

# **Basic Course on Internal Displacement: Background, Program Foundations and Program Approaches for International Agency Staff**

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## **Module I: Introduction to Internal Displacement**

### **Objectives**

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Define internally displaced persons
- Describe circumstances and conditions of the internally displaced
- Develop a profile of internally displaced persons in their regions.

### **Contents**

<b>Section Title</b>	<b>Time</b>
Introduction to the Training	10 minutes
Participant Introductions/Icebreaker	45 minutes
The Nature of Internal Displacement: Circumstances and Conditions of the Internally Displaced	15 minutes
The Critical Issues of Sovereignty, Responsibility and Access	10 minutes
The Guiding Principles	10 minutes
Developing a Profile	45 minutes
<b>Approximate Total Time</b>	<b>2.25 hours</b>

### **Methods**

- Pre-reading
- Presentation/lecture
- Plenary discussion
- Small group work

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## **Materials**

- Facilitator Guide
- PowerPoint slides or overhead transparencies 1.1 – 1.8
- Participant Guide
- “Handbook for Applying the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement”
- “Manual on Field Practice in Internal Displacement”
- The Guiding Principles
- Handout 1.1 “Questions for Developing a Profile”

## **Preparation**

- Copy the handouts for distribution to all participants.
- Using the roster of participants, divide them into regional groups for participation in exercises.
- Prepare for the PowerPoint or overhead transparency presentation.

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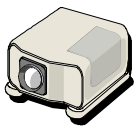
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## Introduction to the Training (5 minutes)



*Present the following introduction to the issue of internal displacement.*

- As the number of internally displaced persons worldwide increases, and as the international community takes an enhanced interest in those persons, staffs of humanitarian organizations -- UN agencies, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) -- are increasingly asked to design programs to protect the rights of the internally displaced and otherwise assist them.
- To protect the rights of and meet humanitarian needs of internally displaced persons, staff persons must understand the circumstances of internal displacement, the basis for international engagement, and basic programming approaches in this complex and rapidly evolving field of activity.
- It was in order to provide a foundation of knowledge to international agency staff that the training packet you have in front of you was developed.<sup>1</sup>
- It is apparent that circumstances facing internally displaced persons, as well as approaches of the international community, will vary considerably from country to country, depending on local circumstances, policies, and capacities.
- However, a decade of experience working with the internally displaced in more than twenty countries -- and especially the development in 1998 of the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*<sup>2</sup> -- provide a foundation of knowledge to guide programming on behalf of the internally displaced.



*Show Slide 1.1 Outline of the Training*

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<sup>1</sup> This training course was developed under the coordination of the UN Interagency Standing Committee Working Group (IASC-WG), with the participation of many agencies within and outside the UN system.

<sup>2</sup> This work was led by the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons, Francis M. Deng.

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## Introduction to the Training (Continued)



Present the following information about the training:

- The training course you are undertaking, the *Basic Course on Internal Displacement: Background, Program Foundations and Program Approaches for International Agency Staff*, organizes the training material in six modules:
  1. Module I, *Introduction to Internal Displacement*, provides basic information on the internally displaced, their circumstances, critical policy issues, the international institutional framework for addressing internal displacement, and the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement ("the Guiding Principles").
    - After you complete this module, you will have a basic understanding of the internal displacement issue.
  2. Module II, *The Basis for Action in International Law and Humanitarian Principles*, describes the legal and other foundations for programmatic action by international agency staff on behalf of internally displaced persons.
    - After you complete this module, you will understand how human rights law, humanitarian law and principles, and other international standards apply to the internally displaced and provide the foundation for your work with internally displaced persons.
  3. Module III, *The Institutional Framework for Activities on Behalf of Internally Displaced Persons*, describes how UN agencies, international organizations, NGOs and other institutions can and must coordinate to support displaced communities.
    - After you complete this module, you will understand the current international coordination mechanisms for managing programming on behalf of the internally displaced, how the current system evolved, and options for providing protection and assistance at the country level.

