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Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Human rights of internally displaced persons

Note by the Secretary-General**

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Paula Gaviria Betancur, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [78/205](#) and Human Rights Council resolution [50/6](#).

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Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Paula Gaviria Betancur

Summary

In the present report, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Paula Gaviria Betancur, examines the intersection of peace processes and internal displacement. She analyses modalities for ensuring the participation of internally displaced persons in peacebuilding, fostering durable solutions through peace agreements and addressing the root causes of violence and displacement, as well as the respective obligations of national and local authorities and the international community. She also highlights good practices and delivers recommendations for furthering the integration of internal displacement into peace processes.

I. Introduction

1. Enabling durable solutions for internally displaced persons and achieving sustainable peace are inextricably linked by their shared dependence on addressing the root causes of conflict and displacement, implementing measures to prevent the recurrence of crises and future human rights violations and ensuring restitution and remedy for victims. Following their displacement, internally displaced persons have the right to freely choose whether to return, integrate locally or resettle elsewhere.¹ For these to be truly durable solutions, however, it is crucial that broader elements of lasting peace also be in place, including security guarantees, the restoration of housing, land and property, community reconciliation, post-conflict reconstruction and development, transitional justice and access to remedy, as well as the re-establishment of rule of law and a legitimate Government.²

2. It is regrettable that the world today is marked by more armed conflicts than at any time in the past three decades, the majority of which are internal conflicts.³ These conflicts are also increasingly deadly,⁴ and many have been characterized by mass atrocities and crimes against humanity. There has been a parallel surge in forced displacement. Globally, more than 117 million people are forcibly displaced, more than double the share of the population displaced a decade ago.⁵ Over half of those forcibly displaced – approximately 76 million people worldwide – are internally displaced, with conflict being the principal cause of displacement.⁶ Displacement is also increasingly protracted, with contemporary displacement ranging from 10 to 26 years.⁷ These sobering statistics underscore the imperative for States and the international community to redouble their efforts to secure sustainable peace and durable solutions to internal displacement and to prevent further violence and conflict.

3. Comprehensive peace agreements have been declining steadily since the 1970s,⁸ while informal approaches to peacebuilding are on the rise. The increasingly complex nature of contemporary conflicts, their interlinkages with the climate crisis, the weaponization of new and emerging technologies and the proliferation of non-State armed groups have challenged traditional approaches to peacebuilding and the search for durable solutions to internal displacement. There are also challenges in ensuring coordination among international, national, regional and local tracks of peacebuilding and in ensuring that all actors responding to internal displacement crises understand the importance of integrating internal displacement considerations into peacebuilding processes.⁹

4. In conflict situations, internally displaced persons may be both victims and actors with the potential to end the conflict, build sustainable peace and prevent further conflict. The unique perspective and understanding that internally displaced

¹ Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, principle 14.

² Walter Kälin, “Foreword by the Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons”, in The Brookings Institution-University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement, *Addressing Internal Displacement in Peace Processes, Peace Agreements and Peace-Building* (September 2007).

³ Peace Research Institute Oslo, “New figures show conflict-related deaths at 28-year high, largely due to Ethiopia and Ukraine wars”, 7 June 2023.

⁴ The number of conflict deaths increased in 2023 in 57 countries. See Institute for Economics & Peace, *Global Peace Index 2024: Measuring Peace in a Complex World* (Sydney, June 2024), p. 11.

⁵ See www.unhcr.org/global-trends.

⁶ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2024* (Geneva, 2024).

⁷ See www.iom.int/high-level-panel-internal-displacement.

⁸ Twenty-three per cent of conflicts in the 1970s and 4 per cent of conflicts in 2010 were concluded through peace agreements. See Institute for Economics & Peace, *Global Peace Index 2024*, p. 5.

⁹ See A/73/173.

persons have of a conflict and its consequences make it essential that policymakers include them in peacebuilding processes; any sustainable peace process must ensure the integration of their human rights and interests in the agreed outcome.¹⁰ It is critical for peacebuilding and durable solutions planning efforts to include a multitrack and multi-stakeholder approach and emphasize the prevention and non-recurrence of conflict and displacement, in particular in contexts characterized by protracted displacement. Peace processes that do not adequately address the rights violations suffered by internally displaced persons and the root causes of displacement risk an eventual recurrence of conflict.

5. Peace agreements should be aimed at addressing the specific needs, rights and legitimate interests of internally displaced persons and reflect a human rights-based approach to supporting durable solutions that ensures the participation of internally displaced persons in peace processes and peacebuilding. That entails the engagement of internally displaced persons in all their diversity, including on the basis of age, gender, disability, minority status, Indigenous identity, sexual orientation and gender identity.

6. In the present report, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons reviews approaches to ensuring the integration of internal displacement considerations in peacebuilding processes, by examining modalities for enabling the participation of internally displaced persons in peacebuilding, fostering durable solutions through peace agreements and addressing the root causes of violence and displacement, as well as by assessing the respective roles and responsibilities of national and local authorities and the international community. She highlights good practices and delivers recommendations aimed at furthering the integration of internal displacement into peace processes, as means of ensuring sustainable peace and the non-recurrence of conflict, human rights violations and forced displacement.

7. To inform the present report, the Special Rapporteur issued a call for input and held two consultations with representatives of academic and United Nations organizations. She thanks all partners and stakeholders who participated in the consultations and provided written submissions.¹¹

II. Legal and policy frameworks

8. In the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, it is established that, regardless of their location and the phase of their displacement, internally displaced persons should not be discriminated against in the enjoyment of their rights to associate freely, participate equally in community affairs or vote and participate in governmental and public affairs and that they should enjoy the right to access to the means necessary to exercise those rights (see principles 22 and 29), which implies their right to equal participation in peace processes.

9. Under the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, the primary duty and responsibility is placed on the competent authorities to establish conditions and provide the means to allow internally displaced persons to return voluntarily, in safety and with dignity, to their places of residence or to resettle voluntarily elsewhere in

¹⁰ Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and the Humanitarian Policy Group of the Overseas Development Institute, “Achieving durable solutions by including displacement-affected communities in peacebuilding”, joint submission to the High-level Panel on Internal Displacement, May 2020.

¹¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all submissions, except where confidentiality has been explicitly requested, have been or will be posted on the web page of the Special Rapporteur’s call for input, available at www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/2024/call-input-peacebuilding-context-internal-displacement.

the country. Special efforts should be made to ensure the full participation of internally displaced persons in the planning and management of their return or resettlement and reintegration (see principle 28). Peace processes provide an opportune moment and a venue through which competent authorities can fulfil their responsibilities to enable durable solutions for internally displaced persons.

