

# Cross-Regional Forum on Implementing Laws and Policies on Internal Displacement in Africa

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18 – 20 September 2024, Dakar

## SUMMARY NOTE

## Introduction

With the adoption of the African Union's Convention for the Protection of and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) fifteen years ago, the African continent boasts the only legally binding regional instrument to protect and assist IDPs worldwide. As of September 2024, 34 of the 55 African Union Member States are party to the Kampala Convention. At the national and sub-national level, there are at least 42 legal and policy instruments specifically addressing internal displacement in 21 countries across the region [1]. Yet only three countries have incorporated the Kampala Convention into domestic legislation following its ratification and the implementation of this regional treaty remains stagnated with far more people living in internal displacement in Africa - over 30 million - than in any other region of the world.

Despite sustained progress on the development and adoption of laws and policies on internal displacement, successful implementation remains a key challenge in most contexts. To help address this challenge, UNHCR and the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, in collaboration with the IDP Protection Expert Group (IPEG) [2] and the International Institute of Humanitarian Law (IIHL), organized a **Cross-Regional Forum on Implementing Laws and Policies on Internal Displacement in Africa** on 18-20 September 2024.

This initiative builds on the successful Cross-Regional Forum convened in Sanremo, Italy, in June 2023 that gathered officials from nine governments from different parts of the world to discuss the implementation of laws and policies on internal displacement. This year's edition, a two-and-a-half-day peer-to-peer exchange convened in Dakar, Senegal, gathered thirteen country delegations from the continent.

This report aims to encapsulate the discussions and insights shared during various sessions of the Forum, highlighting best practices and concrete actions that can be taken to advance the domestication and implementation of the Kampala Convention, to concretely improve the lives of those affected by internal displacement.

## The significance of the Kampala Convention and the national legislation

The Forum began with a session that highlighted the uniqueness of the Kampala Convention, being the first and only legally binding continental text on Internally Displaced Persons, as well as the importance of taking the necessary steps to make it effective and applicable in practice.

The session started with a brief historical recap of the development of the Convention, also pointing out the challenges encountered at the different steps of its implementation, including signature and ratification. Some States consider internal displacement an issue outside of their concern or current priorities. An advocacy campaign was put in place years ago by the African Union (AU) and key partners for States to take the necessary steps towards ratification, and efforts in this direction need to continue. Among countries that are parties to the Convention, many have taken important steps towards domestication of the Convention though most have not yet completed the process (i.e. incorporated it into national legislation).

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[1] UNHCR IDP Law and Policy Dashboard, available at: [www.rimap.unhcr.org/idp-law-policy-dashboard](http://www.rimap.unhcr.org/idp-law-policy-dashboard).

[2] The IDP Protection Expert Group - IPEG - is co-led by the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, UNHCR and the Global Protection Cluster.

Niger and Chad were the first two [3] countries to incorporate the Kampala Convention into their national legislation through the adoption of a national IDP law, respectively in 2019 and 2023. At the Forum, officials from each country presented their experiences to the other participants on the steps taken to move forward with the implementation of the Convention as well as the challenges they have encountered to do so [4]. Both countries adopted comprehensive laws and policies addressing all causes and all phases of displacement, in line with the Convention.

From a Q&A discussion with participants from both countries, the following key points emerged:

- **Political will** at the national level was a pivotal element to kickstart the domestication process and follow through. In particular, both countries saw a specific ministry taking the lead in the process, including to coordinate an inter-ministerial group. For instance, the Ministry of Humanitarian Action and Disaster Management was identified as the lead entity in Niger, together with the interministerial technical committee that supported the entire drafting process of the law;
- **Consultations**, which can take the form of exchanges, sensitization campaigns, workshops and seminars, were a key element of the process of drafting the law; and a wide range of actors supported the drafting of the law and the organization of consultations with IDPs and local governments.
- The importance to involve the **National Human Rights Institutions** since they can intervene and unblock when obstacles arise at the Executive and Legislative level as well as plead for domestication;
- The **impact** of domestication is noticeable. Before the adoption of the law, concepts were unclear (“even the definition of who is an IDP was an issue”), as well as the management of IDP situations. With the adoption of the law, roles, responsibilities and response mechanisms were clear. Therefore, IDPs could be better assisted, protected and supported toward durable solutions;
- The adoption of **implementing regulations** by the national government was necessary to make the law effective in practice, as shown by Niger.

