



# THE IDP-INITIATIVE

## QUARTERLY UPDATE

### MARCH 2021

Partnerships are a prominent feature of our revised Policy on UNHCR's Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement, which requires country, regional and global operations to mobilize and deploy resources and capacities in support of UNHCR's longstanding pledge to work in partnership with others. This Update provides details on some of our latest work in Partnership with others as a part of our IDP engagement. Included is an update on our cluster response, our strategic engagement within the IASC framework, and several examples drawn from country operations which include aspects of cooperation with civil society, with development partners including the World Bank, and with IDP populations themselves. The articles also touch upon recent UNHCR initiatives related to data and information management, climate change and working directly with the private sector.

# Strategic Partnerships in the Advancement of IDP Objectives

Partnerships for UNHCR is a means of working together inclusively with all relevant stakeholders towards a shared goal of upholding international protection and driving durable solutions.

**According to provisional expenditure figures, in 2020, UNHCR disbursed approximately \$1.26 billion to 908 national and international NGOs, reaching its Grand Bargain commitment of providing 28 per cent of its programme expenditures through local and national responders. In 2020, UNHCR worked with 954 local and national responders, the highest number of local and national partners recorded by UNHCR.**

The importance of Partnerships is a prominent feature of our revised Policy on UNHCR's Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement, which *"requires country, regional and global operations to mobilize and deploy resources and capacities in support of UNHCR's longstanding pledge to work in partnership with others"*.

Our commitment towards Partnerships is also grounded in our Strategic Directions, which calls upon us to develop *"operational and advocacy partnerships with regional, national and local actors, as well as [forge] strategic alliances in key areas"*.

This article provides a summary of several of the latest key advances in Strategic Partnerships as related to our engagement in situations of internal displacement:

## Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)

- UNHCR remains deeply engaged in the work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). We have been a force behind IASC reform to lend it greater coherence and weight, notably through rationalizing structures (Emergency Directors Group and Working Group), and through supporting the newly established 'Deputies Forum'.
- In 2020, UNHCR contributed to the work of the various IASC bodies and continued to co-lead the IASC results group 2 on accountability and inclusion. In an effort to ensure that protection remains central to the IASC, the Office proposed to elevate protection matters across all IASC structures in 2021 and beyond.
- To further support the localization agenda, in 2020 UNHCR also became co-chair of the subgroup on localization, which developed draft guidance on the meaningful participation of national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations. To enhance localization, UNHCR and IFRC signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) aimed at building the capacity of local Red Cross and Red Crescent societies and enhancing collaboration in emergency response, preparedness, localization and resilience-building.

## Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster

- The global CCCM cluster, co-led by UNHCR and IOM, supported 23 country-level clusters and cluster-like structures in 2020, with UNHCR leading or co-leading 19 of them. In September 2020, UNHCR internally undertook a deep-dive exercise to critically examine its CCCM response and developed a roadmap to revamp its leadership role, in line with the global CCCM strategy.
- The cluster established a global working group on connectivity and clean energy, and provided cluster coordination and technical trainings delivered in multiple languages to 228 individuals from United Nations entities, civil society organizations, NGOs and local authorities in 19 countries. Due to COVID-19-related movement restrictions, most of the trainings were delivered virtually, including the annual meeting of the cluster which gathered more than 500 participants.

## Global Protection Cluster

- The global protection cluster (GPC) continued to work in close collaboration with UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Mine Action Service and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) to strengthen global action and the provision of direct support to field clusters and partners to ensure effective cluster leadership.
- The GPC's network of over 1,000 protection actors continued to deliver life-saving services to people around the world and help them access their rights and find safety from violence, abuse and exploitation. UNHCR led 25 of the 29 activated country-level protection clusters or sectors. Of these, 16 were co-facilitated by international NGOs, including the Danish Refugee Council, Norwegian Refugee Council and the International Rescue Committee.
- Following an internal review of its governance arrangements, the GPC elected a new strategic advisory group, which is now co-led by an international NGO and composed of United Nations entities, NGOs, local actors and development partners. In February 2020, the GPC launched a new field-oriented strategic framework for 2020 to 2024, setting out commitments and areas of focus for the next five years.

## Shelter Cluster

- UNHCR and IFRC continued to co-lead the global shelter cluster. UNHCR led 16 shelter clusters of the 30 shelter clusters and 19 of the 37 other types of shelter coordination mechanisms, providing shelter and non-food items to over 8 million people through 546 partners. The total budget requirement was just under \$1.6 billion, of which 41 per cent was raised. During 2020, the cluster launched rental market guidance, updated its coordination toolkit and delivered its annual meeting online with 53 events, including thematic sessions, country cluster briefings and regional events with over 1,000 participants.