10. At the regional level, under the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention), which provides a comprehensive framework for the prevention of internal displacement, protection and assistance to internally displaced persons and for enabling sustainable solutions to internal displacement, States parties are obliged to incorporate the principles of the Convention into peace negotiations and agreements in order to find sustainable solutions to internal displacement (art. III (2) (e)). The Kampala Convention also includes a specific provision on reparations for internally displaced persons for damage incurred as a result of displacement (art. XII). The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has adopted a recommendation under which, while non-binding, States members of the Council of Europe are committed to applying the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and in which existing member State obligations that could be applied to protect internally displaced persons are emphasized. Case law under the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention of Human Rights) has been interpreted to address various aspects of peace and transitional justice, notably housing, land and property issues.¹²

11. In its Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee emphasizes that restoring the human rights of internally displaced persons is a core component of ensuring that solutions are truly durable. The restoration of those rights may include reparation, justice, truth and closure for past injustices, through transitional justice or other mechanisms. Durable solutions are also conceptualized in the Framework as a peacebuilding challenge, given that after conflict and generalized violence, durable solutions may not be possible without stabilization.¹³

12. According to the Framework, a rights-based process to support durable solutions should at least indirectly involve internally displaced persons in peace processes, to ensure that their rights, needs and legitimate interests are addressed in peace agreements and peacebuilding strategies, which inform strategies for durable solutions. The participation of internally displaced persons in peace processes should reflect their full diversity. Humanitarian and development actors should advocate and enable their participation through, inter alia, training and community development.¹⁴ The Framework contains a call for full and non-discriminatory access to effective remedies, justice and transitional justice mechanisms for those who have been victims of violations of international human rights or humanitarian law, including arbitrary displacement, indicated as criteria for durable solutions.¹⁵

13. In the Framework, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee cautions that, although peace agreements may contain a policy of preference for one durable solution, individual choices must still be respected, as the principle of freedom of movement remains valid. Durable solutions should be a specific goal of peace agreements, which should address the specific needs of internally displaced persons, including safety and security, housing, land and property issues, reconciliation and peacebuilding, post-

¹² Costas Paraskeva, *Protecting Internally Displaced Persons under the European Convention on Human Rights and other Council of Europe Standards: A Handbook* (May 2017), chap. I, sect. 4.

¹³ A/HRC/13/21/Add.4, para. 16.

¹⁴ Ibid., paras. 48 and 49.

¹⁵ Ibid., paras. 94–105.

conflict reconstruction and remedies. Peace agreements should include clear and consistent definitions related to internal displacement, incorporate displacement-specific rights and protections, specify the roles and obligations of relevant actors towards internally displaced persons and address the implementation process, including the participation of internally displaced persons therein.¹⁶

14. The Brookings Institution-University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement, in its report entitled *Addressing Internal Displacement in Peace Processes, Peace Agreements and Peace-Building*, draws upon case studies and good practices to examine how internally displaced persons and their concerns can be integrated in peace processes, how peace agreements can effectively address internal displacement and how peacebuilding work can mainstream internal displacement considerations; recommendations are also made to various stakeholders to strengthen inclusion of internal displacement across those areas. The report is complemented by a “peacemaker’s toolkit”, which provides practical guidance to mediators on how to integrate internal displacement issues into peace negotiations and peace agreements and engage internally displaced persons themselves in peace processes.¹⁷

III. Integrating internal displacement into peacebuilding

15. In the present report, the term “peacebuilding” is used to refer to a range of measures targeted at reducing the risk of a lapse or relapse into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, while laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development. That definition encompasses mediation, peace negotiations, peace agreements and peace processes.

16. Peacebuilding is necessary in any context where internal displacement occurs, not only where there is an ongoing peace process. It may even be necessary in contexts where the proximate cause of displacement was not related to armed conflict; for example, conflicts may arise between internally displaced persons and host communities over limited resources, regardless of whether the initial displacement was driven by armed conflict, disasters or other factors.

17. Achieving durable solutions entails more than a narrow focus on settlement options (return, local integration or settlement elsewhere) and is, when properly implemented, “a complex process that addresses human rights, humanitarian, development, reconstruction and peacebuilding challenges”.¹⁸ These objectives align with those of most peace agreements. However, peace agreements alone are insufficient to enable durable solutions; stabilization, the rule of law and the return of security are critical to enabling internally displaced persons to enjoy freedom of movement and free choice of residence without the prospect of being displaced again.¹⁹ Furthermore, internally displaced persons may have lost trust in State institutions that had failed to protect them; reforms to the national institutional and legal framework may therefore be necessary for them to feel that their displacement has been truly resolved and that the structural factors that had led to their displacement have been addressed sufficiently to prevent future displacement.

18. Although some peace processes have involved proactive efforts to integrate internal displacement considerations, the Special Rapporteur believes that these are the exception rather than the norm. From the submissions received for the present

¹⁶ Ibid., paras. 21 (d), 50 and 51.

¹⁷ Gerard Mc Hugh, *Integrating Internal Displacement in Peace Processes and Agreements*, The Peacemaker’s Toolkit series, eds. A. Heather Coyne and Nigel Quinney (Washington, D.C., Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement and United States Institute of Peace, 2010).

¹⁸ See [A/HRC/13/21/Add.4](#).

¹⁹ Ibid.

report and the country visits conducted under her mandate, it is clear that more inclusive and articulated responses to internal displacement are urgently needed, as are measures to establish and strengthen coordination between humanitarian, development and peace actors. To strengthen the inclusion of internal displacement in peace processes, the Special Rapporteur highlights the importance of establishing mechanisms for the participation of internally displaced persons, legal and policy frameworks to facilitate durable solutions to displacement and measures to address the root causes of violence and displacement.

A. Participation of internally displaced persons in peace processes

19. It is essential to centre the voices of internally displaced persons and other victims of human rights violations within peacebuilding, given that the perspectives of those who bear the consequences of conflict first-hand are fundamental to finding durable solutions and sustainable peace. Recognizing victims of human rights violations and ensuring that internally displaced persons have ownership and a meaningful stake in the peace process also helps to ensure the legitimacy of the process and to rebuild trust in public institutions.

20. However, peace stakeholders often fail to engage internally displaced persons in discussions related to rights violations and remedies. Political constraints play a role, as any party's demands for expanding participation must be balanced with the limitations of formal political dialogues,²⁰ and the participation of internally displaced persons in high-level negotiations may be limited. Peace processes may be considered too sensitive and complex to engage victims, or they may not be adapted to make them accessible to internally displaced persons. Legalistic language and formal institutional frameworks may render peacebuilding processes difficult for internally displaced persons to navigate, or they may no longer have the identity documents required to assert their rights as citizens. Geographic barriers may limit participation for those outside capital cities, where such processes often unfold.

21. Internally displaced persons facing intersecting forms of discrimination may have been disproportionately affected by human rights violations during conflicts, but they are often even more underrepresented in peacebuilding. That includes women, despite the adoption of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women and peace and security – and despite evidence of their effectiveness as peacebuilders in a wide range of contexts. LGBTQ+ persons often face disproportionate violence during conflicts, yet the violations they suffer are not adequately recognized owing to underreporting of such violence and to their exclusion from peace processes. Ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities, as well as Indigenous Peoples and peasants, are similarly underrepresented in many peacebuilding efforts and may face additional barriers to participation due to language, geography or discrimination. Older persons, children and young people may be excluded if they are not perceived as having agency or important perspectives. Persons with disabilities may face challenges in evacuating and in obtaining assistance in displacement, and others may develop new disabilities as a result of conflict-related injuries, yet they may be underrepresented in peacebuilding if those processes are not accessible.