Members of other delegations shared their **challenges** to move forward with the domestication of the Kampala Convention. While some underlined the lack of political will of the government, various States have already started the process of drafting a law but highlighted the very slow institutional processes delaying the adoption of the law. Some others also mentioned not knowing how to go about starting the process, even if there is an AU model law for reference. This highlighted the importance of peer-to-peer exchanges with delegations of countries in the region that are at different stages of the process.

Discussions also touched on the importance of certain provisions of the Kampala Convention, particularly Article 3.2, when it comes to transposing it into national law. The incorporation of the Convention into national law, through the enactment or amendment of relevant legislation on the protection of, and assistance to, internally displaced persons, is legally required regardless of countries’ legal tradition (monist or dualist). The same article stresses the importance of designating a body responsible for coordinating activities aimed at protecting and assisting IDPs – a key aspect that was also addressed during the session on structures of governance.

[3] The third country is the Republic of Congo, which adopted an IDP law domesticating the Kampala Convention in September 2023.

[4] For more information on the law development processes followed by Niger and Chad, see GPC Task Team on Law and Policy, *Global Report on Law and Policy on Internal Displacement*, Forthcoming – 2025.

In addition, the obligation of State Parties under Article 14 to submit information on the legislative and other measures that have been taken to give effect to Convention when presenting their reports under Article 62 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights as well as, where applicable, under the African Peer Review Mechanism, was also highlighted. Cameroon was the first State to submit such information, while the other delegations took note of the obligation. Some expressed their intention of submitting a report after the Forum and requested guidance on its drafting.

## Core elements of comprehensive responses - National level

This session explored the structures of governance and coordination mechanisms put in place by States at the national level to respond to IDP situations within their territory.

Delegations first presented their respective institutional **focal points** at national levels on IDPs. For most of them, a Ministry (such as Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, the Ministry of interior, Ministry of Peace, Ministry of Territorial Management, Ministry of Social Action, etc.) was identified as the focal point institution for the IDP response while one government decided to establish a dedicated national committee.

Participants discussed the location of the focal point institution within their government and its specific area of expertise.

The ensuing discussion focused on the key elements supporting an effective institutional response, including adequate coordination mechanisms among ministries and other relevant agencies at the national level, and highlighted the following aspects:

- The importance of not always **creating new structures** but **building on the already existing structures** (indeed Art. 3.2 of the Kampala Convention requires State to 'designate', not necessarily to 'create' an institutional focal point for IDPs);
- The need for the national IDP focal point institution to have sufficient institutional **authority** and ability to carry this agenda across government and will benefit from direct reporting to the highest political levels. This is because an effective IDP response rests on a shared whole-of-government approach. For example, in Ethiopia, the coordination mechanism is at the level of prime minister;
- The design of the **coordination mechanism** is crucial as it should not rely solely on vertical authority but also incorporate a horizontal structure, with focal points that connect and collaborate across the system;
- It requires **technical expertise**, which countries do not always have, to transmit knowledge on IDP protection to the people working on the response to IDPs. This highlights the importance of capacity development on the expertise of other countries and of specialized international organisations;
- The importance of a **whole-of-government approach** in addressing internal displacement, and therefore the importance of legal, policy and institutional measures that are specifically dedicated to IDPs but also, complementing those, others that aim at including internal displacement in sectoral and development frameworks and programmes across ministries.

Participants then shared the strengths and challenges of their current systems. On the one hand, the **strengths** identified were:

- The **legal and policy framework**: core IDP instruments play a useful role in setting out the respective responsibilities of the focal point, national ministries/agencies and sub-national territorial entities in the IDP response, as well as in usefully establishing the necessary platforms for both horizontal and vertical coordination led by the focal point;
- The **strategies in place**: a robust response can be implemented by ensuring that: targeted (and time-limited) context-sensitive policies, strategies or plans are used to implement the core framework; institutions are allocated clear roles and responsibilities; solutions are built into the response from early on; regular reviews based on adequate data and analysis assess progress towards solutions. No country wants a perpetual IDP crisis – using IDP frameworks to chart the path to a way out is essential;
- The governments' internal displacement **expertise**, represented through agencies and institutions with specialized knowledge on the issue, including the ones already in place before the existence of the Kampala Convention;
- A **concerted response** from all stakeholders with different ministries working together to reach a decision and provide a response when needed;
- A clearly identified **focal point** who engages in consultations with relevant stakeholders and ensures that, once a decision is made, information is effectively communicated down to the local level to support decision-making;
- The establishment of specialized technical structures (e.g. committees, working groups) to address specific issues within the country, such as Burundi's Flood Committee.