## NGO Partners/Civil Society

- In mid-March 2020, UNHCR established weekly virtual consultations with NGO partners on preparedness and response to COVID-19. Co-organized with the International Council of Voluntary Agencies, the consultations created a space for regular dialogue between UNHCR and NGOs on the COVID-19 response, including specific sessions related to risks faced by internally displaced persons.
- Due to the pandemic, the annual global NGO consultations were organized virtually in September 2020. Exchanges among the participants, representing over 100 organizations, including international and national NGOs, refugee-led organizations (RLOs) and faith-based organizations from 49 countries, focused on responding to pandemics. The recommendations adopted were presented at the seventy-first session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme (ExCom) and informed the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges.

## Multi-Lateral Finance Institutions

- UNHCR partnerships with multilateral development banks and peace actors such as the UN Peacebuilding Fund was significantly strengthened in 2020. While most of the World Bank relationship is still focused on refugee hosting countries, progress is being made on opening up collaboration with development partners on IDP issues. Four new projects were signed with the Peace Building Fund during the year in Sudan, Burkina Faso, North of Central America and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The new project in Sudan, to be implemented with UNDP, will provide direct support to the Peace Commission on the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement. This partnership is another example of UNHCR's commitment to the Sustaining Peace Agenda and interagency collaboration across the H-D-P nexus.
- In a critical advance, UNHCR also contributed directly to the revised paper on the *World Bank Group Approach to Conflict-Induced Internal Displacement*. The paper provides the rationale for the further integration of conflict induced IDPs into World Bank Group programming based on its commitment to vulnerable and marginalized populations. This paper will be part of the operationalization of the World Bank Group's Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence and complements the 2016 Development Committee Paper on Forced Displacement and Development.

## YEMEN

# Partnerships for Cash Assistance for IDPs in Yemen

A lifeline in times of acute food insecurity and growing needs

Cash-Based interventions (CBI) are a cornerstone of UNHCR assistance programmes for IDPs in Yemen. UNHCR runs the fifth-largest cash operation globally and targets IDPs ([UNHCR and Cash Assistance – Annual Report 2020](#)). In 2020, UNHCR supported 187,000 households – of 222,000 assessed – with a variety of cash assistance: Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) to meet basic needs; rental subsidy (RS) to ensure dignified living for families without shelter or facing imminent threats of eviction; and disbursements for families to face the hardship of winter; to cope with the impact of COVID-19; or as a one-off emergency response to specific needs.

## Yemen: an alarming displacement scenario with pockets of extreme vulnerability

Yemen faces a devastating and unrelenting conflict, triggering ‘the world’s worst humanitarian crisis’. Around 80 per cent of its 30 million population are in dire need of humanitarian assistance, with conditions worsened due to the pandemic. Food insecurity is pervasive. In December 2020, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) projected that 16.2 million people, more than half the country will go hungry this year, with 47,000 people projected to experience the most acute food insecurity conditions (IPC Phase 5) in the first half of 2021. IDPs are amongst the most exposed, and evidence shows that they are four times more at risk of falling into hunger.

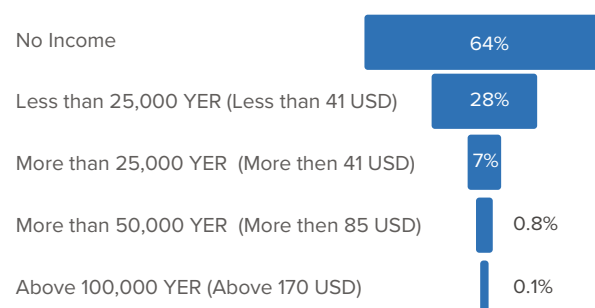
**Over 67 percent of IDPs** (2.6 million people) are in an emergency food insecure situation

**IDPs are four times more at risk** of falling into hunger

**2 out of 3 displaced Yemenis** live in a district categorized as IPC4+

UNHCR data collected through [rapid needs and vulnerability assessments throughout 2020](#) indicate that of some 92 per cent of the almost 272,000 household assessed reported not having any income, or earning less than YER 25,000 (some US\$ 40) per month, while up to 79 per cent reported having at least one family member with a vulnerability, including children and women at risk, persons with disabilities, older persons, and persons with specific protection needs.

