

The Brookings Institution - University of Bern

## PROJECT ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

BROOKINGS *u<sup>b</sup>*

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Boys displaced by the 2004 tsunami in Sri Lanka.

Photo: Katharina Röhl

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# Foreword

Ambassador Carlos Pascual,  
Vice-President Brookings Institution  
Director of Foreign Policy Studies



CARLOS PASCUAL

I am delighted to introduce this annual report of the Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement. The project is a unique example of a partnership between a research institute and the United Nations. Founded in 1994, the Project is co-directed by Elizabeth Ferris, a Brookings Senior Fellow and Walter Kälin, the Representative of the Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons.

I view the Project as an invaluable component of the overall program of work in Foreign Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution. The research conducted by the Project on Iraqi displacement, for example, has complemented the work carried out by other scholars and enabled us to have a more comprehensive understanding of the complex Iraqi reality. The Project's research on Darfur, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other displacement situations provides a unique humanitarian and human rights perspective on crises that are too often seen only in strategic or national policy dimensions. The Brookings Institution's core values of quality, independence and impact are evident in the work of the Project.

Its high-quality research on internally displaced persons has raised the visibility of displacement issues and has been widely acknowledged in the international community. The impact of the Project's work has been far-ranging, as evidenced in the fact that some 15 governments have adopted national laws and policies on internal displacement that build on the Project's work, and the United Nations has endorsed several policy guidelines developed by the Project, including most recently *When Displacement Ends: A Framework for Durable Solutions* and *Protecting Persons Affected by Natural Disasters: Operational Guidelines on Human Rights and Natural Disasters*. These guidelines provide concrete advice to people working in the field to protect the human rights of people displaced by conflict or natural disasters.

Overall the Project has made important contributions to Brookings, the international community, and internally displaced persons and we are proud to support this work.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Carlos Pascual". The signature is fluid and cursive.

CARLOS PASCUAL

Vice President and Director, Foreign Policy  
The Brookings Institution

# Message from the Co-Directors



WALTER KÄLIN



ELIZABETH FERRIS

We are pleased to present this report on our 2007 activities and hope that this new format will serve as an awareness-raising tool about the continuing needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs). While the issue of IDPs is now high on the agenda of the international community, it is important to remember that there are still 25 million people who have been forced from their communities by conflict and many more who have been displaced by natural disasters and large-scale development projects. Unfortunately, there is little evidence that displacement is on the decline; rather, the increasing number of IDPs in countries as diverse as Iraq and Colombia makes it clear that there is still an urgent need to promote the human rights of internally displaced persons. While we have followed the humanitarian reform process closely this year, there are still many IDPs who are falling through the gaps. For example, an expert seminar on protracted IDP situations, organized jointly with UNHCR in June, highlighted the need for improved mechanisms to respond to IDPs once the initial emergency phase has passed.

2007 was a year of intense activity for the Brookings-Bern Project with activities in many different areas, some of which are highlighted in the pages which follow. We are pleased with both our new initiatives—such as the work done on the relationship between internal displacement and peace—and with our continuing efforts to support governments to adopt laws and policies which uphold the human rights of IDPs. It has been encouraging to see the extent to which the Operational Guidelines for people affected by natural disasters and the Framework for Durable Solutions are being used by the international humanitarian community. Our support for National Human Rights Institutions and civil society groups continues to demonstrate the importance of reaching out to others who are working with IDPs on the ground.

As this report makes clear, the research expertise brought by the Brookings Institution and the Representative's on-the-ground activities have enabled the project to have an impact far beyond its small staff. The RSG's 2007 missions to the Central African Republic, Azerbaijan and Sri Lanka and working visits to Afghanistan, Armenia, and Côte d'Ivoire indicated that much more needs to be done before the human rights of IDPs are fully respected. The research conducted this past year by the Brookings Institution on diverse issues, including sectarian violence and displacement in Iraq, mechanisms for consulting with IDPs, and the relationship between migration and displacement served to enhance our understanding of displacement. But there is much that remains to be done—as discussed at a meeting convened in Cairo by the Project and Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of International Migration in March 2007 on the future research agenda of internal displacement. Although we are proud of our work in 2007, we are acutely aware that much more is needed to respond to the world's internally displaced persons.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Kälin'.

Walter Kälin

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth G Ferris'.

Elizabeth Ferris



An internally displaced family at a displaced persons camp in Sabirabad, Azerbaijan.

Photo: Katharina Röhl

*While the issue of IDPs is now high on the agenda of the international community, it is important to remember that there are still 25 million people who have been forced from their communities by conflict.*





While visiting Uganda, RSG Kälin meets with representatives from the government.

Photo Karen Gulick

*...the relationship with the Representative  
has ensured that cutting-edge research  
from the Project is fed directly into the  
UN system and is used in the field to  
improve protection and assistance of IDPs.*

# A Unique Institutional Relationship

When he was appointed Representative of the Secretary-General on Internal Displacement in 1994, Francis Deng was a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution. He established the Project on Internal Displacement at Brookings, with the support of Roberta Cohen, who became co-director of the Project with Deng. The position as Representative was voluntary, unpaid, and came with very limited resources, and the Project within Brookings provided logistical, research and policy support, as well as a vehicle for fund-raising. Even after Dr. Deng changed his institutional affiliation to Johns Hopkins University, the Project continued to support his work from its Brookings base, being known for a while as the Brookings-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement.