On the other hand, the following **challenges** were raised by the participants:

- **Insufficient state funds**, combined with **donor fatigue**, make it challenging to finance the government's proposed response to internal displacement;
- The need to **strengthen** and improve the current monitoring and evaluation systems which can be insufficient to have a precise visibility on internal displacement and plan the response accordingly;
- The need to push for **more political will** to address response to IDPs. A sense of national ownership should be built up, for example, by engaging relevant institutional actors in the process through which IDP frameworks are developed and adopted;
- Frequent staff turnover and changes lead to a **lack of continuity** in the institutions, making it challenging for individuals to follow up on the issue in the long-term.

The **financing** of the institutional focal point for internal displacement and the broader response to IDPs was another central topic of discussion.

All delegations acknowledged the lack of sufficient state budget allocations to adequately cover the response to internal displacement. While the delegations emphasized that, in all countries, the state is the primary guarantor of such responses—responsible for providing resources and ensuring budgetary support—they also highlighted that the state's efforts alone are insufficient. The involvement of technical and financial partners remains crucial, as the state cannot meet all its needs independently. Despite the existence of budget lines for IDP responses in many countries, these funds were consistently deemed inadequate.

When addressing the role of government representatives in managing donor fatigue, a major issue identified was the lack of effective implementation of directives, highlighting the need for a clear and structured approach to how funds should be spent. Additionally, there was a push for relevant authorities to include dedicated budget lines for IDP-related issues across sectors, ensuring that adequate resources are allocated. Given the increasing demand for resources, there was consensus on the necessity of revisiting and reorganizing resource mobilization strategies.

Prioritization emerged as a vital approach to address limited financial capacity and political will, focusing on the most vulnerable IDPs or the regions most severely impacted by displacement. The need for context-sensitive strategies was emphasized, with the importance of relying on accurate data and analysis to guide decisions and ensure that interventions meet the needs of the most affected populations. Finally, the issue of corruption was raised as a significant obstacle to effective resource management, further complicating efforts to adequately address the needs of IDPs.

As a result, several key recommendations were made as good practices to address those gaps, including:

- **Strategic foresight and diversified funding:** once the displacement situation becomes protracted, states must look beyond traditional sources of funding and develop a strategic approach to resource mobilization. It is essential for governments to anticipate how resources will be raised and for how long they will be sustained to ensure long-term support;
- **Dedicated funding streams for IDP-specific interventions:** to ensure that IDP needs are met effectively, it is critical to establish dedicated funding sources or streams. For example, Niger and Chad created dedicated IDP funds through their IDP law. Additionally, broader, IDP-inclusive interventions should leverage wider funding streams to complement these targeted efforts;
- **Transparency and accountability:** the importance of transparency and accountability in managing funds was underscored, as a lack of oversight can undermine the effectiveness of the response. If funds are not properly allocated or accounted for, IDPs cannot receive the assistance they need in a timely and effective manner;
- **Leveraging national resources:** finally, it was suggested that states with significant national resources—such as oil, mining, or tourism—should allocate a percentage of these revenues to support IDP response and budgetary needs. This approach could provide a sustainable and reliable source of funding for IDP interventions.



Group picture - Dakar, September 2024.

## Core elements of comprehensive responses - Local level

The Forum participants next turned to a session focused on responses to IDPs at the local level, emphasizing their equal importance to the mechanisms established at the national level. Local actors are the ones responsible for implementing and carrying out the measures designed to assist IDPs directly. Therefore, it is crucial to identify which local authorities are involved in supporting IDPs when a particular area or locality hosts them.

The discussion began by recognizing the various territorial divisions within each country, highlighting the importance of considering these **specificities** when coordinating responses across the territory. While federal and centralized systems operate differently, the level of decentralization within centralized systems is particularly significant for effectively addressing IDP needs at the local level. Indeed, the distribution of tasks often relies on identifying focal points and assigning responsibilities at various administrative levels as decisions at the national level may not always align perfectly with local needs, necessitating a degree of flexibility and innovation at the local level. In South Sudan, for instance, the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) oversees the IDP response, operating from the national to local village levels, with liaison officers coordinating efforts on the ground. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the central government adopts laws and policies which provinces adapt and implement in order to address regional challenges. They are also responsible for developing localized solutions within the framework of national laws and guidelines, including through provincial solutions strategies. Chad highlighted the importance of a bottom-up approach in the process and the use of local monitoring to inform national priorities, with local authorities visiting camps and using early warning systems to better guide assistance efforts.