22. Peace stakeholders should adapt peace processes to facilitate the meaningful participation of internally displaced persons in all their diversity. This should include participation modalities that move beyond traditional “track one” approaches, in which only high-level authorities are engaged, and move towards “track two” and “track three” approaches, which allow for participation by civil society and

²⁰ Institute for Integrated Transitions, “Effective participation in political and peace negotiations”, April 2021.

communities, including internally displaced persons. Indefinitely postponing the participation of internally displaced persons in peace processes in order to find the right moment can ultimately result in their exclusion. Instead, peace stakeholders should seek to constantly create opportunities to include internally displaced persons or to ensure that their needs, priorities and perspectives are adequately reflected in the peace process when their direct participation would create risks, is impossible or is not their preferred modality for engagement. It is also crucial to build the capacity of internally displaced persons and their organizations at all levels to enable them to participate more effectively in peacebuilding processes.²¹

23. For the participation of internally displaced persons to be meaningful, participation alone should not be the end goal. Peace stakeholders should ensure that there are concrete plans in place to respond to the issues and needs raised, as well as adequate safety and security guarantees to protect participants. Without such measures, peacebuilding stakeholders run the risk of raising false expectations, increasing victims' disillusionment with peace processes, exposing victims to protection risks and failing to address the human rights violations suffered by internally displaced persons.

24. Participation should not be a one-off event, but should be continuous, with internally displaced persons engaged and empowered as stakeholders throughout all phases of the process, from peace negotiations to the conclusion of peace agreements and the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms, as well as in the post-conflict reconstruction process. Peacebuilding stakeholders should expand avenues for engagement by leveraging new technologies that enable participants to engage remotely in peace processes, while bearing in mind the limitations and additional challenges of digital engagement, including risks associated with online harassment and unequal levels of connectivity.

25. Among the 2,055 peace agreements in the Peace Agreements Database,²² 156 contain provisions that specifically and clearly address internal displacement. However, only eight agreements are focused specifically on the participation of internally displaced persons. Within those agreements, the aspects that are emphasized include participation in post-conflict decision-making and governance and the representation of internally displaced persons in dedicated commissions and committees. Although several agreements contain an emphasis on the importance of including women in the peace processes, less attention is paid to other groups facing marginalization and discrimination.²³

26. Despite the challenges involved, certain peace processes have successfully included internally displaced persons as direct participants in peace negotiations. Delegations of internally displaced persons, including specific delegations of women, participated directly in negotiations between the Government of Colombia and the former Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army. The delegations that were able to present concrete proposals during negotiations were engaged in public forums where the various elements of the agreement were presented.²⁴ In the Philippines, a Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission was established following the signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, in 2014, between the Government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. As part of the peace

²¹ Submission by Serbia (2024).

²² The Peace Agreements Database, also known as "PA-X", constructed by PeaceRep, an international research consortium led by Edinburgh Law School, is currently the most expansive collection of peace agreements data in the world and includes a human-coded data set that covers agreement metadata and 230 substantive categories of issues covered in agreement texts. Available at www.peaceagreements.org/portal.

²³ Submission by McGill University (2024).

²⁴ Submission by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (2024).

process, the Commission convened listening sessions with internally displaced persons to develop recommendations to address historical injustices. In addition, groups of internally displaced persons, supported by the national human rights institution of the Philippines, organized their own community-based initiatives to support peacebuilding efforts.²⁵

27. Several peace agreements have incorporated provisions to facilitate the participation of internally displaced persons in elections as voters and candidates. The Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict, signed in 1991, included specific measures to ensure that internally displaced persons could return to areas of origin and would have the same rights, freedoms and opportunities to take part in the post-conflict electoral process (annex 3, art. 3, and annex 4, art. 6). Through the National Pact concluded between the Government of Mali and the Unified Movements and Fronts of Azawad Giving Expression to the Special Status of Northern Mali, a peace agreement signed in 1992 between the Government of Mali and non-State armed groups, four special seats for internally displaced persons from the north of Mali were created to ensure their representation in the National Assembly and their participation in post-conflict governance (arts. 54 and 55). The Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, signed in Colombia in 2016, includes electoral management arrangements to ensure the participation of the most vulnerable and isolated populations, including internally displaced persons, by promoting a diagnostic exercise to identify and address the obstacles faced by those communities in exercising the right to vote and by promoting the political representation of internally displaced persons through special transitory peace electoral districts where internally displaced persons in the process of return have priority as candidates (arts. 2.3.2 and 2.3.6).

B. Fostering durable solutions in peace agreements

28. Peace agreements present a crucial opportunity to lay the groundwork for and enable durable solutions to internal displacement. Effective peace agreements bring about an end to hostilities, resulting in lower levels of violence and conflict, the latter being key to enabling internally displaced persons to exercise their right to a free choice of residence without feeling coerced by security concerns.

29. Durable solutions frameworks within peace agreements should ensure that the conceptualization of security goes beyond short-term humanitarian approaches to protection risks and extends to the establishment of a broader framework capable of protecting the full spectrum of human rights in peacetime. That requires the establishment or re-legitimization of robust State and local institutions, strengthened laws and policies related to the protection of human rights and independent national human rights mechanisms. It is also important for peace agreements to account for the differentiated impacts of the conflict on victims in intersecting situations of vulnerability, including their specific safety concerns. Where groundwork for durable solutions is laid out explicitly in peace agreements, it is crucial that an appropriate sequencing and timeframe be considered, that allowance is made for the participation of internally displaced persons and that internally displaced persons are not encouraged to pursue settlement options before they can safely do so. In some cases, that has led to returns prior to the establishment of appropriate security arrangements, such as the removal of landmines and other explosive ordnance or the re-establishment of legitimate public security institutions, with deadly consequences.

²⁵ Submission by the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines (2023), available at www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/2023/call-input-thematic-priorities-special-rapporteur-human-rights-internally.

30. Peace agreements help in restoring the economic, social and cultural rights essential for the achievement of durable solutions. This requires provisions that ensure that peace dividends go towards remedy and reparation and the restoration of an adequate standard of living, including access to adequate food, water, housing, health care and basic education for those most affected by the consequences of conflict. Peace agreements can include measures to promote reconciliation and coexistence between former parties to conflict, within and between communities of internally displaced persons that may have experienced divisions or between internally displaced persons and their host communities, as well as measures to promote family reunification. Peace agreements may also cover economic recovery and access to livelihoods for conflict-affected communities or the restoration of the rights of internally displaced persons to housing, land and property that may have been lost or appropriated during the conflict or compensation for those losses.

31. Civil and political rights necessary for internally displaced persons to achieve a durable solution may also be addressed through peace agreements. This includes measures to give effect to the right of an internally displaced person to recognition as a person before the law through the re-issuance of civil documentation lost during the conflict, safeguards to ensure the participation of internally displaced persons in public affairs on an equal basis and effective remedies for displacement-related violations, including access to transitional and ordinary justice mechanisms, reparations and information about the causes of violations.

32. Peace agreements may also include explicit reference to durable solutions to internal displacement. Although that is important, it is crucial that references to durable solutions in peace agreements not be focused solely on settlement options – return, local integration or settlement elsewhere – but instead be aimed at a more expansive definition that encompasses the enabling elements necessary to achieving a durable solution, in line with the Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons. It is also essential that elements that might coerce internally displaced persons into a specific settlement option be avoided in peace agreements and that their own settlement intentions be genuinely considered. In many peace agreements, return is favoured over local integration and settlement elsewhere. Such agreements may even include provisions that render assistance conditional upon return to the place of origin. Unless there are compelling reasons to do so, such as to avoid settlement in areas that would pose significant environmental or health risks, or unless such frameworks reflect the genuine aspirations of the majority of internally displaced persons, such measures can interfere with the right to freedom of movement and residence.