On 21 September 2004, the Secretary-General appointed Dr. Walter Kälin, a constitutional law professor at the University of Bern, as Representative of the Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons (RSG). Dr. Kälin had worked closely with Dr. Deng and the Project on Internal Displacement for many years, having chaired the process that led to the development of the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*. Upon his appointment, he asked the Project to continue its work in support of the new mandate, and on 1 January 2005 it became the Brookings Institution – University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement, with Dr. Kälin and Roberta Cohen as co-directors. Dr. Elizabeth Ferris replaced Cohen as co-director in November 2006.

The Brookings-Bern Project is a unique partnership between a research center and a UN Representative. Together, the Representative and Project have studied internal displacement worldwide; raised international awareness of the issue; developed and promoted a legal framework for addressing the needs of the internally displaced; made recommendations for more effective institutional arrangements; provided support for civil society; and conducted policy-oriented research. The research provided by the Project has strengthened the ability of the Representative to raise issues of displacement with governments and to encourage governments, regional organizations and UN agencies to develop and implement policies which uphold the human rights of IDPs. At the same time, the relationship with the Representative has ensured that cutting-edge research from the Project is fed directly into the UN system and is used in the field to improve protection and assistance of IDPs.





Internally displaced women in Georgia.

Photo: Katharina Röhl

*While it is usually easy to say when refugees stop being refugees, it is far more difficult to assess when internal displacement ends.*



## When Displacement Ends: A Framework for Durable Solutions

While it is usually easy to say when refugees stop being refugees, it is far more difficult to assess when internal displacement ends. Internally displaced persons do not have any special legal status that ends at a particular time; and as citizens of the countries where they are displaced they have every right not to go home, even once it is safe to do so. Yet defining the end of displacement has significant consequences for the protection, assistance and integration of the internally displaced.

The result of a collaborative inquiry with the Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University, the *Framework for Durable Solutions* helps to define the situations when it can be said that displacement has ended and those formerly displaced no longer require the specific attention given to them as internally displaced persons. It demonstrates that the ending of displacement occurs not at one point in time but as a gradual process, and that it can be identified by conditions on the ground.

The following are processes through which a durable solution can be found:

- ❖ IDPs are able to make an informed decision as to whether to return, remain where they are, or settle elsewhere in the country
- ❖ IDPs participate fully in the planning and management of return, local integration or settlement elsewhere in the country
- ❖ IDP representatives can visit and assess conditions for return or settlement elsewhere
- ❖ No coercion has been used to induce or to prevent return, local integration or settlement elsewhere
- ❖ National authorities have taken appropriate measures to establish conditions, as well as provide the means, to enable the internally displaced to return voluntarily, in safety and dignity, or to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country

- ❖ National authorities grant and facilitate safe, unimpeded and timely access of humanitarian organizations and other relevant actors to assist internally displaced persons to return, locally integrate, or settle elsewhere in the country

Conditions that mark a durable solution occur when formerly displaced persons:

- ❖ Do not suffer attacks, harassment, intimidation, persecution, or any other form of punitive action upon return or settlement
- ❖ Are not subject to discrimination for reasons related to their displacement
- ❖ Have full and non-discriminatory access to national and sub-national protection mechanisms
- ❖ Have access to personal documentation
- ❖ Have access to mechanisms for property restitution or compensation regardless of whether they return
- ❖ Enjoy without discrimination an adequate standard of living, including shelter, health care, food, water and other means of survival
- ❖ Have been able to reunite with family members
- ❖ Are able to exercise the right to participate fully and equally in public affairs

This framework, which is currently being tested in the field, is intended to assist governments, international organizations, and civil society in their efforts to establish durable solutions for the internally displaced.

The full report is available at:

<http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2007/09displacementends.aspx>

