Translating National Responsibility into Response: Further Observations

This study seeks to shed light on how and to what extent the fundamental responsibility of governments toward IDPs is translated into effective response by fifteen governments by using the twelve benchmarks of the Framework for National Responsibility as an assessment tool. In chapter 1, each of the benchmarks is summarized and compliance with each benchmark is analyzed for all of the fifteen countries in this study while a more in-depth analysis of government response in four of these countries is given in chapter 2. But it also is important to explore similarities and differences in the extent of compliance with the benchmarks by different governments in addition to assessing countries responses benchmark by benchmark. Further, certain issues arise that lie beyond the benchmarks but that also require consideration in assessing national approaches to internal displacement. In this concluding chapter, we step back from the details of government policies to draw some observations on trends in national responses with respect to the twelve benchmarks, to reflect on the determinants of effective national response, to analyze the utility of the Framework as an assessment tool and to suggest areas for future research, before turning in chapter 4 to some brief recommendations to governments seeking to effectively protect and assist IDPs.

Political Will and National Response

Before proceeding with this analysis, we want to emphasize the overriding importance of political will in determining whether a government fulfills its responsibility to IDPs. Governments cannot always control the factors that cause displacement, but they can take measures to improve the lives and uphold the rights of IDPs. If national authorities are convinced of the importance of addressing internal displacement, they can take actions to respond to the needs of those who are displaced and to support durable solutions to displacement. In the fifteen countries surveyed in this study, the motivation to address displacement does not seem to be based primarily on humanitarian concerns but rather on political calculations and pressures.

Most obviously in Myanmar and to a slightly lesser extent in Sudan and Turkey, the national governments have not been motivated to respond to IDPs, in part because of a desire to deny their own role in causing or

at least condoning the conditions that created the displacement. At the other end of the spectrum is the government of Georgia, which acknowledges and indeed draws attention to the suffering of IDPs, at least in part because of political considerations. At the same time, it could be that Georgia is keen to be portrayed as "doing the right thing" for IDPs in order to curry favor with the international community. In Colombia, concerns about the international reputation of the country appear to have motivated the government to take a number of measures on IDP issues, most notably with the adoption of a law on IDPs. At the same time, it is legal pressure resulting from close monitoring of and reporting on the government's response by the country's Constitutional Court as well as by the Ombudsman that has proven critical to efforts to ensure that government measures for IDPs are actually implemented. The country's strong legal tradition has facilitated such efforts.

Moreover, government policies toward IDPs are not static; they evolve in response to changes in the political context. For example, in Georgia the government became much more concerned about the "old" IDPs after "new" IDPs were created in 2008 due to the conflict with Russia in South Ossetia. However, even then, international pressure proved critical to convincing the Georgian government of the importance of adopting policies that address the needs of IDPs in protracted situations. Similarly, in the six months following the end of the conflict with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka, the government was keen to demonstrate responsiveness, especially after extensive international criticism of its military operations against civilians during the final stages of the conflict and of its internment policies. Thus it moved quickly to return IDPs to their places of origin (although as the case study points out, this practice raised serious concerns). In many instances, governments undertake policies as a result of international initiatives. This study found many cases in which governments undertook actions in response to suggestions made by the Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons or his successor (RSG), the Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons (RSG)

during missions and working visits. For example, after years of non-engagement on the issue of IDPs, the government of Turkey decided, for the first time, to collect data on the number of IDPs in the country. In several other countries, governments have decided to develop or modify IDP policies and legislation as a direct result of a visit and advocacy by the RSG. A general list of missions and working visits conducted by the RSGs and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons is provided in figure 3-1.

With the above points in mind, we do not assume that assessing a government's performance on each of the twelve benchmarks of the Framework for National Responsibility provides an accurate picture of political will. For example, a government may collect data on internal displacement, set up an institutional focal point on IDPs, adopt an IDP law or take action toward meeting many or most of the benchmarks without necessarily having the genuine political will to protect the rights of IDPs and assist them in a sustainable manner. Certain governments' efforts in the areas covered by the benchmarks may amount to nothing more than "window dressing." Even the indicators developed for each benchmark cannot give a complete picture of a government's exercise of its responsibility toward IDPs. That said, it does seem that action on the benchmarks can indicate a certain degree of political will; certainly it suggests that a government is ready to acknowledge IDPs as an issue and understands that doing so raises expectations for a government response. Furthermore, taking no action on certain benchmarks—for example, Benchmark 2 on acknowledgment of the existence of internal displacement—indicates a lack of political will to take certain actions on the issue. That is in and of itself quite revealing.

Using the Framework for National Responsibility as an Assessment Tool: Trends in National Response

Chapter 1 examines the ways in which each of the twelve benchmarks set out in the Framework for National

**Figure 3-1 Special Procedures on IDPs: Missions and working visits
to the 15 countries assessed in this study[a]**

Country	Missions and working visits
Afghanistan	Working Visit: 2007
Central African Republic	Working Visit: 2009; Missions: 2010, 2007
Colombia	Working Visit: 2008; Missions: 2006, 1999, 1994
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Mission: 2008
Georgia	Working Visit: 2006; Missions: 2010, 2009, 2008, 2005, 2000
Iraq	Mission: 2010
Kenya	Working Visits: 2008, 2011
Myanmar	N/A
Nepal	Mission: 2005
Pakistan	N/A
Sri Lanka	Working Visits: 2009 (2), 2005; Missions: 2007, 1993
Sudan	Missions: 2005, 2004, 2002, 2001, 1992
Turkey	Working Visits: 2006, 2005; Mission: 2002
Uganda	Working Visits: 2009, 2006; Mission: 2003
Yemen	Working Visit: 2010

a Francis Deng, Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons (1994-2004); Walter Kälin, Representative of the UN Secretary General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons (2004–2010), Chaloka Beyani, Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons (2010-present). See OHCHR, "Country Visits," (www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/idp/visits. htm); Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement, "Items from Chaloka Beyani," "Items from Walter Kälin," and "Items from Francis M. Deng," (www.brookings.edu/projects/idp/rsg_info.aspx).

Responsibility are being met—or not met—in the fifteen countries surveyed by this study. This comparative analysis has revealed certain trends for each benchmark in terms of the readiness and capacity of the included governments to mount an effective national response and in terms of the modality of response. In looking at the overall results of this analysis, it must be said that no one government performed well on all twelve of the benchmarks; conversely, most governments were taking at least some measures in line with at least some of the benchmarks, at least for certain groups of IDPs. Overall, governments performed much better on the three benchmarks on legal frameworks, policies and institutional focal points (Benchmarks 5, 6 and 7, respectively) than the others, at least with respect to taking the basic minimum actions recommended; very often, however, effective implementation was limited.

Overall Observations and Comparisons of Benchmarks

Chapter 1 raises the question of whether certain characteristics of a particular instance of internal displacement might explain why a government proves to be more or less responsive to addressing internal displacement. By no means did the discussion provide an exhaustive list of potential determinants; it simply offered a set of hypotheses based on common and easily measurable (mostly quantitative) features of displacement, such as the number of IDPs and the length of time of displacement, and whether those features appeared to influence the government response, positively or negatively. In particular, six points were considered: different causes of displacement; magnitude of displacement; duration of displacement; where IDPs live; UNHCR engagement; and government capacity, as measured by the Human Development Index.