Country experiences highlighted that effective coordination requires **complementarity** between national and local authorities. In Chad, information collected during field visits by local officials flows back to higher levels, enabling better-targeted assistance. In Nigeria, the so-called **Borno model** was adopted as a localized approach to improve coordination and management of the humanitarian response to internally displaced persons and address previous gaps in coordination, monitoring, and resource management within the State.

The model features State-led coordination and regular coordination meetings held between state and local levels to bring together line ministries, partners, and stakeholders. This fosters collaboration and ensures that activities are aligned with the state's overall strategy. Specific sectors (e.g., Camp Coordination and Camp Management [CCCM], Protection, Education, WASH) are managed through sector and sub-sector groups, often in collaboration with UN agencies and civil society organizations.

Budget governance remains a challenge across many contexts, with varying degrees of efficiency. Some participants noted issues with resource management, emphasizing the need for transparency and accountability in resource allocation.

When it comes to **challenges** and **difficulties** at the local level in relation to the provision of assistance and protection to IDPs, countries highlighted resource limitations, poor infrastructure, and coordination gaps.

Common **key elements** that emerged from the discussion include:

- **Participation of IDPs:** a key issue raised was the need to ensure the meaningful and effective participation of IDPs in decision-making, in line with the Kampala Convention and the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. Listening to IDPs and actively engaging with them on the ground so that they can inform policies and programmes, as well as participate in public affairs, is of fundamental importance;
- **Role of community and religious leaders:** local community and religious leaders act as crucial intermediaries between administrative authorities and IDPs, facilitating communication and ensuring that the needs of IDPs are met. Maintaining these connections is key;
- **Increased responsiveness and local policies:** there is a clear need for more responsive local-level policies tailored to the unique challenges faced by IDPs. Examples include state-level strategies on internal displacement and durable solutions by Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states in Nigeria, or the durable solutions strategy in North Kivu;
- **Involvement of sub-national structures:** sub-national structures (whether regional, provincial, departmental, municipal) play a crucial role in the response. They must actively participate in both the development and implementation of laws and policies to effectively protect and assist IDPs;
- **Enhanced capacity and coordination:** the need for improved coordination between various actors at the local level is essential to avoid duplication and ensure effective service delivery;

*For example, Niger counts four administrative levels: national, regional, departmental, local. The IDP response at the local level relies primarily on the mayor and the municipality of the receiving town. If the needs go beyond their capacity to intervene, they can request assistance from higher administrative levels. Coordination-wise, different sectors meet once a month to coordinate their interventions. If there is a need for more support, the national level may intervene. At all levels, coordination is happening through 'nexus committees', bringing together humanitarian, development and security actors - which is key to planning a holistic response.*

- **Elevator system between central and local levels:** there must be a continuous and effective exchange between central and local levels, ensuring that communication flows seamlessly without interruption;
- **Partnership with humanitarian agencies:** collaboration with humanitarian partners is vital, particularly in areas where the state is unable to provide direct assistance. Maintaining strong links with these agencies ensures that needs are communicated effectively, and resources can be allocated accordingly;
- **Security and camp management:** security remains a critical issue affecting camp management and the protection of IDPs. There is a need to balance security concerns with the principles of protection and civilian character of sites [5], ensuring that the safety of IDPs is maintained without compromising their rights and dignity.

[5] UNHCR/ICRC, *Aide Memoire - Operational Guidance on Maintaining the Civilian and Humanitarian Character of Sites and Settlements*, July 2018, <https://www.refworld.org/policy/opguidance/unhcr/2018/en/121458>.



## The critical role of nationally-owned data on internal displacement

This session focused on the central role of nationally-owned data on internal displacement and the need for countries to set up and strengthen **data processes** to better understand existing displacement situations, as well as plan and implement responses tailored to IDPs' needs.

The session began with a presentation on the role of data for IDP law and policy. This highlighted that the emphasis often is on the question of "*How many IDPs are there?*"; however, the discussion emphasized that there are numerous other important data needs in addition to **numbers**. Data on IDPs' **locations, needs, capacities** and **durable solutions** preferences, as well as on the information on the **situation** of displacement more generally (including the situation of host communities, availability of services, etc.) is also widely recognized as essential to help protect and assist them.