33. Effectively operationalizing durable solutions commitments within peace agreements requires that these agreements contain an outline of the capacity-strengthening requirements and the roles and responsibilities of different institutional stakeholders with regard to the actions needed to facilitate various settlement options and of the broader legal, political, security and human rights reforms that enable those options to become truly durable solutions. Although national authorities should be at the forefront of such efforts, local and subnational authorities should also have appropriate roles, as could civil society. Regional and international actors may also provide support on a transitional basis during the post-conflict reconstruction period.

34. Despite potential synergies and the shared objectives of both processes, peace agreements often fail to comprehensively address the question of durable solutions. Political factors may play a role, as States that are more concerned with protecting their populations and maintaining or enhancing their international reputation may be more inclined to explicitly recognize internally displaced persons and their needs,

whereas States that prioritize demonstrating effective control over their populations may be less inclined to acknowledge internally displaced persons.²⁶

35. Of the 156 peace agreements signed since 2007 stored in the Peace Agreements Database and that specifically address internal displacement, only 70 contain substantive provisions related to durable solutions as defined under the Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons. The durable solutions criteria most frequently reflected were long-term safety, security and freedom of movement, the restitution of housing land and property and post-conflict reconstruction and development. In contrast, access to justice, reparations, political participation, family reunification, education, livelihoods restoration and access to documentation were frequently overlooked criteria.

36. Several recent agreements provide examples of durable solutions provisions. Under the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, signed in 2019, the Government is explicitly committed to creating the conditions necessary for the voluntary return, reintegration and social reinsertion of internally displaced persons, including through the adoption of specific instruments to protect their rights to land and other assets (art. 4 (k)). Signatory armed groups are compelled to respect the property of communities, including those in situations of displacement (art. 5 (i)). The 2016 peace agreement for Colombia contains several commitments aimed at addressing the underlying drivers of displacement and ensuring the non-recurrence of human rights violations, including arbitrary displacement, which the State has incorporated into ordinary law. Those commitments include measures to initiate comprehensive rural reform, increase political participation, address the illicit drug trade and uphold the rights of victims by addressing the structural issues that led to the internal conflict.²⁷ In the Philippines, the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro includes socioeconomic development programmes in favour of internally displaced persons,²⁸ which are rendered into ordinary law through the Bangsamoro Organic Law (art. XIV, sect. 1).

C. Addressing root causes of violence and displacement and promoting reconciliation

37. The long-term viability of peace agreements and of durable solutions to internal displacement is contingent upon the extent to which those agreements and associated peacebuilding processes address the root causes of violence and displacement. Victims of human rights violations, including internally displaced persons, must enjoy meaningful guarantees for the prevention and non-recurrence of future violations of their human rights, in order to feel secure in their place of residence, trust the institutions mandated to uphold their rights and rebuild their lives.

38. International, national and local peace actors should take a conflict-sensitive approach in which measures to prevent future internal displacement and conflict are favoured. Their actions should help to strengthen national and local peace infrastructure, such as community dispute resolution mechanisms, that can help to mitigate future tensions, violence and conflict and serve as a space for exchange between internally displaced and host communities. In his New Agenda for Peace, the Secretary-General advocates in favour of national prevention strategies, which can provide peace actors with the opportunity to collaborate with humanitarian, human rights and development actors in creating conditions that enable protective

²⁶ Ileana Nicolau, "IDP protection and State sovereignty: explaining norm institutionalisation in Colombia, Peru and Kenya", PhD dissertation, European University Institute, June 2022.

²⁷ Submission by the Constitutional Court of Colombia (2024).

²⁸ Annex on Normalization, sect. G, para. 1.

environments for the development of durable solutions and full respect for human rights without discrimination.

39. In many peace processes, there is a balance to be struck between the short-term compromises necessary to achieve a peace agreement and end violence as soon as possible and the need to address more contentious issues related to justice and accountability, including for human rights violations and arbitrary displacement. However, favouring the former over the latter may jeopardize the long-term viability of any agreement, as peace agreements that excessively ignore or postpone the demands of justice may help to achieve conflict reduction in the short run, but rarely avoid controversy or succeed in silencing those demands in the long run, thus creating unstable situations.²⁹

40. The prevalence of weak, ineffective or corrupt governance institutions, or of institutions that are not seen as representative of the entire population, can be a key driver of violence and displacement. Such institutions – in particular those in the security sector – may have actively participated in or enabled human rights violations affecting civilians before or during periods of conflict, or they may have been unwilling or unable to prevent such violations from being perpetrated by other actors. As a result, they may have lost legitimacy in the eyes of internally displaced persons and other victims of human rights violations. Reforming or rebuilding those institutions is crucial to preventing the recurrence of future atrocities and promoting reconciliation and should be a focus of early post-conflict reconstruction efforts. Measures for doing so can include establishing a transitional administration, holding a constitutional referendum and convening elections. It is crucial to ensure that internally displaced persons enjoy the civil and political rights necessary to participate fully in those processes, including the right to vote and take part in elections. Political participation without discrimination is crucial to peace, recovery and long-term development for societies emerging from conflict, as is the integration or re-integration of internally displaced persons as equal rights holders.

41. Law and policy reform may also be essential to addressing the root causes of violence and preventing further displacement. For example, in cases where housing, land and property grievances had led to conflict, implementing land governance reforms, strengthening legal frameworks to protect housing, land and property rights and implementing land dispute resolution mechanisms could protect rights, address inequalities and mitigate future grievances and instability. Such reforms could also contribute to State transformation by establishing or re-establishing trust among citizens and in the ability of State institutions to uphold human rights.

42. Transitional justice mechanisms should address the full set of issues relevant to internally displaced persons and to enabling durable solutions to their displacement. Those issues include protection, access to justice, housing, land and property matters, social cohesion and clarification of the fate and whereabouts of missing relatives. Inequalities or ineffective governance related to those areas are often at the heart of conflicts, and it is often the people whose rights in those areas are less effectively protected who experience arbitrary displacement during conflicts. Strengthening governance in those areas as part of transitional justice processes is critical to prevent the recurrence of human rights violations and ensure durable solutions.

43. Humanitarian, development and peace actors should coordinate their efforts throughout the response to conflict, as well as during the transition from risk-based approaches to protection deployed during crises to comprehensive human rights-based approaches that enable sustainable peace. Absent dedicated efforts in that regard, there is a risk of different actors remaining siloed in their language, mandates

²⁹ Louise Mallinder and Ron Slye, “Rethinking peace and justice”, Institute for Integrated Transitions, 2021.

and sectoral approaches, which can reduce the effectiveness of their interventions.³⁰ Actors overseeing transitional justice should assess not only the needs and interests of internally displaced persons, but also their awareness of the transitional justice mechanisms available, in order to ensure their meaningful participation.