## Average monthly income by assessed household





## Vulnerabilities 175,091 79% Households with at least one member with a vulnerability



118,279 16%

Children at risk

out of total children



110,960 35%

Women at risk

out of total women



43,795 3%

Persons with disability

out of total assessed



8,425 20%

Unaccompanied older person

out of total assessed



262,002 20%

Persons with legal and physical protection needs

out of total assessed

A comparative analysis also showed that of all IDPs living in the areas most severely affected by food insecurity, some groups require specific attention in addressing their immediate needs. These are people living in the thousands of IDP informal sites, who have little to no means of making a living; female-headed displaced households, whose vulnerability is linked to gender inequality and limitation to women's access to livelihood opportunities; people with disabilities, older persons on their own and marginalized groups, who are at heightened risk of exclusion.

It is to those groups that UNHCR CBI, particularly the MPCA, provides an essential lifeline, bringing immediate support, empowering families to meet basic needs, mitigating harmful coping mechanisms, and contributing to the local economy. Findings of the latest UNHCR post-distribution monitoring (PDM) exercise in 2020 show that up to 97 percent of families receiving UNHCR MPCA used a significant part of the grant to cover their food needs, mostly found in the local markets. Most of the IDPs reported that the assistance improved their living conditions although many indicated it was still insufficient to survive in dignity. The PDM further highlighted that, without UNHCR cash, families cut spending first on hygiene items followed by baby supplies, education, and medicines. In addition, they are likely to stop paying rent or incur additional debts, thus increasing the likelihood of eviction or tension with host communities.

## Established methodology with procedural safeguards

With its recognized focus on families displaced by conflict as per its mandate and expertise, **UNHCR has established a solid methodology to assess the socio-economic situation and potential protection risks of the displaced population.** The assessment tools, tailored to the specific context of the north and south of Yemen, capture critical socio-economic and demographic profile (e.g. family size, level of income, age/gender breakdown of head of household and dependents), current shelter type and conditions, protection profiles and specific needs, such as female-headed households, households with an elderly member, or persons with disability.



Assessment of an IDP woman heading a household in Hodeida/  
UNHCR Yemen

The information recorded during the assessment is uploaded into an online secured system hosted internally by UNHCR. A scoring formula evaluates the household's socio-economic profile recorded during the assessment while considering the biodata and protection risks potentially faced by the family. By ascribing different weights to specific factors, the scoring formula prioritizes households with little to no income, with a high dependency ratio, whose breadwinner is a person with a disability or a single mother, or families living in sub-standard shelters. This enables an automatic ranking of households according to their vulnerability score to be measured against an

established eligibility threshold. Such an eligibility mechanism allows UNHCR to adapt its list of beneficiaries based on the funding available at any given time.

Eligible beneficiaries are subsequently invited by SMS to collect their cash assistance. The MPCA transfer value is equivalent to the Survival Minimum Expenditure basket endorsed by the [Yemen Cash Working Group](#), of which UNHCR is an active member. It amounts to 101,000 YER in the north of Yemen (some 170 USD), and 117,000 YER in the south to compensate for the higher depreciation of the currency.

**Suriah Ali Al-Soufi, a mother of five children aged 34, is the sole caretaker of her family. Suriah was displaced from Sana'a at the beginning of the war in 2015, after the family house was damaged by an air strike, forcing her family to move to the south-western city of Dhamar.**

*"After the death of my husband in 2017, due to a severe illness, I felt myself under enormous pressure, but I knew I could not give up for the sake of my children. We needed a roof over our heads and food on our plates."*

She recently approached a Community Centre in Dhamar, run by a UNHCR partner, seeking assistance. Through UNHCR's standard socio-economic vulnerability assessment for CBI and due to her protection profile as a widow with five children, Suriah was assessed as eligible for multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA).

*"Since I had no permanent source of income, I immediately thought of two things" said Suriah, "food for my children and some material to set-up a more secure source of income".*

The MPCA – worth 110,000 Yemeni Ryals (some 170 USD) - allowed Suriah to meet her family's immediate needs, avoiding selling off personal belongings, pulling children out of school and sending them to work, begging on the streets, or eating just once a day – all common harmful coping mechanisms in Yemen. Two-thirds of Yemeni IDPs report resorting to four of these mechanisms to cope – while in most countries, IDPs usually report resorting to two. It also enabled her to have a more predictable source of income, by purchasing raw material to produce perfume. Although the work is not very lucrative, it enables her to feed her children and has given her a sense of dignity and independence as a woman heading a household, a condition common for one in four displaced women nowadays in Yemen.



UNHCR engages existing financial service providers (FSPs) to distribute over-the-counter transfers at certified payment-points across Yemen. In line with the [2018 Principals' Statement on cash assistance](#), UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP have jointly launched a tendering process to identify a unified pool of FSPs for all UN agencies to standardize the quality of cash services across the UN system.

