



# Shining a Light on Internal Displacement

## A Vision for the Future

Executive Summary



United  
Nations

UN Secretary-General's High-Level  
Panel on Internal Displacement

Report of the United Nations  
Secretary-General's High-Level Panel  
on Internal Displacement



# Shining a Light on Internal Displacement

**A Vision for the Future**

**Executive Summary**

Report of the UN Secretary-General's  
High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement



Report available at <https://internaldisplacement-panel.org>

**Website:** <https://www.un.org/internal-displacement-panel/>

**Twitter:** @IDPs\_Panel

Copyright © United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement

September 2021

### **Acknowledgements**

Copy Editor: David McDevitt

Designer: Diane Broadley

**Disclaimer:** The opinions expressed in this report are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the UN Secretary-General, the Executive Office of the United Nations Secretary-General or the United Nations. The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

# Background

On 10 May 2019, 57 Member States called on the United Nations Secretary-General to establish an independent, high-level panel to examine the world's internal displacement crisis. The States, which included countries from every region of the world and those affected by displacement from a range of causes, expressed concern that "international attention to internal displacement has been insufficient in comparison with the rising needs". In October 2019, the Secretary-General announced the creation of the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement with the task to "raise international attention to the issue of internal displacement and its impact and prepare a report to the UN Secretary-General with concrete and practical recommendations to Member States, the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders on how to better respond to internal displacement, in particular where it is protracted, and achieve Government-led durable solutions to internal displacement".

Over the course of a year and a half, notwithstanding the challenges imposed by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we gathered wide-ranging information, conducted in-depth research and undertook broad consultations. With the help of partners, we heard from over 12,500 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host community members across 22 countries. We also spoke with national and local authorities; regional organizations; donor Governments and financial institutions; humanitarian, development and peace actors; private sector actors; civil society representatives; academics; and specialists in disaster risk reduction. From this body of work, we have drawn up a report containing our findings and recommendations across the spectrum of the questions the Secretary-General tasked us to examine. Here, we present a summary.

**Donald Kaberuka** (Co-Chair)

Paula Gaviria

Nasser Judeh

Pauline Riak

**Federica Mogherini** (Co-Chair)

Per Heggnes

Mitiku Kassa Gutile

Sima Samar

# Executive Summary

## 1. Introduction

At the end of 2020, a staggering 55 million people were living in internal displacement. The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) climbed steadily over the past decade, with tens of millions of people forced to flee their homes each year and millions of others already trapped in protracted displacement. Without doubt, this is a global crisis. It is not just a crisis of numbers though, but also of profound human suffering. IDPs are forced from their homes, uprooted from their livelihoods and separated from support networks and family members. Many continue to face significant risks and violations of their rights while in displacement, with women, children and vulnerable and marginalized groups typically experiencing the worst effects. For many IDPs, the prospect of rebuilding their lives remains elusive for years or even generations. More broadly, large-scale protracted displacement is imperiling progress towards development, peace and prosperity for communities and societies as a whole.

While some regions are affected more than others, no nation is spared from the risks of displacement. All around the world, conflict, violence, disasters, climate change and their interactions are driving people from their homes. Human rights violations, development mega-projects and technological disasters also pose significant threats.

From our work, however, we have found that the root causes of the global displacement crisis go much deeper. Most crucially, we are struck by the lack of political will to address internal displacement. Too many States fail to acknowledge or take responsibility for their displaced citizens and residents. The United Nations, donor countries and international financial institutions, among others, have also not demonstrated the

level of commitment required to overcome this crisis. As a result, there has been a collective failure to prevent, address and resolve internal displacement.

Several intersecting problems contribute to this reality. First, in many cases, there is limited appreciation of the far-reaching costs of inaction on internal displacement. Second, even where the importance of action is understood and political will is present, capacity gaps and operational constraints often impede progress. Third, internal displacement is frequently not prioritized, owned or addressed due to competing agendas. And fourth, despite clearly established responsibilities, including most fundamentally of States to their displaced citizens and residents, there is limited accountability for actors that fail to respond to internal displacement or even cause it in the first place. Meanwhile, other global trends are relentlessly compounding and exacerbating the crisis. These include, among others, the COVID-19 pandemic, the worsening climate crisis and the declining commitment to multilateralism.

As a result of these factors, internal displacement is all too often neglected in Government policies and plans, UN strategies and guidance, development financing, and in public communications and media. This invisibility creates a vicious circle: the less visible IDPs are, the less they are prioritized. And the less they are prioritized, the further they slip into obscurity and neglect.

