

Statement by Roberta Cohen
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on Internal Displacement
at the
Briefing on Internally Displaced Persons in Armenia and Azerbaijan
Congressional Human Rights Caucus
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Distinguished Chair,
Human Rights Caucus members,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Congressional Human Rights Caucus is to be commended for drawing attention to a neglected and overlooked group of people – the internally displaced persons (IDPs) of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Forced from their homes by conflict more than ten years ago, many continue to live in conditions of extreme poverty and vulnerability. A 2004 World Bank study found that IDPs in the South Caucasus suffer disproportionately from the rest of the population. They “are generally poorer” with more limited material assets, higher unemployment rates and far more reliant on public assistance, making for serious concerns about respect for their human rights.¹ Their shelter is substandard, and many face difficulties accessing material needs, education for their children as well as basic social and political rights. While international attention generally focuses on current, “hot” emergencies, it is important not to forget the hundreds of thousands of men, women and children left behind in quiet emergencies, the result of protracted and unresolved conflicts.

Because internally displaced persons reside within their own countries, primary responsibility for meeting their protection assistance, reintegration and development needs rests with their national authorities. But national responsibility is generally not defined. To help governments design an effective national response, and to enable other actors to evaluate their performance, the Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement has identified twelve benchmarks of national responsibility. The benchmarks were published this year by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights,² and should prove instructive to the Human Rights Caucus in evaluating how the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan are exercising their national responsibility. The Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, Dr. Walter Kalin, who serves as co-director of the Brookings-Bern Project, uses this national responsibility framework as a guide in his dialogues with governments about internal displacement.

Allow me to summarize the twelve steps and their relevance to Azerbaijan and Armenia.

¹ S.B. Holtzman and T. Nezam, *Living in Limbo: Conflict-Induced Displacement in Europe and Central Asia*, The World Bank, 2004.

² *Addressing Internal Displacement: A Framework for National Responsibility*, The Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, April 2005; UN document E/CN.4/2006/71/Add.1.

1. The first is prevention. Governments have a responsibility to try to prevent or mitigate the conditions on their territory that might compel populations to flee. In the South Caucasus, this means working toward political solutions and maintaining the cease-fire since any new outbreaks of conflict can lead to mass displacement. Further it means setting up early warning and rapid response mechanisms, and in the case of natural disasters, as occurred in Armenia, adopting housing standards that make buildings better equipped to withstand the effects of earthquakes. Further, it means promoting conditions within a society that accord with human rights so that discrimination, tensions, ethnic strife and the accompanying displacement can be averted.

2. Raising National Awareness of the Problem. A government's public recognition of internal displacement and of its responsibility to address the problem is the opening step to an effective national response. Public pronouncements, public information campaigns, a statement by a high government official can help build national consensus around addressing the issue. Azerbaijan's 2004 Presidential decree announcing that the government would improve living conditions for refugees and IDPs was a good example of a government's acknowledgment of the IDP problem. The Armenian government's translation and dissemination of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement was also a step in acknowledging governmental obligations to the displaced. Far more however needs to be done. When the Representative of the Secretary-General visited Armenia in 2000, he found that while those displaced by the earthquake and other natural disasters and the 340,000 refugees from the conflict were a focus of attention by the government, the needs of Armenians internally displaced from the border regions had been largely overlooked. Indeed, President Robert Kocharian acknowledged to the Representative that these displaced were the "forsaken people."³

3. Data Collection. Credible and detailed information on the numbers, locations and conditions of IDPs is essential to the design of effective policies and programs. Azerbaijan, it is generally agreed, has the largest internally displaced population of the South Caucasus, an estimated 558,000, among the ten largest IDP populations in the world. In Armenia, by contrast, the numbers are small. From 2002 to 2004, in the absence of reliable statistics, an independent institution, the Norwegian Refugee Council, undertook a mapping exercise and put the total number of IDPs who remained displaced by conflict at around 8,000, a considerable reduction from earlier estimates of 72,000, reflecting substantial return and resettlement.⁴

³ Testimony of Francis M. Deng at the public hearing on Internally Displaced Persons in the Caucasus Region and Southeastern Anatolia, US Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 20 June 2003 and Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons, *Profiles in displacement: Armenia*, E/CN.4.2001/5/Add. 3, 6 November 2000.