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## **Introduction to the Training (Continued)**

4. Module IV, *Preventing, or Preparing for, Internal Displacement*, discusses how international organizations can, when possible and appropriate (in the eyes of the displaced themselves), work to prevent displacement or, when necessary, coordinate to prepare for internal displacement.
    - After you complete this module, you will understand critical steps to prepare for impending displacement and methods that can be taken by the international community to head off unwarranted internal displacement.
  5. Module V, *Protection and Assistance during Internal Displacement*, covers the appropriate role of international organizations when displacement has taken place and displaced populations are at risk.
    - After you complete this module, you will understand the critical importance of both assistance and protection activities, and techniques for accessing and assisting displaced communities.
  6. Module VI, *Return, Resettlement, and Reintegration of Internally Displaced Populations*, describes factors affecting the return of the displaced to their home areas or resettlement in a new permanent setting.
    - After you complete this module, you will understand appropriate roles for international agencies in assisting prior to and during return/resettlement, and the importance of ongoing reintegration activities.
- As is clear from the structure of this training course, the first three modules are intended to provide a basic level of knowledge in the nature of internal displacement, the standards that underpin international programs, and mechanisms for institutional coordination.

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### **Introduction to the Training (Continued)**

- The second set of modules -- which closely parallel the organizational structure of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement -- are intended to suggest program priorities before, during, and after displacement.
- Since internal displacement is a diverse phenomenon and an evolving area of knowledge, the information presented in these modules is often suggestive, rather than definitive.
- You and other experienced international staff, carefully analyzing circumstances in the country context -- and working, of course, with the internally displaced themselves and relevant national authorities - - are the best designers of appropriate programming in your situation.
- What this course provides is important background material, relevant experience from other contexts, and information on evolving practice to assist your efforts on behalf of internally displaced persons, families and communities.
- At the end of this training, we will work together to synthesize the information we have learned by conducting a “Capstone” or final exercise. We will take a real world example of a displacement crisis—the situation of Tajikistan from 1992-96—and, working together as a Country Team, develop our own strategy for assisting displaced populations.

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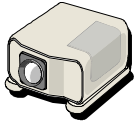
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## Participant Introductions/Icebreaker Activity (45 minutes)



*Introduce the activity by making the following points:*

- It is important to understand why identifying the internally displaced as a unique category of people requiring protection and assistance is necessary.
- Some observers and relief organizations have argued that by defining internally displaced as distinct, one risks focusing too much on one group of victims, thereby diminishing attention on the needs of other victims of conflict.



*Show Slide 1.2 Why a Special Category?*

- The argument advanced by the Representative of the Secretary General in favor of having a special category is that:
  - The internally displaced share characteristics and face ordeals specific to their situation. In order to understand their situation, it is necessary to delineate the circumstances they face.
  - Up to now, the protection and assistance needs of internally displaced persons have been overlooked; those needs cannot be properly addressed if the beneficiaries themselves and the nature of their situation are not made distinct.
  - The development of the *Guiding Principles* as a normative framework required a standard setting process.
  - The essential thrust of the identification process is not to create new categories of people having special rights but to extend protection and respect of existing rights to persons in particularly vulnerable situations.

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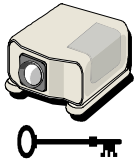
## Participant Introductions/Icebreaker Activity (Continued)

*Conduct the activity by asking participants to do the following:*

- Work in your table groups to introduce yourselves to one another and write a group definition of internally displaced persons.
- Post your group definition on chart paper and appoint a spokesperson to present the individuals at your table to the larger group and present your definition.



*Debrief the activity by having each table group introduce its members and present its definition of the internally displaced.*



*Show Slide 1.3 Descriptive Definition*

*Present the following Descriptive Definition according to the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons (1998):*

“...persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.”

*Make connections between the groups’ definitions and this definition.*

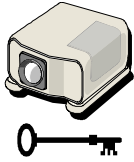
*Emphasize the following two essential components of the description:*

- *The element of coerced or forced movement, and*
- *The fact that the victims have not crossed an international state border.*

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## Participant Introductions/Icebreaker Activity (Continued)



*Show Slide 1.4 Earlier Definition*

*Give participants the following earlier definition from the Analytical Report of the Secretary-General (1992):*

“[P]ersons who have been forced to flee their homes suddenly or unexpectedly in large numbers, as a result of armed conflict, internal strife, systematic violations of human rights or natural or man-made disasters; and who are within the territory of their own country.”

*Point out some of the most important features of the current definition and how the current and former descriptions differ. These include the following:*

*“Forced or obliged” as opposed to just “forced to flee”*

- Forced to flee is too narrow because it doesn’t include possibility of being expelled or intimidated to leave by threat.
- Most important fact is that displacement is coerced or involuntary.