Although, as explained in the introduction to this volume, the data simply are not robust enough for quantitative analysis, we began this study with the idea of looking for determinants of good government policy. While we had originally hoped to be able to come up with an overall assessment of government capacity based on the twelve benchmarks, in fact the findings did not lend themselves to such definitive assessments. Among the fifteen governments, four seem to have taken their responsibility more seriously—Colombia, Georgia, Kenya and Uganda—although there are deficiencies in the responses of all four. The governments of Myanmar, Yemen and the Central African Republic seem to have had particular difficulties in fulfilling their responsibilities toward IDPs. In the case of Myanmar, the obstacles are overwhelmingly political; in Yemen and the Central African Republic, the limitations appear to arise primarily from inadequate government capacity. The remaining eight governments fall somewhere in between. Some, such as in Nepal, have demonstrated a significant commitment at one particular point in time but have failed to follow through. Some, such as in Sri Lanka, have at times demonstrated blatant disregard for their responsibility to protect and assist IDPs and have moved swiftly to try bring an end to displacement. Sudan, Pakistan, and to a certain extent Turkey have very problematic records with respect to preventing displacement in one part of the country yet have supported efforts to bring an end to displacement in others. In some cases, such as Afghanistan and Yemen, the continuing conflict and the role of nonstate actors have made it difficult for the government to respond effectively to IDPs. (However, there is little evidence that those two governments would have given priority to displacement issues even if they had not been embroiled in ongoing conflicts.)

Since it was not possible—or desirable—to "score" or even rank governments in terms of their efforts to fulfill their responsibility to IDPs, the analysis of the role of the six dependent variables (different causes of displacement; magnitude of displacement; duration of displacement; where IDPs live; UNHCR engagement; and government capacity) is descriptive rather than analytical in nature.

Different Causes of Displacement

This study focuses on displacement due to conflict, violence and general human rights violations but seeks to examine to a limited degree any similarities and differences in how governments respond to displacement caused by other causes. In several of the cases surveyed (for example, Georgia, Sudan and Yemen), the country in fact was experiencing conflict-induced displacement in more than one context.

Thus another potential variable in national responses relates to different conflicts occurring within the country. Especially given the issue of national responsibility, one could expect a government to adopt consistent approaches and policies toward those displaced by different conflicts occurring within the country's borders. Perhaps unsurprisingly given that consistency of response is not a primary concern of governments (or always of the international community), the reality is quite different, as in the case of Georgia, where the government tended to give priority to Abkhaz IDPs, as they are much more numerous than those from South Ossetia. After the renewed conflict and new mass displacement in August 2008, the government proved much more responsive to securing decent durable housing for the "new" IDPs while IDPs displaced since the early 1990s continued to languish in dilapidated collective centers. On the plus side, one could conclude that the government was better equipped to deal with the new cases and that this was a case of "lessons learned"; on the other hand, the government opened itself up to charges of discriminating against the protracted cases and creating a two-tiered system of assistance to IDPs. National authorities in Pakistan, Iraq, Uganda, Yemen and Sri Lanka have responded differently to displacement due to different conflicts or to a conflict occurring in different parts of the country. Further comparative analysis of the national response within countries would be helpful in understanding the reasons for different government policies regarding people displaced in different parts of the country.

Estimated IDP populations in 15 countries assessed in this study[b]
Circles are sized according to estimated IDP population
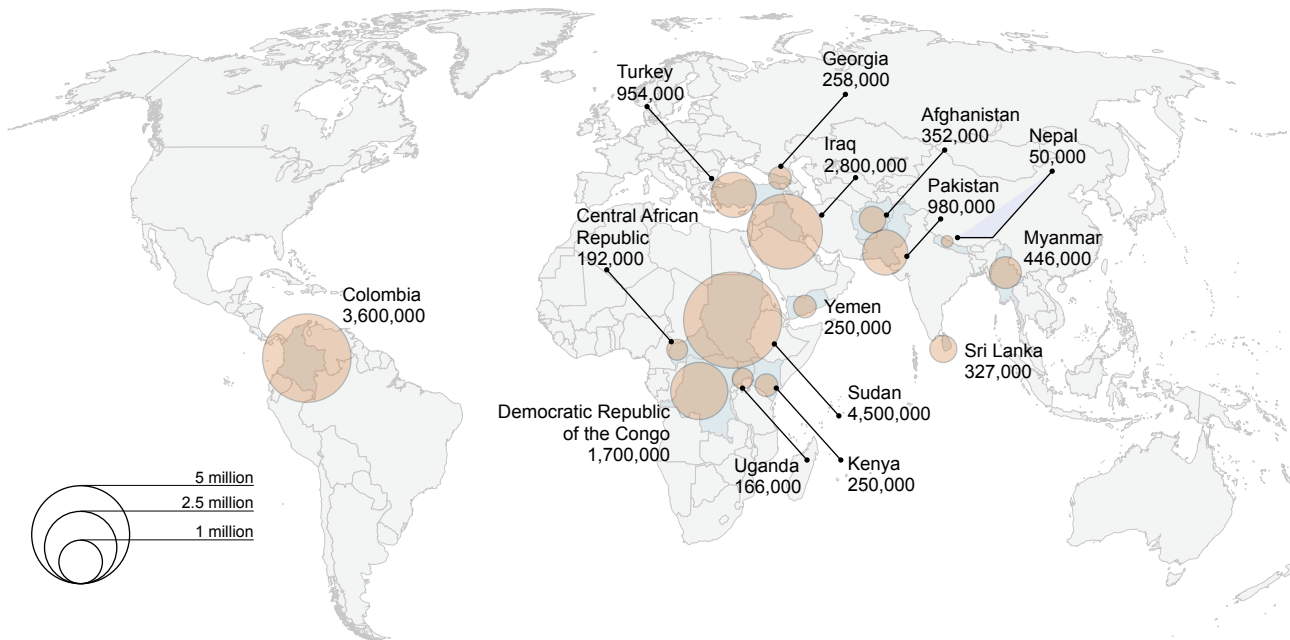
b Population estimates are from government, UN and NGO sources. The lowest estimate was used. For sources, see IDMC, *Internal Displacement: Global Overview of Trends and Developments in 2010*, March 2011 (www.internal-displacement.org).

In several cases, countries experiencing conflict-induced displacement also experienced significant displacement due to natural disasters (in particular, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Myanmar). Such cases afforded the opportunity to explore any similarities and differences in how governments respond to different causes of displacement. As discussed, the response of many, perhaps most, governments to natural disasters differs from their response to conflicts.[1] The case of Myanmar in particular is striking in this regard.

Magnitude of Displacement

In this study we were interested in exploring whether there appeared to be any correlation between the magnitude of

displacement and efforts to fulfill national responsibility to IDPs. Simply put: did the number of IDPs in a country influence the responsiveness of the government to internal displacement? The answer to that question could cut both ways. On one hand, it might be expected that where there was a large number of IDPs, the government would be all the more aware of the situation and therefore moved to respond. On the other hand, the existence of many IDPs in a country could be an indicator of the failure of the government to meet its responsibility, whether because of its inability to prevent arbitrary displacement or to respond adequately due to capacity constraints or even because of its unwillingness to do so.

