

Members of the IDP Protection Expert Group



Paula Gaviria Betancur

Paula Gaviria Betancur was appointed Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons by the Human Rights Council in September 2022 and assumed the mandate on 1 November 2022.

Ms. Gaviria is a human rights lawyer and a forced displacement expert. She currently serves as executive director of Compaz, a non-profit founded by Nobel Laureate Juan Manuel Santos. With over two decades of experience in human rights and humanitarian affairs, she was a member of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, which worked from 2019 to 2021 to identify concrete recommendations on how to better prevent, respond and achieve solutions to the global internal displacement crisis. She has been an advocate for durable solutions to internal displacement and particularly for the role of the private sector in breaking the displacement cycle.

Ms. Gaviria has over two decades of experience promoting human rights from civil society, the judicial sector, academia, and government. She was the President of Colombia's Human Rights Advisor (2016-2018). Her role was key in ensuring the victims' participation in the negotiations. Before that, she supported the preparation and implementation of the country's 2011 Victims' Law and directed its Victims Unit (2012-2016), overseeing the development of the Victims Registry. In 2016, she received the World Bank José Edgardo Campos Collaborative Leadership Award. Previously she acted as Director of Human Rights Promotion at the Ombudsman Office of Colombia (2000-2004).



Cecilia Jimenez Damary

Cecilia Jimenez-Damary served as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of IDPs from 2016 to 2022, the first woman appointed to the mandate and from a country with IDPs. A Filipino lawyer who specializes in human rights and international humanitarian law, she has over three decades of experience in NGO human rights field work and advocacy in the Asia-Pacific region. She had previously served as National Director of the IDP Project of the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines, Senior Legal Adviser and Trainer with the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) in Geneva, among others, and served as the government representative to the Philippine Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission for the Bangsamoro.

Ms. Jimenez-Damary holds a Master of Laws in Public International Law from King's College London, UK; a Management Development Certificate in International Organizations-MBA programme (MDC) from the University of Geneva, Switzerland; a Bachelor of Laws from the Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines; and a Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service from the University of the Philippines. She was admitted to the Integrated Bar of the Philippines in 1990.

Ms. Jimenez-Damary is a distinguished legal expert who has made significant contributions to the field of IDP protection and migration, transitional justice, and human rights accountability issues. She has worked with international organizations, governments and national civil society organizations in a variety of contexts, including on the effective use of United Nations human rights mechanisms. She has recently resumed her academic engagement by pioneering the teaching of transitional justice in the Philippines.



Chaloka Beyani

Dr. Chaloka Beyani served as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons from 2010 to 2016. He is a highly respected international law expert who has dedicated his career to advocating for human rights, especially for IDPs. He has extensive experience in teaching international law, human rights, public law, and criminal law at Oxford University, the University of Zambia, and the London School of Economics, where he currently serves as an Associate Professor of International Law.

Over the years, Dr. Beyani has worked with various international organizations, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Development Fund for Women, the European Union, and the African Union. He has also drafted and negotiated numerous international treaties and constitutions, including the African Union Convention on Internally Displaced Persons.

Dr. Beyani is a recognized expert in the fields of human rights, international humanitarian law, humanitarian assistance, displacement, climate change, and population transfers. He has been a member of several expert advisory groups, including the United Nations Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement and the UK Foreign Secretary's Advisory Group on Human Rights.

Walter Kälin



Professor emeritus Walter Kälin served as Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons from 2004 to 2010. He has been a Professor of International and Constitutional Law at the University of Bern since 1985 and is presently serving as Envoy of the Chair of the Platform on Disaster Displacement. He was Special Advisor on Internal Displacement to the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators in Ethiopia and Somalia. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Norwegian Refugee Council.

Mr. Kälin has extensive experience in international human rights law, humanitarian protection, and refugee law. He is a former member of the United Nations Human Rights Committee and former Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Kuwait under Iraqi Occupation. Throughout his career, Mr. Kälin has acted as a consultant for numerous agencies and organizations, including the Swiss development agency, SDC, UNHCR, UNHCHR, UNDP, and others, on matters of decentralization, human rights, and refugee law.

Peter de Clercq



Peter de Clercq is an internationally recognized expert in the management of humanitarian and development assistance, in particular in displacement contexts. Hailing from the Netherlands, he is a Senior Advisor to UNDP on Internal Displacement, a Visiting Professor at the School of Governance in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, and a Distinguished Visiting Fellow of the Development and Rule of Law Project, Stellenbosch University, South Africa.

Mr. de Clercq has more than three decades of experience working with the United Nations at various duty stations and retired from the organization at the Assistant Secretary-General level in 2019. He served as the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti and United Nations Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator, and Resident Representative. Mr. de Clercq has also worked with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for 27 years, holding various positions in its Headquarters in Geneva and Budapest, as well as in field assignments in Angola, Pakistan, Sudan, and Zimbabwe. He was seconded to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to UNDP in Sudan. Mr. de Clercq has a wealth of experience in managing political processes, security sector development, operations, and emergency management, protection of civilians, and rule of law, as well as mobilization and management of humanitarian and development assistance.

