**Call for inputs**

***Internal displacement in the context of the slow-onset adverse effects of climate change***

**Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons**

**Deadline: 17 June 2020**

[The Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Ms Cecilia Jimenez-Damary](https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/idpersons/pages/idpersonsindex.aspx), will dedicate her upcoming report to the issue of internal displacement linked to slow-onset natural hazards in the context of the adverse effects of climate change. She will build on the reports of her predecessors[[1]](#footnote-1) to further advance a human rights-based approach to the issue of climate change and internal displacement, in line with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

The Special Rapporteur requests inputs from Member States and inter-governmental entities, UN agencies, civil society actors, humanitarian and development organizations, national human rights institutions, business representatives and other stakeholders, to contribute to the preparation of her report, which will be presented to the General Assembly in October 2020.

**Background**

Internal displacement linked to the adverse effects of climate change is expected to increase significantly over the coming years and decades. Projections by the World Bank indicate that, without additional and concrete climate and development action, over 143 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America alone could be forced to move within their own countries by 2050 owing to slow-onset impacts of climate change.[[2]](#footnote-2) While some might eventually cross borders, most displaced persons are expected to remain within their countries.

Slow-onset events and processes linked to the adverse effects of climate change, such as drought and desertification, land and forest degradation, glacial retreat, sea level rise, and salinisation of soil and groundwater supplies, can lead to displacement[[3]](#footnote-3). Slow-onset events and processes such as drought and sea level rise can lead to a scarcity of water in some areas and flooding in others, and affect agriculture, fishing, energy production and damage shelters, impacting livelihoods, housing, access to food and drinking water, and access to education. The interaction between the impacts of climate change and other factors can also exacerbate the risk of conflicts, acting as a driver of further displacement. Disasters in the context of climate change can also impact communities already affected by armed conflict. In many contexts, it is often a combination and the interrelationship of different drivers that lead to displacement.

Displacement linked to the adverse effects of climate change can negatively impact the enjoyment of a number of human rights, such as the rights to health, adequate housing, food and water, education, and cultural and religious rights. At the same time, discrimination and other factors impacting the enjoyment of human rights by some groups might make them more vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, increase their risk of displacement and pose challenges for their achievement of durable solutions.

For years, efforts have been undertaken at international fora to address and combat climate change and its impacts, and there has been growing global recognition of the challenges of human mobility in the context of the adverse effects of climate change and the importance of climate action, preparedness and disaster risk reduction, and approaches based on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus – all of which have an important bearing on the enjoyment of human rights by internally displaced persons. The High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement recently established by the UN Secretary-General will address, among other issues, protracted displacement and durable solutions for persons displaced in the context of disasters and the adverse effects of climate change.[[4]](#footnote-4) There has also been growing recognition of the human rights impacts of climate change and the importance of a rights-based climate action. Human rights were explicitly mentioned in the 2015 Paris Agreement, and international organizations including UNEP have increasingly referred to human rights.[[5]](#footnote-5) The Human Rights Council, OHCHR and multiple UN human rights mechanisms have engaged with environmental issues, in some instances addressing human mobility.[[6]](#footnote-6) There has also been growing attention to the responsibility of businesses in connection with climate change and its human rights implications.[[7]](#footnote-7) The impact of climate change on the human rights of future generations has also been of great concern.[[8]](#footnote-8)

While recognizing the important progress made so far, the Special Rapporteur believes that there is a need for greater attention to the plight of internally displaced persons or those at risk of internal displacement in the context of the slow-onset adverse effects of climate change, and for human rights-based prevention and response strategies.

**Questionnaire**

The Special Rapporteur is particularly interested in receiving inputs on any or all of the following issues with a focus on the slow-onset adverse effects of climate change, including case studies and specific examples of good practices and challenges:

1. Examples of national and/or regional laws and policies relevant to internal displacement in the context of disasters and climate change.
2. Available data and evidence on internal displacement linked to slow-onset natural hazards in the context of the adverse effects of climate change (globally or in a specific region or country), trends and/or challenges and gaps with regards to data collection, analysis and use.

