



IDPs, JRS Response, and GP20: A desire to prevent, protect and resolve

Suggested Advocacy for JRS

March 2020



Worldwide, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is on the rise. By the end of 2018, over 41 million people had been forced to flee their homes as a result of internal conflict, generalised violence, infrastructure or urban development projects, and increasingly environmental disasters and climate change. Most of these IDPs live in situations of protracted displacement or face chronic displacement risk. As more people remain displaced, the burden on affected countries is undermining their ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

More than 60 per cent of all forcibly displaced people in the world are IDPs, yet the situation and needs of these vulnerable people are under-reported. IDPs face similar challenges to those experienced by refugees: human rights violations and a lack of access to food, shelter, education, and other basic needs and opportunities. While the national authorities bear primary responsibility for their protection, IDPs often struggle to access their rights and are at risk of being forgotten citizens in their own countries.

In 1998, in the response to surging numbers of IDPs following the end of the Cold War, the first Representative of the Secretary General on Internally Displaced Persons presented 30 *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* to the UN Commission on Human Rights. The Guiding Principles have become the cornerstone of the normative framework for the protection of IDPs.

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To mark the 20th anniversary of the Guiding Principle, in 2018 the Global Protection Cluster, a network of humanitarian agencies and NGOs, launched a multi-stakeholder 3-year plan, the *Plan of Action for Advancing Prevention, Protection and Solutions for Internally Displaced People 2018–2020* (GP20)¹. The initiative, spearheaded by UNHCR, UN OCHA and the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs, aims to reduce and resolve internal displacement in line with the Guiding Principles. In 2019, JRS joined the United Nations and other partners to strengthen this effort.

JRS position on IDPs

“For humanitarian reasons, these [internally] displaced people should be considered as refugees in the same way as those formally recognised by the

¹ *Plan of Action for Advancing Prevention, Protection and Solutions for Internally Displaced People 2018–2020* (GP20): http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/_assets/files/20180523-gp20-plan-of-action-final.pdf

Convention, because they are victims of the same type of violence.” (Catholic church definition of a Refugee, *Refugees: A Challenge to Solidarity*, 1992)

JRS place people at the heart of its mission, irrespective of any legal definition. In situations of forced displacement, we do not make distinctions between refugees and IDPs where that would imply a different level of protection. We believe IDPs have a right to emergency assistance and ongoing protection during their displacement, and should be provided with the opportunities and support they need to rebuild their lives. This more inclusive concept of forcibly displaced persons guides JRS in its service and mission.

GP20 Objectives

- Strengthen the participation of IDPs in decisions that affect them, including IDPs who may be particularly vulnerable or marginalised.
- Expand the development and implementation of national laws and policies on internal displacement.
- Increase the number of stakeholders with the capacity to collect, analyse and use quality data on internal displacement for designing an effective response to internal displacement.
- Scale up engagement of states to take the lead on solutions for IDPs, including through SDGs’ implementation.

What has GP20 achieved so far?

The GP20 Plan of Action has supported achievements in the following areas:

- Intensified outreach on internal displacement through specialised events such as photo and virtual reality exhibitions in Ukraine and Honduras, training of judges and magistrates in Honduras, and national events in Georgia, Kosovo, Colombia and El Salvador to refocus attention on internal displacement.
- Enhanced participation of IDPs in decision-making, for example the development of IDP laws in South Sudan and Niger, and research on the participation of women and girls in those processes.
- Advanced laws and policies on internal displacement, for example in Niger and South Sudan, and a regional exchange in West Africa on the ratification of the Kampala Convention, which resulted in renewed commitments from Cape Verde and Senegal to ratify the Convention.

- Collected data on internal displacement, including a multi-stakeholder workshop in Central African Republic that agreed on how to reconcile multiple data sources and methodologies to arrive at an agreed upon dataset on internal displacement.
- Shared practices and challenges related to internal displacement at quarterly GP20 Steering Group meetings, showcasing government efforts to address internal displacement, webinars showcasing country specific UN and NGO practices, and regional state to state exchanges on thematic issues.

How can GP20 help JRS?

Give visibility to our work

- Share our advocacy messages and protection briefings and updates with the GP20 Coordinator, who can disseminate further as appropriate.
- Send a paragraph about our recent work for IDPs for inclusion in the next GP20 newsletter, which reaches over 400 people in UN agencies, NGOs, member states and academia, plus other experts.
- Share our good practices that have: helped to prevent the conditions that lead to internal displacement; addressed the protection needs of IDPs; and helped IDPs progress towards durable solutions.

Provide technical advice on GP20 priorities

- Liaise with and seek the support of the four GP20 Global Focal Points, which cover the GP20 objectives.

JRS specific contribution

JRS accompanies, serves, and advocates the cause of IDPs around the globe²: from Syrians displaced by the long civil war, to Yazidis driven from Iraq by the genocide against their people in 2014. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Myanmar, Central African Republic, Colombia and Afghanistan, JRS provides quality education, livelihoods training, and psychosocial support to people who have been displaced in their own countries often for many years.

How can JRS better contribute to the GP20 activities?