Existing IDP-related information systems vary from country to country, but they provide valuable data that decision-makers can rely on to guide their actions. IDP laws and policies may provide a useful framework, clarifying which data should be collected on which populations and for what purpose. The Kampala Convention refers to issues relating to data specifically by imposing an obligation on states to "*assess or facilitate the assessment of the needs and vulnerabilities of IDPs and those of their host community, in cooperation with international organisations and agencies*" (Art. 5.5.), going as far as putting in place measures to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the assistance provided to IDPs (Art. 9.2).

In addition, the treaty also requires states parties to create and maintain an up-to-date register of all IDPs within their jurisdiction or effective control, in collaboration with international organisations, humanitarian agencies, or civil society actors (Article 13). These provisions highlight the need for the response to be informed by an adequate **evidence base**. Reference to IDP registries is reflected in the IDP laws of countries, such as Chad and Niger. However, it was highlighted that the negotiators of the Convention were not data experts, and most of them had significant experience in refugee contexts, where registration is standard practice. Over the past 15 years, an agreement was reached that **registering individual IDPs is not always advisable**, and that in many situations, alternative data gathering systems would be more appropriate.



Participants during the Workshop Session on Data on Internal Displacement.

The discussion then shifted to the **existing IDP data systems in Africa**. Participants completed a brief survey on IDP data in their respective countries, which revealed that the most commonly collected pieces of information are IDPs' locations, their movements and basic demographic data. In contrast, the least collected data includes access to services and sustainable solutions and it remains a critical need to prioritize the establishment of an evidence base in these underreported areas. Indeed, while the collection and analysis of 'humanitarian data' presented by the delegations is essential, it is important to recognize that other types of data, such as development and socioeconomic data, also play a crucial role.

#### **Examples of good practices in this area:**

**Mali** included questions on IDPs in the 2022 Census led by INSTAT (Mali national statistical office), and it is currently working towards their inclusion in the regular multi-purpose household survey ('EMPO' Survey, *Enquête Modulaire Permanente auprès des Ménages*) with INSTAT and DNDS (government body working on data collection on internal displacement). This is a large-scale, ongoing household survey conducted by Mali's government in collaboration with international partners such as the World Bank and UN agencies. This ongoing project will disaggregate data by displacement status starting in 2025, with a particular focus on 12 Sustainable Development Goals indicators. Integrating these broader datasets with humanitarian data will enhance the overall understanding of IDP needs and inform more comprehensive and sustainable responses.

Similarly, **Burkina Faso** is developing a socio-economic module in inter-agency protection monitoring with INSD (Burkina Faso national statistical office), with the support of CONASUR (government body working on IDPs), to be able to capture additional data on IDPs.

IDPs were also included in the recent poverty assessment done by **Central African Republic (CAR)** with ICASEES (CAR national statistical office) [6]; this provided valuable insights by comparing the conditions of displaced and non-displaced populations.

Among the **challenges** in data collection that were highlighted, these included difficulties in achieving uniform geographic coverage, a lack of resources, data protection concerns, and the reluctance of people in certain areas to provide information due to stigmatization and fear of sharing personal details. Addressing these challenges is vital to improving the effectiveness of IDP responses and ensuring that the needs of displaced populations are accurately understood and met.

It is crucial for all actors involved in data collection to work together in order to improve the **quality of data on internal displacement**. A key reference in this regard is the International Recommendations on IDP Statistics (IRIS) [7], developed by the Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics (EGRIS), which were adopted by the UN Statistical Commission in 2020. EGRIS members provide support to improve official statistics on internal displacement.

In this context, participants emphasized the importance of strengthening the capacity of National Statistical Offices to collaborate with institutional IDP focal points on data on internal displacement.

[6] For more details, see the *CAR Poverty Assessment Report 2023* at the [link here](#).

[7] International Recommendations on Internally Displaced Persons Statistics (IRIS).

## Preventing displacement and mitigating its causes - Country experiences

Displacement due to conflict and disasters poses significant challenges globally. Effective prevention strategies require adequate legal frameworks, community engagement, early warning systems, and coordinated responses. Furthermore, complementary, non-IDP-specific laws and policies can comprehensively address the prevention of displacement and address its root causes.

