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**UNHCR engagement with internally displaced
persons**

Summary

This paper provides a comprehensive update on recent developments in the engagement of UNHCR with internally displaced persons, encompassing advocacy, operational activities and humanitarian coordination and leadership. Furthermore, it highlights progress made by UNHCR in strengthening strategic partnerships and advancing its contributions to the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement.

I. Introduction

1. At the end of 2024, the number of individuals displaced within their own countries due to conflict and violence reached 73.5 million, an increase of approximately 10.2 million compared to 2023. Globally, the population of internally displaced persons was more than double that of refugees and continued to represent the largest group among persons of concern to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).
2. In line with the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, UNHCR facilitated the provision of protection, assistance and solutions to internally displaced persons in over 30 countries across all regions. The Office also contributed to the coordination of humanitarian responses, serving as the lead agency for the Protection, Shelter and Camp Coordination and Camp Management clusters.

II. Advocating in situations of internal displacement

3. The right to be protected against arbitrary displacement is enshrined in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and in the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, reflecting both international humanitarian and human rights law.
4. In 2024, UNHCR maintained strong advocacy efforts on behalf of internally displaced persons, despite facing a challenging funding environment and escalating humanitarian crises. The Office engaged with national authorities, host communities, internally displaced persons and other stakeholders to promote the protection of rights and to ensure that the voices of displaced populations were heard and reflected in decision-making processes. The Office underscored the need for meaningful and inclusive participation of internally displaced persons in shaping solutions that affect their lives, while reiterating that the primary responsibility for their protection and assistance rested with the States.
5. The engagement of UNHCR in situations of internal displacement is guided by the Policy on UNHCR's Engagement in Situations of Internal displacement and its Focus Area Strategic Plan for Protection and Solutions for Internally Displaced People 2024-2030, which provide a roadmap for predictable and prioritized action. The strategic plan aims to ensure that internally displaced persons benefit from:
 - national legal, policy and administrative frameworks;
 - improved access to essential services;
 - opportunities to lead dignified, safe and self-sufficient lives;
 - meaningful participation in protection and solutions processes; and
 - a humanitarian and development coordination system that is accountable, predictable and centred on protection, enabling the achievement of durable solutions.
6. UNHCR supported more than 25 countries in strengthening their legal, policy and institutional frameworks to prevent and address internal displacement in accordance with international standards in 2024. The Office provided technical assistance to national authorities in the development, revision and implementation of national and subnational instruments, including solutions strategies and action plans. These efforts aim to enhance the protection of internally displaced persons, operationalize solutions, facilitate their inclusion in national services, and provide access to socioeconomic opportunities. In July 2024, UNHCR launched the internally displaced persons law and policy dashboard, a global resource providing comprehensive data on domestic laws, policies, strategies, and legal instruments related to internal displacement. In March 2025, the second edition of the Global Report on Law and Policy on Internal Displacement was published with a focus on assisting States in fulfilling their responsibility towards internally displaced persons. UNHCR also supported the development of regulations to implement national laws on internal displacement in Chad, Honduras, and the Philippines, where a new regional law was adopted in 2024. In addition, UNHCR conducted technical support missions to Colombia, Mexico

and the Republic of Moldova and contributed to policy reforms in Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Sudan and Ukraine.

7. In line with the strategic plan, protection analysis remained a key advocacy tool for UNHCR in ensuring that protection considerations were systematically integrated across all aspects of the response. In 2024, protection analysis prepared by the UNHCR-led Global Protection Cluster was shared with States, United Nations Resident Coordinators and United Nations Country Teams, and internally displaced persons to inform planning, coordination, and decision-making processes.

8. In September 2024, UNHCR issued an updated internal guidance package for engagement in situations of internal displacement. The package incorporates lessons learned and best practices from the past five years of implementation.

9. UNHCR advocated for the establishment of inclusive national statistical systems to ensure that internally displaced persons are reflected in national data collection exercises, such as the censuses conducted in Djibouti and Iraq. This work was carried out in close coordination with the Expert Group on Refugee, Internally Displaced Persons and Statelessness Statistics, as mandated by the United Nations Statistical Commission.