As discussed in chapter 1, the countries surveyed for this study were fifteen of the twenty countries worldwide reporting the highest number of IDPs: nine of the top ten countries and six countries from those ranked 11 to 20 were included. The lack of case studies of countries falling in the lower range of numbers of IDPs limits the ability to

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1   For further analysis of the applicability of the benchmarks to natural disasters, see Elizabeth Ferris, "The Framework for National Responsibility and Natural Disasters," Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement, forthcoming.

test this hypothesis, and we recommend further research in assessing national responsibility in such countries. Yet, even among the fifteen countries selected for this survey, there is a broad range of numbers of IDPs: from just over an estimated 200,000 IDPs in the Central African Republic at the peak of displacement there to millions in, for example, Sudan and Colombia. Examining those cases could provide at least preliminary findings until a wider range of cases can be examined. Moreover, in selecting the additional six countries to survey, consideration was given to the magnitude of the IDP population relative to the total population of the country. Especially with respect to raising national awareness and mobilizing adequate resources, the relative size of the IDP population would seem to be more important than the absolute number of IDPs.

Yet, it also must be noted that the magnitude of an IDP population can change—often dramatically—over time. For example, the number of reported IDPs in Afghanistan fell from a high of 1.2 million in 2002 to around 350,000 in 2010 while the number of IDPs in Pakistan fell from a reported 3 million in 2009 to "at least 980,000" in 2010 (see figure 3-2 below). But all such figures need to be treated with caution. Both government and international statistics are estimates and, at best, a snapshot at a particular moment in time. Moreover, IDPs in general are a mobile population. Figures may either decrease or increase simply due to improvements in data collection methods rather than any objective change in the situation. Moreover, IDPs' own experience tends to be highly dynamic—they may move back and forth between different host communities, return to their original communities for a while and then move back to host communities, or move to spontaneous settlements or other locations—which complicates the compilation of reliable figures.

Returning to the question posited, the findings do not reveal any clear, reliable connection between the number of IDPs and the degree of national responsibility exercised. If anything, the magnitude of displacement has tended to be a precursor of poor government performance overall, as evident in particular in the cases of Sudan, Turkey and Colombia, all of which surpass the 1 million IDPs mark. That said, the size of the IDP population nonetheless may

indirectly help to develop the national response inasmuch as a large number of IDPs often is a major trigger of international concern and pressure (for example, in Sudan, Turkey and Colombia), which may trigger a better government response.

Duration of Displacement

In chapter 1 of this study, we posited a possible correlation between duration of displacement and government response, noting that governments might be unable to implement all or many of the benchmarks in the immediate emergency phase of displacement but that as displacement became protracted, they would be more likely to take measures to address IDPs' needs. However, we also noted that it could be that a protracted displacement signaled poor performance in terms of the exercise of national responsibility. Figure 3-3 indicates the time when the first known major internal displacement first began.

Analysis of internal displacement in the fifteen countries assessed in this study reveals that the process of fulfilling national responsibility to IDPs tends to be dynamic. It also tends, in general, to be gradual, with incremental steps taken toward implementing the benchmarks over time. However, it is not necessarily a linear process: while generally there tends to be gradual progress, there also are examples of "backsliding" caused, for instance, by a change in the political context, such as change in government. In other cases, a certain "compassion fatigue" may set in as displacement becomes protracted, especially if resource constraints increase.

Internal displacement may be protracted for various reasons: conflicts drag on, peace processes are nonexistent or become stalled and durable solutions are elusive.[2] About two-thirds of the world's IDPs have been

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[2] See Elizabeth Ferris, *Resolving Internal Displacement: Prospects for Local Integration* (Washington: Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement, June 2011); Alex Mundt and Elizabeth Ferris, "Durable Solutions for IDPs in Protracted Situations: Three Case Studies" (www.brookings.edu/papers/2008/1028_internal_displacement_mundt.aspx).

Figure 3-2. For the 15 countries assessed in this study: Basic IDP population estimates[c]

Country	Number of IDPs	Percentage of total population	Peak number (year)
Afghanistan	At least 352,000	At least 1.2	1,200,000 (2002)
Central African Republic	192,000	4.30	212,000 (2007)
Colombia	3,600,000 – 5,200,000	8 – 11.6	3,600,000 – 5,200,000 (2010)
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1,700,000	2.5	3,400,000 (2003)
Georgia	Up to 258000	Up to 6.1	Undetermined
Iraq	2,800,000	9.00	2,840,000 (2008)
Kenya	About 250,000	0.60	650,000 (2008)
Myanmar	At least 446000	At least 0.9	Undetermined
Nepal	About 50,000	About 0.2	200,000 (2005)
Pakistan	At least 980,000	At least 0.5	3,000,000 (2009)
Sri Lanka	At least 327,000	At least 1.6	520,000 (2006)
Sudan	4,500,000 – 5,200,000	10.5 – 13	Darfur: 2,700,000 (2008); Southern Sudan: 4,000,000 (2004)
Turkey	954,000 – 1,201,000	1.3 – 1.6	1,201,000 (1992)
Uganda	At least 166,000	At least 0.5	1,840,000 (2005)
Yemen	About 250,000	About 1.0	342,000 (2010)

c As of December 2010, for displacement due to conflict, generalized violence and human rights violations. Source: *IDMC, Internal Displacement: Global Overview of Trends and Developments in 2010,* March 2011 (www.internal-displacement.org).

Figure 3-3. First major wave of displacement for current IDP caseloads[d]

Country	Date
Afghanistan	2001
Central African Republic	2005
Colombia	1960
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1996
Georgia	1992; 2008 (S. Ossetia); 1994, 2008 (Abkhazia)
Iraq	1968
Kenya	1991
Myanmar	1962
Nepal	1996
Pakistan	2006
Sri Lanka	1983
Sudan	1983 (S. Sudan); 2003 (Darfur)
Turkey	1984
Uganda	1988
Yemen	2004

d Of the 15 countries assessed in this study. Source: IDMC, *Internal Displacement: Global Overview of Trends and Developments in 2010.*

displaced for more than five years, and most refugees and displaced persons have been displaced for nearly eighteen years, on average.[3] But displacement is rarely a one-off event. In almost all of the fifteen countries surveyed here, displacement has occurred at several distinct points in time. Different waves of displacement has meant that there are different groups of IDPs at the same time, sometimes known as "old" IDPs and "new" IDPs, as in Georgia (which had waves of displacement in 1991, 1998, and 2008); Sri Lanka (which had experienced displacement since the 1980s resulting from its long-standing conflict with the LTTE and then again in 2009 when the government-led counteroffensive brought the conflict to an end); and Kenya (which experienced periodic displacement, often in the context of electoral violence or land disputes, during the 1990s and early to mid 2000s followed by the new, massive displacement that followed widespread electoral violence in late 2007 to early 2008). In some countries, such as Colombia, displacement has occurred since the 1960s and continues today. Sometimes people leave their communities as individuals; sometimes whole communities are displaced. Lack of clarity about when displacement ends further complicates understanding how successive waves of IDPs should be treated.[4] Although

the Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons specifies criteria for understanding both the process and the conditions needed to provide durable solutions for IDPs, they have not been used to determine to what extent IDPs, such as Colombians displaced in the 1970s, have found lasting solutions or whether they remain in limbo as IDPs.