During this session, it was highlighted that the prevention of arbitrary displacement and the mitigation of its causes require **integrated approaches** that blend legal frameworks, community engagement, and robust early warning systems. Country experiences shared by Ethiopia, DRC, Niger, Chad, and Nigeria illustrated the frameworks and strategies in place to prevent the conditions leading to displacement and support affected communities. Continued collaboration, capacity building, and international support are essential for strengthening these frameworks and enhancing resilience among vulnerable populations.

Indeed, effective approaches for addressing internal displacement require comprehensive legal, policy and operational measures. In the context of **conflict**, respect and ensuring respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL) is essential, as is prioritizing direct engagement with at-risk communities. In cases of organized displacement, especially when military imperatives necessitate it, the process must be structured within a clear framework that carefully balances security needs with humanitarian consequences.

For instance, participants from the **Democratic Republic of Congo** shared the experience of criminalizing forced displacement and integrating transitional justice systems to address the needs of displaced populations while promoting accountability. Customary land rights are also acknowledged, particularly for women and children, to resolve underlying land disputes that contribute to instability. Representatives from Ethiopia presented their Early Warning System (EWS), which was set up to monitor potential conflicts through multi-tiered information gathering at federal, regional, and community levels.

Similarly, participants from **Niger** highlighted the importance of legal protections, enacting frameworks that safeguard IDPs and humanitarian actors while facilitating community dialogues to promote local conflict resolution. Early warning efforts in the country are integral, combining crisis monitoring with grassroots engagement to preempt displacement. This system relies on strong cooperation across government tiers and continuous capacity-building efforts to address threats proactively. However, challenges such as misconceptions about EWS as merely a security tool underscore the importance of public education to clarify its preventive purpose.

In disaster settings, preventive measures focus on adopting **climate adaptation** strategies and strengthening community resilience through **disaster risk reduction (DRR)** initiatives. Countries like **Senegal**, for example, have implemented planned relocations to address coastal erosion, minimizing displacement risks. Additionally, anticipatory actions, such as providing cash assistance ahead of disasters, are recognized as effective strategies for reducing the impact of natural hazards.

## Protecting and assisting IDPs in the acute phase of a crisis - Country experiences

Internally displaced persons face significant vulnerabilities, especially during the acute phase of crises, making their protection and assistance a priority. This session highlighted the experiences and best practices of various countries in addressing IDP needs, focusing on the **framework of IHL** and the **roles played by governments and humanitarian organizations**.

IHL enjoys broad acceptance across Africa, with recognition of the **Geneva Conventions** and their Additional Protocols, which emphasise minimum protection for civilians in non-international armed conflicts under Common Article 3. In terms of protection principles, the **Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement** prohibit the forced transfer of protected persons under three conditions: displacement must not be due to armed conflict, the safety and security of IDPs must be ensured, and their dignity must be respected. Furthermore, IDPs should not be compelled to leave their homes for reasons linked to armed conflict, underscoring the importance of voluntary and informed decisions regarding displacement. The role of **UN peace missions** was also discussed, particularly the inclusion of civilian protection units in many peacekeeping operations to safeguard civilians in conflict zones. However, challenges persist, as seen in missions like MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which has faced criticism regarding its effectiveness, particularly during transitions from peacekeeping to development. Case studies from the Central African Republic (CAR) and Burundi further illustrate these issues, with the withdrawal of peacekeeping forces leaving significant protection gaps, highlighting the challenges in ensuring ongoing civilian protection during mission transitions.

Delegations were invited after a short introduction to reflect in groups on the questions on practical **solutions** and **challenges** regarding the response to fundamental needs of IDPs and the question of access for humanitarian organizations and NGOs. The conversations highlighted the following elements:

### ADDRESSING FUNDAMENTAL NEEDS

- **Assessment and response:** initial assessments of IDPs' needs should be conducted rapidly, followed by ongoing evaluations as crises evolve. Rapid response mechanisms exist but, in practice, they are not that fast (based on watch committees that launch alerts and then evaluate them, with assistance coming afterwards). In Mali for example, it takes an average of two weeks for a response to arrive. In many countries, the lack of pre-positioned stocks and adequate human resources limits the government's ability to respond effectively on its own. As a result, partnerships with international organizations or NGOs are essential to ensure a timely and coordinated response;
- **Support from communities:** In cases where the administration is absent or NGOs are rare, some countries have identified communities that can ensure distributions as part of rapid responses.