III. Strengthening partnerships

10. To commemorate the twenty-seventh anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, UNHCR co-organized an online event with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons. The event reaffirmed the continued relevance of the Guiding Principles as the foundation for provision of protection and solutions for internally displaced persons.

11. In line with efforts to engage diverse stakeholders, UNHCR, in coordination with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement, convened a global event in Nigeria to mobilize the private sector in support of solutions for internally displaced persons. Titled "Bridging Futures: 2024 Africa Roundtable on Private Sector Solutions to Internal Displacement", the event brought together business leaders, government officials, international financial institutions, multilateral development banks and non-governmental organizations. It underscored the role of internally displaced persons as economic agents and explored investment opportunities for advancing practical, market-based solutions. A dedicated publication was produced to inform the discussions.

12. UNHCR and the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons co-led the Protection Expert Group for Internally Displaced Persons (IPEG), which provided technical support to government and United Nations stakeholders in addressing protection challenges through field missions and peer-to-peer exchanges. In November 2024, the IPEG delegation conducted a mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The purpose of the visit was to emphasize the critical importance of community-based protection mechanisms. These mechanisms include community watch groups, which play a vital role in identifying and reporting security incidents, as well as local committees dedicated to conflict mediation and reconciliation efforts. In September 2024, with the support of the International Institute of Humanitarian Law, IPEG organized the "Cross-Regional Forum on Implementing Laws and Policies on Internal Displacement in Africa", held in Senegal. Officials from 13 countries engaged in a peer-to-peer dialogue focused on addressing challenges to implementing laws and policies related to internal displacement, with particular attention to domesticating the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa.

13. In support of locally informed solutions, UNHCR continued to assist the IDP Advisory Group, a consultative body comprising leaders from internally displaced and affected communities. The Group contributes to efforts aimed at preventing displacement, protecting affected populations and advancing solutions for internally displaced persons. It also advises the Office of the Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement. In 2024,

UNHCR initiated a pilot model intention survey in Mozambique to systematically capture the intentions of internally displaced persons.

14. To reinforce community voices, a workshop on enhancing the participation of internally displaced persons was jointly organized by UNHCR, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, IPEG and the McGill University. Forty participants, including 10 representatives of internally displaced communities, shared experiences and recommendations for strengthening participation in the design and implementation of responses to displacement and solutions.

IV. Ensuring effective humanitarian coordination

15. UNHCR continued to engage with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) on matters relating to internal displacement, including through the humanitarian reset, the reform process led by the Emergency Relief Coordinator to streamline the humanitarian architecture.

16. The Global Protection Cluster, led by UNHCR in contexts of internal displacement, coordinates the protection response in humanitarian settings. In 2024, UNHCR led 28 out of 32 protection clusters and cluster-like mechanisms, including in Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar and the Sudan.

17. The Global Protection Cluster responded to over 500 requests for support from country operations worldwide. It conducted 17 missions to 10 countries to strengthen operational protection strategies and provided support for the development of national protection advocacy. Key initiatives undertaken by the cluster included the annual Global Protection Forum, which brought together participants from 150 countries to share innovations and strengthen collaboration. In parallel, the cluster led targeted public and private advocacy efforts to promote protection and solutions for internally displaced persons. These included the issuance of advocacy notes, letters, statements and submissions, as well as direct engagement with donors, members of the United Nations Security Council, the Human Rights Council and other key stakeholders.

18. To ensure that protection remains central to programming for solutions, the Global Protection Cluster developed new guidance on its role in durable solutions processes. In addition, a new strategic framework for the period 2025 to 2030 was adopted, emphasizing streamlined, accountable and inclusive protection coordination that is grounded in the lived experiences of affected populations.

19. The Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster, co-led by UNHCR and IOM, supported 20.8 million internally displaced persons in 27 countries in 2024. With 40 per cent of internally displaced persons still residing in displacement sites, the cluster prioritized efforts to create safe and dignified living conditions.

20. To enhance coordination and service delivery, the cluster introduced real-time tracking tools to improve efficiency. These included a funding tracker in Afghanistan, an evacuation tracker in Ukraine to coordinate movement of over 83,000 internally displaced persons, and site monitoring tools to assess service gaps in Burkina Faso and Yemen. The cluster also strengthened efforts to prevent violence against internally displaced women and girls. In Burkina Faso, training sessions and awareness campaigns were conducted to empower women's associations, while in Somalia, the installation of solar lights improved safety in settlements.