Suggested guide to action

While the Guiding Principles have helped to raise awareness and address internal displacement, much remains to be done. More and more people live in situations of prolonged displacement with no solution in sight. The GP20 Coordinator asks JRS to amplify the voices, testimonies, needs and aspirations of IDPs.

² In 14 countries: Myanmar; Philippines; South Sudan; Burundi; Democratic Republic of Congo; Central African Republic; Nigeria; Ukraine, Colombia; Venezuela; Mexico; Iraq; Syria and Afghanistan.

JRS serves and accompanies IDPs through its programmes but we should advocate at the international, regional and local levels to encourage and support national laws and policies that can protect the rights of people displaced and promote durable solutions. JRS at all levels has a role to play in supporting IDPs. The following activities can be done:

Project Level

- **Foster IDP participation** in the actions and decisions that affect them by collecting the voices, needs and aspirations of the IDPs we serve.
- Organise consultations with IDPs to raise awareness of the Guiding Principles and seek their views and participation in the **development of national laws and policies** to address internal displacement.
- Facilitate and support IDP and host community **participation in key processes for development and peacebuilding**, for example by providing a platform for IDPs to contribute their experiences and expertise to the achievement of **durable solutions** in peace building discussions. This can be fed, via JRS IO, into international policy dialogues such as the 2030 Agenda, UN Secretary General's prevention agenda and UN reform more generally.
- Ensure IDPs do not face barriers to **political participation**, including addressing impediments to accessing documentation, voting and standing for office. This could be done, for example, by conducting an information and awareness raising campaign to inform IDPs about their right to vote and the process to do so.
- Support IDPs in building and strengthening platforms for **determining and realising their priorities**, for example by strengthening the capacity and visibility of existing IDP networks. Priorities can be fed subsequently into inter-agency fora to help shape programme design, strategy development and data collection and analysis.
- **Launch new projects for/with IDPs:** Since the number of IDPs and the number of countries affected by internal displacement are steadily rising, seek to respond more generously and strategically to IDPs around the world.
- **Establish new partnerships for inclusive collaboration on IDP issues:** Seek to engage in strategic and collaborative action with other humanitarian and developmental organisations to enable an effective response to protracted displacement.
- Raise the profile of the **Guiding Principles** in JRS, including through their inclusion in induction packages for new staff and development of learning

opportunities that emphasise the foundational importance of the Guiding Principles.

National & Regional Level

- **Channel voices, needs and aspirations of the IDPs served** by JRS: (see above). Ensure IDPs are given the opportunity to participate in all decision-making processes that affect their lives and determine their future.
- **Advocate to prevent and reduce internal displacement:** Call on governments and other actors to prevent and reduce internal displacement in line with the Guiding Principles, through investments in peace building, disaster risk reduction, and inclusive development. Encourage governments to take steps to implement preventive programmes for foreseeable displacement situations.
- Engage in a **dialogue with national governments and IDPs** to ensure governments prioritise durable solutions to internal displacement in their national and regional planning, with reference to the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions, and factor in displacement into implementation plans for the SDGs.
- **Advocate to state authorities to legislate for IDP protection:** Call on governments and communities to develop and implement laws and policies based on the Guiding Principles that protect the rights and freedoms of IDPs.
- **Advocate for increased action to tackle protracted displacement and achieve durable solutions:** Call on governments to provide IDPs with fair and decent solutions. Encourage governments to recognise that the absence of durable solutions is both a humanitarian and a development issue. Programmes that address this should provide the support IDPs need to become self-reliant, thereby allowing them to restore their dignity and hope.
- Support the creation of a **government chaired working group** on development and implementation of law and policy on internal displacement.
- Organise **seminars on the Guiding Principles** and development and implementation of IDP law and policies with a diverse range of stakeholders, bringing in examples of best practices from other countries.
- **Review priorities and programmes** in countries affected by internal displacement to ensure initiatives helping IDPs to move towards self-sufficiency are in place, and that the impact on host communities is factored into the response.

- Encourage partnerships that can **map the dynamics of displacement situations**: Call for partnerships between states, IDPs, humanitarian and development partners, donors, civil society, the private sector, as well as other actors as relevant, to jointly: 1) analyse the protection risks, needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of IDPs and their hosts, 2) identify the reasons why displacement is protracted, and 3) agree on and implement strategic, clear and quantified collective outcomes.

International Level

- **Channel voices, needs and aspirations of IDPs served**: (see above) JRS IO will share IDP testimonies with the GP20 Coordinator.
- Together with GP20 members, demand that the international system recognise internal displacement as a **global issue that must be addressed for the world to achieve the SDGs**.
- **Raise awareness and generate debate** with colleagues and other contacts about the Guiding Principles, GP20 Plan of Action, and associated IDP advocacy activities.
- Ensure the GP20 Plan of Action and information on the Guiding Principles and other key resources on internal displacement are on **institutional websites**.
- Coordinate JRS's feedback and **participation in the 2020 High-Level Panel** on Internal Displacement. This Panel will work to increase global attention on and support for displaced persons, while developing concrete recommendations for Member States, the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders to improve the approach and response to the issue, with a particular focus on durable solutions. UNSG Guterres will announce the Panel's composition in early 2020 and it will begin its deliberations shortly after. The Panel will submit recommendations to the UNSG within a year of its first meeting.

More info at: <http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/gp20/>