

THE HLP ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT AND ICVA'S CONTRIBUTION TO ITS WORK

ICVA CASE STUDY #1¹

Short summary of the case study:

According to the [Internal Displacement Monitoring Center](#), there were about 55 million people internally displaced by the end of 2020. This number is expected to increase in the years to come not only because of ongoing conflicts and violence but also due to disaster and climate change. In 2016, the World Humanitarian Summit highlighted the issue of protracted internal displacement. However, the New York Declaration and the two Global Compacts that followed largely left the fate of internally displaced persons unattended, focusing rather on refugees and 'safe, orderly and regular migration'. Concerned that Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) may 'fall through the cracks', a variety of stakeholders mobilised to ensure renewed attention to the issue of internal displacement.

Following lobbying from States and civil society organizations and building on the 20th anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, and initiatives such as the GP20 Plan of Action, on 23 October 2019 UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, announced the establishment of a High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement.

As per HLP Terms of Reference (ToRs), its objectives were focused on addressing solutions to protracted displacement in a strategic but tangible manner, with particular attention to the Triple-Nexus and achieving government-led durable solutions to internal displacement. The Panel was clearly called to "raise international attention to the issue of internal displacement and its impact." The Panel was tasked to prepare a report for the UN Secretary-General "with concrete and practical recommendations to Member States, the United Nations system, and other relevant stakeholders." Despite the inherent focus on State ownership in dealing with internal displacement, the process clearly envisaged multi-stakeholder engagements and responsibility.

Civil society engagement:

From its inception meeting, the High-Level Panel adopted a participatory approach, engaging with a variety of stakeholders and relying heavily on the expertise of NGOs and academia. The COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupted initial plans for consultations. However, the Panel and its Secretariat

¹ Based on Jerome Elie, [CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE HIGH-LEVEL PANEL ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT: WILL THE VISION FOR THE FUTURE CHALLENGE THE STATUS QUO](#), October 2021

quickly managed to adapt and maintain an enabling environment, including several meetings in the last stretch when the recommendations took shape. Networks of NGOs such as InterAction and ICVA played an important role. First, they wrote [a letter to the UN SG](#) asking for the extension of the Panel's mandate in time, a request that was taken into account. Secondly, they also acted as connectors and convenors, organising fruitful brainstorming that often-crossed specific stakeholder lines.

In a context where travel was very restricted, being connected to 'front line' NGOs was not evident, while consulting internally displaced persons was even more challenging. The networks supported in this direction. Despite its non-operational nature, ICVA engaged support from 32 NGOs and five UN agencies, which allowed the Panel to consult over 12,500 IDPs and host community members across 22 countries. Such efforts helped inform the Panel's recommendations and further highlighted the notion that IDPs can take an active part in developing long-term solutions, alongside host communities.

Civil society reactions to the HLP report:

After the HLP report was launched on 29 Sept. 2021, many civil society stakeholders issued enthusiastic messages and called for immediate measures to implement the report. ICVA again played a catalysing role regarding joining messages which focused in particular on the following subjects addressed in the report and its recommendations:

- Solutions focused on internally displaced persons as rights-holding citizens;
- System reform;
- Accountability;
- Financing and resourcing;
- Climate change and disaster displacement; and
- The impact on the ground.

Again ICVA was instrumental in NGOs drafting a collective letter to the UN SG calling for immediate action by the SG. There are concerns that the report's recommendations may not be actioned urgently, therefore the letter also asks for concrete timelines and strategy in implementation of the report's recommendations. Work has started in this direction through the planned revision of the humanitarian system structure from an IDP's perspective, the drafting of an action plan on the implementation of the recommendations etc. NGOs are keen to see and contribute so that these processes are well managed, lead to concrete positive results on the ground and do not take more time than needed. ICVA will continue to support by advocating for NGOs participation and contribution to these processes and progress on the ground.