21. The cluster also responded to acute crises and climate-related shocks. This included a reforestation initiative at a displacement site in Burkina Faso to combat desertification, rehabilitation of shelters damaged by monsoon rains in Myanmar, and assistance following the collapse of the Arba'at Dam in the Sudan. The cluster trained over 2,100 individuals across 22 countries and worked closely with the IASC task force on localization to strengthen the leadership of local and national actors in humanitarian response and coordination.

22. Complementing camp coordination and camp management efforts, the Global Shelter Cluster, co-led by UNHCR and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent

Societies, coordinated the shelter and non-food item response for 93 million people including internally displaced persons and host communities across 39 cluster and cluster-like coordination systems. Despite a 66 per cent funding gap, partners reached 17 million individuals, including seven million internally displaced persons with shelter assistance and 11 million with non-food items.

23. The Global Shelter Cluster supported five coordination missions and provided remote technical assistance to operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Honduras, Mali, the Philippines, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. The cluster addressed a range of issues including shelter severity classification, disaster risk reduction, environmental sustainability, and housing, land and property rights. Environmental assessments were conducted in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali, while ecological profiles were developed to inform environmentally sound shelter programming in Afghanistan, Myanmar, and the Philippines.

24. The cluster also advanced capacity-building efforts to make shelter interventions more responsive and adaptive. More than 100 humanitarian actors were trained in the use of cash-based shelter interventions in the Syrian Arab Republic. Trainings were delivered in Honduras, Somalia and Timor-Leste. Additionally, the shelter response in Fiji, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nepal and Vanuatu was strengthened through trainings and support provided for contingency planning and preparedness.

V. Engaging with the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement

25. UNHCR continued to contribute to the implementation of the United Nations Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement which aims to help internally displaced persons find a durable solution; prevent new displacement crises; and ensure effective protection and assistance for those displaced. In this context, UNHCR, together with IOM and the United Nations Development Programme, committed to serve as Solutions Champions, supporting Resident Coordinators and United Nations Country Teams to facilitate government-led solutions. This engagement included the implementation of projects financed by the Internal Displacement Solutions Fund in countries such as the Central African Republic, Colombia, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Somalia and Yemen.

26. UNHCR also participated in the work of the Hub for Coordination of Solutions to Internal Displacement, an inter-agency resource designed to support field implementation of solutions in line with the Action Agenda on Internal Displacement. UNHCR remained an active member of the Global Solutions Working Group and a core member of the Steering Group on Solutions to Internal Displacement, which operate both at global and country levels to promote a coherent, system-wide response.

27. As part of the commitment to the Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, UNHCR developed a protection risk assessment tool to be used by Resident Coordinators and United Nations Country Teams in government-led solutions processes. The tool was piloted in Afghanistan, Chad and Mozambique. UNHCR also contributed to the development of the Guidance on Solutions to Internal Displacement, issued in February 2025, under the leadership of the Office of the Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement and in collaboration with members of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group and the IASC. Additionally, the Office participated in the United Nations High-Level Committee on Programmes and contributed to the development of the United Nations System-wide Approach to Internal Displacement Framework. The framework aims to foster integration of displacement responses across humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding pillars.

28. To ensure coherence in the engagement of UNHCR on internal displacement, the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations and the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection provided strategic oversight on commitments pertaining to the operational and protection-related aspects of the response to internal displacement. This effort was further supported by the Principal Advisor on Internal Displacement, who continued to promote, coordinate and catalyse the organization's engagement, while also serving as the institutional focal point for external engagement on internal displacement.

VI. Budget and expenditure

29. These activities were supported by a needs-based budget of \$1,975.1 million for the engagement of UNHCR in situations of internal displacement, as approved by the Executive Committee at its seventy-fourth session in October 2023. The final budget for 2024 was adjusted to \$1,903.7 million, representing a nine per cent decrease compared to the 2023 budget of \$2,099.0 million. The total expenditure on internal displacement responses reached \$673 million by the end of 2024.