44. Truth commissions are important for countries emerging from conflict and fragility to address past abuses. The right to the truth implies knowing the full and complete truth as to the events that transpired, their specific circumstances, who participated in them and the circumstances under which the violations occurred and the reasons therefor.³¹ It is especially critical to clarify the fate and whereabouts of people who have gone missing, not only to give internally displaced persons a sense of closure, but also because they may be unable to regain their property rights while the property holders are still missing. Truth commissions help in fulfilling those rights, as part of a comprehensive system that enables victims to understand the violations they may have experienced and seek appropriate remedy. Several truth commissions have engaged internally displaced persons as a priority group, although their role is often limited to delivering testimony rather than participating in the design of the commissions.³² For internally displaced persons, truth commissions can not only recommend reparations and other remedies and promote rehabilitation and social cohesion,³³ but also, and most importantly, they allow for an investigation and analysis of the root causes of displacement during conflicts, including pre-existing poverty, structural discrimination and inequalities, thus laying the groundwork for corresponding measures to prevent the recurrence of such displacement.

45. Several truth commissions have specifically addressed internal displacement and have proven particularly instrumental in addressing housing, land and property issues that underpinned conflict and displacement. The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission established in Kenya to investigate post-election violence in 2007 and 2008 that had led to the displacement of more than 350,000 people, held thematic hearings on internal displacement, including direct consultations with internally displaced persons.³⁴ In Yemen, the National Commission to Investigate Alleged Violations of Human Rights, mandated to investigate violations of human rights and international humanitarian law since 2011, carries out regular visits to camps for internally displaced persons as part of its work to document violations perpetrated during the current conflict.³⁵ The Truth and Dignity Commission established in Tunisia in 2011 examined historical instances of forced displacement on political grounds, as well as due to property expropriation.³⁶

46. Truth and reconciliation commissions can play an important role in addressing housing, land and property issues, which are not only of high salience to internally displaced persons but often represent an underlying driver of conflict. The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission of Kenya found land-related injustices, including illegal acquisition of land by public and private actors, forced resettlement, forced evictions and land-grabbing, to be closely linked with ethnic violence, which was, in turn, linked to displacement.³⁷ In the Philippines, the Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission investigated “legitimate grievances” experienced by the people of Bangsamoro, which were defined as those grievances rooted or grounded in objective conditions and circumstances and encompassing acts of economic

³⁰ Submission by the International Organization for Migration (2024).

³¹ See [E/CN.4/2006/91](#).

³² Submission by McGill University.

³³ See [A/HRC/42/45](#).

³⁴ *Report of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission*, vol. IIC (2013), chap. 3, paras. 247–319.

³⁵ See www.nciye.org/en/?p=1556.

³⁶ See www.ivd.tn/rapport/.

³⁷ *Report of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission*, vol. III, chap. 1, paras. 85–93, and vol. IV, chap. 1, paras. 245 and 246.

disenfranchisement, including the loss or destruction of property and forced displacement due to armed conflict, development aggression and poverty.³⁸ The Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Co-existence and Non-Repetition in Colombia carried out a geospatial analysis of the geography of forced displacement during the country's internal armed conflict to identify which communities were most affected by displacement.³⁹

47. Although many harms suffered by internally displaced persons during conflicts might appear irreparable, a comprehensive approach to reparations and restitution focused on enabling durable solutions can help victims of human rights violations to begin rebuilding their lives. Reparations can take material and symbolic forms and may be provided both on an individual basis or collectively. Reparations can also emphasize restitution, or the restoration of victims to their situation prior to displacement. The Special Rapporteur's predecessors have emphasized the importance of a robust understanding of reparations to both achieving durable solutions and promoting accountability, noting that reparations can not only help to facilitate reintegration through economic recovery, access to land, the re-establishment of livelihoods and the provision of educational assistance, but can also have an important psychological impact through recognition of the suffering that victims have endured and contributions to the restoration of their dignity, to the extent feasible.⁴⁰

48. However, implementing reparations and restitution programmes can be challenging in terms of resources, capacity and the selection of recipients. In situations of large-scale displacement, providing financial compensation to hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons may not be feasible given resource constraints, in particular for States emerging from crisis. Determining whether to issue reparations collectively or individually can be a politically charged process, and it is equally challenging to identify who might qualify as a victim of forced displacement and potential beneficiary of reparations, in particular in instances where there is no formal registry of internally displaced persons. Victims of arbitrary displacement may also have been subjected to other crimes, such as the dispossession of their lands and properties. Such crimes may involve the participation of non-State actors, including armed groups and civilian third parties, which can make reparations claims processes more complex. In international conflicts, States may also owe reparation to each other's citizens, creating additional complications.

49. Reparations programmes related to internal displacement have been implemented in some post-conflict contexts. In Colombia, internal displacement has been recognized as a human rights violation that merits reparations since the adoption, in 2011, of the Victims and Land Restitution Act, the provisions of which have been strengthened by subsequent legislative measures and judicial rulings. That has led to the restitution or compensation for land and property, as well as the provision of cash compensation to several victims and specific recognition for their displacement alone.⁴¹ Those measures were complemented by development plans, with a territorial approach aimed at reducing rural inequalities, and by measures for durable solutions in resettlement or collective return processes, as established in the country's national development plan.⁴²

50. More commonly, reparations programmes have focused on restitution for housing, land and property issues.⁴³ The Council of Europe Development Bank, an

³⁸ *Report of the Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission* (2016), sect. 2.1.1 and endnote 48.

³⁹ See www.comisiondelaverdad.co/violacion-derechos-humanos-y-derecho-internacional-humanitario/desplazamiento-forzado.

⁴⁰ A/73/173, paras. 42 and 64.

⁴¹ Submission by the Constitutional Court of Colombia.

⁴² Submission by the National Planning Department of Colombia (2024).

⁴³ See A/HRC/47/37.

international financial institution mandated specifically to address challenges related to migration and displacement, has provided grant and loan funding to repair and rebuild housing for internally displaced persons in Council of Europe member States, with a major focus on Ukraine in recent years, as well as in countries of the former Yugoslavia. Together with the Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and donors, the Bank implemented the Regional Housing Programme in the Balkans. Through the Programme, internally displaced persons and other vulnerable groups received secure housing, as well as access to personal documents, essential utility services, economic opportunities and social rights, thereby contributing to the restoration of mutual trust and the promotion of peace and stability in the region.⁴⁴ For Ukraine, the Council of Europe has also established a Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which will include registration of the damage inflicted on the property of internally displaced persons in Ukraine to enable future restitution claims under the European Convention of Human Rights.⁴⁵

51. Because displacement often occurs in contexts of poverty, reparation programs should be designed to contribute to reducing socioeconomic vulnerabilities and inequalities and improving long-term self-sufficiency. With regard to benefits, which can include access to higher education, livelihood support and cash grants, it is important to be mindful of the challenges that arise for victims whose only option is to resettle in urban areas, where they are at an even higher risk of being marginalized and living in poverty.⁴⁶

52. Social cohesion is another crucial enabling factor for durable solutions. It is essential that transitional justice mechanisms promote dialogue, understanding and collaboration to build harmonious relationships and reduce tensions. That factor applies between different groups of internally displaced persons that may settle in the same area, between internally displaced persons and host communities in instances where the former opt to integrate locally or settle elsewhere in the country and between internally displaced persons and their communities of origin when they choose to return after a conflict. Discovering the location of missing family members can be an important form of reparation, allowing internally displaced persons to re-establish their lives and move towards durable solutions.