We were interested in exploring in this study the connections between old and new cases of displacement in the same country. Various questions were investigated: Does prior experience of displacement make a government better equipped (politically, legally or institutionally) to address a new wave of displacement in a more effective and timely manner? What, if any, lessons are learned and improvements noted in the government's approach? Conversely, does having to address one major situation of displacement make a government less inclined or capable of devoting (at least to the same extent) continued attention and resources to recurring internal displacement, particularly when both old and new IDP caseloads coincide?

Almost all countries affected by new displacements over the last five years had experienced earlier periods of displacement, even though they received little public

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[3] Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, *Expert Seminar on Protracted IDP Situations, 21–22 June 2007, Geneva: Summary Report* (www.brookings.edu/events/2007/0621_displacement.aspx); Elizabeth Ferris, "Durable Solutions for IDPs in Protracted Situations: A Work in Progress," 1 June 2007, background paper prepared for the Expert Seminar on Protracted IDP Situations, UNHCR and Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, Geneva, 21–22 June 2007.

[4] In 2002, the question of when it would be appropriate to stop considering an IDP as such was posed to RSG on IDPs Francis Deng by the Office of the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator as one on which the international community required guidance. The RSG turned to the Brookings Project on Internal Displacement (which he co-directed), which, together with Georgetown University, undertook an in-depth research project to answer that question. The research project included a series of consultations with international humanitarian, development and human rights agencies and NGOs, donors, affected governments and civil society, including IDPs. For an overview of

the research project, spearheaded by Erin Mooney and Susan Martin, see, for instance, *Forced Migration Review*, no. 17 (May 2003) (www.fmreview.org). This project culminated in the publication of *When Displacement Ends: A Framework for Durable Solutions* (Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, June 2007) which was presented by RSG Kalin to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and was disseminated by the IASC to all UN Country Teams. This document, together with feedback and examples of best practices received from field operations, provided the basis for the revised version endorsed by the IASC and published as the *IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, April 2010), which also was presented to the UN Human Rights Council by the RSG. Both the provisional and final edition of the Framework on Durable Solutions are available at: www.brookings.edu/idp.

attention. In Kenya, for example, there was widespread displacement resulting from post-election violence in late 2007 and early 2008, but analysis (see chapter 3) shows that in fact the country had experienced multiple series of displacements since the early 1990s. In Pakistan, over 2 million people were internally displaced due to military operations in the Swat Valley initiated in May 2009, adding to the existing caseload of around 1 million IDPs. But there have been multiple waves of displacement in Pakistan since 2001, affecting hundreds of thousands, due to fighting between the armed forces and militant groups. [5] In Iraq, large numbers of people were displaced after 2006, but the country had also experienced extensive displacement under the Saddam Hussein regime. Given that the government registers only IDPs displaced since 2006, the focus of international efforts (by UNHCR and IOM) and reporting on Iraqi IDPs has been on those cases—despite the fact that most of those displaced before 2003 have yet to achieve durable solutions. Indeed, as one in every eleven Iraqis was still internally displaced at the end of 2010, the problem of internal displacement in Iraq cannot be reduced to one specific "caseload."

Where IDPs Live

Another feature of displacement that we wanted to explore was the location and general living arrangements of IDPs during their displacement—that is, whether they were living in camps or other forms of organized settlements. On one hand, it might be expected that because camps congregate IDPs into large groups at locations that often are established especially for them and usually are easily identifiable, IDPs themselves would be more visible to the government and public as a group and also easier to access and organize for delivery of assistance and services. Would we therefore find greater and more effective government engagement in countries in which a large number of IDPs are found in camps? On the other hand, it cannot be assumed that conditions in camps are better than in non-camp situations. This assessment is difficult because IDPs living with host families or in other non-camp arrangements are not easy to identify because they are dispersed. More important, does the government draw a distinction between IDPs in camps and those in other living arrangements in responding to their needs?

In many situations of internal displacement, governments set up camps or settlements (including collective centers) for IDPs, typically shortly after large-scale movements of people occur because of conflicts or natural disasters. But in all the countries surveyed here, IDPs also have formed informal settlements on their own, without government planning or management. Such settlements have characteristics in common with both camp and community settings.

Available data indicate that a significant majority of the displaced in twelve of the fifteen countries surveyed lived outside of formal camps. Countries where a majority of IDPs seem to have lived in planned camps or collective centers (at least at one point in time) include Uganda, Kenya, Sri Lanka and perhaps Sudan. In contrast, there were no camps in Colombia or Turkey and also very few in Pakistan and, until recently, in Yemen. While there is a dearth of information about living conditions for IDPs generally, much less is known about IDPs living outside of camp settings—for example, whether they are sharing a house with relatives or friends, whether they are squatting on public property, or whether they have joined the ranks of the urban poor. And little is known about their specific needs for protection and assistance. Are they generally eking out a living? Are they exploited and threatened? Do they face discrimination any different from that experienced by the urban poor? Answers to these important questions are simply unknown.

It does seem that IDPs living in camps are more visible than those dispersed among the population. In Sudan, for example, much more attention has been given to IDPs living in camps in Darfur than to those living on the margins of urban centers; similarly, IDPs from

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[5] On displacement since 2001 in Pakistan, see Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Millions of IDPs and Returnees Face Continuing Crisis: A Profile of the Internal Displacement Situation*, 2 December 2009 (www.internal-displacement.org).

Southern Sudan living in camps get more attention than all those who have crowded into informal settlements on the outskirts of Khartoum since the 1990s. In Iraq, it was the movement of IDPs into squatter settlements that seemed to trigger government action; when they lived dispersed and largely invisible among communities, it was perhaps easier for the government to ignore them. Similarly, if the 1 million displaced Kurds in Turkey had been concentrated in consolidated settlements, it is likely that the government would have been under more pressure to act than when it was they were dispersed in many communities and were all too easily dismissed as "economic migrants," as the government did throughout the 1990s.

And what if living in a camp essentially becomes a requirement for or at least a determining factor in receiving humanitarian assistance? In Yemen, the government is rightly criticized for focusing on and providing assistance only to IDPs in camps, although the draft national strategy on IDPs sets out, at least in principle, the importance of redressing the imbalance. In Georgia, just under half of IDPs were living in collective centers while the majority lived in private accommodations of different types, but it was the IDPs in the collective centers who came to epitomize the plight of IDPs in the country. Moreover, the IDPs living in private accommodations have been a major "blind spot" with respect to data collection. To be sure, the delivery of services is by and large logistically easier when populations are in concentrated groups (though when camps are overcrowded, security and other issues can easily occur during assistance delivery). However, under international law, as reflected in the Guiding Principles, the rights of IDPs certainly are not contingent on their living in a certain location.