⁴ The NRC found that thousands of IDPs had returned to their villages, integrated elsewhere or emigrated; the figure also was reduced because the NRC did not count as IDPs those who fled to Armenia from Nagorno-Karabakh, deeming them to be refugees rather than IDPs. (To the international community, Nagorno-Karabakh remains a part of Azerbaijan so Armenians who fled from there have been deemed refugees.) See Norwegian Refugee Council Global IDP Project, *Profile of Internal Displacement: Armenia*, 3 June 2003. The 72,000 figure, it should be noted, did not include the much larger numbers of IDPs displaced by the 1988 earthquake (some 500,000 of which 100,000 remained displaced in 2000) and

Azerbaijan's National Poverty Reduction Strategy calls for an *annual* survey on the IDP population. UN agencies have been urging the government to undertake such a survey so that needed information becomes available. In the view of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre of the Norwegian Refugee Council, there is at present "little data" on the accommodations or general living standards of IDPs in Azerbaijan although the State Committee for Refugees and IDPs collects some basic information.⁵

Data collection must also be disaggregated to be effective, with particular reference to vulnerable groups. Many displaced children in the South Caucasus, for example, suffer restrictions in their access to school, which makes it important to know how many children are unable to attend school or can attend only in shifts. Data disaggregated by gender is also important. In the South Caucasus, most of the internally displaced are women. Data is needed in particular about women heads of household and single women and also about girls and their attendance at school. Data is needed about elderly persons and those with disabilities – who are among the most vulnerable among the displaced.

In addition, data is needed about areas of return in order to estimate the damage to infrastructure and land and the resources needed for rehabilitation. This could help IDPs to decide whether to return to border villages and be aware of the obstacles they will need to overcome.

4. Training. Training programs for government officials, parliamentarians, military and police in the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, the first international standards on IDPs, can help ensure that national and local government officials are aware of the rights and needs of the displaced and of their obligations toward them. In 2003, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre of the Norwegian Refugee Council held a training workshop in Baku to review the Guiding Principles and the government's plans and policies concerning IDPs. As a result of this training session, government officials became more aware that IDPs in rural areas did not receive water and electricity on a regular basis, lacked medical services and often did not have phone connections while IDPs in urban areas suffered substandard conditions in public buildings and had difficulties in finding employment.⁶ Holding training sessions can be a valuable means of keeping the conditions of IDPs on the agendas of government officials.

Training programs are also an important way of empowering IDPs and making them aware of their rights. Thus the training program in Baku recommended that workshops on the Guiding Principles be held with IDP communities as well.

subsequent natural disasters, see Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General, *Profiles in displacement: Armenia*. The number does also not include the hundreds of thousands of refugees who fled to Armenia from Azerbaijan.

⁵ Norwegian Refugee Council Global IDP Project, *Profile of Internal Displacement: Azerbaijan*, 25 February 2005, p.26.

⁶ Norwegian Refugee Council and UNHCR, "Report for the Workshop on the Guiding Principles on Integral Displacement," Baku, Azerbaijan, 27-28 November 2003.

5. A National Legal Framework. Laws on internal displacement are important vehicles for upholding the rights of IDPs. It is therefore valuable for governments to examine whether their laws effectively address the problem of displacement and accord with international standards, or whether their laws should be revised or new laws adopted.