53. Strong social cohesion enables the sustainable integration or reintegration of former internally displaced persons who can feel a sense of belonging and actively participate in social, economic and cultural activities. If tensions between internally displaced persons and local communities are not sufficiently addressed, there is a risk of further cycles of conflict and displacement. Efforts to build social cohesion must address the concerns of both receiving communities and internally displaced persons, as both groups may be facing similar challenges in rebuilding from conflict, and neither may fully understand the concerns and context of the other. Assistance programmes should be inclusive and conflict-sensitive and address the needs of both internally displaced persons and receiving communities holistically, through the provision of shared public goods rather than the provision of assistance solely to internally displaced persons, in order to avoid creating inequalities that may become grounds for new conflicts.

54. Access to mental health services and healing programs can help in addressing the psychological impacts of displacement. Unresolved trauma, anxiety and

⁴⁴ See <https://regionalhousingprogramme.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/RHP-Final-Statement.pdf>.

⁴⁵ Submission by the Council of Europe (2024).

⁴⁶ Submission by the International Center for Transitional Justice (2024).

depression may hinder the ability of internally displaced persons to cope with challenges and participate fully in their communities. Recognizing their identity and validating their experiences can foster their integration or reintegration, while preserving their cultural, linguistic and religious practices. Ensuring their rights to self-determination contributes to a sense of belonging.

55. The adverse effects of climate change can compound other drivers of displacement, including conflict and violence, and reduce communities' ability to cope with conflict and displacement. Climate change may lead to or worsen conflicts over increasingly scarce natural resources or may result in multiple waves of displacement if people are dually affected by conflict and by disasters exacerbated by conflict. Conversely, conflict can result in environmental damage or may be financed through the exploitation of natural resources, which may worsen climate change, and climate change adaptation and mitigation measures may be deprioritized if conflict and violence consume the attention of the State. It is essential to address these dynamics, in order to ensure the sustainability of peace and the ability of conflict-affected communities to rebuild their lives.

IV. Role of the international community

56. While it is clarified in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement that national authorities bear primary responsibility to provide protection, assistance and solutions to internally displaced persons within their jurisdiction, States emerging from protracted crises and conflict may require appropriate support from the international community as they embark on transitional justice processes, post-conflict reconstruction and planning for durable solutions. That includes support from other States, on a bilateral basis, and from regional and international organizations, all of which can play a role in resolving conflict, reaching peace agreements and supporting peacebuilding processes and durable solutions for internally displaced persons. Most fundamentally, the international community should work at all levels to strengthen frameworks for and implementation of international human rights and humanitarian law, as the best means of preventing conflict and displacement, and to address collective threats to international peace and security, including climate change, through a human rights-based approach.

57. States, regional organizations and relevant United Nations entities, including the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Mediation Support Unit, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Department of Peace Operations, may offer their good offices to support negotiations. Where those international actors are engaged in track one peace negotiations between high-level officials, they should advocate with the negotiating parties to ensure the inclusion of displacement issues, durable solutions planning and other priorities of internally displaced persons as part of negotiations; they should also keep internally displaced persons informed on the progress of negotiations.⁴⁷ In track two and track three negotiations, international actors can not only build the capacities of victim- and survivor-led organizations to engage directly in peace negotiations, but also provide them with funding and training, identify obstacles to the political mobilization of internally displaced persons and develop strategies to overcome those obstacles.

58. International stakeholders working with internally displaced persons should bring the perspectives of these communities to the attention of negotiating parties and advocate in favour of the alignment of negotiations with relevant international frameworks, including the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the

⁴⁷ The Brookings Institution-University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement, *Addressing Internal Displacement in Peace Processes, Peace Agreements and Peace-Building*, sect. 6.1.

Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons. Neighbouring States and regional organizations should leverage their understanding of historical dynamics and networks within their regions, while ensuring that the negotiating parties draw upon relevant regional frameworks for protection, assistance and solutions for internally displaced persons. International actors can also act as guarantors of peace negotiations and strengthen accountability.

59. Internally displaced persons may place more trust in international stakeholders than in State institutions, which often lose legitimacy during conflicts due to their inability or unwillingness to protect communities from human rights violations, including displacement. International actors can leverage that situation to reduce asymmetries of information, build trust and ensure accountability between internally displaced persons and the negotiating parties. They can also advocate and facilitate the participation of internally displaced persons in peace negotiations.⁴⁸ International actors can be especially instrumental in providing information to and facilitating the participation of displaced communities that have historically faced intersecting forms of marginalization and discrimination and might otherwise be excluded from peace processes.

60. International actors should regularly engage with and provide funding and capacity-building to local civil society organizations and community-based protection initiatives. These organizations have more in-depth knowledge of local dynamics and peace infrastructure and often enjoy greater levels of trust among conflict-affected communities, including internally displaced persons. They can transmit the needs, concerns and priorities of internally displaced persons to other peace actors and be effective partners for international actors in implementing assistance programmes, from early warning systems and humanitarian assistance programmes, to mediation and peacebuilding programmes. Local peace actors and structures are also important for ensuring the long-term sustainability of peacebuilding programmes, as they remain embedded within communities after international actors may have exited.

61. Within the United Nations system, United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions coordinate with national actors to assist countries in navigating the transition out of conflict and into peace. They can also play a role in providing protection and assistance for and facilitating durable solutions. As at mid-2023, nearly 20 per cent of internally displaced persons worldwide were living in countries or regions that hosted a special political mission or peacekeeping operation.⁴⁹ Five peacekeeping operations and two special political missions have a mandate for the protection of civilians, including internally displaced persons. The mandates of some peacekeeping operations contain explicit references to providing humanitarian assistance for internally displaced persons, facilitating their participation in elections and providing support for their return, resettlement or local integration.⁵⁰

62. United Nations peacekeeping missions are mandated to support States in fulfilling their primary responsibility for the protection of civilians, including internally displaced persons.⁵¹ In doing so, they have saved lives, stabilized society, built trust, helped to achieve peace agreements, advanced reforms and supported the

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Calculation based on the locations of United Nations special political missions and peacekeeping operations and displacement data from the *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2024* of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre.

⁵⁰ See, for example, Security Council resolutions [2659 \(2022\)](#), [2709 \(2023\)](#) and [2717 \(2023\)](#).

⁵¹ United Nations, “United Nations agenda for protection: strengthening the ability of the United Nations System to protect people through their human rights”, February 2024; and [S/2024/385](#), para. 40.

protection of human rights.⁵² In terms of the protection of internally displaced persons, peacekeeping missions have ensured the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance, deterred attacks on internally displaced person sites and assisted with establishing conditions for durable solutions by improving security, alleviating socioeconomic strain and fostering social cohesion in return areas.⁵³ They have also informed internally displaced persons about their right to vote and contributed to ensuring the peaceful conduct of elections.⁵⁴

63. At the same time, protection-related failings by peacekeeping operations have been documented through both United Nations and external evaluations, in cases where civilians were put at risk in places allocated for protection, including death and injury of internally displaced persons.⁵⁵ In addition, some United Nations peacekeepers have caused harm to some of the people they have been sent to serve and protect, through sexual exploitation and abuse. Despite improved policies and procedures for accountability, such cases continue to be reported.⁵⁶ These operations also face resource and training gaps that limit their ability to protect internally displaced persons.⁵⁷ Similarly, special political missions may not always have sufficient capacity to ensure the visibility of internal displacement issues and risks in their work.⁵⁸

64. The withdrawal or transition of peacekeeping operations absent sufficient continuity planning has led to gaps in protection of civilians,⁵⁹ a matter of significant concern given the increasing number of peacekeeping missions that have drawn down or begun to do so in recent years. Although there is a framework for planning the withdrawal of peacekeeping missions under Security Council resolution 2594 (2021), protection actors report that authorities frequently lack the willingness or ability to develop and implement feasible benchmarks or protection plans as peacekeeping missions exit. This has reportedly led to protection system shocks and negative consequences for the protection of civilians, as communities face ongoing risks as protection actors grapple with changing mechanisms, capacities and resources.