The issue of camps is further complicated by problems in defining what constitutes a camp. In Iraq only 1 percent of IDPs lived in camps, but many more of the almost 3 million IDPs (at the height of displacement) lived either in squatter settlements or in public buildings. In Myanmar, about 25 percent of conflict-displaced IDPs lived in government-run camps while 20 percent lived

in camps or settlements administered by ethnic authorities. Similarly, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, while 2 percent of the country's 3.5 million IDPs lived in camps administered by UNHCR, the figure jumped to 33 percent when informal settlements were included. That gives rise to the question of what a camp or settlement is—is it defined by the fact that IDPs live in distinct concentrations with other IDPs? Or is it that someone—the government or, for example, UNHCR—takes responsibility for the settlement?[6]

UNHCR Engagement

In the introduction to this volume, we posited that UNHCR engagement with IDPs could be related to the exercise of government responsibility because UNHCR seeks to support government response. UNHCR has a long history of engaging with IDPs, although until the last decade, most of that involvement was ad hoc, depending on needs, whether UNHCR was present in the country working with refugees, whether there was a formal request from the UN Secretary-General and whether resources were available.[7] Following the

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[6] Note that the Global Cluster on Camp Management and Coordination explicitly states that it is involved in all types of camps and settlements for both conflict- and disaster-induced displacement, including planned camps, collective centers, self-settled camps and reception/transit centers (http://oneresponse.info/GlobalClusters/Camp%20Coordination%20Management/Pages/default.aspx).

[7] See the various real-time evaluations of UNHCR's IDP operations by the office's Policy Development and Evaluation Service and IDP Advisory Team (for example, on operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Eastern Chad, and Uganda). See also the following key UNHCR policy documents pertaining to its role in situations of internal displacement: *UNHCR's Operational Experience with Internally Displaced Persons*, September 1994; *UNHCR's Role in IASC Humanitarian Reform Initiatives and in the Strengthening of the Inter-Agency Collaborative Response to Internally Displaced Persons Situations*, 20 September 2005; *UNHCR's Expanded Role in Support of the Inter-Agency Response to Internal Displacement Situations, 36th Meeting of the Standing Committee*, 8 June 2006 (EC/57/SC/CRP.18); *UNHCR's Expanded Role in Support of the Inter-Agency*

implementation of humanitarian reform initiatives in 2005, UNHCR was designated the cluster lead in the areas of protection, camp management and coordination, and emergency shelter in conflict situations, so its involvement has since become more systematic and visible.

While UNHCR generally tries to strengthen the government's capacity to respond to internal displacement, including by supporting data collection and the development of laws and policies, its support needs to be finely balanced. It must keep the role of the government front and center in order to ensure that its support does not veer into substitution for government action; otherwise, UNHCR involvement risks absolving governments of their responsibility.

One of the difficulties in collecting data on this indicator is that UNHCR has different forms of engagement. The earliest record of UNHCR involvement with IDPs appears in the case of Sudan, where it was involved in assisting IDPs in 1972, when its activities focused on providing assistance but not protection to IDPs.[8]   As shown in figure 3-4 below, UNHCR involvement with

IDPs in some of the countries surveyed had already begun in the 1990s: in Sri Lanka (1988), Afghanistan (1992), Georgia (1993) and Colombia (1998), followed by UNHCR's involvement in Yemen in 2009 which represented involvement in a relatively new displacement situation. In cases in which the cluster approach has been applied, UNHCR has assumed lead responsibility for IDP protection in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the

Figure 3-4. Year of earliest UNHCR involvement with IDPs in the 15 countries assessed in this study[e]

Country	Year
Afghanistan	1992
Central African Republic	2006
Colombia	1998
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1999
Georgia	1993
Iraq	1991
Kenya	2008
Myanmar	2006
Nepal	2006
Pakistan	2008
Sri Lanka	1988
Sudan	1972 (South Sudan)
Turkey	1974
Uganda	1979
Yemen	2007

Response to Internal Displacement Situations, Informal Consultation Meeting, 12 September 2006; *The Protection of Internally Displaced Persons and the Role of UNHCR*, 27 February 2007; U*NHCR's Role in Support of an Enhanced Humanitarian Response to Situations of Internal Displacement: Update on UNHCR's Leadership Role within the Cluster Approach and IDP Operational Workplans*, 25 May 2007; *Policy Framework and Implementation Strategy: UNHCR's Role in Support of an Enhanced Inter-Agency Response to the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons*, 4 June, 2007; *Real-Time Evaluations of UNHCR's Involvement in Operations for Internally Displaced Persons and the Cluster Approach: Analysis of Findings*, 29 August 2007 (EC/58/SC/CRP.23); *UNHCR's Role in Support of the Return and Reintegration of Displaced Populations: Policy Framework and Implementation Strategy*, 11 February 2008 (EC/59/SC/CRP.5). All documents are available at UNHCR's website (www.unhcr.org).

8 On the evolution and history of humanitarian agencies' engagement in protection the world over, see Elizabeth Ferris, *The Politics of Protection* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press), 2011.

e Source for Afghanistan, Georgia, Iraq, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Turkey and Uganda: UNHCR, *UNHCR's Operational Experience with Internally Displaced Persons*, September 1994 (www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6b3400.html); Central African Republic and Nepal: *UNCHR Statistical Yearbook 2006*; Democratic Republic of the Congo in: *UNHCR Global Report 1999*; Kenya and Pakistan: *UNHCR Statistical Yearbook 2008*; Myanmar and Yemen: *UNHCR Statistical Yearbook 2007*; Colombia: "UNHCR field office opens in Colombia," 7 December 1999 (www.unhcr.org/3ae6b82130.html) and Frédérique Prunera, "Personnes déplacées en Colombie et personnes d'origine colombienne cherchant refuge dans les pays voisins," ["Displaced Persons in Colombia and Colombian Refugees in Neighboring Countries"], *Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge* [*International Review of the Red Cross*], no. 843 (September 2001), p. 769.

Congo, Georgia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Uganda and Yemen. There certainly are cases in which UNHCR's long involvement in the country has supported government efforts to exercise responsibility toward the displaced; Georgia, Colombia and Uganda stand out in this regard. In other cases, such as Myanmar and Pakistan, there are government restrictions on UNHCR's engagement with conflict-induced IDPs while in cases such as Sri Lanka, UNHCR has not played the leading UN role with respect to IDPs. There are also cases, such as Afghanistan, Yemen and Kenya, in which UNHCR has played an important role in supporting the development of national laws and policies, even though such policies have yet to be adopted. By contrast, in Nepal, human rights and development actors take the lead on IDPs. In Turkey, UNHCR is entirely absent from engagement on IDPs, despite advocacy by NGOs for more than a decade that it become involved.[9] The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), by contrast, has been providing technical assistance to the Van governorate for years on development of an action plan on IDPs and compensation scheme.

Government Capacity

Finally, while recognizing that ongoing conflict or years of war had a negative impact on the capacity of nearly all of the countries surveyed, we hypothesized that governments of countries scoring high on the Human Development Index (see figure 3-5) would have greater capacity to take measures to address displacement than those scoring lower. The results were inconclusive. For example, Colombia and Georgia are both countries where displacement has been protracted, and both score relatively high on the human development index (.807 and .798 respectively) and both have a rich body of IDP laws and policies. But in Colombia,

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[9]   U.S. Committee for Refugees *The Wall of Denial: Internal Displacement in Turkey*, 1999. This paper, written by Bill Frelick, was commissioned as a case study for the conference entitled, "'Tough Nuts to Crack'": Dealing with Difficult Situations of Internal Displacement," held on 28 January 1999, co-sponsored by the Brookings Project on Internal Displacement and the U.S. Committee for Refugees.