Despite these challenges, however, we believe there is reason for hope. We have been encouraged to see a number of displacement-affected States demonstrate an openness to addressing displacement in their countries. We concluded that, with redoubled efforts to support durable

solutions in such contexts, it is possible to achieve a breakthrough for millions of IDPs, host communities and displacement-affected nations. Building on this, we decided to focus primarily on driving progress in contexts where solutions are within reach. At the same time, without significant improvements to prevention and humanitarian response, this global crisis will never be truly resolved. We thus also explored actions to help prevent and reduce the risks of new displacement and strengthen the quality of protection and assistance to those already displaced. The summary that follows provides an overview of the analysis, conclusions and recommendations set out in our report, as well as our suggestions for follow-up.

## 2. The Imperative for Durable Solutions

Around the world, millions of people are stuck in the limbo of protracted displacement, unable to find a durable solution or re-establish a safe and lasting home. Many remain marginalized and dependent on humanitarian assistance for years or decades. Even where there are opportunities to return to their areas of origin, integrate locally or settle elsewhere in the country, IDPs often lack predictable support to rebuild their lives.

The fact that internal displacement is still primarily viewed as a humanitarian issue is a key part of this problem. While humanitarian action is critical in saving lives and alleviating suffering, it alone cannot address all the elements necessary to enable durable solutions at scale. As IDPs told us, these factors include safety and security; housing, land and property; livelihoods and integration in social safety nets; education; and access to public services.

We are convinced that to achieve solutions more widely, a fundamental change in mindset, approach and working methods is required. There is a need to move beyond the humanitarian model that is designed for the provision of

lifesaving assistance towards a development-oriented approach that focuses on strengthening public systems and services as a whole to be able to absorb IDPs and ensure that they, along with other members of the local community, are protected and supported by the State. This requires far stronger emphasis on the responsibility of States and a recognition of the rights and agency of IDPs as citizens and residents of their country. The focus must be on creating the conditions for solutions that are voluntary, safe and dignified rather than compelling IDPs to return home or leave their current place of shelter.

Additionally, addressing internal displacement must be recognized as critical for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and delivering on the promise to 'leave no one behind'. There is a need for earlier and more predictable engagement of development, peace, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation actors as part of these efforts. Their engagement is essential to address the governance, infrastructure, social cohesion, security and disaster risk reduction components required to achieve lasting solutions.

Alongside this, tailor-made solutions must continue to be supported for vulnerable individuals and marginalized groups, ensuring that people of all ages, genders and diversities are able to find a lasting end to their displacement. Protection and the safety, security, and rights of IDPs should guide all aspects of the solutions approach. At the global level, we see the need for international solidarity and 'responsibility sharing' to underpin solutions efforts, including a firm commitment by civil society and international actors to join hands in supporting IDPs and displacement-affected countries to find an end to displacement.

Building on this vision, the recommendations we are making on solutions call for: (i) strong political will and Government capacity to lead durable solutions efforts; (ii) a key role for IDPs, local communities, civil society, the media and

academia; (iii) greater use of the private sector's capacities; (iv) a UN system with strengthened leadership and accountability on solutions; (v) predictable financing to catalyse action on solutions and support national ownership in the long term; and (vi) systems to generate and provide the necessary data and knowledge. Recommendations on each of these areas are outlined below.

### **Recommendation 1: Make solutions a nationally owned, whole-of-government priority**

As part of their sovereign duty, States bear the primary responsibility to support their displaced citizens and residents to achieve an end to their displacement. This is not just a legal obligation but also an operational necessity: we have seen that Government leadership is crucial for resolving displacement sustainably and at scale. An important starting point for this is recognizing that as citizens and residents, IDPs are the responsibility of all parts of government, from the highest levels of political leadership to local authorities and across all relevant ministries. To realize this approach in practice, we make the following recommendations:

- States are urged to acknowledge IDPs and situations of internal displacement and ensure that action to address displacement is a national priority, recognizing it as both a duty of the State to its citizens and residents and a critical step for development, peace and prosperity.
- States should adopt a development-oriented approach to internal displacement, including by systematically integrating internal displacement into national and local development plans and the plans of relevant ministries, and by reporting on how their national development efforts address the rights and needs of IDPs in their Voluntary National Reviews.
- States must recognize that internal displacement is likely to be increasingly an urban phenomenon and should support local authorities to address it deliberately as part of urban planning, including in spatial planning, and make full use of the cities' resources, infrastructure and capacities to contribute to solutions.
- States should address displacement in peace processes, include IDPs of all ages, genders and diversities in associated dialogues and should promote compensation, restitution, transitional justice and social cohesion initiatives as part of the recovery process.
- States are encouraged to work with IDPs, host communities, local authorities, civil society, the private sector, the UN, NGOs and international financiers to develop dedicated solutions strategies and costed operational plans.
- States should institutionalize a whole-of-government approach to addressing internal displacement, support local and municipal authorities and establish clear mechanisms for coordinating action across all relevant parts of government.
- States should work with the UN Resident Coordinator to put in place a mechanism for coordinating with relevant international and local actors, including representatives of displaced and host communities.
- States should adopt and implement laws and policies on internal displacement in line with human rights.
- States are urged to allocate funds for solutions from domestic budgets, including to support local and city authorities, and ensure that funding allocations are based on current regional and municipality population figures (including IDPs) and the distinct service needs of IDPs.



## Recommendation 2: Political will is key and should be catalysed

Through our work, we observed that States have varying levels of political will and capacity to address internal displacement. In some cases, Governments are committed to taking action but lack the technical or financial capacity to do so. In others, capacities are present but displacement is not seen as a priority. In extreme cases, States are both unable and unwilling to respond or are even responsible for causing displacement in the first place.

To ensure the rights and needs of IDPs and host communities are not left unfulfilled, we believe it is crucial to invest in catalysing political will, capacity and action in cases where they are weak or absent. From our research and consultations, we concluded that a combination of positive incentives and accountability measures are needed to effect this change. Political will is often stronger when States feel there is benefit in stepping up action to address displacement. State interests in maintaining or cultivating a positive international reputation, generating domestic public support, accessing financing and enabling investments can be powerful motivations that can be harnessed and built upon. At the same time, States need to feel that there will be consequences for failing to address displacement or violating the rights of IDPs. There is thus a need to strengthen accountability at all levels. Likewise, recognizing that action requires not only political will but also capacity, we believe steps are needed to improve access to technical support. To these ends, we make the following recommendations:

- Local and national actors, both within governments and in civil society, should drive change and bring attention to displacement, cultivate public pressure for action and hold leaders accountable for addressing internal displacement.
- Regional organizations should adopt relevant legal and policy frameworks on internal displacement and work towards their implementation.
- Regional organizations, with the support of other relevant actors, should facilitate predictable opportunities for State-to-State engagement on internal displacement, where States can present their achievements, exchange their experiences and learn from each other.
- Representatives of the UN, States, regional organizations, NGOs and financing institutions should strengthen their diplomacy with States on internal displacement, particularly to advocate for solutions.
- The UN Secretary-General should strengthen the UN's diplomacy and advocacy by appointing a Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) on Solutions to Internal Displacement to provide continuous engagement with States on solutions.
- The UN Secretary-General is encouraged to produce an annual report on the State of Solutions to Internal Displacement that documents positive steps taken to resolve displacement as well as areas where improvements are still needed.
- The UN should work to enhance States' access to predictable technical support by providing expert capacity to Governments and streamlining technical assistance from the UN, including by using the SRSG's office as an entry point for requests.
- National and, where relevant, international legal authorities should investigate and prosecute those who forcibly displace populations or commit other violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Criminal Law that contribute to displacement.

### **Recommendation 3: Ensure the whole of society is invested**

Even with effective Government leadership, solutions to internal displacement cannot be achieved without the engagement of others across society. Most crucially, making real progress on ending protracted displacement requires recognizing the rights and agency of IDPs as citizens and residents of their country. It also calls for better utilizing the expertise and capacities of civil society, the media and academia. To deliver on this whole-of-society approach, we urge the following actions:

- States and other actors should recognize the rights and agency of IDPs to drive their own solutions and seek to understand and promote IDPs' capacities more deliberately.
- States and other actors must implement measures to ensure IDPs can exercise their rights to participation, including voting and participating in general community, governmental and public affairs as citizens and residents of their country, as well as in decision-making processes related to displacement specifically (e.g. through consultative bodies and community-based planning).
- States, the UN, NGOs and donors must take steps to ensure meaningful participation, representation, and leadership of local and national civil society actors as key partners in strategic planning and responses and strengthen their capacities by providing technical and financial support.
- The media is urged to proactively report on and give visibility to internal displacement, with a particular focus on sharing human stories that help cultivate a culture of tolerance, understanding and peaceful coexistence; Governments are called upon to allow them to do so without undue interference.