*“As a result of” is the same but “in order to avoid” added*

- More flexible in terms of proximity to conflict or whether conflict has taken place or not. “...as a result of” implies effects have already taken place while “in order to avoid” implies fear that they will take place.

*“within territory of their own country” replaced by “have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.”*

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### **Participant Introductions/Icebreaker Activity (Continued)**

- The more specific description was to address worldwide trends of state disintegration and formation. In the former Yugoslavia persons displaced could be considered refugees or internally displaced depending on whether the new borders they crossed had an international character.

*Discuss another important element of the description: the delineation of causes.*

“In particular as a result of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters”

- The causes of displacement are listed as part of the description. Most are self-explanatory. “Situations of generalized violence” leave open the nature and extent of the violence.
- “In particular” emphasizes that other causes may be considered.
- “Natural disaster” is included because in some disasters governments respond by discriminating against or neglecting certain groups of victims on political or ethnic grounds or by violating their rights in other ways. Man-made disasters are included for the same reason. (i.e., where a dam is built but the government makes no attempt to resettle or compensate those displaced).
- “Disaster” also included to avoid situations where people are displaced to a potentially hostile area.

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### **Participant Introductions/Icebreaker Activity (Continued)**

*Point out the following additional elements and/or changes:*

*“Home or habitual residence”* as opposed to just *“homes”*

- More flexible definition that habitual residence is not necessarily a house or a building
- Implications on return/durable solution

*“Suddenly or unexpectedly”* removed

- Precluded prospect of a “planned or managed” ethnic cleansing

*“Large numbers”* removed

- IDPs can often flee in small groups
- Situation of being an IDP is not determined on the basis of being part of a larger group

*“Internal strife”* changed to *“situations of generalized violence”*

- Encompasses more situations

*“Systematic”* removed from violations

- Broadens level of human rights violations to be considered

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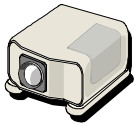
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### **The Nature of Internal Displacement: Circumstances and Conditions of the Internally Displaced (15 minutes)**



*Make the following points about internal displacement:*

- By the year 2000, internal displacement affected between 20 and 25 million people in over fifty (50) countries, far more than the number of refugees worldwide.
- Often the result of violent ethnic conflict or civil wars and/or gross violations of human rights, displacement creates conditions of severe hardship and suffering for the affected populations.



*Show Slide 1.5 Why IDPs Are Especially Vulnerable*

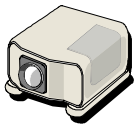
- Although all persons affected by conflict and/or human rights violations suffer, displacement from one's place of residence may make the internally displaced especially vulnerable:
  - Internally displaced persons may be in transit from one place to another, may be in hiding, may be forced toward unhealthy or inhospitable environments, or face other circumstances that make them especially vulnerable.
  - The social organization of displaced communities may have been destroyed or damaged by the act of physical displacement; family groups may be separated or disrupted; women may be forced to assume non-traditional roles or face particular vulnerabilities.
  - Internally displaced populations, and especially groups like children, the elderly, or pregnant women, may experience profound psychosocial distress related to displacement.
  - Removal from sources of income and livelihood may add to physical and psychosocial vulnerability for displaced persons.
  - Internal displacement may well disrupt schooling for displaced children and adolescents.

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### **The Nature of Internal Displacement: Circumstances and Conditions of the Internally Displaced (Continued)**

- Internal displacement to areas where local inhabitants are of different groups or inhospitable may increase risk to internally displaced communities; internally displaced persons may face language barriers in their location of displacement
- The condition of internal displacement may raise the suspicions of or lead to abuse by armed combatants, or other parties to internal conflict
- Internally displaced persons may lack identity documents essential to receiving benefits or recognition before the law; in some cases, displaced persons may have jettisoned such documents in fear of persecution.
- Internally displaced persons are found in a wide range of habitats: (1) in structured camps; (2) scattered in forests or the countryside; (3) living with relatives or members of related groups; (4) in large urban or peri-urban settings; (5) in hiding; (6) in fluid conditions in proximity to their homes, sometimes returning periodically to work fields or check possessions; and (7) multiple other circumstances, such as in abandoned factories or public buildings, in railroad cars or storage facilities.