Acknowledging the opportunities and also the risks associated with cash assistance, UNHCR Yemen places strong attention on accountability to affected populations and on upholding integrity throughout the CBI implementation cycle. This is done through several procedural safeguards, such as household visits to better detect living conditions; the automated scoring system, based on objective criteria and limiting the subjectivity of the enumerators; verification of three to five per cent of the assessed beneficiaries to detect and correct assessment errors; identification for payment following know-your-customer principles, with beneficiaries uniquely identified through an individual SMS code and through the ID card recorded at the assessment time; post-



*Internally displaced people are assisted to receive UNHCR cash assistance at the designated local bank in Yemen.*

distribution-monitoring by UNHCR staff and through an independent third party for in-depth assessments at least once a year. In cooperation with partners, UNHCR is also strengthening its complaints and feedback mechanisms, with dedicated human resources within partners' staff (Accountability Officers and CBI Officers) employed to respond to queries, backstop during the disbursement process, receive individual complaints or general allegations from beneficiaries and ensure remedial action in coordination with UNHCR.





*Rakhine State, Myanmar: Between May and December 2020, over 36,000 IDPs displaced by the AA-MAF conflict received shelter materials to construct improved shelters.*

## MYANMAR

# Targeted Interventions through Information Management Strategies

In the age of information, efficient data collection and usage can unlock new opportunities, create efficiencies and facilitate evidence-based decisions like never before.

As the UN agency mandated to protect and seek solutions for refugees, IDPs and stateless persons, the strategic use of information enables UNHCR to be at the forefront in leading responses, particularly in times of crises when rapid and coordinated action is required.

In Myanmar, responsive information management strategies are used to drive impact and encourage the efficient use of resources in responding to the needs of over 100,000 IDPs affected by armed conflict between the Arakan Army and Myanmar

Armed Forces in Rakhine State. The conflict, which erupted in early 2019, added another dimension to wider developments within Rakhine State, including the Rohingya crisis.

With CCCM partners UNHCR coordinated the roll-out of a comprehensive Population Data Management system, involving an area-based approach with focal points covering displacement sites, assigned by geographical area. These strategies were key in overcoming common challenges faced by humanitarian actors in



Rakhine State which include coverage of a large IDP population over a wide geographical area, limited access to affected communities and movement restrictions, among others. Thus, a collaborative approach was adopted in which information for the Population Data Management system was crowdsourced from focal points comprising of partner civil society organisations in the field.

Each focal point gathers demographics, pre-agreed multi-cluster needs information and activities performed within a specific geographical area. The systematic collection of high-quality data acts as a starting point for effective protection and is essential for programming, monitoring, analysis, and advocacy. Partners have access to the anonymized dataset and are encouraged to use it for detailed analysis.

The focal point system prevents overlap between partners as each organization is responsible for a predetermined geographical area. This in turn reduces duplication and prevents gaps. The end result is an efficient use of resources and well-coordinated humanitarian response. The systematic recording of the size and characteristics of the IDP population provides UNHCR and its partners with accurate and up-to-date information to support efficient humanitarian interventions. Inefficiencies are reduced as partners need not carry out multiple on-site needs assessments individually. Instead, they are able to obtain a quick read on the prioritised needs of IDPs at each site through the centralized system which is freely accessible.

A prime example of this is the provision of non-food items and shelter support. In 2020, UNHCR and coordinating partners collectively reached more than 55,000 IDPs out of the 74,000 displaced in central Rakhine by the Arakan Army conflict as the pandemic unraveled.

The speed and efficiency with which aid is distributed to IDPs in Rakhine State is testament to the importance and effectiveness of information management strategies in overcoming various challenges faced by humanitarian partners in Rakhine State. By working closely in partnership with partners on the ground, humanitarian actors are able to achieve a robust operational response where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.



*Rakhine State, Myanmar: IDPs receive blankets to keep warm during the cold season.*

## MYANMAR

## Empowering local communities in seeking durable solutions

In situations of displacement, communities are often best placed to identify their own protection challenges and effective ways to address them.

Local civil society organizations (CSOs) typically take the lead in the provision of assistance as they have a good understanding of local cultural nuances and have established relationships with community members.

External organizations often have a complementary role to play in helping CSOs and their communities set priorities, recognize hidden threats and facilitate broader discussions on solutions. These are best achieved by working with existing local institutions, structures and programmes. In recognising the importance of community involvement in their own protection, UNHCR has a longstanding commitment to working in partnership with displaced communities and their institutions in seeking durable solutions.

In Kachin State, Myanmar, UNHCR runs well-established community-based protection programmes in partnership with local CSOs to assist some 94,000 IDPs. One of these is the Kachin Baptist Convention Humanitarian and Development Department (KBC), a large faith-based CSO covering 40 per cent of the IDP population at 55 displacement sites. The ethnic Kachin minority are predominantly Christian and churches serve as important community institutions, playing a large influencing role in everyday life.