65. At the same time, efforts are being made to ensure the continuity of protection of civilians, including internally displaced persons, as missions withdraw. Those efforts can be systematized across other peacekeeping operations in situations of transition or withdrawal to ensure the protection of internally displaced persons. A joint transition plan drafted by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Government in 2021 is guiding the current withdrawal of the peacekeeping mission from the country. The protection cluster is engaged with partners and authorities in the transfer of the Mission's early warning system to State actors, consolidating protection mechanisms and ensuring

⁵² See S/2023/646; and Lise Morjé Howard, *Power in Peacekeeping* (Cambridge, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Cambridge University Press, 2019).

⁵³ Ibid. See also Global Protection Cluster, "Global protection update: the continuity of protection in a context of mission withdrawals", July 2024; and Vincenzo Bove, Jessica Di Salvatore and Leandro Elia, "What it takes to return: UN peacekeeping and the safe return of displaced people", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (July 2024).

⁵⁴ S/2024/385, para. 40; and Security Council resolution 2709 (2023).

⁵⁵ High-level Panel on Internal Displacement, *Shining a Light on Internal Displacement: A Vision for the Future* (2021); and United Nations, note to correspondents: Board of Inquiry report on Malakal, 5 August 2016.

⁵⁶ See A/70/95-S/2015/446; A/78/774, paras. 4 and 65; and Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, para. 21, available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/a4p-declaration-en.pdf>.

⁵⁷ High-level Panel on Internal Displacement, *Shining a Light on Internal Displacement*.

⁵⁸ United Nations, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs institutional plan to advance solutions to internal displacement, January 2024.

⁵⁹ S/2024/385, para. 40.

communities can undertake self-protection initiatives.⁶⁰ Transition planning efforts should ensure a clear designation of roles and responsibilities in relation to protection, assistance and solutions for internally displaced persons.

66. Leading up to and throughout peace processes, international actors should provide funding for and implement assistance programmes that enable those processes. This includes humanitarian assistance programmes that are run while conflict and displacement are still ongoing, to ensure internally displaced persons can maintain an adequate standard of living and benefit from relative safety and security, development assistance as the situation stabilizes, for longer-term programmes that can enable durable solutions, and assistance for peacebuilding programmes, the implementation of peace agreements and post-conflict reconstruction. International actors along the humanitarian-development-peace nexus should develop common operational frameworks and ensure that effective arrangements are in place for coordination, information-sharing and transition and handover as the peace process evolves. Protection of civilians and violence reduction, mental health and trauma healing and support for government-led solutions processes for displacement are key areas for coordinated work.

67. Adequate, predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding in particular remains a critical challenge; the implementation of General Assembly resolution [76/305](#) on financing for peacebuilding is therefore crucial.⁶¹ It is critical for the United Nations, the World Bank and other key peacebuilding funders to incorporate a results-based approach to the disbursement of funds for peacebuilding activities that is explicitly linked to both the achievement of durable solutions for the internally displaced and the prevention of internal displacement due to violence and conflict.

68. The Peacebuilding Fund is the leading instrument within the United Nations system for sustaining peace and preventing conflict. It has been increasingly requested to fund efforts to promote durable solutions and address root causes of internal displacement in diverse contexts.⁶² The Fund's current strategy includes an emphasis on prevention and supporting durable solutions for the internally displaced and local populations; funds for such projects tripled between 2020 and 2022.⁶³ The projects have supported government priorities for solutions to internal displacement, including peaceful cohabitation and reconciliation efforts, integration or re-integration, protection and human rights, as well as resolving housing, land and property issues. They have also successfully contributed to establishing conditions for solutions, for example, in the Philippines, through more peaceful cohabitation between the internally displaced and the local population, and in South Sudan, through the inclusion of the internally displaced in transitional justice processes.⁶⁴

69. International financial institutions, which have begun to play a more significant role in peacebuilding efforts in recent years, should provide targeted, flexible and sustained funding to support the prevention of future arbitrary displacement and durable solutions. The Fragility, Conflict and Violence Envelope, under the International Development Association of the World Bank Group, is an example of such funding, as it provides additional resources to eligible borrowing countries facing different levels of conflict risks, including funding under the Prevention and Resilience Allocation, to support countries to take proactive measures

⁶⁰ Global Protection Cluster, "Global protection update".

⁶¹ [A/78/307](#), para. 60.

⁶² United Nations, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs institutional plan to advance solutions to internal displacement.

⁶³ United Nations, "Support for solutions to internal displacement", in presentation on the Peacebuilding Fund, June 2023.

⁶⁴ United Nations Web TV, joint meeting of the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, 1 July 2024.

against escalating conflict and violence, the Remaining Engaged during Conflict Allocation, to preserve institutional capacity during periods of limited government capacity, and the Turn Around Allocation, to support countries emerging from conflict and crisis where the Government is pursuing a reform agenda.⁶⁵

V. Conclusions

70. For contexts emerging from conflict, building sustainable peace, bringing about durable solutions to internal displacement and preventing the recurrence of future human rights violations, including arbitrary displacement, are inextricably linked and mutually dependent processes. They share imperatives to address the root causes of conflict and displacement, prevent the recurrence of crises and future human rights violations and ensure restitution and remedy for victims of human rights violations, including internally displaced persons. Where peace processes fail to fully address internal displacement considerations, internally displaced persons are left in limbo, unable to fully integrate or reintegrate into the communities where they find themselves and at perpetual risk of future cycles of displacement. Furthermore, such processes are unlikely to lead to sustainable peace, as they fail to fully address the underlying drivers of conflict and displacement and are unlikely to restore the legitimacy of public institutions for those who experienced human rights violations during conflict.

71. Integrating internal displacement considerations into peace processes is crucial to enabling durable solutions and building sustainable peace. Centring the perspectives of internally displaced persons themselves in peace negotiations is an important first step in that regard, including through enabling their direct participation in peace negotiations, where safe and desirable. Peace agreements should enable durable solutions by committing all parties to undertaking essential structural and institutional reforms and providing internally displaced persons with the assistance necessary to rebuild their lives, regain a sense of community and trust in public institutions and live without fear of future displacement. To address the past and prevent the recurrence of conflict and further human rights violations, post-conflict societies must implement a holistic framework for transitional justice that provides internally displaced persons and other victims of human rights violations with remedies, restitution, truth and a sense of closure, in addition to measures designed to promote reconciliation and social cohesion between different communities.