At a roundtable in Yerevan in 2001 in the which the government participated and which was sponsored by the Brookings Project and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Armenian lawyers recommended that the government formulate and enact a specific law on IDPs to clarify the term internally displaced person and regulate the treatment of IDPs, in particular their access to housing, education, employment and basic services as well as property and compensation issues. At a similar roundtable held in Baku, Azerbaijani lawyers identified gaps in the 1999 Law on the Status of Refugees and Forcibly Displaced Persons when compared with the Guiding Principles. For purposes of clarity, they proposed two separate laws, one for refugees and one for IDPs, and called for special measures in an IDP law that would introduce minimum material requirements in camps and settlements, provide for the right to permanently resettle in any part of the country, prohibit using humanitarian aid for political purposes, ensure protection for pregnant women and women with small children and provide other comparable protections which they considered missing from the 1999 law.⁷ Property restitution is another important area that could be covered by national law.

To provide guidance to governments in the development of their laws, the Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons is currently developing a legislators' manual, which will be available in 2007 and will encompass issues such as housing, property, employment, social security, education and political participation, and ensure that the relevant provisions accord with the Guiding Principles.

6. A National Policy. A national policy or strategy document is important to explain the government's overall view of the problem and how it plans to address it. For optimum effectiveness, policies must be published, widely disseminated and discussed in a transparent process with the displaced and be based on internationally acknowledged standards. They should include all phases of displacement from prevention through returns or resettlement and ensure non-discrimination. They must also address the particular needs of vulnerable groups, such as women heads of household, children, elderly people, and disabled people.

In Azerbaijan, a series of presidential decrees beginning in 2001 have sought to improve conditions for IDPs, providing food, kerosene and drug subsidies for those in collective centers, free public utilities, payment of some education costs and income tax exemptions. The government's July 2004 State Program on IDPs expanded these subsidies and outlined a series of projects to help IDPs, in particular to build new settlements with electricity and access to clean water, to promote employment and to

⁷ Roberta Cohen, Walter Kalin and Erin Mooney (eds), *The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the Law of the South Caucasus*, American Society of International Law, 2003, pp. 329-332 and p.229 for Armenia.

assist in returns to ‘liberated’ areas. These policies and programs demonstrate the government’s willingness to address internal displacement in the country. The design and implementation of these programs, however, would benefit from extensive consultations with the displaced and host communities.

In the case of Armenia, when the Representative of the Secretary-General visited the country in 2000, he urged the government to clarify, consolidate and coordinate government policy on internal displacement. He found that the needs of IDPs for shelter, physical security, and self-sufficiency in income, health, and education were not being adequately addressed and felt the development of a policy would be helpful in this regard. He felt it should build upon the funding proposal the Department for Migration and Refugees had formulated to rehabilitate the border areas and support the return of the 28,000 who already had returned as well as of the additional displaced persons estimated to want to do so. Since that time, the government has developed several plans of action and concept papers on migration and post-conflict rehabilitation aimed at the “resettlement and rehabilitation” of IDPs both in Armenia and in “bordering territories.”⁸

7. Creation of a National Institutional Focal Point. To ensure that policies, laws and programs are implemented, it is important to have a dedicated government office devoted to the issue of internal displacement. While some governments create a new institutional structure, others assign responsibility to an existing government agency. Whatever the arrangement, the body should have staff specifically focused on internal displacement and with sufficient authority to provide leadership in implementing government policies and programs and in coordinating and monitoring the activities of the various government offices involved.

In the case of Azerbaijan, UNHCR has recommended better government coordination on behalf of IDPs.⁹ In its 2005 report, UNHCR acknowledges that coordination has improved now that it is vested in the office of one of the Deputy Prime Ministers who serves as Chair of the State Committee for Refugees and IDPs. Nonetheless, more effective coordination is needed because of the many government bodies with responsibilities for IDPs, the sizeable number of international organizations working with IDPs as well as 72 international NGOs and 22 national NGOs, while the shift from international relief programs to development adds to coordination challenges.