Figure 3-5. Human Development Indicator rank by level of development of the 15 countries assessed in this study[f]

Low human development	Rank (2010)
Kenya	128
Myanmar	132
Yemen	133
Nepal	138
Uganda	143
Sudan	154
Afghanistan	155
Central African Republic	159
Democratic Republic of the Congo	168
Medium human development	**Rank (2010)**
Sri Lanka	91
Pakistan	125
High human development	**Rank (2010)**
Georgia	74
Colombia	79
Turkey	83
Other countries	**Rank (2010)**
Iraq	N/A

f   Source: UNDP, *Human Development Report: The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways to Human Development* (http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2010).

the nature of the internal conflict means that successive governments also bear some responsibility for the displacement of populations, although the passage of the Victims and Land Restitution Law under the Santos administration was a historic and positive step in addressing internal displacement and, potentially, in achieving durable solutions. Meanwhile in Georgia, political considerations were the driving factor determining the government's narrow approach to durable solutions focusing exclusively on the right to return; only in recent years and after intense international advocacy has this changed. In both countries, therefore, the dynamics of the conflict rather than the level of development have played the most important role in

determining the government's response.

At the same time, the level of development of a country, including in terms of governance structures, does appear to have better equipped some government institutions to respond. Colombia, with an active Ombudsman, a well-established judiciary and an activist Constitutional Court, was the first country in the world to develop a comprehensive law on internal displacement. Over the years it also has developed a sophisticated system for responding to IDPs, though one that many observers consider still inadequate to address the scale of displacement. In Georgia, the government reforms that were ushered in following the Rose Revolution of 2003 were followed by a gradual shift in government policy that led to amendment of laws and development of national strategies and action plans to address IDP issues. In particular, the government made efforts to ensure that IDPs do not face undue hardship while they remain displaced while retaining its long-standing primary goal of reestablishing its control of the occupied territories and advocating for the right of IDPs to return.

The Utility of the Framework for National Responsibility in Assessing National Response to IDPs

Although the Framework for National Responsibility has been widely used by government and international practitioners, as discussed in the introduction to this volume, and has been employed to analyze specific government responses to internal displacement, as far as the authors are aware, this study constitutes the first time that the Framework has been used as a tool for both assessing and comparing government policies toward IDPs. Overall, the authors found the Framework to be a very useful instrument for conducting assessments, although the collection of data for some of the benchmarks was especially challenging. Problems with data collection for this study have hindered efforts to draw conclusions regarding the determinants of governments' effort to fulfill their national responsibility toward IDPs.

The easiest benchmarks to analyze were those with tangible indicators, in particular, the benchmarks related to data collection (Benchmark 3), national laws (Benchmark 5), policies (Benchmark 6) and institutional focal points (Benchmark 7). Data on these four benchmarks were for the most part publicly available, and it was relatively easy to find straightforward answers to questions such as whether a government had adopted a law on IDPs or had named an institutional focal point. It was more difficult to assess whether the data collected were comprehensive and whether laws, policies and focal points were active and effective. In several cases, such as Afghanistan, laws and policies that had been developed between 2003 and 2005 were virtually unknown to humanitarian practitioners in the country in 2010. Similarly, it was relatively simple to determine which ministry or office was responsible for IDPs but difficult to assess whether the office was an effective agent for IDPs or was simply a figurehead. For example, while the Ministry of Displacement and Migration in Iraq is clearly involved in IDP assistance, observers on the ground have been highly critical of both its capacity and the will of its leadership to take the steps necessary to protect and assist IDPs. While it was relatively easy to "tick the box" indicating that a government had established a focal point, it was much more difficult to assess whether the focal point was effective. Moreover, in this case—and indeed with many of the benchmarks—the situation is often fluid and using the benchmarks to assess responsibility is sometimes akin to taking a snapshot at a particular moment in time.

Benchmark 8, on national human rights institutions, and Benchmark 10, on durable solutions, proved especially difficult to analyze in depth. While it was relatively easy to assess whether a national human rights institution existed (although in both Kenya and Pakistan, there are NGOs with names that are similar to those of NHRIs, so doing so was not a straightforward task), its role, degree of political independence and stature were often unclear. Analysts differ in their assessment of whether an NHRI has even been established in the Central African Republic. The classification of NHRIs undertaken by OHCHR on the basis of the Paris Principles

was an important reference standard. With respect to IDP issues specifically, however, it was often difficult to ascertain whether the NHRI was active on IDP issues, whether it was truly independent of the government and whether it was effective.

It was also relatively easy to compile information on certain government policy statements and efforts to support durable solutions for IDPs (Benchmark 10), although the sustainability of reported returns could usually not be assessed, particularly in countries with ongoing conflict. As a benchmark, "support for durable solutions" is likely too broad. It encompasses a wide range of activities, such as negotiating peace agreements, ensuring that returning IDPs are not subjected to discrimination, supporting economic opportunities and resolving housing, land and property issues. In order to assess whether a government was supporting durable solutions, the net needed to be cast very wide. Cooperation with the international community (Benchmark 12) was another benchmark that was relatively easy to measure on the level of the government's willingness to accept international financial assistance. But determining the extent to which the government facilitated access by international actors was more difficult. Finally, the issue of data collection turned out to be somewhat surprisingly difficult to assess, given the various different methodologies used and difficulties in tracking down existing datasets.

The most difficult benchmarks to analyze were those whose underlying concepts are very broad and those for which data simply were not publicly available. In the first category are the benchmarks on prevention (Benchmark 1), raising national awareness (Benchmark 2) and participation (Benchmark 9). As with finding durable solutions, preventing internal displacement includes a wide range of activities—from early-warning systems to disaster risk reduction to peace-building and tolerance-promotion activities in areas at particular risk. Such diverse activities make it difficult to assess the extent to which the government is trying to prevent displacement—if it is not actively involved in creating or continuing displacement.

Assessing the extent to which governments are trying to raise national awareness of displacement and accept their responsibility toward IDPs also is difficult. Political leaders can say the right things and publicly indicate their commitment to resolving displacement without in fact having any intention of doing so. Thus, the governments of Sudan and Sri Lanka have both given strong indications that they are committed to resolving displacement even while taking actions that undermine that goal. The indicators that we developed on participation of IDPs (Benchmark 9) proved to be difficult to use, both because the term "participation" encompasses components as diverse as IDP-friendly voter registration systems and mechanisms for needs assessment (which are likely to be covered under different aspects of government policy as well as by different parts of government.) As with other benchmarks, it is also difficult to assess the extent to which participation is meaningful or is token. In the second category were cases for which tracking down data proved to be especially difficult. The question regarding participation (Benchmark 9) proved challenging in this respect as well. It also was difficult to gather even basic information on whether the government was devoting adequate resources to IDPs (Benchmark 11), in part because no government had a budget in which all of its support for IDPs was included in a single figure (although Colombia came closest) and in part because of the time required to track down this information. The example of Transparency International's work in Georgia was highlighted as especially useful in this regard, leading to a recommendation for similar work to be undertaken by specialized NGOs. The NHRI or judiciary in the country also could play a valuable role; in Colombia, it was the Constitutional Court that judged the resource allocations for IDP issues to be inadequate.