- Efforts should be made to create, expand and support networks of researchers working on internal displacement, particularly in displacement-affected countries and the Global South, including by strengthening donor investments in the universities, think tanks and initiatives that support these efforts.
- Civil society groups, teachers and community leaders, among others, should seize all opportunities to build understanding and awareness of issues related to the prevention and resolution of situations of internal displacement.

### **Recommendation 4: Make better use of the capacities of the private sector for solutions**

The private sector has unparalleled potential to address some of the most common hurdles to sustainable solutions. As experiences in refugee situations have shown, the private sector's capacities to create jobs and livelihoods, support access to housing and repair infrastructure can be invaluable in helping displaced populations and host communities recover from crises and reestablish lasting homes. At present, however, private sector actors have not systematically engaged in IDP contexts in the way many have started to do in refugee settings. We believe that strengthening the engagement of the private sector in situations of internal displacement could be a gamechanger. To facilitate this, we propose a number of steps:

- Private sector actors are urged to seek out opportunities for engagement where they can contribute to solutions to internal displacement.
- Governments and financiers should create business-friendly environments by adopting policies and regulations that can incentivize private sector engagement, including through the use of public-private partnerships, social impact bonds, blended finance or insurance mechanisms to lower the risk of investing and operating in internal displacement contexts.

- Governments, private sector actors, financiers, the UN and NGOs should work together to establish national and local private sector platforms to share knowledge and create opportunities for strengthened partnerships and private sector engagement.
- Committed private sector actors should volunteer to serve as champions at the national or global level on engagement in internal displacement settings, and global platforms like the World Economic Forum should provide space for private sector actors to showcase good practices and make commitments to action.
- Donors and humanitarian and development organizations should commit to sourcing products from the local private sector whenever possible.
- The UN and NGOs should invest in building their understanding of the private sector, including by recruiting individuals with private sector backgrounds.

### **Recommendation 5: Make the UN fit for purpose and accountable for solutions**

To end protracted displacement, it is clear to us that fundamental changes are needed in the way international humanitarian, development and peace actors engage in contexts of internal displacement. Where Governments show a willingness to address internal displacement, international actors must go beyond a purely humanitarian model and adopt a more development-oriented approach that strengthens public systems and services as a whole. Addressing internal displacement must be taken up as a responsibility not just of humanitarian actors, but also of actors across the development, peace, disaster risk reduction and climate change spectrum. As the entity mandated to provide a large portion of the leadership and coordination for international efforts, the UN has a critical role to

play in driving this change. To this end, we recommend the following steps be taken:

- The Secretary-General should formalize the role of Resident Coordinators to lead UN efforts on solutions at country level, including by incorporating the associated responsibilities into their Terms of Reference and performance assessments.
- Relevant UN agencies, NGOs and donors should provide Resident Coordinators with capacity to support their leadership role on solutions, including by stepping up to serve as a 'Coalition of Champions' on solutions at county level.
- The Resident Coordinator should ensure an appropriate mechanism is in place to coordinate efforts towards solutions, including for joint analysis and the development of a solutions strategy and costed plan, and should ensure that solutions are included in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and associated processes.
- The Secretary-General should formally and unequivocally communicate his expectation that UN development actors step up their engagement on IDP solutions and recognize this as essential to their work on the SDGs.
- The Secretary-General should set out clear expectations for all parts of the UN system on solutions and require relevant UN agencies and entities (humanitarian, development, peace, and disaster/climate change) to outline institutional plans for how they will build internal capacities and step up their engagement on solutions.
- The Secretary-General should appoint an SRSG on Solutions to Internal Displacement to provide high-level leadership inside and outside of the UN on solutions and drive change across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

- UN agencies and NGOs should incorporate action on internal displacement in individual performance assessments and the Secretary-General should use independent evaluations to assess UN responses on internal displacement at country level.

### **Recommendation 6: Harness international financing for solutions**

Across the spectrum of our work, financing emerged as one of the most fundamental requirements for effective action on internal displacement. At present, however, there is a gap in predictable financing for solutions. It is first and foremost the responsibility of States to make displacement a priority in their domestic budgets, but it is also clear that international financing has important potential to catalyse action. Access to resources can provide States and other actors with greater operational capacity and can help make addressing internal displacement a priority. Careful use of financing can also promote joined-up action by humanitarian, development and peace actors for solutions.