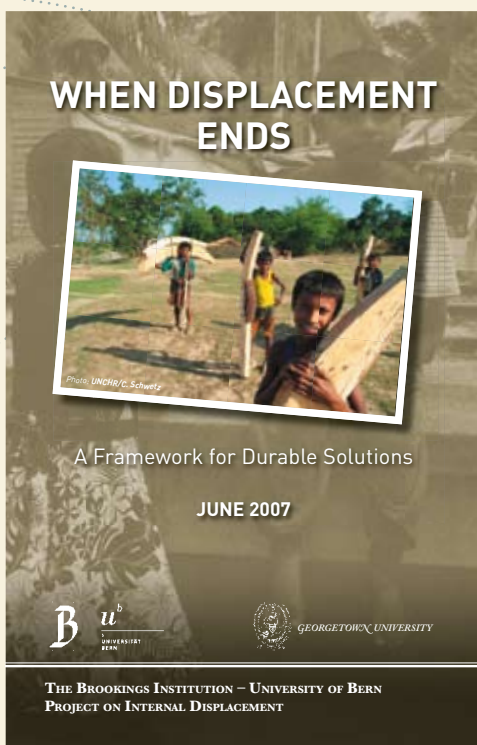




Photo: Courtesy of CHF International

## Internal Displacement in Iraq

*Elizabeth Ferris*

The US-led military intervention in Iraq in March 2003 did not produce the stream of refugees which many in the humanitarian community had predicted and feared. In fact, over 300,000 Iraqi refugees returned to their country after Saddam Hussein was overthrown. But with the escalation of violence, most notably with the bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra in February 2006, Iraqis began fleeing their homes in large numbers. By the end of 2007, some 4.5 million Iraqis had left their homes and communities. About half were internally displaced, while the other half had fled the country.

While internal displacement was initially a consequence of the growing sectarian violence and the breakdown of social order, it also exacerbated sectarian polarization in the country as people were forced to move from mixed communities to single sect ones. The internally displaced moved in with family or friends, rented housing, or occupied abandoned buildings. Very few – less than one percent – of Iraq's displaced lived in tented camps although by the end of the year, pressure was growing to establish

camps. As the number of internally displaced persons increased, host communities faced growing pressures and governorates began closing their borders to IDPs.

Internally displaced persons faced immediate needs for shelter, food, and employment. Many found it difficult to access the government's Public Distribution System which provides basic food rations to Iraqis. In many cases, they were told that they needed to return to their community of origin in order to register their change of address with the authorities before they could receive rations.

Iraq is the most difficult situation in the world for humanitarian agencies. Following the August 2003 bombing of UN headquarters and subsequent withdrawal of expatriate UN and NGO staff, provision of all humanitarian assistance within Iraq was delivered by Iraqi staff, the Iraqi Red Crescent or NGOs. The volatile security situation sometimes forced Iraqi NGOs to work out of their homes and use their own private vehicles to deliver food and relief items to those affected by the violence.

As the number of Iraqis leaving the country increased, conditions for those who remained worsened. Medical personnel fled the country in large numbers, leaving hospitals and clinics short-staffed. This encouraged greater displacement because Iraqis could not get needed medical treatment there. The consequences of Iraq's "brain drain" are likely to be felt for many years ahead.

In 2007 the Brookings-Bern Project worked closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to carry out research on the situation of displaced Iraqis in Iraq as well as in neighboring countries. Staff participated in seminars, public events and UN meetings on Iraqi displacement. They met with government, UN, and NGO representatives; wrote articles and op-eds to draw attention to the urgent humanitarian needs facing Iraq's displaced; and organized expert seminars in Washington. In April, the Representative of the Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons made a statement on Iraq at the International Conference on Addressing the Humanitarian Needs of Iraqi Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons inside Iraq and in the Neighboring Countries and later published an article on Iraqi displacement in *Forced Migration Review*.





Photo: Courtesy of CHF International

## National Laws and Policies

Since the submission of the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* in 1998, the Representative of the Secretary-General has promoted their incorporation in national legislation. Indeed, the development of a national legal framework upholding the rights of the internally displaced and the adoption of a national policy or plan of action on internal displacement are considered part of the national responsibility of states. The UN Secretary-General endorsed this approach in his 2005 reform report *In Larger Freedom*, urging states to accept the Guiding Principles and to commit themselves to incorporating them into national legislation.

The challenge is how to translate the sometimes abstract provisions of the Guiding Principles into practical and effective directives at the national level.

The Representative of the Secretary-General and the Brookings-Bern Project have worked to address this challenge through the development of an IDP Law and Policy Manual that will assist legislators and policy-makers in drafting effective laws and policies. The specific topics to be addressed in the Manual include: movement-related rights; family life; food and water; shelter; health; documentation; property and

possessions; employment and economic activities; political participation; education; and humanitarian assistance. The Manual will identify measures that can be taken to prevent or mitigate the affects of displacement and will consider cross-cutting issues applicable in all situations of internal displacement including: equality, non-discrimination and affirmative measures; consultation and participation of the internally displaced; monitoring and benchmarks; and information.

Experts identified to write on each of the topics to be addressed in the Manual have prepared studies to be published by the American Society of International Law and the Brookings Institution by the end of 2008. Based on these studies the Manual is being drafted and will be reviewed and published in 2008 following consultation among relevant international agencies and national authorities.



### Strengthening the capacity of national human rights institutions (NHRIs)

NHRIs are uniquely placed to advise governments and to monitor and investigate human rights situations. For this reason, the Project and the Representative have considered it important to integrate internal displacement into the work of NHRIs and increase their capacity for promoting and protecting the rights of internally displaced persons.

The Project has directly supported seven NHRIs in Asia to strengthen their capacity to address internal displacement and has begun to develop a strategy to work with NHRIs in Africa.