### HUMANITARIAN ACCESS AND SECURITY

- **Coordination and local engagement:** it is crucial to establish strong coordination mechanisms between local and central authorities to facilitate humanitarian access;
- **Non-discrimination:** assistance must be equitable, ensuring all IDPs receive necessary support without discrimination;

- **Prevention:** to ensure security in accessing communities, a recommended practice is to plan multiple alternative routes for convoys such as food delivery. This helps anticipate safer paths in case of attacks by armed groups;
- **Challenge:** to overcome insecurity in certain areas, some governments decided that certain organizations need escorts, but this has a cost. Additionally, convoys arranged by governments for NGOs can be problematic, as some NGOs may be reluctant to participate since under international humanitarian law, traveling alongside military forces may render them legitimate targets.

## HUMANITARIAN ACCESS AND NEGOTIATION

- **State responsibility:** governments must facilitate humanitarian access and ensure the safety of aid workers;
- **Considerations:** issues such as security clearances, particularly in conflict zones, complicate access. The need for negotiation with local authorities and armed groups is paramount.

## BEST PRACTICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Localization:** strengthening partnerships with local organizations can enhance access and response effectiveness;
- **Concerted coordination:** importance of sharing information between the local level and the central level as actors at the local level must inform the central level;
- **Civil-Military coordination:** effective civil-military relations can help secure access and safety for humanitarian actors;
- **Profiling and needs assessment:** thorough profiling of IDPs and ongoing needs assessments can guide effective interventions.

The protection and assistance of IDPs in the acute phase of a crisis require coordinated efforts from governments, humanitarian organizations, and local actors. Adhering to IHL principles, ensuring safety and dignity, and facilitating humanitarian access are essential to alleviating the suffering of IDPs and addressing their fundamental needs.

## Addressing protracted internal displacement - Country experiences

Protracted internal displacement refers to situations where internally displaced persons are unable to achieve self-sufficiency or find durable solutions to rebuild their lives. Addressing protracted internal displacement requires a **multi-faceted approach** that prioritizes the needs, choices and rights of IDPs. The focus should be on the character of displacement rather than its duration, ensuring that IDPs have choices regarding their futures.

This session examined various scenarios of displacement and provided insights from country experiences, particularly from Burkina Faso and Mali, highlighting effective strategies and solutions focusing on local integration, improving living conditions, and fostering community resilience.

In scenarios of protracted internal displacement, particularly in areas affected by ongoing conflict or disaster, various strategies have been proposed to support IDPs and improve their living conditions.

Progressive **re-access to rights** for IDPs during displacement is key to mitigating protracted displacement no matter their location and where they may wish to settle. In regions where both IDPs and host areas are affected by ongoing conflict or disaster, continuous humanitarian efforts are crucial to improving living conditions and reducing vulnerabilities while seeking durable solutions. In this regard, **Burkina Faso** shared its Solutions Strategy and Action Plan that focuses on three key axes to address the needs of IDPs: access to services, revitalizing the local economy, and conflict prevention. The strategy aims to improve essential services for IDPs, support the revitalization of local economies to benefit both displaced populations and host communities, and promote the autonomy of affected populations to reduce the risks of further displacement.

**Interim solutions**, such as those outlined in **Somalia's** IDP Act, include cash grants, rental assistance, and access to temporary housing until permanent solutions can be found to improve living conditions. Moreover, urban upgrading initiatives aimed at improving neighborhoods that host IDPs can enhance living conditions for both displaced populations and local communities.

A good practice to highlight for the inclusion of IDPs is to establish mixed communities where IDPs live alongside local populations, fostering integration. This can be supported by creating durable housing solutions, such as accommodation constructed with sustainable materials, and providing access to essential services like schools, multifunctional centers, and community gardens. Additionally, offering IDPs land titles, building materials, and training empowers them to take part in the development of their new homes and livelihoods, contributing to their long-term stability.

This approach emphasizes the importance of **integrating sustainable solutions from the outset** of a crisis to ensure lasting, positive outcomes for displaced populations.

## Supporting durable solutions - Country experiences

Supporting durable solutions for internally displaced persons is essential for rebuilding lives shattered by violence, conflict and disaster. This process primarily presents a **development challenge**, necessitating sustainable economic and social reintegration into mainstream society, while also restoring rights and re-establishing the social contract between displaced citizens (and residents) and the State.