*Show Slide 1.6 Departure and Duration Vary Enormously*

- The intensity of departure and duration of internal displacement also vary enormously.
  - Some displaced communities flee rapidly, in a group, to flee large-scale fighting or attack, often leaving all possessions behind.
  - Internally displaced persons may flee their homes individually or in family units as human rights abuses, threats, or attacks intensify. Families may send children or other groups to live apart from the remainder of the family as vulnerability mounts.

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### **The Nature of Internal Displacement: Circumstances and Conditions of the Internally Displaced (Continued)**

- Internally displaced persons may retain some portion of their possessions and tools of livelihood or be bereft of possessions.
- Certain internally displaced populations may have been forced by authorities or combatants into confined camps or settlements against their will.
- Displacement may be of short duration, until a crisis has passed, or -- in many circumstances -- may last for years.
- Internal displacement may be lengthened as authorities refuse to allow return to home areas controlled by opposing forces.
- Internally displaced persons may face repeated cycles of displacement as conflict or human rights abuses ebb and flow.
- Return may be made difficult by property or other damage in the home area, by hostility of those who did not flee, or due to seizure of property or homes by other individuals.

### **The Critical Issues of Sovereignty, Responsibility and Access (10 minutes)**



*Present the following information on sovereignty, responsibility and access:*

- When states themselves are actively involved in causing displacement or are guilty of gross violations of human rights that cause populations to flee, the situation is more complicated.
- In all cases the fact that internal displacement takes place inside the territory of a state raises sometimes sensitive issues of state sovereignty and state responsibility. However, when states cause, encourage or condone displacement, they usually perceive the internally displaced as “enemies” rather than citizens. Left to suffer in isolation and obscurity, the internally displaced can then not only be deprived of the protection of the state but also denied assistance.

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### **The Critical Issues of Sovereignty, Responsibility and Access (Continued)**

- Often the same state authorities also deny assistance and access by the international community. In other situations the internally displaced can be caught in the middle of a conflict between rebel groups and government forces and are victimized or viewed with hostility and suspicion by both sides.
- All scenarios of internal displacement raise difficult questions with no easy solutions. The biggest and often most complicated questions revolve around conceptions of sovereignty and its impact on access by international organizations.
- In what most perceive as a positive development, the cold war/"impregnable" perception of sovereignty is undergoing a subtle transformation. States are becoming less and less able to hide behind claims of national interest and sovereignty if they abuse the rights of their citizens.

*Ask participants to turn to page I-7 in their Participant Guide.*

- Secretary General Kofi Annan in the 1999 annual session of the General Assembly stated:

*State sovereignty, in its most basic sense, is being redefined - not least by the forces of globalisation and international cooperation. States are now widely understood to be instruments at the service of their peoples, and not vice versa. At the same time individual sovereignty- by which I mean the fundamental freedom of each individual, enshrined in the charter of the UN and subsequent international treaties-has been enhanced by a renewed and spreading consciousness of individual rights. When we read the charter today, we are more than ever conscious that its aim is to protect individual human beings not to protect those who abuse them.*

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### **The Critical Issues of Sovereignty, Responsibility and Access (Continued)**

- The Representative of the Secretary-General for the Internally Displaced, who was appointed in 1992 following a request by the Commission on Human Rights, has further reinforced the view that states cannot hide behind borders with his "sovereignty as responsibility" concept.

*Under this concept, a state can claim the prerogatives of sovereignty only so long as it carries out its internationally recognized responsibilities to provide protection and life supporting assistance to its citizens. Failure to do so would cause it to forfeit traditional rights of sovereignty and legitimize the involvement of the international community.<sup>3</sup>*

- Notwithstanding the changing perception of sovereignty, it is a maxim for all issues of internal displacement that ultimate responsibility rests with the state. Based on ultimate state responsibility, the challenge for the international community has been how to respond to crises of internal displacement while respecting national integrity.
- Unlike refugees, there is no single institution to respond to the protection and assistance needs of the internally displaced.
- Scarce resources and a lack of a political will to create a new agency have hampered the international community's ability to respond to the problem.
- The magnitude of the task has also, up to now, precluded an existing agency from taking on the complete burden of dealing with the internally displaced.