Beyond coordination, it is also important for government bodies in Azerbaijan to monitor how the 2004 State Program on IDPs and other decrees pertaining to IDPs are being carried out, and also review existing laws pertaining to IDPs to see whether they allow for the full exercise of civil, political, economic social and cultural rights.

In Armenia, there is a Department for Migration and Refugees, but it needs more resources to function effectively and ensure that plans to help IDPs, especially in the border areas, are well coordinated and implemented. The International Organization for

⁸ Ibid. p.231.

⁹ UNHCR, *Assessment of the IDP Situation in Azerbaijan and Cooperation Mechanisms in Place to Address their Needs*, Geneva, 2005.

Migration (IOM) has assisted the Department, for example by helping to set up a working group on refugees and IDPs composed of government officials and academics to formulate recommendations for government review and adoption.

8. A Role for National Human Rights Institutions. In countries with national human rights institutions, governments often find that these bodies can support national efforts to address internal displacement. Both Azerbaijan and Armenia have Human Rights Ombudsmen. They could be invited to focus attention on internal displacement, provide advice to the government, disseminate the Guiding Principles, provide training programs for government officials, review laws and policies to ensure that they are in line with international standards, receive complaints from individuals and groups and monitor the government's response. To carry out such roles, institutions need authority, resources and training but the capacity building is worth the effort. A growing number of national human rights institutions around the world are playing constructive roles in helping governments to deal with internal displacement. In Azerbaijan, UNHCR reports that the Ombudsman has met with UN officials and shown interest in the plight of IDPs.

9. Participation of IDPs in Decision-Making. When governments provide material aid, health services, education or employment for IDPs, and the IDPs are not consulted, the programs invariably do not work as well as when the beneficiaries are involved. IDPs in Azerbaijan, for example, have complained that when they are resettled to houses built by the government, they are not consulted in the choice of relocation sites, which has resulted in their being far from employment opportunities or land.¹⁰ Similarly, programs that exclude women's participation can lead to women and their families becoming more impoverished and susceptible to exploitation. Because consultation mechanisms are critical to effective policy implementation, consultation must be fully built into the planning and reconstruction process. Participants at the NRC/UNHCR training program in Baku recommended the creation of an IDP forum to enable IDPs to have their voices better heard by national authorities and international organizations. In the ongoing peace process to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, IDPs should also be given a place at the table so that their views and opinions can be heard.

10. Supporting Durable Solutions. This means that governments must facilitate the voluntary and safe return of IDPs to their home areas, or their resettlement in another part of the country. In cases where IDPs can return, it is the government's responsibility to help create a secure environment, including removing land mines, as well as rebuilding infrastructure, restoring basic services, and undertaking housing projects, employment programs and agricultural development programs. In areas of Nagorno-Karabakh under Azerbaijani control, and in border areas of Armenia, such programs are sorely needed.

For IDPs who cannot return, or choose not to,¹¹ it is the government's responsibility to assist them to integrate locally. In Azerbaijan, in recent years, the government has begun

¹⁰ Norwegian Refugee Council and UNHCR, p.11.

¹¹ More than 5,000 Armenian IDPs cannot return to their villages, or they choose not to return because of fear of landmines or socio-economic vulnerability. Nor can hundreds of thousands of Azeri IDPs return to their homes in Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas.

to help IDPs integrate, which is a welcome change from its previous policy of resisting efforts to improve their living conditions, fearing that this would signal abandoning the goal of return and regaining control over Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas from which the displaced originate. Today, the government sees the displaced less as political pawns for pursuing national objectives than as citizens who need help to regain their lives. The government also has begun to recognize that eventual returns need not be incompatible with current resettlement efforts. In fact, according to a World Bank study, there is little evidence to prove that helping IDPs become self-reliant will end their desire to return home. To the contrary, long periods of vulnerability and joblessness could reduce their self-reliance upon their return home.¹²