Through our research and consultations, we have concluded that a two-pronged approach is needed to strengthen financing. First, there is a need to integrate internal displacement more systematically into existing financing streams. Second, dedicated funding needs to be made more accessible, in particular to States that have demonstrated a willingness to take action. To these ends, we recommend the following:

- Donors should provide funding as locally as possible and support municipal authorities and local civil society actors to strengthen their institutional capacities.
- Development financiers should systematically include solutions for internal displacement within fragility financing and articulate a concrete plan for how they will ensure more predictable institutional engagement on internal displacement.

- In line with the OECD DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, financiers should ensure that their resources contribute to a joined-up approach to solutions.
- The UN, in particular the Peacebuilding Fund and Central Emergency Response Fund, bilateral donors and IFIs should scale up their engagement on solutions and actively pursue opportunities for complementary funding across the humanitarian-development nexus.
- Donors, with the engagement of displacement-affected States, the UN, civil society and the private sector, should establish a Global Fund on Internal Displacement Solutions to provide financial and technical support to national solutions plans and strategies, promote performance monitoring and accountability, and incentivize transformational change that enables nations to overcome key barriers to solutions.

### **Recommendation 7: Strengthen the effective use of internal displacement data**

The Panel strongly believes that data and evidence are key for advancing solutions to internal displacement. Without understanding the extent of displacement, who is most affected and how (with attention to age, gender and diversity in particular), and the needs and capacities of displaced populations, it is not possible to develop effective public policies, operational plans and responses. We have focused our attention on how data and evidence could be used to strengthen national responsibility and action on internal displacement, while also recognizing that the role of international actors on data will continue to be vital. To that end, we encourage the following steps to be taken:

- Governments should recognize data and evidence as critical to the design of effective policies, operational plans and responses to internal displacement and commit to an evidence-based approach to action.

- Governments should put in place processes and systems to collect, analyse and manage internal displacement data and, when necessary, be supported with financial and technical assistance to do so.
- All actors should prioritize the protection of sensitive data and ensure that their operations and systems are guided by strong data protection standards.
- Governments should provide space for international actors to collect and analyse data necessary for their operations.
- Country-specific internal displacement data working groups should be established, led or co-led by Governments where possible, to coordinate data collection and analysis between relevant data actors and to set out a strategy that outlines the priorities of each actor at different stages of the displacement cycle.
- International donors should increase financial support to in-country data efforts as well as to global-level efforts to better understand internal displacement trends.

### 3. Strengthening Prevention

The continued occurrence and recurrence of new displacement linked to conflicts, violence, disasters and climate change points to the fact that despite positive steps that have been taken, there is a failure to sufficiently address the drivers of displacement. Political leadership to prevent and end violent conflicts is critically lacking and civilians have been repeatedly targeted and displaced. There is limited accountability for State and non-State actors who commit these abuses, which has allowed an environment of impunity to persist unchecked.

Efforts to address climate change have similarly been lagging, with recent analysis showing that

current trajectories of emissions reductions are vastly insufficient to meet the Paris Agreement target of limiting global temperature rise by 1.5C by the end of the century. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the scale of recent changes in the climate system are unprecedented over hundreds or even thousands of years. As the adverse effects of climate change are increasingly felt, the scale and severity of displacement risks are likely to increase dramatically. Cruelly, many of the countries most at risk from the impacts of climate change are among the least responsible for the emissions driving it. For some small island developing States, the threat posed by climate change is truly existential.

Displacement is frequently the result of several interacting factors. In addition to conflict and climate change, fragility, poor governance, corruption, poverty and inequality can contribute to socioeconomic tensions that lead to conflict, limit the resources available to mitigate risks and exacerbate other more acute threats.

In our recommendations, we are urging the adoption of a multi-faceted approach to prevent the risks of displacement, protect people from harm when crises do occur and renew efforts to resolve the root causes of crises.

#### Recommendation 8: Address the drivers of displacement and reduce displacement risks

While, at times, displacement is a necessary coping strategy for individuals and families at imminent risk of harm, more can and must be done to reduce the frequency of situations in which people have no choice but to flee their homes. To this end, we urge the following actions to be taken:

- To prevent conflicts and violence from occurring in the first place and reduce risks of conflict-induced displacement, States and, at global level, the Security Council, should demonstrate



genuine political leadership and renewed commitment to a rights-based order that puts humanity first; further, they should recognize that with sovereignty comes responsibility and work collectively to end cultures of impunity that allow rights violations to persist unchecked.