Between 2012 and 2018, UNHCR's partnership with local CSOs like KBC was largely focused on the provision of camp-based humanitarian assistance to IDPs displaced by armed conflict. Years of careful relationship building on the ground enabled UNHCR to be viewed as a trusted partner. Priorities gradually shifted to long term



UNHCR and KBC teams provide household items to IDP families preparing return to villages nearby in Waingmaw Township, Kachin State.





*UNHCR and KBC staff conduct focus group discussions with IDP women to better understand needs and concerns in Chipwi Township, Kachin State.*

solutions outside of camps as the security situation improved. In 2019, ceasefire negotiations between the Kachin Independence Army and the Myanmar Armed Forces resumed. As negotiations progressed and fighting subsided, prospects for durable solutions increased. KBC subsequently presented a plan on durable solutions and sought UNHCR's feedback and assistance in operationalizing it.

Harnessing on its technical expertise and experience in solutions in other parts of the world, UNHCR conducted trainings and information sharing sessions with KBC and other partners to sensitize them to the concept of sustainable returns as well as standards and best practices related to it. Emphasis was placed on a rights-based approach and meaningful engagement with IDPs at every stage of programming: in assessment, diagnosis, prioritization, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Dialogue with local authorities and administrative departments was also encouraged and facilitated by UNHCR as part of the confidence-building and reintegration process.

These norm-setting exercises were carried out with the goal of empowering communities to develop their own long term mechanisms and incorporate sustainability into the conceptualization and design of durable solutions. At the request of KBC, UNHCR also supported the fine-tuning of KBC's durable solutions plan, jointly carried out assessments and awareness raising sessions, and facilitated inclusive consultations with IDPs in finding solutions for their communities. By 2020, KBC was able to undertake many of these activities independently.

Similar community-centred ground-up initiatives have been undertaken with other CSO partners covering displacement sites throughout Kachin State, including the Karuna Mission Social Solidarity and Shalom. Once appropriate return sites were identified and ascertained to have met standards for sustainable return, UNHCR provides material assistance through Quick Impact Projects, constructing shelters and other essential community infrastructure such as water, sanitation and hygiene facilities.

Through continued engagement with and support to local civil society organizations, UNHCR has been able to empower communities in planning for long-term solutions that are sustainable and protection-oriented. To date, approximately 8,300 IDPs in Kachin State have returned to villages of origin or resettled to other locations. A further 27,000 IDPs have indicated plans to return or settle elsewhere through initiatives led by local CSO partners supported by UNHCR.



## NEW YORK

# Advancing IDP Objectives through New York Engagement

However far-removed the UN Headquarters in New York may seem to most of our field operations, it plays a critical role in protecting and in finding solutions for internally displaced persons.

Each of the 33 IDP operations in which UNHCR is operationally engaged are supported through one or more NY-based bodies – the **General Assembly**, ECOSOC, Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and of course, the UN Secretariat to name a few.

Every two years, the General Assembly adopts a resolution on IDPs that recognizes the challenges IDPs face. It equips agencies like UNHCR with the necessary tools to protect IDPs and help find solutions for them. They help to combat gender-based violence, protect children, ensure IDPs have access to basic services, and find durable solutions.

A battery of GA resolutions including on the coordination of humanitarian assistance, international cooperation in the field of natural disasters, displaced communities in Africa and even the UNHCR resolution all contribute towards protecting IDPs. These carefully negotiated texts are particularly useful as advocacy tools at the country and regional levels. They also guide our activities on the ground. UNHCR along with other key agencies such as OCHA, IOM and ICRC are always invited to advise member states during the informal negotiations.

Country-specific GA resolutions, some of which speak to the situation of IDPs can call on the SG to allocate additional resources and support, for instance by appointing a special envoy as in the case of Myanmar, and also recognize a specific role for UNHCR on issues like refugee returns.



*UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, preparing to brief the Security Council upon the invitation of Germany in April 2019. These annual briefings allow the Council to appreciate how it can help protect and find solutions for the forcibly displaced worldwide. © UNHCR/ Arjun Jain*

The **Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)** plays a critical role in the protection of IDPs, not least through the Humanitarian Affairs Segment and the associated resolution on humanitarian coordination. The resolution on the Sahel in 2019 calling for stepped up development assistance and coordination is another prime example of how the ECOSOC can set the foundation for enhancing our integrated efforts in a specific region of particular concern to UNHCR. UNHCR worked closely with OCHA in advising member states in this case.