Examples of activities carried out by NHRIs, with the support of the Project, include:

- ❖ advising its government on the development of a policy on internal displacement (Nepal);
- ❖ partnering with an expert research institution to train authorities on the rights of the internally displaced (India);
- ❖ raising awareness about the rights of the internally displaced among the community through translation of the Guiding Principles into local languages and media spots (Timor-Leste); and
- ❖ providing research and recommendations concerning equal access to goods and services for the internally displaced (Sri Lanka).



RSG Kälin meeting with IDPs in South Sudan.

Photo: Katharina Röhl

## Engaging Civil Society

**T**he Project places considerable emphasis on working with civil society and IDP communities. During 2007 we collaborated with a wide range of partners to support workshops, training courses and specific activities.

### *Community Trust Fund (CTF)*

Based in Puttalam, Sri Lanka, CTF advocates for war-affected populations and has over 1,200 members. A Project grant supported a range of activities including: ten one-day workshops for local authorities; the establishment of IDP Help Desks at various CTF field offices to act as focal points for local IDP issues, collect data and information, disseminate materials, and initiate advocacy campaigns; and a national consultation bringing together officials and IDPs to discuss the implementation of Sri Lanka's laws and policies on internal displacement.

### *Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group*

For the last three years the Project has supported the Annual Winter Course on Forced Migration of the Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group in Kolkata. The course brings

together academics, representatives of national human rights institutions and NGOs, government officials, researchers, activists, and journalists from different South Asian countries.

#### *East African School on Refugee and Humanitarian Affairs (EASRHA)*

With support from the Project, this annual course is a joint initiative of the University of Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania), Moi University (Kenya) and Makerere University (Uganda). Participants in 2007 included government officials, civil society representatives and university students from East Africa. The Project also supported the participation of two guest lecturers for the course.

#### *Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA)*

With a Project grant, CHA is conducting legal aid clinics with the purpose of initiating mechanisms and structures for IDPs to find solutions, and in particular to address land and property rights issues. The clinics provide advisory services and have been used to launch information campaigns about the rights of IDPs. Through another Project grant, CHA, the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA), and the Sri Lankan Human Rights Commission are collaborating to produce a quarterly newsletter in English, Sinhala, and Tamil.

#### *South Sudan Law Society (SSLS)*

With support from the Project, the South Sudan Law Society (SSLS) has established legal aid clinics in three areas of Southern Sudan. Each clinic is run by qualified lawyers who provide advice on legal matters to IDPs; track investigations of human rights violations; provide free court representation to IDPs; and visit courts, police stations, and prisons to ensure laws and IDP rights are respected. SSLS also organized monthly workshops and disseminated 3,000 copies of the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* in Dinka and Nuer, along with posters to promote IDP rights.

#### *KUSH*

The Project is also working with KUSH to begin a program to monitor human rights and IDP issues in the Abeyi region of Sudan. Specific activities include implementing a training course among local leaders; the dissemination of the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*; and the deployment of information officers to monitor and implement the Abeyi Area Strategic Action Plan.





An internally displaced woman at an IDP collective center in Sumgayit, Azerbaijan.

Photo: Katharina Röhl

## IDPs and Peace

*Khalid Koser*

Resolving internal displacement is inextricably linked with achieving lasting peace. In some countries the sheer scale of displacement is so significant and accounts for such a large proportion of the population that it is simply unrealistic to plan for a peaceful future without incorporating the needs of the displaced and ensuring their active participation. Helping displaced populations to return and reintegrate can simultaneously address the root causes of a conflict and help prevent further displacement: for example the return of displaced populations can be an important signifier of peace and help validate the post-conflict order. The return of displaced populations can be a pre-condition for peace if they are politically active; and they can also make an important contribution to the recovery of local economies. And in some countries the displaced have become parties to the conflict, and their inclusion is therefore necessary for conflict-resolution.

All these reasons apply equally to refugees; but IDPs often have needs that differentiate them from refugees and require specific attention during peace processes. More often than refugees, IDPs remain close to the zone of conflict and are more vulnerable to



Internally displaced children at an IDP camp in Uganda.

Photo: Karen Gulick

violence; the provision of humanitarian assistance to IDPs is often more difficult than to refugees; and unlike refugees, IDPs are not singled out for specific protection in international law. In contrast to other war-affected civilians, IDPs need shelter; may be unable to replace official documents; and often encounter problems recovering land and property. Yet while recent peace processes have a relatively good record for incorporating civil society and refugees, IDPs have often been ignored.

The best way to address the concerns of IDPs in peace negotiations is through their direct participation. But there can be significant obstacles especially to participation in “track-one” negotiations. These negotiations are high-level and work to short deadlines. IDPs tend to lack the resources, education, and political skills to mobilize and participate and also lack legitimate leaders to represent them. IDPs can sometimes run the risk of reprisals where they do mobilize. There may also be situations where IDPs can be “spoilers.”

It is exactly because of such obstacles that parallel “track-two” peace negotiations have gained legitimacy. While there are no recent examples of IDP-specific initiatives, IDPs have formed effective coalitions with other groups in “track-two” negotiations in Burundi, Colombia, Georgia, and Liberia. On one hand some of the advantages of direct participation

in “track-one” negotiations cannot be replaced – for example they set the timetable and agenda for peace processes. On the other hand “track-one” often relies on “track-two” to provide local insights and a less formal forum for problem-solving.