IFRC:

Climate and disaster displacement is not only a humanitarian concern, but also a developmental, governance and human rights issue. Effectively addressing displacement requires investments in understanding and identifying risks, reducing vulnerability and exposure, and ensuring that governance frameworks are fit for purpose. This requires not only a whole of government, but whole of society approach, with active participation from communities and local actors at all stages.

The IFRC has produced a report on “Strengthening Responses to Internal Displacements in Disasters”[[9]](#footnote-9) as well as a report on “Disasters and Displacements in a changing climate: the role of National Societies in Asia Pacific”[[10]](#footnote-10) identifying challenges, opportunities but most importantly cross-sectoral solutions.

IFRC recognize that Disaster Law and Policy is an integral, but often under-explored, aspect of the integrated approach necessary to addressing climate displacement including planned relocations. Most countries have some form of disaster risk management system that is underpinned by one or more laws. These frameworks establish the legal basis for all aspects of disaster risk management from risk reduction, to preparedness, response and recovery and provide the enabling environment for actions downstream. Disaster laws help to clarify roles and responsibilities and coordination mechanisms for disaster risk management across sectors as well as from national to local level.

Used effectively, disaster law and policy can support more integrated approaches and institutional mechanisms for coordination on displacement across sectors and from national

to community level. They can also mandate the involvement of at-risk populations for example, (displaced populations or those at risk of displacement), to be engaged in risk analysis, planning and decision-making.

IFRC research has found that displacement and planned relocation are often either completely absent or not adequately addressed in disaster law or policy.

Disaster law and policy must move beyond aspirational statements, to mandate practical measures that meet the assistance and protection needs of those displaced, as well as host communities, and provide for longer term support to mitigate risk, recover and support the realisation of durable solutions.

Drawing on extensive research[[11]](#footnote-11) and international best practice and standards, IFRC has developed a set of recommendations on Disaster related human mobility jointly with a Checklist on Preparedness and Response[[12]](#footnote-12). The checklist serves as an assessment tool to guide a review process of national and local level laws and policies for enhancing disaster preparedness and response; and provide guidance on how to improve national legal and policy frameworks to bring them in line with existing international standards, including the Sendai Framework on DRR.

1. The impact of climate change-related internal displacement on the enjoyment of human rights by specific groups, such as indigenous peoples, minorities, children, older persons and persons with disabilities.
2. Analysis of the response of States and the international community to:
   1. prevent the conditions that might lead to displacement and prepare for internal displacement in climate change contexts, including early warning, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and disaster risk reduction.
   2. protect and assist those internally displaced in such disaster situations, and
   3. provide effective remedies, overcome protracted displacement and support durable solutions for them.

* The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) engage in Lobbying for strengthening the capacity of local actors to prevent conditions leading to humanitarian crisis including climate induced internal displacement and disasters as well as to bring durable solutions in response efforts. One of the key activities in this regard was regional conferences on localisation of aid.

The Africa regional conference on localisation of aid was organised by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the Government of Switzerland as the co-conveners of the Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream with funding support from the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid and hosted by the African Union. This platform resulted in key recommendations for individual and collective actions to advance localisation. Find out summary reports on

<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-01/Regional%20Localisation%20Conferences%20Summary%20Document%20-%20October%202019.pdf>

* IFRC is also working closely with the African Union on the development of a model law for the facilitation of international disaster response and initial recovery to assist countries in efforts of developing legal frameworks that create enabling environment for effective and coordinated cross border response by different actors. In addition, IFRC have also been working closely with African Union and RECs in promoting for and providing support for the development of Disaster Management guidelines.
* IFRC, as part of the biannual AU humanitarian Policy training program, is facilitating a disaster Law session, for disaster management experts of African Union member states to discuss the role of legislation in effective disaster risk management and present key recommendation on how to strengthen laws and policies based on international standards and best practices.
* Through participation in the Drafting of the Tunis Declaration on accelerating the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the common African Position on DRR, IFRC influenced the inclusion of commitments related to working towards improving legal frameworks for Disaster Management and following integrated approaches in designing and implementing Disaster Management and Climate Change Adaptation policies, strategies and actions.