In more complex situations where the UN has established integrated missions – either the 12 peacekeeping missions such as CAR, Mali and South Sudan or the various political missions such as Afghanistan – it is **the Security Council** that

plays a more significant role in the protection of civilians including of IDPs. In renewing the mandate of these missions, the Security Council consults with a broad range of stakeholders, including UNHCR and other humanitarian partners to better understand how they can shape the mission mandate to better protect civilians, including where necessary, IDPs and refugees. UNHCR, OCHA and other agencies work closely with DPPA and DPO in ensuring that we are aligned in our approach and our views are favourably considered by the Council. Regular briefings by DPPA, DPO and the ERC to the Council are also critical to ensure member states' support towards IDPs.

A new set of challenges occur when a mission drawdown or transition takes place – for instance where a political mission replaces a peacekeeping mission (for instance in Sudan where UNAMID is being replaced by a smaller UNITAMS), or where the UN Country Team plays a more active role in part or whole of the country (such as the UNCT filling the gap that MONUSCO will leave as they withdraw from Kasai in the DRC this summer). In the absence of a smooth and well-planned transition, communities can be further displaced or face even more dire consequences. UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies need to work more closely with development and peace actors in this regard. UNHCR is advocating for and participating in early planning for transition, for instance in Mali where MINUSMA and the UNCT have developed an Integrated Strategic Framework.

Security Council members have also been appreciative of the briefings they receive from the High Commissioner, both on thematic and geographic issues, several of which speak to IDPs in critical operations.

IDPs are also important players in peace and political processes. The **Peacebuilding Commission**, which discusses several African countries with significant IDP populations, lends additional political weight and has called on

UNHCR for guidance, for example in relation to Burundi. UNHCR also works with the Peacebuilding Fund in places such as Sudan and the Sahel to address social cohesion, conflict resolution, and documentation. The PBF, which requires several agencies to work in partnership across the HDP nexus, helps to prevent future displacement and strengthens prospects of durable solutions for IDPs.

The efforts of the **UN Secretariat**, in particular the SG's prevention platform allow agencies like UNHCR to raise concerns we have about a deteriorating situation that may devolve into a full blown humanitarian crisis. The SG's reform process has allowed us to strengthen our relationship with development and peace actors to work in true partnership and ensure that IDPs benefit from our varying and respective strengths.

While UNHCR's support towards IDPs is appreciated in New York, nothing compares to IDPs themselves speaking to member states and other stakeholders. Isamel Gamboa-Ocampo of Colombia, representing the Global Youth Advisory Council provided practical examples on how youth can be greater agents of change in post-conflict situations. Similarly, other community representatives have taken to the podium to amplify their views and garner support from member states and UN agencies.

Member states and other UN agencies have remarked that UNHCR's added-value in these process-heavy, jargon-laden yet important initiatives stem from our extensive field presence, our focus on representing the views and voices of IDPs, and the importance we place on being operational. Noticeably, UNHCR best represents IDP interests when it forges strong alliances and partnerships in the field with UN missions, UNCT members, NGOs, and other stakeholders, that is then mirrored in New York.



UNHCR and GIZ providing training on sewing and entrepreneurship skills to IDP women in Nampula, Mozambique

## MOZAMBIQUE

# Cooperation with GIZ in Mozambique for Socio-Economic Inclusion

Since October 2017, the deteriorating security situation in the northeast province of Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, has resulted in more than 200 reported attacks, of which many are against the civilian population.

These attacks and the significant escalation of violence on the ground are characterized by the use of heavy weaponry and explosives. The situation is causing large-scale human suffering, loss of lives, violations of human rights and mass forced displacement. Over 500,000 persons have been uprooted across at least three provinces of Mozambique, representing a fivefold increase in displacement since the beginning of the year. These compound an already difficult situation, with the country still recovering from two tropical cyclones in March and April 2019 affecting some

2.2 million people and significantly reducing the capacity of local communities to effectively respond to internal displacement.

The Government of Mozambique has requested humanitarian organizations, including UNHCR, to address the needs of IDPs and host communities in the country. Through the existing cluster system in the country, UNHCR leads the Protection cluster at national level in the capital and co-leads with the Government in the province of Cabo Delgado.



*“Before, I had nothing to do. I would spend the whole day thinking of family members I have lost, and if I would ever have the chance to return to Cabo Delgado. Now, I go to sleep knowing that I will have sewing classes the next morning with my new friends. One of these days I dreamt that I was a great sewist. It made me smile, and it gave me hope for better days in the future”.*

Per the 2020 United Nations Human Development Index (HDI), Mozambique is one of the most underdeveloped countries in the world. Some 70 per cent of the overall population subsists below the poverty threshold. With violence and conflict causing upheaval and disruption of income, increased protection risks have followed such as survival sex for food and child labour, forced/early marriage, trafficking and recruitment into armed groups in the northern provinces of Mozambique.