Jennifer Welsh



Professor Jennifer Welsh is the Canada 150 Research Chair in Global Governance and Security at McGill University and the Director of the Centre for International Peace and Security Studies. She is a co-director of the Canadian Research Network on Women Peace and Security and was the co-founder of the Oxford Institute for Ethics, Law, and Armed Conflict. She has extensive experience in policy processes related to international peace and security and Canadian foreign policy. In 2005, she was the lead writer for the International Policy Statement for the Government of Canada. From 2013 to 2016, she served as Assistant Secretary General and Special Advisor to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon on the Responsibility to Protect, helping to further develop and implement the principle within and beyond the UN system.

Ms. Welsh has published several books and articles on the evolution of the notion of the 'responsibility to protect' in international society, the protection of civilians, the UN Security Council, and Canadian foreign policy. Her recent publications include *The Return of History: Conflict, Migration and Geopolitics in the 21st Century* and *The Responsibility to Prevent: Overcoming the Challenges of Atrocity Prevention*. She is currently co-leading a project of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences on contemporary challenges to the delivery of humanitarian health responses (including in contexts of migration) and has recently launched a research programme on the 'localization' of responses to internal displacement. Welsh has served as a consultant to several organizations including the United Nations, the Government of Canada, and Interpeace. She sits on the editorial boards of the journals *Global Responsibility to Protect*, *International Journal*, and *Ethics and International Affairs*, and on the advisory boards of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect and the Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation.



Atle Solberg

Atle Solberg is a political scientist from Norway with a wealth of experience in international humanitarian action and working with displacement situations, both in conflict and natural disaster settings. He is currently the Head of the Secretariat of the Platform on Disaster Displacement, and served as the Head of the Nansen Initiative Secretariat, the predecessor to the Platform on Disaster Displacement, from 2012 to 2015.

Throughout his career, Mr. Solberg has worked for UNHCR and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Switzerland, the Balkans, and Central America, as well as for the Norwegian Refugee Council in the Balkans, Indonesia, and Colombia. He also has research and teaching experience from the University of Bergen on humanitarian issues, as well as the protection of unaccompanied minors. In addition, he has undertaken evaluations of humanitarian aid and worked as a consultant with a focus on Norway and the post-conflict recovery situations in the Balkans and Central America.

Given his extensive experience with displacement situations and humanitarian action, Mr Solberg is a key figure in the global effort to address internal displacement and improve the protection of those affected by displacement due to natural disasters or other hazards.



Nina Birkeland

Nina Birkeland is a Senior Adviser on Disaster Displacement & Climate Change at the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). She has extensive experience working on displacement issues, particularly related to climate change and natural disasters. Ms. Birkeland's work has focused on the protection of people affected by displacement, as well as on the prevention of displacement and the search for sustainable solutions.

At the NRC, Ms. Birkeland has led the development of the organization's work on displacement and climate change, and has been instrumental in the creation of the NRC's Climate Displacement Program. She has also been involved in various global initiatives related to climate change and displacement, including the Nansen Initiative and the Platform on Disaster Displacement.



Maya Sahli-Fadel

Maya Sahli-Fadel is an Algerian jurist who serves as Vice-President of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). She has been a member of the commission since 2011, where she served as the special rapporteur on refugees, asylum seekers, displaced persons, and migrants in Africa. In addition to her work with the ACHPR, Sahli-Fadel has served as a member of the United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent from 2008 to 2014, and as a member of the Working Group on the Death Penalty and the Working Group on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Ms. Sahli-Fadel has extensive experience as a lawyer, having taught at the University of Algiers since 1981 and at the National School of Magistracy since 2000. She has also worked as a lawyer at the Algiers Bar Association from 1987 to 1994.



Elizabeth Ferris

Dr. Elizabeth Ferris is the Director of the Institute for the Study of International Migration in the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. She is also an ISIM Research Professor at Georgetown. She joined ISIM in Fall 2015 after serving for 9 years as a Senior Fellow and Co-Director of the Brookings Project on Internal Displacement and as an adjunct professor in Georgetown's School of Foreign Service. In 2016, she served as senior advisor to the UN Secretary-General in planning the Global Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants which led to the development of the Global Compacts on Refugees and Migrants. From 2019-21, she served as one of four expert advisors to the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement.

Prior to joining Brookings in 2006, Ms. Ferris spent 20 years working in the field of international humanitarian response, most recently in Geneva, Switzerland at the World Council of Churches. She has also served as Chair of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), as Research Director for the Life & Peace Institute in Uppsala, Sweden, as Director of the Church World Service Immigration and Refugee Program in New York. She has written or edited ten books and many articles on humanitarian and human rights issues which have been published in both academic and policy journals. Her current research interests focus on the politics of humanitarian action and on the role of civil society in protecting displaced populations.



Erin Mooney

Erin Mooney is an internationally recognized senior expert on IDPs, forced migration, humanitarian affairs and human rights, with 29 years of UN and other international professional experience. She has taken up the role of Chief of Civil Affairs with MONUSCO's in 2024. She has extensive field experience in Africa, the Middle East, Europe (Ukraine, South Caucasus, Western Balkans), Asia and the Americas. Her institutional experience includes working for the UN (UN RSG-IDPs, UNHCR, OHCHR, OCHA, UNICEF, UNDP, DPKO, DPA, UN SRSG-CAAC, IOM), USAID, various INGOs, and as Deputy Director of the Brookings Institution Project on IDPs and a Senior Adviser to the UN RSG on IDPs (2001-2006).

Ms. Mooney is the author of over 90 publications on IDPs, humanitarian affairs and human rights including academic publications and developing for the UN and IASC global policy and guidance on IDPs on a range of issues.