- When there are early signs of conflict, renewed violence or threats to civilians, the UN, States and mediators should rapidly mobilize to support de-escalation, political negotiation and conflict resolution, and systematically address internal displacement as part of these efforts.
- States should adopt policies to mitigate civilian harm in armed conflicts and integrate the prevention of forced displacement explicitly in laws, manuals and training of armed forces.
- The UN should mobilize and use its full weight to confront threats to civilians, including by ensuring senior staff across all parts of the system are trained and held accountable for taking action when there are widespread rights violations or civilians are under threat.
- States must take immediate action to prevent a further worsening of the global climate crisis, including by reducing their emissions in line with the Paris Agreement targets and working in solidarity with poorer nations to support them in preparing for the impacts of climate change – including displacement.
- States should ensure that laws, policies, strategies and action on disaster management and disaster risk reduction address displacement risks (including the possibility of protracted displacement) more explicitly and proactively, including with consideration for how risks intersect, overlap and are compounded by broader societal challenges.
- Financers should dramatically scale up funding for displacement-sensitive climate adaptation interventions, including through channels like the

Green Climate Fund, with a focus on countries at greatest risk and those already experiencing displacement linked to climate change.

- Financers should better utilize forecast-based financing and other anticipatory financing tools that enable greater preparedness for crises.
- States should invest in resilience-building measures, such as micro-insurance schemes and social safety net programmes, that help populations to better cope with the adverse effects of climate change and protect their livelihoods, and should give particular attention to the needs of indigenous persons, pastoralists, and others with a special attachment to their lands.
- Where no alternatives exist to mitigate the risk of harm and displacement, States should facilitate migration out of areas at high risk or undertake planned relocation with the consent and participation of affected communities.
- Donors and Governments should invest in community-based prevention and preparedness initiatives, including early warning mechanisms and interventions that draw on local and indigenous knowledge.

## 4. Improving Protection and Assistance

Around the world, millions of IDPs face critical gaps in humanitarian assistance and protection. Displaced women and girls face are exposed to heightened risks of sexual and gender-based violence, including assault, abuse, early and forced marriage and sexual exploitation. Children lose access to education and may be more vulnerable to recruitment by gangs or armed groups, radicalization, trafficking and negative coping strategies. IDPs often lack livelihoods and are among the most food-insecure parts of the population. Most live outside of camps and in urban areas where they are among the poorest of the poor, lack secure housing and are exposed to a range of

health, social and economic risks. Older people and people with disabilities struggle to access effective support and population groups that were already marginalized prior to displacement often face further stigma and exclusion.

To address this human suffering that is at the core of the global internal displacement crisis, more needs to be done to close the gap between IDPs' needs and the assistance and protection provided. We have examined both how to strengthen protection and assistance during emergencies and how to ensure humanitarian responses lay the foundation for solutions.

### **Recommendation 9: Strengthen the quality of protection and assistance to IDPs and host communities**

Strengthening the quality of protection and assistance for IDPs will require action by a number of actors. This begins, first and foremost, with national and local authorities, but also calls for changes within the humanitarian system, among development and peace actors, and in the financing approach of donors. Most crucially, there is a need for a more proactive approach across all actors to better understand and respond to the specific rights and needs of IDPs. To realize the changes we believe are needed, we urge the following actions to be taken:

- National Governments should prioritize protection and humanitarian assistance in broader decision-making and budgetary allocations, and be proactive in consulting IDPs of all ages, genders and diversities about their needs and concerns.
- Where State capacities are overwhelmed, States should facilitate space for humanitarian actors to deliver neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian assistance and protection without undue interference.
- In cases where humanitarian access is unduly restricted or denied, the UN and donor

States should proactively advocate with the Government and hold it accountable through mechanisms such as the UN treaty bodies, the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review and, in particularly serious cases, the Security Council.