“Track-three”, or grassroots initiatives, probably provide the greatest scope for IDP participation, and are particularly important for resolving local-level conflicts. At the same time their impact on national level negotiations is usually limited, and alone they cannot be relied on to ensure that IDP concerns are effectively represented.

Where the direct participation of IDPs in peace negotiations is not possible, desirable, or effective, what are the alternatives? One is for international mediators to prompt political leaders to incorporate displacement issues in peace negotiations. This worked in Mozambique and Bosnia. But it requires mediators who understand the specific concerns of IDPs, and preferably who have time actually to consult with them. A second complementary strategy is to focus on the legal rights of IDPs, especially as advocating for agreed standards should not require direct consultations. There are often international, regional and national mechanisms that can be harnessed to promote the protection of IDPs’ rights. Third, UN agencies and other international and national actors can collect and provide information on displacement issues to “track-one” actors, to whom they often have privileged access.

Engaging with the concerns of the displaced in peace negotiations – whether directly or indirectly - is only the first step in ensuring that peace processes address them. Peace agreements establish the political, legal and humanitarian obligations of governments towards IDPs, and it is critical that their texts: contain clear definitions of displaced persons; define roles and responsibilities in relation to durable solutions; enumerate the rights of displaced persons; and define an implementation process. Equally, displacement issues also need mainstreaming in the peace-building phase, when it is especially important to provide security; solve property-related problems; encourage reconciliation; undertake post-conflict reconstruction; and ensure a political transition to an effective and legitimate government.

Further recommendations can be found in the recent Brookings-Bern Project publication *Addressing Internal Displacement in Peace Processes, Peace Agreements, and Peace-Building* available at <http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2007/09/peaceprocesses.aspx>

*There are often international, regional and national mechanisms that can be harnessed to promote the protection of IDPs’ rights.*

# Annual Course on the Law of Internal Displacement

In June 2007 the Project and Representative of the Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, convened the third course on the law of internal displacement at the International Institute for Humanitarian Law in Sanremo, Italy. The 2007 course was attended by 28 delegates from 11 countries, as well as representatives of international NGOs. Speakers included the Representative, Project staff, and invited experts from academia and policy.

The course is designed for government officials from countries affected by internal displacement and who work directly on these issues. Its aims are to:

- ❖ increase participants' understanding of the international norms underpinning the protection of internally displaced persons;
- ❖ promote the use and implementation of the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*;
- ❖ encourage governments to establish or improve existing legislation and policies on the protection of internally displaced persons; and
- ❖ facilitate the exchange of experiences among participants regarding implementation and monitoring mechanisms.

The course includes lectures, plenary discussion, presentations by participants, practical exercises and a role play. The lectures cover legal aspects of protection from, during and after displacement for internally displaced persons. Practical exercises, carried out in small groups, require participants to work with case files to identify internally displaced persons, their human rights, and responsible agencies for protecting and assisting them. Another exercise focuses specifically on resolving property disputes. The culmination of the course is a national hearing role play, in which participants adopt the role of members of the government or representatives of international organizations or civil society, and negotiate a draft national policy on internal displacement.



Participants drafting a national internal displacement policy in an exercise at the Annual Course in Sanremo.

# Web-based Database

An increasing number of national governments, regional organizations and international agencies base recommendations, plans, laws and policies on the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*. In order to assist their efforts, the Project is creating a centralized repository of all materials relevant to the rights of the internally displaced.

A wealth of support for the norms underlying the provisions of the Guiding Principles exists in the resolutions of international bodies, recommendations of treaty bodies, the diplomatic representations of states, judicial decisions of courts and the laws of a small but growing number of states. The growing number of such authorities strengthens the ability of advocates persuasively to argue that the Guiding Principles reflect existing law and state practice about particular aspects of IDPs' rights. It will also increase the standing of the Guiding Principles and the authority of the assertions contained in the Guiding Principles as to the scope of IDPs' rights. In order to be of use to courts, lawyers and advocates seeking to understand the legal basis and status of the Guiding Principles, these disparate opinions, decisions and other documents are being compiled, organized, and made accessible.

The Brookings-Bern Project, together with the Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University, is in the process of developing a web-based database on the law of internal displacement. The website and all documents, where possible, will be available in English, French and Spanish. The website will include explanatory material, including: an introduction to internal displacement and frequently asked questions; an introduction to the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*; the history of the Guiding Principles; information about the mandate and activities of the Representative of the Secretary-General; and a list of links to relevant international, regional and non-governmental organizations, and academic and national human rights institutions.

The web-based database will be launched in early 2008 and will be accessible at [www.idpguidingprinciples.org](http://www.idpguidingprinciples.org). In the interim a webpage has been developed and added to the Project website that provides access to a growing catalogue of laws and policies on internal displacement from countries around the world.



