supporting local capacities, specifically targeting the Bangsamoro government. This has included reinforced mainstreaming of protection perspectives and principles into humanitarian planning as well as in the emergency response of a variety of government agencies.

In view of the challenges posed by the pandemic, UNHCR – as protection cluster lead of Mindanao's Humanitarian Team – supported the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in establishing a virtual protection coordination platform to facilitate stronger coordination and information sharing among government and humanitarian actors, ensuring that interventions were delivered in a timely manner, avoiding gaps and duplications.

UNHCR also maintains its technical support to BARMM through the deployment of Protection and Information Management Experts, with the support and guidance of UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP). This initiative aims at strengthening BARMM's capacity on protection and information management as well as enhancing UNHCR's advocacy activities. The expected deliverables include the development of practical tools and institutionalized local policies on IDP protection while systematically reinforcing duty bearers' awareness on the important role of accurate and reliable data in humanitarian programming and effective delivery of services.

In pursuit of the GP20 campaign to promote the human rights of IDPs, UNHCR has accelerated its technical support to the Marawi Land Dispute Resolution Committee through the drafting of guidelines and other operation-related documents for housing, land and property (HLP), as well as through the creation of an HLP forum and HLP thematic bulletins. Through remote coordination and support to Parliament members, UNHCR is providing support to the drafting, sponsorship and progress status monitoring on the Marawi Compensation Bill and IDP Protection Bill.

Concrete support has further been enabled to strengthen the logistical capacity of local government units (LGUs) to ensure the protection of frontline workers and the community at large through donation of 14,000 PPEs and hand over of tablet computers to facilitate efficient delivery of essential goods and services to their constituents amid a public health emergency.



UNHCR implements low-cost Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) targeting the most vulnerable communities in Mindanao to promote community empowerment, advance peaceful co-existence between IDPs and host communities, and strengthen the resilience of IDPs.

To promote community empowerment, advance peaceful co-existence between IDPs and host communities, and strengthen the resilience of IDPs, UNHCR implements Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) targeting the most vulnerable communities in Mindanao. These projects are also envisioned to improve the overall protection of IDPs and help re-establish basic services in the communities such as safe water sources, sanitation and hygiene facilities, improve opportunities for livelihoods, and support social cohesion activities.

Despite the challenges in mobility, UNHCR was able to further cement its relationships with local partners, whose engagement has been crucial to facilitate protection impact activities. The effective network thus established has provided unique access in monitoring the protection situation of remote and fragile communities. As part of its strategy, UNHCR has continued to forge partnerships with frontline government agencies and humanitarian organizations in disseminating IEC materials on COVID-19 key messaging and conducting awareness campaigns to IDP communities. The visibility materials are translated to local languages and adapted to the local context to expand outreach.

Better data and evidence to support solutions for internal displacement:

A brief introduction to the UNHCR - World Bank Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement

In October 2019, UNHCR and the World Bank inaugurated the Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement (JDC).

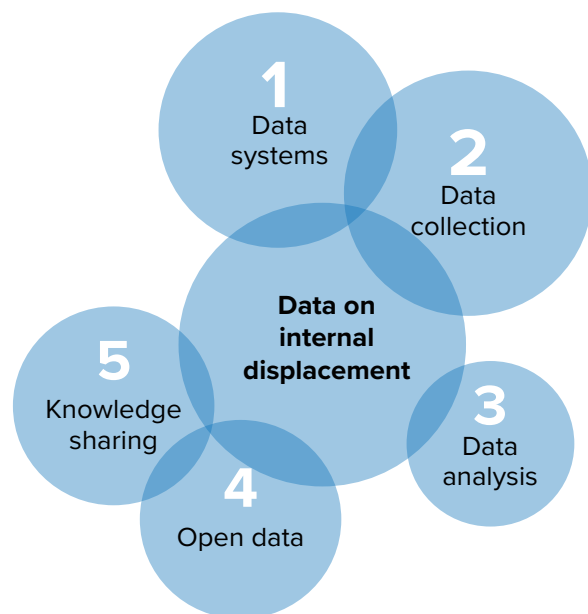
The JDC aims to enhance the ability of stakeholders – including governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations – to make timely and evidence-informed decisions that can improve the lives of persons impacted by forced displacement, including internally displaced persons (IDPs). With a focus on socioeconomic data, the JDC works with partners to enhance the collection, analysis and sharing of quality data on forced displacement in line with international standards.

The JDC is overseen by a Management Committee that includes representatives from the World Bank, UNHCR, countries affected by forced displacement and donor countries. It benefits from contributions from its Strategic Advisory Council, a network of ~100 experts from government, development, humanitarian and civil society organizations.

The JDC's 2020 work programme covers a broad range of activities under the five thematic areas depicted. A strong emphasis on internal displacement cuts across all thematic areas of JDC's work. IDP-specific activities include working with Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics to implement and refine the International Recommendations on IDP Statistics, endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission in March 2020. They also include data collection and analysis activities in a variety of countries affected by internal displacement – with 8 out of 14 survey exercises initiated in 2020 either fully focused on internal displacement or including an IDP dimension.

With support from the JDC, the national statistical office of the **Central African Republic** will for example expand its 2020 national household survey to fully include internally displaced persons; In **Somalia**, a rapid monitoring system will be set up for collecting high-frequency data on IDPs. The high-quality data on IDPs and host communities collected through these and similar exercises will help inform action in support of durable solutions. Finally, the JDC hosts an annual research conference to bring together academics, practitioners, and policymakers for interactive debate on the latest data and evidence on forced displacement. The forthcoming conference, to take place in Colombia in May 2021, will have a particular focus on internal displacement.

To find out more about the JDC and its IDP-specific activities, please visit: www.jointdatacenter.org



Visit our **Global Focus** portal for more information on funding needs: reporting.unhcr.org/financial

More information on the IDP-Initiative can be obtained through the Office of the Principal Advisor on Internal Displacement.