In Armenia, where the number of those who remain displaced from border regions is small, their plight was not used for political purposes but did not receive much priority. In fact, their needs were expected to be addressed through general programs for poverty alleviation. The State Department Human Rights Report for 2005 reported that the government “did not provide special programs” to help IDPs “adjust to their new surroundings” although IDPs had access to international assistance programs.¹³ Durable solutions for the displaced would mean targeting of their needs within broader programs. Among their special needs are food security, shelter, access to cultivable land, de-mining of land, and economic opportunities.¹⁴

In the case of Azerbaijan where there are hundreds of thousands of IDPs and many in camps, its National Poverty Reduction Strategy (2003-2005) does target IDPs as a vulnerable group. The strategy, which is to be extended over a longer period, includes plans for new housing, upgrading infrastructure around settlements, improving access to education and health care, and employment generating activities. The 2004 State Program on IDPs further includes steps to close down IDP camps and increase self-reliance. As a result, measurable progress has begun to be made. Tens of thousands of IDPs have been relocated into new housing, especially those who had been living in tents and railway wagons.

Nonetheless, the UN reports that more than 90,000 Azeri IDPs still live in camps or settlements, substantial numbers at below-subsistence levels, without adequate food, education, sanitation and medical care. At least 300,000 are scattered among unfinished buildings, including mud dwellings, hostels, public buildings, health facilities and the homes of friends or relatives.¹⁵ The poor sanitary conditions in many of these locations make them breeding grounds for disease; moreover many of these housing sites are far from markets and income-generating opportunities, and only few own or have access to arable land and adequate water to allow agricultural self-sustainability.¹⁶ The government

¹² Holtzman and Nezam, *Living in Limbo*.

¹³ Department of State, *2005 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Armenia*, March 2006.

¹⁴ Norwegian Refugee Council, *Profile of Internal Displacement: Armenia*.

¹⁵ UNHCR, *Assessment of the IDP Situation in Azerbaijan*, p. 11; and Department of State, *2005 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Azerbaijan*, March 2006 (citing the International Organization for Migration).

¹⁶ Testimony of Francis M. Deng; see also Norwegian Refugee Council Global IDP Project, “Trapped in Displacement: Internally Displaced People in the OSCE Area,” Vienna, 4-5 November 2004.

estimates that 63 percent of the displaced population lives below the poverty line, 300,000 to 400,000 IDPs are unemployed, and 26 percent of IDP households suffer from malnutrition.¹⁷ The majority is dependent on the government's monthly food allowance of \$6 and is likely to continue to need international food aid as well.¹⁸

Durable solutions for the Azeri displaced must therefore involve increasing food security for them as well as new and better-situated housing. In addition, attention must be paid to their employment opportunities through micro-credit loans and training workshops, as well as access to land in rural areas. In short, a proper balance of continued humanitarian aid plus development programs must be established.

Integration into the political, social and economic life of the country is also essential. Efforts must be made to end restrictions on IDPs' freedom of movement as a result of rigid *propiska* registration systems. Nor should IDP children be segregated in separate schools. The International Crisis Group has found few opportunities for IDPs to participate in political life. They report that IDPs cannot vote for parliamentary candidates representing their current places of residence in Azerbaijan,¹⁹ while a Brookings study found that in both Armenia and Azerbaijan, IDPs have experienced problems in exercising their right to vote.²⁰

Finally, although this is often treated as a luxury, addressing the psychosocial problems of IDPs should be a part of durable solutions. Despite the passage of time, some IDPs do not overcome the trauma of displacement. Many become dependent on external aid and need help to regain their self-reliance. Programs of psychological counseling can be important. UNICEF has undertaken some programs in this area, especially for girls.