UNHCR and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) are working together to bridge the humanitarian-development divide and reduce protection risks by undertaking interventions to promote the economic inclusion of persons that have been displaced by violence. UNHCR is using its experience in working with IDPs, operational presence and intimate knowledge of the local context to facilitate the inclusion of IDPs in the existing programmes implemented by GIZ. UNHCR teams are adopting a coordination role by bringing together the government, NGOs and GIZ to implement the joint initiative. Additionally, UNHCR is supporting the target population to establish community-based organisations, which will be linked to markets through social enterprises.

The UNHCR-GIZ joint response includes the provision of skills training such as sewing and entrepreneurship classes. Additionally, the 200 selected beneficiaries received solar-powered sewing machines and solar lights. They are also provided with a financial incentive, which entails conditional cash-assistance based on the confection of cloth-face masks to be purchased by GIZ. This incentive supports IDPs and refugees to jump-start their economic activity. Persons forcibly displaced in Mozambique need assistance which will enable them to rebuild their lives, and this requires enhanced humanitarian-development cooperation and more robust burden-sharing measures.

With UNHCR technical support, Mozambique has ratified the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) in 2019 and deposited the instrument of ratification in 2020, a significant achievement for a country facing a critical internal displacement situation. However, the government requires support in the process of domesticating and translating this international instrument into national legislation and action plans that will promote socioeconomic solutions for IDPs and host communities.



UNHCR and GIZ provides training on sewing and entrepreneurship skills to IDP women in Nampula, Mozambique.



# Partnership on Climate Action with PDD, IOM and others

## UNHCR's Strategic Framework for Climate Action - Implementation in 2021

- Many of the adverse effects of climate change can be linked to root causes of displacement and thereby the protection needs of those displaced. In addition, most displacement linked to climate change is internal. Therefore, UNHCR's Strategic Framework seeks to strengthen its holistic approach to the prevention, anticipation and response to climate-related shocks, environmental degradation and protection of internally displaced people in this context. Collaboration through a strong partnership approach is central to the Strategic Framework's implementation.

## UNHCR works in partnership with the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD), GP20, IOM and the Secretariat of the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement (HLP):

- **Together, they work to facilitate knowledge exchange and strengthen capacities** at the national and regional levels to implement instruments that can prevent, reduce and address disaster displacement. In 2020, UNHCR organized with these partners through the GP20 Initiative a regional exchange on disaster displacement in Asia. It aimed to generate recommendations for the HLP and to provide a platform for states to share best practices, discuss challenges and gaps, and identify opportunities to strengthen action on internal displacement in the Asia region.
- **UNHCR's strong partnership with PDD, IOM, France and Fiji was highlighted during the joint Commemoration** of the 5th Anniversary of the Endorsement of the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda, adoption of the Paris

Agreement under the UNFCCC and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in February 2021.

- **UNHCR and PDD also signed a Memorandum of Understanding in December 2020** in which they endeavour to work towards having a better understanding of internal and cross border displacement in the context of disasters, and climate change impacts at global and regional levels, identifying best practices on assisting and protecting the affected people, notably through the PDD Workplan.
- **In order to better understand how States deal with both disaster and conflict induced displacement at the same time**, UNHCR and IOM are conducting a joint study focused on law and policy responses in selected countries. The research aims to provide insights into normative and policy frameworks but also institutional and coordination mechanisms through the lens of five case studies, namely Afghanistan, Colombia, Niger, the Philippines and Somalia. This study was commissioned by the Global Protection Cluster's Task Team on Law and Policy, and will be published in the coming weeks.

UNHCR also continues to share our experiences with the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement. This includes perspectives on how the adverse effects of climate change can become a threat multiplier for conflict and instability, and thus lead to new displacement, both internally and across borders. Towards this end, UNHCR has contributed directly to HLP workstream 2, on Preventing Internal Displacement in the Context of Conflict and Disasters, and workstream 3, on Improving the International Systems' Ability to Facilitate Solutions, including through the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus.

**SOUTH SUDAN**

# IDP Initiative Solutions: Partnerships in South Sudan

In South Sudan, more than 1.6 million people are currently internally displaced as a result of conflict and disasters. Many are located in camps or collective sites. A UNHCR survey undertaken in 2019 and periodically updated reveals that a large percentage of those displaced intend to return home when conditions are suitable. UNHCR has undertaken a partnership approach in an effort to facilitate lasting solutions to their plight.