Durable solutions for IDPs focus on sustainable reintegration through voluntary and participatory processes, whether in areas of return, local integration, or relocation.

A solution is considered durable when **IDPs no longer face displacement-specific needs**. The criteria for assessing these solutions include safety, security, and freedom of movement, adequate living standards, employment opportunities, access to housing and land, and family reunification, among others.

To achieve durable solutions, several considerations must be addressed, such as capacity gaps at the sub-national level, successful housing models combining government land and private sector involvement, and the development of peri-urban areas through public-private partnerships. However, even if it is an important long-term investment, the financial cost of solutions remains a challenge, requiring integration into broader development programs with support from institutions like the African Development Bank (AfDB).

At the institutional level, IDP-specific laws and whole-of-government approaches that strengthen local capacities and community-driven programs are essential. **South Sudan** presented the effectiveness of area-based approaches adopted in the country, which focus on tailored interventions in specific locations to address the diverse needs of displaced populations and adopt more context-sensitive solutions to the ongoing displacement crisis in the country.

Financing durable solutions requires dedicated funds from states and IDP-sensitive funding from donors to integrate IDPs into long-term development plans. In this regard, **Nigeria** presented their Durable Solutions Action Plan for the Yobe State, which has strong government leadership, coordination, and community-centered approaches to achieve durable solutions for IDPs and where they committed to allocate 5% of the state budget to support these solutions, reinforcing the importance of funding for sustainable IDP reintegration and recovery. Ultimately, addressing the needs of IDPs involves a comprehensive approach that spans legal, institutional, operational, and financial dimensions to ensure lasting and sustainable outcomes.

## Conclusion

The Forum underscored the **critical need for direct engagement with governments** to foster national and local ownership in addressing internal displacement in Africa. By facilitating discussions that encompassed various aspects of the IDP response—from the need for effective coordination mechanisms to concrete measures for prevention, protection and durable solutions—the event highlighted the multifaceted challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

A key takeaway is the **importance of the domestication of the Kampala Convention**. It is essential that the remaining States ratify this pivotal instrument, reinforcing the need for sustained political will after fifteen years of advocacy. While governance models may vary, they collectively reflect a national responsibility towards IDPs. Identifying where IDP focal points are situated and which institutions lead these efforts is crucial, especially given the highlighted weaknesses in overlap, finance, and capacity.



Certificates of attendance were handed out at the end of the Workshop.

The discussions highlighted the **crucial role of local leadership** in addressing challenges such as epidemics and GBV during conflict and disasters. This local perspective underscores the importance of **integrating IDP-specific responses** into broader development programs and sector budgets, ensuring more comprehensive support for displaced populations. However, **insufficient budgets** remain a significant barrier, limiting the ability to address all aspects of the crisis and necessitating the prioritization of the most urgent needs. Moreover, existing policies at the local level must be better **tailored to the unique challenges** faced by IDPs, calling for more responsive and localized approaches. To effectively address these gaps, it is essential to enhance the **tracking of IDP movements** and provide regular updates on displacement sites, such as camps, ensuring that assistance reaches the areas where it is most needed.

Furthermore, while **early warning and conflict resolution systems** are in place in many countries, they require strengthening to be effective. Addressing protracted internal displacement will demand coordinated efforts, strong government leadership, and alignment with national development priorities, particularly at the local level where capacity gaps persist.

The way forward requires a **collaborative approach** that prioritizes the voices of internally displaced persons, incorporates local experiences and strengthens the commitment to ending arbitrary displacement. While governments will continue their concerted efforts to ensure meaningful protection and sustainable solutions for IDPs throughout Africa, country delegations made informal commitments to promote the implementation of laws and policies addressing internal displacement:

- **Kampala Convention:** several participants committed to initiating the ratification process, advancing the domestication of the Kampala Convention and producing progress reports on its implementation to be submitted to the ACHPR;
- **Protection and assistance of IDPs:** several participants committed to strengthening the legal framework for better protection and assistance of IDPs. Others committed to enhancing operational measures to improve living conditions of IDPs and host communities in protracted displacement situations, inspired by the experiences shared, as well as strengthening national data systems in relation to internal displacement;
- **Early warning systems:** commitments were made towards implementing or strengthening early warning systems. One country committed to finalizing the adoption of a national disaster management policy with a monthly coordination mechanism;
- **Durable solutions:** several participants committed to further developing national strategies aimed at achieving durable solutions for IDPs.