11. Allocation of Adequate Resources. A sure sign of national responsibility is readiness to devote national resources to deal with internal displacement, in particular to reconstruct areas of return or extend humanitarian and development aid to those who resettle. In the case of Azerbaijan, with its oil wealth, the government since 2001 has begun to use state oil funds, in addition to its regular budget, to improve the conditions of IDPs and in 2006, announced that it would allocate \$210 million for refugees and IDPs, an increase over the \$153 million it reportedly provided in 2005.²¹ Monitoring, however, will be needed to ensure that the funds are used effectively and represent a sufficient

¹⁷ Norwegian Refugee Council Global IDP Project, "Azerbaijan: new government programme improves IDP conditions, but still no return in sight," 25 February 2005, p.3; and UNHCR, *Assessment of the IDP Situation in Azerbaijan*.

¹⁸ World Food Program, "WFP Food Survey Shows Food Insecurity Threatens Rural and Displaced Azerbaijanis," News Release, 11 March 2005.

¹⁹ International Crisis Group, *Nagorno-Karabakh: Viewing the Conflict from the Ground*, Executive Summary, 14 September 2005, pp.21-22.

²⁰ In Armenia, there was no absentee voting and it was difficult for people in new residences to register. In Azerbaijan, national and local authorities pressured IDPs to support ruling party candidates and reportedly cut off electricity or threatened to withdraw aid because of IDP choices in voting; there was also a lack of clarity in how to use absentee voting guidelines, and the use of the Latin alphabet on ballots posed problems for IDPs. See Erin Mooney and Balkees Jarrah, *The Voting Rights of Internally Displaced Persons: The OSCE Region*, Brookings-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement, November 2004, pp.10-18.

²¹ *Azer News*, February 8, 2006.

portion of assets. At present, the assets of the State Oil fund currently total \$1.4 billion,²² but they are projected to go up to \$15 billion per year.²³ As these revenues grow, the UN's aid can be expected to decrease and beginning in 2003, donors began to reduce their overall assistance, which was estimated at \$640 million since the start of the emergency.²⁴ International humanitarian organizations at present provide \$30 million a year with 136, 000 IDP families receiving food assistance every month from the World Food Program.²⁵

Related to the allocation of funds is the need to promote zero tolerance for corruption. In 2005, an anti-corruption law came into effect in Azerbaijan, which is encouraging, but it also must be borne in mind that Transparency International ranks Azerbaijan among the 25 most corrupt countries in the world.²⁶ The State Department Human Rights Report for 2005 described how some IDPs had to bribe officials for passports and identification cards. The International Crisis Group reports that IDPs complain of corruption in housing construction and access to jobs and basic services.²⁷ A group of internally displaced women expressed concerns to me about favoritism shown in the disbursal of international funds for micro credit projects for IDPs. Clearly monitoring will be needed to ensure that corruption does not tarnish national or international funds intended to benefit displaced populations.

In the case of Armenia, the Norwegian Refugee Council reports that “[l]ack of funding is one of the main obstacles for return for Armenia’s remaining IDPs.”²⁸ The government has not had the financial capacity to comprehensively address the needs of IDPs, although the Armenian diaspora has shown itself generous. However, the pace of recovery and reconstruction in the border areas has not been sufficient to encourage thousands of remaining IDPs to return. The NRC has recommended providing IDPs with soft long-term loans so as to help them with the construction of housing in border regions and the purchase of machinery, seeds and fertilizers for agricultural development projects. It might also be helpful for the government to receive international technical assistance in preparing grant proposals so that it can navigate the complicated bureaucratic mechanisms of international organizations and more effectively access international aid.

12. Cooperation with International and Regional Organizations to Reinforce National Efforts. Both Azerbaijan and Armenia have cooperated with the international community on the subject of internal displacement. With the support of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, Azerbaijan developed its National Poverty Reduction Strategy and in cooperation with the World Bank and UN, it established various funds to provide micro credit projects for IDPs and

²² State Oil Fund Revenue and Expenditure Statement, April 20, 2006.

²³ Yigal Schleifer, “Azerbaijan Oil: A Mixed Blessing,” *Christian Science Monitor*, December 30, 2005.