## Impact of partnerships on the implementation of the IDP step-up

In line with the 2019 IDP Policy, UNHCR South Sudan has stepped up its interventions to focus on transitional solutions through return and reintegration to improve the quality of life for IDPs, expanding geographic coverage to 11 new counties in six states, working through 16 partners (national international NGOs) who are spread throughout the country. This allows the most vulnerable IDPs to be targeted for assistance in areas of return and their current displacement



*UNHCR plastic sheet used by displaced families for transportation to higher ground in Dhorbuoy, Leer county [Unity state]*

locations. Expanding geographical reach by working with partners has enabled improved data collection in hard to reach areas, where UNHCR does not have a physical presence. This has benefited protection profiling and return intention surveys conducted at the household level; and provided a deeper understanding of the demographics we serve, their most crucial needs and their intentions, enabling the operation to align its programmes to meet IDP needs.

## Solutions activities in partnership with Government stakeholders

Government Action Plan on solutions: Inside South Sudan UNHCR works closely with the government and partners such as UNDP, OCHA, UNMISS and IOM in drafting and validating the Action Plan on Return, Reintegration and Recovery which operationalized the National Framework for Returns. The plan will assist the government to: Restore conducive environment for return; Strengthen governance at national and sub-national levels; Promote peacebuilding, social cohesion, reconciliation and healing; Restore basic services and promote recovery and resilience; Enhance data collection and information management for joint analysis of challenges and conditions; and Rebuild the economy towards a path to development.

Supporting structures to coordinate IDP returns: UNHCR further supports the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) to hold the National Level and State Level Task Forces on Solutions. Included in the work of the RRC is coverage of the Government Action Plan on returns, which will trigger a new way of working on returns, with the government at the forefront of decision making, coordination and organization of IDP returns, replacing previous structures which were led by humanitarians. UNHCR will co-chair the taskforce with the government at the state level and provide technical support at the national

level. More than 8,000 return requests were registered by UNHCR in 2020, but only 1,697 individuals have been assisted to return by 30 November 2020. In addition, while 2,400 IDPs expressed their intention to return home in Q4 of 2020, returns were greatly inhibited due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. In December 2020, 11 households comprising 52 individuals returned from Juba to Unity State via UNHAS flight. IDP returns are also regarded as a key litmus test in the sustainability and feasibility of refugee returns.

## Partnership plans for 2021

### Supporting Governments on a Solutions

**Strategy and Action Plan:** In 2020, the governments of Sudan and South Sudan committed to a Solutions Initiative for over five million citizens of their countries who live in exile abroad or are internally displaced. The initiative seeks to address the needs of IDPs and refugees in both countries through the development of a Regional Durable Solutions Strategy under the Sudan and South Sudan Initiative on Displacement. The Governments of Sudan and South Sudan, IGAD, UNHCR and members of the Core Group (EU, World Bank, Germany and UNDP) support the initiative. The Government of South Sudan has developed a work plan and is now in the process of preparing for national consultations and field assessments to gather first-hand information for development of the draft Durable Solutions Strategy and Action Plan. UNHCR will conduct consultations for IDPs and Sudanese refugees in South Sudan, and support the drafting of the solutions strategy and its action plan.

**Working with UNMISS to facilitate returns:** While there is consensus, including by the government, that conditions for return are not yet conducive, this has not deterred refugees and IDPs from returning. Against a backdrop of fragile peace, since 2017 some 360,000 refugees have returned to South Sudan from the region and more than 1.3 million IDPs have returned spontaneously and through humanitarian supported returns to their

areas of origin or alternative locations. Numerous return intention surveys conducted by UNHCR since 2018 illustrate the increased appetite among displaced populations to return. In 2019 and the first quarter of 2020 UNHCR and UNMISS worked together to facilitate returns using UNMISS transportation assets. The operation is in the process of expanding this collaboration to 2021 and beyond. In February 2021, the operation returned 42 households of 189 individuals from Juba to Bentiu via UNHAS, and more returns are expected to take place in 2021 via barges and buses where security conditions allow.

**Quick impact projects:** UNHCR will collaborate with implementing partners and UNMISS to support projects that improve basic infrastructure such as: roads in high return areas that will facilitate access to markets, goods and services, boost employment opportunities and enhance trade; drilling of boreholes; installation of lighting to ensure security and mitigate SGBV. Such initiatives will impact entire communities and serve as a catalyst for further investment in areas of return, and contribute to peaceful coexistence and social cohesion.



*An elderly IDP woman is assisted to disembark a plane upon returning to Bentiu from Juba 13 Feb 2021*

*Cover images clockwise from top left::*

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