Marking 27 Years of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

Joint Statement by the Solutions Champions

April 17, 2025

NEW YORK/GENEVA, 17 April 2025 – Today marks the 27th anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement – a landmark framework that defines the rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and outlines the responsibilities of national governments and other authorities to protect and support them. Since their acknowledgment by the UN Commission on Human Rights in 1998, the Principles have served as a foundation for national and international responses. They have shaped domestic laws, informed policies and supported efforts to uphold the rights and dignity of millions of IDPs around the world.

Yet despite this progress, internal displacement continues to rise at an alarming rate. Today, 76 million people are displaced within their own countries due to conflict, violence, disasters, and increasingly the impacts of extreme weather shocks. Millions of people have remained trapped in protracted displacement for years or even decades. This growing global crisis calls for a renewed commitment to the Guiding Principles and support for governments to meet their responsibilities to provide protection, assistance, and long-term solutions.

At the heart of the Guiding Principles is the concept of "sovereignty as responsibility". IDPs are citizens or residents of their country, and national authorities have a duty to protect their rights and promote durable solutions in line with their wishes and international standards.

Solutions require strong national leadership, inclusive planning and long-term investments to help people regain self-reliance and rebuild their lives in dignity and peace. At a time when humanitarian needs are surging and resources decreasing, we are concerned about the risk of reversing hard-won gains on addressing internal displacement achieved over the past years. Now more than ever, we need to foster long-term solutions, stability and inclusion.

As the United Nations' Solutions Champions, and guided by the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, we reaffirm our shared commitment to support IDPs and host communities in moving from crisis to lasting recovery, peace and development. We will seek to advance cost-effective actions from the onset of a crisis, provide support to national leadership wherever possible, strengthen local capacities and ensure the voices of IDPs guide the support they receive. We will also do more to reduce the risk of future displacement through early warning systems, support for local conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms, disaster risk reduction, and building resilience to extreme weather shocks.

We also urge governments to integrate the Guiding Principles into national laws and policies, and to lead on the design and financing of durable solutions. IDPs must be included in national development strategies and efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure that no one is left behind. Finally, we further encourage governments that have already taken steps in this direction to continue their leadership and share good practices to support others.

This anniversary is a moment for reflection and action. Displacement should not mean despair. Solutions are possible – but only if we act together, and act now.

Signed,

The Solutions Champions

IOM Director General

UNDP Administrator

UN High Commissioner for Refugees

Emergency Relief Coordinator

Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs

Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, DPPA

Available at: https://www.undp.org/news/marking-27-years-guiding-principles-internal-displacement