72. States emerging from conflict and violence are often fragile and may lack the resources, political will or legitimacy to lead peacebuilding processes or meaningfully engage with internally displaced persons and incorporate their perspectives. The international community, including neighbouring States and States with influence, regional organizations, the United Nations, including all relevant agencies, funds and programmes, and international financial institutions, should engage, in line with their mandates and expertise, in supporting peace processes. Such support should be aimed at integrating internal displacement considerations in all phases of the peace process, from negotiations to agreements, to post-conflict reconstruction, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts, and at ensuring consistent two-way feedback between internally displaced persons and leadership. As international actors disengage from conflict situations where their intervention is no longer necessary or

⁶⁵ International Development Association (IDA), *Building Back Better from the Crisis: Towards a Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Future*, report of the Executive Directors of IDA to the Board of Governors on additions to IDA resources for the twentieth replenishment (February 2022), annex 4.

desirable, they should seek, to the extent possible, to ensure a responsible exit by building the capacity of local institutions and engaging in continuity and transition planning.

VI. Recommendations

73. The Special Rapporteur recommends that States, de facto authorities, armed groups and other direct parties to peace processes should:

- (a) Proactively engage and seek the perspectives of internally displaced persons in peace processes;
- (b) Incorporate the perspectives and preferences of internally displaced persons into peace agreements and other laws, policies and frameworks to resolve conflict and build sustainable peace;
- (c) Create conditions conducive to the direct or indirect and continuous participation of internally displaced persons in peace processes at all phases, including by:
 - (i) Providing adequate safety and security guarantees;
 - (ii) Adapting negotiations processes to ensure that they are accessible to internally displaced persons throughout the country, including through leveraging new technologies to enable their participation, as well as to people with mobility restrictions, including persons with disabilities and older persons;
 - (iii) Promoting an intersectional approach to participation that reflects the perspectives of internally displaced persons in all their diversity, including women, LGBTQ+ persons, older persons, children and young people, persons with disabilities and minorities;
 - (iv) Ensuring that internally displaced persons have access to the documentation necessary to participate in peace processes and to exercise the full spectrum of their civil and political rights, or adopting flexible requirements for such documentation;
- (d) Provide clear information to internally displaced persons on peace processes and peacebuilding initiatives in a variety of formats and with due consideration for linguistic and ethnic diversity and disabilities;
- (e) Privilege multitrack approaches to peace negotiations that ensure that internally displaced persons are able to engage at different levels regardless of their political position or social status;
- (f) Invest in capacity-building measures to ensure that internally displaced persons are able to meaningfully engage in peace processes;
- (g) Establish follow-up mechanisms to ensure that concrete measures are enacted to respond to the issues and concerns raised by internally displaced persons during their participation in peace negotiations;
- (h) Ensure the effective participation of internally displaced persons in post-conflict governance by facilitating their participation in elections as voters and candidates, including through the adoption of positive discrimination measures, as needed;
- (i) Expand the conceptualization of durable solutions in peace processes, including peace agreements, beyond a focus on settlement options – return, local

integration or settlement elsewhere – to include the full restoration of the rights of internally displaced persons in line with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons;

(j) Integrate measures to facilitate durable solutions into peace agreements, including the following:

(i) Institutional reforms, especially in the security sector, to rebuild the legitimacy of institutions that may have failed to adequately protect internally displaced persons during conflict;

(ii) Strengthened legal and policy frameworks to protect human rights, including the establishment and strengthening of independent national human rights mechanisms;

(iii) Sequenced measures to enable settlement options, with due safeguards to ensure conditions for internally displaced persons in areas of settlement are appropriate;

(iv) Social and economic development programmes in favour of conflict-affected areas and areas of settlement for internally displaced persons;

(v) Measures to reunify family members separated by displacement and provide appropriate assistance to address needs associated with separation from or the loss of family members, in particular for children;

(k) Ensure that peace agreements do not contain provisions that could coerce internally displaced persons into pursuing certain settlement options over others, except where this reflects the preferences of internally displaced persons and/or prevailing considerations of safety and security;

(l) Provide access to justice, truth and remedy for internally displaced persons and other victims of human rights violations, to address past violations and prevent their recurrence, including by:

(i) Establishing truth and reconciliation commissions and engaging internally displaced persons in their design to ensure that they adequately address internal displacement issues;

(ii) Clarifying the fate and whereabouts of all missing persons;

(iii) Creating or strengthening frameworks to resolve housing, land and property issues faced by internally displaced persons, including issues that may have served as underlying drivers of conflict;

(iv) Promoting a robust understanding of reparations that includes both individual and collective reparations for violations of human rights, including arbitrary displacement, and restitution for lost or damaged housing, land and property and other economic harms;

(m) Provide clear and accessible information and capacity-building, as necessary, to ensure that internally displaced persons are aware of and able to effectively engage with transitional justice mechanisms;

(n) Develop peace education to keep conflict-affected communities abreast of peace negotiations or agreements and to promote their ownership and participation in peacebuilding;

(o) Promote social cohesion between different conflict-affected communities, including internally displaced persons, through mechanisms for dialogue, inclusive community development projects and peacebuilding initiatives;

(p) **Develop national prevention strategies to address the root causes of conflict and violence, including links to climate change and environmental degradation, and strengthen national and local infrastructures for peace as called for in the New Agenda for Peace.**

74. **The Special Rapporteur recommends that the international community, including States with influence over the parties to conflict, regional organizations and multilateral organizations, including the various entities of the United Nations system and the international financial institutions, in line with their relevant mandates, should:**

(a) **Promote respect and strengthen accountability for international humanitarian and human rights law and act collectively to address shared threats to international peace and security, including climate change;**

(b) **Engage early in emerging crises and offer their good offices, as appropriate, to support peace negotiations;**

(c) **Advocate with the parties in favour of multitrack approaches to negotiations, the participation of internally displaced persons in negotiations and the integration of their priorities into agreements;**

(d) **Keep internally displaced persons informed regarding peace processes and convey their priorities to the parties;**

(e) **Build the capacity of internally displaced persons to engage directly in peace processes and advocate in particular the participation of internally displaced persons in intersecting situations of vulnerabilities, including women, young people, older persons, LGBTQ+ persons, persons with disabilities and minorities;**

(f) **Advocate with the parties to align negotiations, agreements and peacebuilding efforts with relevant international frameworks for internally displaced persons, including the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons;**

(g) **Build trust and promote accountability between negotiating parties and between authorities and internally displaced persons, including by serving as guarantors of peace agreements;**

(h) **Provide funding, build partnerships and capacitate local civil society organizations dealing with issues of relevance to internally displaced persons, including their organizations, and support community-based protection initiatives;**

(i) **Systematically integrate measures to provide protection and assistance to internally displaced persons and to facilitate durable solutions into the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions;**

(j) **Ensure that United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions have sufficient resources and specialized personnel to effectively address internal displacement considerations;**

(k) **In contexts where United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions are in the process of closure or drawdown, ensure effective transition planning to strengthen the host Government's capacity to protect civilians, including internally displaced persons, in line with Security Council resolution [2594 \(2021\)](#);**

(l) **Provide flexible and predictable multi-year funding to support the implementation of peace processes, through humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programmes that incorporate a results-based approach linked explicitly to the achievement of durable solutions for the internally displaced and to the prevention of internal displacement due to violence and conflict;**

(m) **Ensure effective coordination, information-sharing and coherence of activities among humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors throughout the response to the conflict and the effective transition and handover, as conflicts transition out of emergency situations and towards stabilization and peace.**