Limitations of the Framework for National Responsibility as an Assessment Tool

We found three areas in which the Framework for National Responsibility fell short as an assessment tool for understanding the exercise of government

responsibility for IDPs: accounting for the responsibility of nonstate actors; accounting for national responsibility for protection, particularly during displacement; and accounting for other causes of displacement.

Accounting for the Responsibility of Nonstate Actors:[10] The first and perhaps most obvious shortcoming of the Framework is that, as international humanitarian law—which is reflected in the Guiding Principles—recognizes, national authorities do not always bear sole responsibility for the protection and assistance of all persons (including IDPs) in the territory under their effective control; responsibility may extend to nonstate actors in situations of armed conflict.[11] Millions of IDPs around the world have been displaced by nonstate armed actors and may find themselves under the control of those actors. There are more than fifty countries with conflict-affected IDPs, and in at least half of them there are active nonstate actors. Further, as Geneva Call and IDMC note,

> In 2010, close to three million people fled their homes across the world, the majority displaced by conflict between governments and armed groups, or by generalised violence. While governments, or armed groups associated with the government, were the main agents of displacement in close to half of the situations of displacement, in more than a quarter of situations, the main agents of displacement were armed groups opposed to the government.[12]

At times governments simply do not have access to IDP populations (or returning IDPs) because the IDPs are in territory that is under the de facto control of nonstate actors. While this study did not find any cases in which governments are "doing everything they can possibly do" to address internal displacement, in countries such as Yemen, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, Iraq, Colombia and Georgia continuing conflict inevitably limits to some extent the opportunities for and impact of government action. However, the fact that IDPs may prefer displacement in or return to areas under the control of nonstate actors indicates the inability or unwillingness of some states to fulfill their responsibility to provide the protection that IDPs need.[13]

There are examples, however, of some nonstate actors (the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the Justice & Equality Movement (JEM) of Sudan and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) of Sri Lanka and separatist authorities (Abkhaz) that themselves have taken steps that are in line with some of recommended measures set out in the Framework. Most notable, in Southern Sudan, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement welcomed and participated in training on internal displacement, had its own focal point office for IDP and refugee issues, and adopted its own policy on addressing internal displacement.[14] The impact of its involvement is especially notable because in this case the group, a nonstate actor, has become the government of a sovereign state. It is hoped that the more "responsible" policies and practices toward IDPs implemented during the long years of armed struggle

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[10] In situations of armed conflict.

[11] See Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols, as well as Jean-Marie Henckaerts, "Study on Customary International Humanitarian Law: A Contribution to the Understanding and Respect for the Rule of Law in Armed Conflict," *International Review of the Red Cross*, vol. 87, no. 857, March 2005 (www.icrc.org); *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*; and Walter Kälin, *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement: Annotations,* 2nd. ed., Studies in Transnational Legal Policy No. 38 (Washington, D.C.: American Society of International Law and Brookings Institution, 2008) (www.brookings.edu/reports/2008/spring_guiding_principles.aspx).

[12] Geneva Call and IDMC, *Conference on Armed Non-State*

Actors and the Protection of Internally Displaced People (March 23–24, 2011), June 2011, p. 7. See further: *Forced Migration Review—Feature: Armed Non-State Actors and Displacement*, no. 37, March 2011 (www.fmreview.org/non-state.pdf).

[13] This was a finding of Geneva Call and IDMC, *Conference on Armed Non-State Actors and the Protection of Internally Displaced People.*

[14] See Brookings-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement, *Seminar on Internal Displacement in Southern Sudan, Rumbek, Sudan, 25 November 2002* (www.brookings.edu/reports/2003/02humanrights_idp.aspx).

will serve as a reference for the government of South Sudan.

Accounting for National Responsibility for Protection, Particularly during Displacement: While protection is central to the Framework for National Responsibility and is implicit in many of the benchmarks, a benchmark explicitly focused on protection and specifically on protection as physical security would emphasize the central responsibility of governments to protect IDPs. For example, even if a government has a sound legal framework for IDP protection and assistance, consults with IDPs, supports training, and so forth, if it cannot prevent armed attacks on IDP camps, it is failing to meet its responsibility to protect IDPs. In part, this is covered in some of the benchmarks (for example, Benchmark 1 on prevention) and certainly is an existing responsibility in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, but the issue is of such importance that there should be a specific benchmark on and indicators of IDPs physical security. Surely, the clearest and ultimate test of a responsible government is that it protects the physical safety of IDPs, and that is the least that IDPs should expect of their government. Equally, a benchmark on physical security could include a stronger reference to the responsibility of the government to protect the security of humanitarian workers working to protect and assist IDPs. IDPs, in and outside of camps, face ongoing and intensifying physical security issues, as do the humanitarian workers who assist them but who in nearly all the countries surveyed face access problems and in many instances must curtail their physical presence due to insecurity (see the Benchmark 12 analysis in chapter 1). A benchmark explicitly focused on physical protection could shed further light on the national response to this issue and the adequacy of the response.

Accounting for Other Causes of Displacement: The Framework, in line with the Guiding Principles, explicitly states the importance of ensuring national responsibility in all IDP situations—noting that to be truly "national," the response must be comprehensive.[15]

However, the main text of the Framework—the set of benchmarks—was developed on the basis of experience with IDP situations caused by conflict, generalized violence and systematic human rights violations. Indeed, the Framework seems most useful in assessing government responsibility toward those displaced by conflict, violence and persecution. Even so, several individual benchmarks—such as training on the rights of IDPs (Benchmark 4), ensuring that a legal framework protects those rights (Benchmark 5), encouraging the NHRI to play a role in monitoring IDPs' enjoyment of rights (Benchmark 8), data collection (Benchmark 3), ensuring IDPs' participation in decisions affecting their situation (Benchmark 9), and securing durable solutions (Benchmark 10)—certainly would be relevant in assessing policies on other forms of displacement. However, they might require different approaches and indicators for analysis.[16] For instance, it would always seem essential to clarify institutional responsibility (Benchmark 7), though the choice of institution may vary depending on the cause of displacement—and our research showed that it usually did. Further, any situation of displacement will require a durable solution for all the people uprooted (Benchmark 10), although the timing, approach and constraints to solutions likely will be different in cases of displacement induced by natural disaster, climate change or development.

Suggested Areas for Future Research

This research project has found that the Framework for National Responsibility is a valuable—although not perfect—tool for analyzing government efforts to prevent displacement, to respond to IDPs' needs for protection and assistance and to support durable solutions. While we were often frustrated by the lack of reliable data and therefore unable to draw meaningful comparisons among countries, we found that the twelve benchmarks all directed attention to important issues in understanding the way that governments address internal displacement.

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15   See introduction to the Framework.