1. Responsibility of the business sector in the prevention, response and provision of remedy to climate change-related displacement, for example by including considerations relating to climate change and displacement in human rights due diligence processes, in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.
2. The role of National Human Rights Institutions in monitoring, reporting and promoting accountability for climate change-related internal displacement, handling complaints and gathering disaggregated data, supporting States in preventing the conditions that might lead to displacement and responding to displacement in line with their human rights obligations, and promoting sustainable development, in accordance with the Paris Principles.
3. Examples of mechanisms used to hold States, companies or other actors accountable for climate change-related displacement, and to provide effective remedy to those affected.
4. The impact of health crises such as the current one related to COVID-19, and of the measures taken to respond to them, on climate change-related internal displacement, including their impact on: a) displacement patterns, b) climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, c) preparedness and disaster risk reduction, and d) humanitarian assistance and protection to internally displaced persons.
5. Any other information stakeholders wish to share regarding internal displacement in the context of the adverse effects of climate change.
6. Information on how slow-onset effects of climate change are inter-related with conflict, i.e. how climate change and conflict combine to act as drivers and causes of internal displacement, and what specific combined effects they have on internally displaced persons.

The responses to the above questionnaire can be submitted in English, French or Spanish. Please send your inputs by email to [idp@ohchr.org](mailto:idp@ohchr.org) **by 17 June 2020**. Please limit your responses to a **maximum of 2,000 words**. Reports, academic studies and other types of background materials can be attached as **annexes** to the submission. Please submit your responses in an accessible format, such as MS Word.

If not stated otherwise in your submission, the responses received will be published on the [website](https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/idpersons/pages/idpersonsindex.aspx) of the Special Rapporteur. Unless requested otherwise, the submissions may also be quoted, in part or in full, or referenced in the report and briefings of the Special Rapporteur and related information products.

For any questions or clarifications, please do not hesitate to contact the mandate through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights ([idp@ohchr.org](mailto:idp@ohchr.org)).

1. See A/66/285 and A/64/214. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Kumari Rigaud, Kanta, Alex de Sherbinin, Bryan Jones, Jonas Bergmann, Viviane Clement, Kayly Ober, Jacob Schewe, Susana Adamo, Brent McCusker, Silke Heuser, and Amelia Midgley. 2018. *Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration*. Washington, DC: The World Bank. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See list of other slow-onset events linked to climate change at FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Terms of Reference, High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See for example <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/report/climate-change-and-human-rights> and <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/press-release/unep-un-human-rights-office-sign-new-agreement-stepping-commitment> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See for example OHCHR, PDD, *The Slow Onset Effects of Climate Change and Human Rights Protection for Cross-Border Migrants,* 2018; OHCHR reports on climate change and human rights (A/HRC/10/61, 2009), climate change and the right to health (A/HRC/32/23, 2016), climate change and the rights of the child (A/HRC/35/13, 2017); Human Rights Council Resolution 41/21 on human rights and climate change, (A/HRC/RES/41/21, 2019) and Special Procedures reports relevant to climate change, listed at <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/SP/List_SP_Reports_Climate_Change.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See for example <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Business/Pages/Climate-Change-and-the-UNGPs.aspx> and <https://2019unforumbhr.sched.com/event/U9Gp/addressing-climate-change-the-business-and-human-rights-connection> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See for example speech by the High Commissioner for Human Rights at COP25, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25407&LangID=E>; and the UN Secretary-General’s Call to Action for Human Rights before the Human Rights Council, available at <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2020-02-24/secretary-generals-remarks-the-un-human-rights-council-%E2%80%9Cthe-highest-aspiration-call-action-for-human-rights-delivered-scroll-down-for-all-english> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2019/11/IDP-Summary-Report-Final-LR.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/12/2018-IFRC-Climate-Change-Disasters-Displacement-Report-LR.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Law and Disaster Preparedness and Response, Chapter 7, page 101.

    <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2019/11/DPR_Synthesis-Report_EN_Screen.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Checklist on Law and Disaster Preparedness and Response, page 27

    <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2019/11/DPR_Checklist_Final_EN_Screen.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)