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<sup>3</sup> Roberta Cohen and Francis Deng, *The Forsaken People*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington, 1998  
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### **The Critical Issues of Sovereignty, Responsibility and Access (Continued)**

- Out of political necessity, the international community has sought a collaborative approach to the problem by making better use of existing mandates.
- The collaborative approach requires that the capabilities of many international organizations, working together, be combined to address situations of internal displacement in a coordinated fashion.
- You'll learn how the collaborative approach works in Module III.

### **The Guiding Principles (10 minutes)**



*Present the following information about the Guiding Principles:*

- In 1992, after the Commission on Human Rights requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations to appoint a Representative on internally displaced persons, Dr. Francis Deng, a well-respected African scholar and former diplomat, was selected.
- He was asked to study the causes and consequences of internal displacement, to review international legal protection and institutional responses to internal displacement, and to search for ways in which their protection and assistance could be improved.
- In response to an analysis of legal norms affecting internally displaced<sup>4</sup> and to remedy deficiencies in existing law, the Commission on Human Rights and the General Assembly requested the Representative of the Secretary-General to prepare an appropriate framework for the protection and assistance of the internally displaced.

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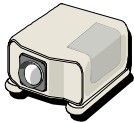
<sup>4</sup> United Nations, Compilation and Analysis of Legal Norms, Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General to the Commission on Human Rights 1996, E/CN.4/1996/Add.2 and Part II Compilation and Analysis of legal norms E/CN:4/1998/53/Add 1 and the Guiding Principles E/CN.4/1998/53/Add. 2

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### The Guiding Principles (Continued)

- In collaboration with a team of experts, the Representative drafted the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, which were presented to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-fourth session in April 1998.
- The Commission unanimously adopted resolution 1998/50, which took note of the *Guiding Principles* and requested that the Representative report back regularly on their dissemination and implementation.



*Show Slide 1-8 The Guiding Principles*

- The *Guiding Principles* address the specific needs of internally displaced persons by identifying rights and guarantees relevant to their protection.
- The Principles reflect and are consistent with international human rights law and international humanitarian law.
- They restate the relevant norms applicable to the internally displaced, which are widely spread out in existing instruments, clarify any grey areas that might exist, and address the gaps in protection.
- They apply to the different phases of displacement, including protection against arbitrary displacement, access to protection and assistance during displacement, and guarantees during return or alternative settlement and reintegration.
- In terms of their use, the Principles are intended to provide guidance to the Representative in carrying out his mandate, to assist States and national authorities when faced with the phenomenon of displacement and to guide intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations when addressing internal displacement.
- The *Guiding Principles* are also intended to be a persuasive instrument that provides not only practical guidance, but also acts as an instrument for public policy education and consciousness-raising.

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### **The Guiding Principles (Continued)**

- Since their introduction, the Guiding Principles have rapidly gained international recognition and standing as a useful tool for addressing situations of internal displacement.
- The UN Security Council has referred to the *Guiding Principles* in statements by the President and in its resolutions.
- The General Assembly has also noted the *Guiding Principles* and welcomed their use by the Representative in his dialogue with governments.
- Regional organizations have noted the *Principles* and encouraged their wide use and application.
- Members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee have expressed their willingness to disseminate the Principles among staff members and field offices for use in work with the internally displaced.
- The Red Cross movement and several non-governmental organizations have also been especially active in promoting the Guiding Principles and applying them in their work with the internally displaced.

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### **Developing a Profile (45 minutes)**



*Introduce the activity by telling participants the following:*

- Now that you have a definition of the internally displaced and some information on conditions of displacement, let's work to develop a profile of the internally displaced in your region.

*Conduct the activity by asking participants to do the following:*

- Using the UN definition as a guide, work as a group with other participants from your region to develop a profile of the internally displaced in your region.
- Describe the various groups of the internally displaced, where they are displaced from, and where they are displaced to, and the pattern of displacement.
- Where possible, describe the causes and nature of the displacement, particularly if there are any peculiarities or extenuating circumstances to the application of the definition.
- Use the questions in the Participant Guide to guide your discussion.

*Ask participants to turn to the Questions for Developing a Profile on page I-10 in the Participant Guide.*

*Debrief the activity by having each group present its profile to the large group. Point out similarities and differences in the profiles.*

*Transition to Module II, The Basis for Action in International Law and Humanitarian Principles.*