²⁴ International Crisis Group, *Nagorno-Karabakh: Viewing the Conflict from the Ground*, Executive Summary, 14 September 2005, p.17.

²⁵ *Azer News*, February 8, 2006

²⁶ Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index*, 2005.

²⁷ International Crisis Group, *Nagorno-Karabakh*, p.18, 19-20.

²⁸ Norwegian Refugee Council Global IDP Project, “Trapped in Displacement.”

to support return and reconstruction. UNHCR has recently recommended strengthened international partnerships for Azerbaijan, in particular with UN-Habitat in the area of housing, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for agricultural programs and the International Labor Organization (ILO) for employment and vocational training as well as help with the planning of new industries. It further has recommended that the UN-ILO-World Bank Youth Employment Network initiative in Azerbaijan target IDP youth.²⁹ Both Azerbaijan and Armenia in the past have invited the Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons to visit their countries and more recently have invited the new Representative of the Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons to visit their countries, which he plans to do later this year. Both have cooperated with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which has sought to promote a peaceful solution to the conflict and has undertaken steps to promote attention to IDP needs.

Recommendations:

On the basis of this national responsibility framework, I would make the following recommendations to the United States government:

- First, to acknowledge that persons in protracted situations of internal displacement, such as in the South Caucasus, and especially in Azerbaijan, require greater national and international attention.
- Second, to hold bilateral discussions with Azerbaijan and Armenia in Washington, Yerevan or Baku, or within the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The talks should press for greater attention by the two governments to resolving the problem of internal displacement in their countries. They should give particular attention to basic food and medical issues, adequate shelter, education, and employment and overall the integration of the displaced into the political, economic and social lives of their countries. The Azerbaijani government has shown itself willing to embark upon a path to address the issue of internal displacement; bilateral talks should encourage its ending of all political showcasing of IDPs, in particular their segregation from the rest of the population, and press for the achievement of concrete results for one of the world's largest IDP populations, whose basic needs too long have been neglected. The Armenian government has also taken steps to address internal displacement and should be encouraged to resolve the remaining problem, which is comparatively small, by giving it the priority and resources it deserves. Further, bilateral talks should establish what sort of resources the Armenian and Azerbaijani governments are able to devote to IDPs and what kinds of resources are required from the international community.
- Third, to encourage the field missions of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to monitor and issue reports on the plight of internally displaced persons in the South Caucasus region. Such reports could monitor how funds are allocated to IDPs in both countries and in particular how the State Oil

²⁹ UNHCR, *Assessment of the IDP Situation in Azerbaijan*.

Fund in Azerbaijan is being used to address IDP concerns. The OSCE could also provide technical assistance to both governments in the area of laws and policies, combating corruption, as well as in election monitoring to ensure that IDPs are able to freely exercise their right to vote and to not face discrimination with regard to political participation. In 2003, the Ministerial Council of the OSCE recognized the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as a “useful framework” for the work of the OSCE. It is now time for the OSCE, using the Guiding Principles and the Brookings-Bern Framework for National Responsibility as a guide, to report on progress in OSCE countries with regard to internal displacement.

- Fourth, to encourage UN agencies to continue to provide humanitarian aid to needy IDPs while at the same time shifting their focus to long term reconstruction and development and to promote the strengthened involvement of international agencies, such as the World Bank, the ILO, UN-Habitat and the FAO, in areas of employment generation, housing, reconstruction and development and in providing technical assistance with regard to government grant proposals.
- Fifth, to encourage the governments to closely cooperate with the Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons when he visits their countries later this year.

Finally, I would recommend that the Congressional Human Rights Caucus build on this hearing to examine the conditions of internally displaced persons in other parts of the world. There are today some 24 million persons uprooted by conflict and human rights violations in more than 40 countries. May this important hearing be but the beginning of a series of hearings to address the human rights of what some have called the world’s most vulnerable people.