# Protecting Persons Affected by Natural Disasters

According to the International Institute for Disaster Risk Reduction, over 200 million people have been affected by natural disasters every year over the past two decades. It is unclear how many have been forced to flee their communities as internally displaced persons. Those affected by natural disasters, including IDPs, are entitled to fundamental human rights on a par with other citizens of their country, but in practice, their rights are often violated. They may well face, *inter alia*, discrimination in aid provision, enforced relocation, sexual and gender-based violence, and unsafe or involuntary return or resettlement. Often their rights are violated because of inadequate planning or inappropriate policies rather than malign intent.

Following the large-scale displacement resulting from the 26 December 2004 tsunami, the Project turned its attention to the issue of the promotion of the human rights of those displaced by natural disasters. In particular, the Representative of the Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons developed operational guidelines for humanitarian organizations working with affected populations. These guidelines were endorsed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in June 2006 and are being widely circulated among agencies which are operational in natural disaster response. They are intended to complement other efforts to provide advice to governments responding to natural disasters in their countries.

The operational guidelines spell out the basic human rights of those affected by natural disasters and indicate vulnerable populations in greatest need of assistance. Those affected by natural disasters have the right to be protected against violence, including sexual and gender-based violence; the right to information about available assistance; and the right to be consulted in a meaningful way. People who have been displaced by a natural disaster also have the right to decide whether to return home, to stay where they are, or to settle in another part of the country.

Recognizing that guidelines alone are not sufficient to ensure the human rights of IDPs, in 2007 the Project developed a manual to be used as a training tool for humanitarian organizations. A plan to organize training events for government officials and humanitarian organizations was drawn up, with three events to be held in the first half of 2008: in the USA, Central America and Southern Africa.

While the Project has focused its efforts on the human rights of those displaced by natural disasters, work was also carried out to support efforts to reduce the risks of natural disasters. Thus a seminar was organized in Washington on Disaster Risk Reduction and the Representative wrote an op-ed on the same theme on World Disaster Risk Reduction Day. Renewed efforts are needed both to prevent future disasters and mitigate the associated risks, on the one hand, and, on the other, to ensure that those who are affected by disasters are able to exercise their human rights.



Sri Lankan children displaced by the 2004 tsunami.

Photo: Katharina Röhl

# New Challenges for IDP Research

*Khalid Koser*

In the short time that IDPs have attracted attention, a lot has been achieved: a Representative was appointed by the UN Secretary-General, a normative framework for protecting IDPs has evolved, states are developing national laws on internal displacement, and the UN system is delivering a better humanitarian response.

In striking contrast to the growth of “refugee studies”, there has been very little academic research on IDPs. One reason is that the concept refugee has been in use for longer than the concept IDP. Another is that the crisis of internal displacement has been so urgent that efforts have focused on advocacy and policy rather than research. IDPs are also more difficult to research than refugees. And perhaps the distinction between refugees and IDPs is too blurred to justify a separate body of research.

Still, important research challenges lie ahead. One is conceptual. Unlike the narrow legal definition of a refugee, the definition of an IDP is broad and descriptive. On one hand this is a distinct advantage. It recognizes the realities of the experience of displacement, which often takes place for mixed reasons rather than in ways that conform to neat categories. On the other hand it runs the risk of being too broad to be of practical value. At the meeting organized by the Project and Georgetown’s ISIM on the future research agenda on internal displacement, there was considerable discussion of the appropriate “frame of reference” for IDPs. Should they be compared with refugees? Economic migrants? People affected but not displaced by conflict?<sup>1</sup>

A lack of conceptual clarity compounds more practical challenges in counting IDPs. Many do not settle in camps. Some return home quickly. Others are in areas outside government control. And counting IDPs is only half the challenge; we need better demographic and socio-economic profiles, and enumeration of specific vulnerabilities.

Important research challenges also arise around understanding the causes, consequences and solutions for internal displacement. In understanding causes, a longer-term time frame is required: What will be the displacement implications of climate change? A more comprehensive understanding of consequences is also required: In what ways does internal displacement result in specific vulnerabilities – as compared to those who do not move at all, or other mobile populations? A critical research question surrounding solutions is to understand when displacement ends. The Project has developed a framework for gauging the end of displacement, but it needs testing and refining.

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<sup>1</sup> For meeting report, see [http://www3.brookings.edu/fp/projects/idp/conferences/2007\\_Cairorpt.pdf](http://www3.brookings.edu/fp/projects/idp/conferences/2007_Cairorpt.pdf)



Photo: Courtesy of CHF International

The limited academic research on IDPs has been dominated by lawyers, anthropologists, international relations experts, and health and nutrition specialists. More work is needed in all these areas. At the same time there are disciplinary gaps. Although the concept of internal displacement is relatively new, the phenomenon is not, and historians can teach us lessons from internal displacement in the past. Neither has there been any serious analysis from economists: What are the impacts of IDPs on local labor markets? There is also a need for the application of geographical techniques – remote sensing and Geographical Information Systems. There has been a lack of genuinely multi-disciplinary research; virtually no longitudinal research; and very little internationally comparative research.