- The UN Security Council should explicitly include protection of IDPs in mandates of Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions and should hold troop- and police-contributing countries and mission leadership accountable for fulfilling these functions.
- The UN Secretary-General and ERC should formally reaffirm that Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that the specific needs of IDPs are identified and responded to in a comprehensive and coordinated manner during the humanitarian response.
- The UN Secretary-General should commission an independent review of the humanitarian system in contexts of internal displacement and, based on its findings, the IASC should update its policy and operational guidance on responding to internal displacement to ensure a more predictable response to the specific needs of IDPs.
- Humanitarian actors should lay the foundation for solutions for internal displacement as early as possible and ensure Humanitarian Response Plans outline how the response will create a pathway to solutions.
- Humanitarian responses should, as far as possible, invest in working with and through local systems and structures rather than creating parallel systems for service delivery.
- Donors should continue to strengthen humanitarian financing by working towards implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments and by creating exemptions for humanitarian actors in anti-terrorism legislation to reduce impediments to humanitarian operations.

## 5. Follow-Up

The culmination of the Panel initiative and the launch of our report should not be seen as the end of the process of building national, regional and global commitments on internal displacement. On the contrary, now more than ever before is when action is needed to bring about meaningful change. Both the letter and spirit of the Panel's recommendations should begin to be given effect in concrete, practical terms. The momentum that led to the creation of the Panel and propelled our work must be sustained.

### Recommendation 10: Sustain momentum and ensure robust follow-up

The Panel believes that follow-up action is needed at all levels. More specifically, we recommend the following:

- The UN Secretary General is urged to provide strong leadership for follow-up of the Panel's report and for embedding internal displacement as a priority issue across the United Nations and globally.
- All actors should be proactive and resolute in moving forward with the implementation of the Panel's recommendations that specifically relate to them.
- At national level, States, with the support of UN Resident Coordinators, should convene a meeting of relevant high-level officials and experts to develop a plan for domestic application of the Panel's recommendations.
- Regional organizations should convene a regional ministerial summit to discuss how the Panel's recommendations will be taken forward within the respective regions.
- A High-Level Event on Internal Displacement should be convened at which States and other actors make commitments on internal displacement in light of the Panel's report and recommendations.
- The Secretary-General should establish a small 'Coalition of Champions' from across the humanitarian, development, peace, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation communities to support follow-up and other relevant action in light of the Panel's recommendations.
- Member States should maintain the Panel's 'Group of Friends', reconfigured and renamed as necessary, to support the momentum and follow-up on the Panel's recommendations.
- Bilateral development donors, IFIs and the OECD should convene a contact group dedicated to supporting the integration of internal displacement within development financing approaches.
- The Secretary-General should establish a Private Sector Advisory Board to help engage the private sector as part of solutions.
- The UN General Assembly should designate a World Internal Displacement Day each year in April to coincide with the anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.
- The Secretary-General should publish an annual State of Solutions to Internal Displacement Report that tracks progress against the overall shifts described in this Panel report and that captures positive steps actors have taken to address internal displacement as well as the challenges and barriers that persist.
- The Secretary-General should establish in his office a small secretariat or other appropriate mechanism to ensure continuing overall administrative coordination, monitoring, reporting on and dissemination of information on the implementation of our report and recommendations.



# Panel Members

The Panel was made up of eight distinguished members appointed in their personal and independent capacity from the worlds of Government, international organizations, civil society and the private sector. They include representatives from several displacement-affected countries.

- **Federica Mogherini**, Rector of the College of Europe, former High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and former Vice-President of the European Commission (Co-Chair).
- **Donald Kaberuka**, Chair of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, former Finance Minister of Rwanda and 7th President of the African Development Bank (Co-Chair).
- **Paula Gaviria**, Director of Fundación Compaz, former Head of the Victim's Unit in Colombia and former Advisor to the President of Colombia on Human Rights.
- **Per Heggnes**, CEO of the IKEA Foundation.
- **Nasser Judeh**, Senator, former Deputy Prime Minister and former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.
- **Mitiku Kassa Gutile**, Commissioner for the National Disaster Risk Management Commission of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.
- **Pauline Riak**, Professor of Sociology and Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs, the Rumbek University of Science and Technology and Chair, Sudd Institute, South Sudan.
- **Sima Samar**, Member of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation, former Special Envoy of the President and former Chair of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission.



Inaugural meeting of the Panel, February 2020.

From left to right: Paula Gaviria, Mitiku Kassa Gutile, Pauline Riak, Federica Mogherini, UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Donald Kaberuka, Nasser Judeh, Sima Samar, Per Heggnes. Credit: IOM/Muse Mohammed







**United  
Nations**

UN Secretary-General's High-Level  
Panel on Internal Displacement