16   See Ferris, *The Framework for National Responsibility: Natural Disasters*, forthcoming.

We therefore suggest a number of areas in which further research using the Framework is needed:

Evolution of the Exercise of National Responsibility for IDPs: While this study seeks to profile and assess governments' national responses to IDPs over the years, further in-depth analysis could be conducted on how governments' exercise of national responsibility develops and is manifested over time. In particular, research could focus on the timing and sequencing of actions taken on the twelve benchmarks of the Framework for National Responsibility and examine political changes over time and their implications for IDPs response. Questions this research would answer include the following: Is it more effective to take action on one benchmark before another? What motivates the government to initiate certain measures but not others? What role is played by national political institutions, political interests and civil society groups in bringing about change in response to IDPs? What role do international actors play in supporting such change? The research would also include analysis seeking to explain why governments treat "old" and "new" IDPs differently in law, policies and practice.

National versus Local Exercise of National Responsibility for IDPs: It would be helpful to look in more detail at the relationship between national and local administrative entities to determine how responsibility is divided among different levels of government and which models are most effective. A related and interesting point for comparative analysis would be the extent to which different systems of government—for example, federal versus unitary systems—exercise their responsibility toward IDPs differently.

Allocation of Financial Resources: As noted in the description of Benchmark 11 (allocation of resources), an excellent research project would be to "trace the money" to identify funds allocated to IDPs through different government ministries. Findings could serve as an important point of comparison of financial allocations made to IDPs and those made to other groups of vulnerable national citizens.

Countries with Lower Numbers of IDPs: Further research on countries with smaller numbers of IDPs could add an important dimension to our understanding of IDP issues. Sometimes it is assumed that it is easier for a government to respond effectively to a smaller caseload than to a larger one. But that is an untested assumption that needs to be studied. For example, there are reports of only a few thousand IDPs remaining in Armenia and Senegal; what are the particular obstacles to resolving these relatively small-scale cases of internal displacement? Are there particular political interests that prevent the government from taking the necessary action?

Data, Data, Data: Much greater attention is needed to both ensuring that data on IDPs exist and collecting data on the benchmarks of the Framework for National Responsibility. In addition to the United Nations and international organizations such as the International Organization for Migration, national governments, national human rights institutions, and relevant civil society groups should all commit the necessary effort and resources to improving the collection of data on internal displacement, particularly with regard to the attainment of durable solutions (return, local integration and resettlement to a third location). In addition, it would be very helpful if the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, in the course of its detailed monitoring of more than fifty countries experiencing internal displacement, collected data systematically on the various benchmarks of national responsibility. Given the breadth of IDMC's monitoring work, doing so would also enable and strengthen the basis for comparative analysis across countries where data exist. That in turn would serve as a useful advocacy tool, both for national and local civil society actors and for international agencies seeking to support government efforts to address internal displacement more effectively. This study has given some indication of how various governments have implemented each of the benchmarks, which could well serve as practical advice to other governments.

Other Causes of Displacement: As has been noted, this study applies the Framework primarily to cases of conflict-induced displacement. It would therefore be useful

to determine the extent to which the Framework can be used in cases of natural disaster and development-induced displacement.[17]

Recommendations

Our research on national responsibility and assessment of the relative importance of the different benchmarks set forth in the Framework for National Responsibility have resulted in a number of findings, recommendations and even several good practices that we hope can guide, motivate and assist governments in developing their own response to internal displacement. Beyond the more detailed findings and recommendations presented in this study and over and above the obligations of governments toward IDPs articulated in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, we offer the following six short pieces of advice to political leaders seeking to translate their responsibility to IDPs into effective response.

Make responding to internal displacement a political priority. This means acknowledging the occurrence of internal displacement and all its various causes and raising awareness of the issue within both the government and the broader society. When a president or prime minister indicates that addressing displacement is a priority, a signal is sent throughout the government, from government ministries to local mayors, and to the population—not least the IDPs themselves—that this is an issue to be taken seriously. However, it is also necessary to translate such statements into concrete, tangible and effective national response, through the implementation of laws and policies to protect and assist IDPs in accordance with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

Designate an institutional focal point with sufficient political clout to get things done. The designated focal point should be adequately staffed and resourced to meet its responsibilities, including overseeing the process of collecting data on internal displacement to ensure sound programming, initiating legislation based on the Guiding Principles, developing policies and action plans, ensuring IDPs' access to information and their participation in all phases of displacement, organizing the necessary training programs and advocating for budgetary allocations.

Devote adequate resources. Addressing internal displacement—from preventing displacement to protecting and assisting IDPs to securing durable solutions—is an expensive task. National commitments to address internal displacement must be matched with a commensurate commitment of national resources. That includes making funds available to ensure not only that IDPs have access to food, water, shelter and medical care but also that, among other things, IDP children have access to quality education, that there are sufficient police personnel monitoring the safety of IDP camps and settlements, and that the national institutional focal point and national human rights institution have adequate human and financial resources to fulfill their roles. Where responsibility is assigned to a particular authority, such as local levels of government, it must be ensured that the authority is provided with the necessary financial means. These and other measures may be included in IDP laws and policies, or may require amending certain laws and regulations.

Look for help within the country. To address the sheer scale of displacement and related needs in many conflict-affected and post-conflict countries, external humanitarian and development assistance has become the norm. National and subnational efforts and mobilization of competent human capital are just as if not more important. It is critical for national authorities not

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17   Ibid.

only to provide tangible financial support but also to lend meaningful political support and to engage in dialogue with regional, provincial and municipal authorities. Further, governments should appeal to and not obstruct the work of credible organizations in their countries that work to protect and promote IDP rights—they are usually the first responders in crises and the only ones with true staying power. The work of civil society groups and national human rights institutions is vital as it represents national ownership of efforts to respond to the plight of IDPs and can offer an effective conduit for the meaningful involvement of IDPs in advocating for their rights. Hence, national human rights institutions should be encouraged and allowed, in accordance with the standards set forth in the Paris Principles, to independently monitor displacement, report on the promotion and protection of the rights of IDPs and provide legal assistance to IDPs.[18]

Ask for international assistance when need it. International actors not only have concrete financial resources to contribute but also technical and legal expertise that can be used to support policies for IDPs. These various actors have important contributions to make. They should be seen as partners who can assist the government in meeting its responsibilities. As with national actors, it is essential that international actors are able to undertake their work addressing internal displacement without undue obstacles or delay and in full security.

Don't put off the search for durable solutions for IDPs—and involve IDPs in the process. Resolving displacement while respecting basic human rights is not only a humane thing to do that enables people to more fully enjoy their rights and to get on with their lives, it is a responsibility of governments, set forth in the Guiding Principles. Resolving displacement sustainably can also be an important dimension of other national endeavors, including rebuilding after a natural disaster, reconciling after a conflict and preventing future conflicts. It is equally important to not delay measures for improving the living conditions of IDPs in their location of displacement even while exploring alternative durable solutions. It is further incumbent on governments to ensure the meaningful participation of internally displaced persons in the planning and management of durable solutions to their displacement.

We hope that our research and analysis of the ways in which governments have exercised their national responsibility toward IDPs will inspire further research, provide some concrete examples of responsible action to governments seeking to protect and assist IDPs, and lead governments to more effectively exercise the responsibility toward IDPs that has been entrusted to them.

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[18] See Principles Relating to the Status of National Institutions (the Paris Principles), in UN General Assembly, A/RES/48/134, 4 March 1994 (www2.ohchr.org/english/law/parisprinciples.htm); See other UN resolutions on NHRIs at OHCHR's website (www.ohchr.org/en/countries/nhri/pages/nhrimain.aspx).