Besides these challenges, there are three other distinct reasons for encouraging academic research on internal displacement. First, academics have the time, space and skills to listen to IDPs. Second, the information gap about IDPs is so significant that even the most modest of contributions can have an impact. Finally, while it is understandable that there is little space for ambiguity for advocates, policy-makers and practitioners, academics have the right and privilege to test assumptions and ask awkward questions.

# Into 2008

In the coming year, we will continue to raise awareness of internal displacement through research, seminars, and development of practical tools that can be used to enhance assistance and protection for IDPs. We will place particular emphasis on two initiatives that were launched last year: supporting efforts to incorporate internal displacement into peace processes and promoting a rights-based response to natural disasters. But our plan of activities responds to a wide variety of situations in support of four objectives. Specifically, we seek to:

## **Strengthen the Normative Framework for IDPs by:**

- ❖ Using the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* to reflect upon their impact on IDP protection and to raise awareness of the continued needs of IDPs
- ❖ Finalizing the *IDP Law and Policy Manual* which will provide guidance to policy-makers developing national laws and promoting the human rights of IDPs
- ❖ Producing a volume of studies upon which the Manual is based
- ❖ Launching a web-based database of laws and policies related to internal displacement
- ❖ Publishing a second edition of the *Annotations to the Guiding Principles*

## **Enhance the Will to Protect IDPs by:**

- ❖ Continuing to work with national governments in developing laws and policies on IDPs, through supporting Representative country missions and working visits, through active dissemination of the *IDP Law and Policy Manual*, and through providing advice on an on-going basis
- ❖ Supporting and encouraging regional organizations to adopt policies that promote the human rights of IDPs, with a particular emphasis on the African Union
- ❖ Working to mainstream IDP issues into the United Nations through staff working in OCHA and UNHCR and through dialogue with the Peacebuilding Commission
- ❖ Organizing a workshop in Colombia for municipal authorities to consider how they can more effectively address IDP issues
- ❖ Organizing seminars and workshops to raise awareness of internal displacement, with emphasis on addressing the gap between humanitarian emergency response and long-term development

## **Build Capacity to Protect IDPs by:**

- ❖ Organizing workshops in USA, Central America and Southern Africa for organizations responding to natural disasters, based on the *Operational Guidelines on Human Rights and Natural Disasters*



A displaced boy at a makeshift IDP camp on the outskirts of Khartoum, Sudan.

Photo: Katharina Röhl

- ❖ Evaluating and revising the *Manual on Human Rights and Natural Disasters* after it has been field-tested
- ❖ Organizing the fourth course on the Law of Internal Displacement for government officials at Sanremo
- ❖ Supporting civil society initiatives to respond to IDPs
- ❖ Conducting research on the role of national NGOs in IDP protection
- ❖ Carrying out training initiatives with National Human Rights Institutions
- ❖ Disseminating information through our website and listserv
- ❖ Publishing draft guidelines on how to consult with IDPs
- ❖ Working with universities and research institutions in Asia and Africa to support their efforts to build capacity to address IDP issues

#### **Address New Challenges by:**

- ❖ Developing a manual for mediators to incorporate issues related to internal displacement in mediation
- ❖ Conducting research on peacekeeping initiatives in Darfur, on internal displacement in Iraq and on security and displacement in Afghanistan
- ❖ Responding to new situations as they arise



# Seminars and Workshops in 2007

*Involving Women in the Sudanese Peace Process* (17 January)

*Researching Internal Displacement – State of the Art and an Agenda for the Future*, in collaboration with the Institute for the Study of International Migration, Georgetown University and hosted by the Forced Migration and Refugee Studies Centre at the American University in Cairo (8-9 March, Cairo)

*The Return of Displaced Persons to Southern Sudan* (16 March)

*Darfur at a Crossroads: Global Public Opinion and the Responsibility to Protect* (5 April)

*Iraqi Displaced Persons and the Iraqi Red Crescent* (26 April)

*Internal Displacement in Colombia*, in collaboration with the Washington Office on Latin America (9 May)

*Internal Displacement: Global Overview of Trends and Developments in 2006* in collaboration with the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (11 May)

*Reporting Crises: How the Media, Government and Relief Agencies Shape Humanitarian Response* (24 May)

*Expert Seminar on Protracted IDP Situations*, jointly organized with UNHCR (21-22 June, Geneva)

*Internal Displacement and Peace Processes*, hosted by Ambassador Peter Maurer, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations (11 June, New York)

*Internal Displacement and Peace Processes*, in collaboration with the Geneva Centre for Security Policy and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (3 July, Geneva)

*2007 Iraq Displacement Mid-Year Review*, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (16 July)

*Exercising National Responsibility: Laws and Policies on Internal Displacement in Colombia, Turkey, and Uganda* (5 September)

*Disaster Risk Reduction: A Front Line of Defense against Climate Change and Displacement*, in collaboration with InterAction's Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group (10 October)

*Armed Conflict in Uganda: Civilian Experiences and Policy Implications*, in collaboration with the Feinstein International Center, Tufts University (29 October)

*Report Launch: Addressing Internal Displacement in Peace Processes, Peace Agreements and Peace-building*, in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations (29 October, New York)

*Internal Displacement in South Asia* (8 November)

*Moving Beyond Rhetoric: Consulting with IDPs*, (15-16 November, Geneva)

*Bloggers, Buzz and Sound Bites: Innovative Media Approaches to Humanitarian Response* (27 November)



Students at the Annual Winter Course on forced migration at the Calcutta Research Group.

# Project Publications in 2007

*Summary Report: Researching Internal Displacement – State of the Art and an Agenda for the Future*, Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement – Georgetown University, Cairo, Egypt, Spring 2007

*Iraqi Refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic: A Field-Based Study*, by Ashraf al-Khalidi, Sophia Hoffmann & Victor Tanner, Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, June 2007

*When Displacement Ends: A Framework for Durable Solutions*, Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement – Georgetown University, June 2007

*Addressing Internal Displacement in Peace Processes, Peace Agreements and Peace Building*, Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, September 2007

## Translations

*The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* (1998)

- ❖ Tetum Translation, January 2007
- ❖ Kirmanji Kurdish Translation, August 2007

*Protecting Persons Affected by Natural Disasters: IASC Operational Guidelines on Human Rights and Natural Disasters*

- ❖ Spanish Translation, Spring 2007
- ❖ French Translation, Spring 2007
- ❖ Bahasa Indonesia Translation, Summer 2007
- ❖ Chinese Translation, Summer 2007
- ❖ Thai Translation, Summer 2007

*Addressing Internal Displacement: A Framework for National Responsibility* (April 2005)

- ❖ Russian Translation, February 2007
- ❖ Serbian Translation, February 2007

## Visit Our Website

An important tool for making our information available around the world is the Project's website, which contains up-to-date research and analysis of internal displacement situations and issues, as well as recent items from the RSG.

New items from the Project and the RSG are also distributed through a monthly newsletter, the *Brookings-Bern Update*, which can be subscribed to through the Project's website or by emailing [brookings-bern@brookings.edu](mailto:brookings-bern@brookings.edu).

Visit our site at [www.brookings.edu/idp](http://www.brookings.edu/idp)



# Translations of Project Publications

In addition to publishing and disseminating Project publications, an integral component of the Project's work has been arranging for translations of these documents.

In the past year, the Project arranged for the translation of the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* into both Kurmanji Kurdish and Tetum, bringing the total number of translations to 47. The *Framework for National Responsibility* was also translated into Russian and Serbian during 2007. These translations have been used in training workshops in the Caucasus and the Balkans by NGOs and the UN. *The Operational Guidelines on Human Rights and Natural Disasters* were translated into French, Spanish, Indonesian, Chinese and Thai during 2007. These translations have proven useful in training workshops held by the UN and NGOs on the response to disasters.

The Project has also arranged for translations of other items, such as mission reports of the Representative of the Secretary-General, articles and opinion pieces written by Project staff members. In 2007, the Project arranged for the translation of Francis Deng's 2002 report from his mission to Turkey into Turkish, as well as the Azeri translation of the report from Walter Kälin's mission to Azerbaijan. In summer 2007, the Project translated a commentary on UN Security Council Resolution 1769 on Darfur written by Roberta Cohen into Arabic and an opinion piece on Côte d'Ivoire into French.

Both the translations of major publications as well as articles, reports, and opinion pieces help to make the work of the Project available to internally displaced persons and to the policy-makers working on resolving issues of internal displacement.

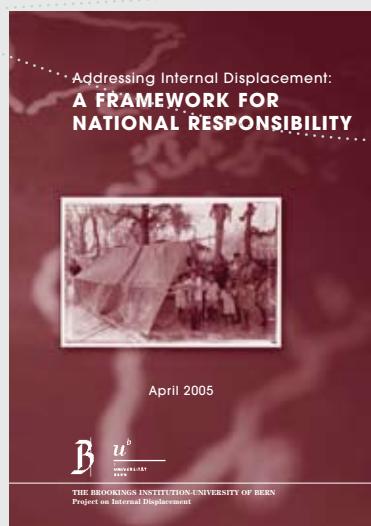




Photo: Courtesy of CHF International

## List of Donors in 2007

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## Staff of the Brookings-Bern Project in 2007

### CO-DIRECTORS

Walter Kälin, Representative  
of the Secretary-General on  
the Human Rights of Internally  
Displaced Persons, Co-Director

Elizabeth Ferris, Brookings  
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*\* departed in the course of 2007*





Sri Lankan girl displaced by the 2004 tsunami.

Photo: Katharina Röhl



# BROOKINGS

*u<sup>b</sup>*

<sup>b</sup>  
UNIVERSITÄT  
BERN

## **Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement The Brookings Institution**

1775 Massachusetts Avenue NW  
Washington DC 20036-2103

T +1 202 797 6168

F +1 202 797 2970

Email [brookings-bern@brookings.edu](mailto:brookings-bern@brookings.edu)

Web [www.brookings.edu/idp](http://www.brookings.edu/idp)

