Focus Area Strategic Plan for Protection and Solutions for Internally Displaced People 2024-2030

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UNHCR's involvement in situations of internal displacement is one of the eight corporate focus areas requiring renewed attention and accelerated action, as outlined in the UNHCR Strategic Directions 2022-2026.
*The **Focus Area Strategic Plan for Protection and Solutions for Internally Displaced People 2024-2030** sets out UNHCR's global roadmap for predictable and prioritized action. The plan details UNHCR's specific role and contribution in providing protection and solutions in contexts of internal displacement and the strategic shifts that UNHCR operations worldwide will adopt to advance this agenda.*

The problems we seek to address

The global internally displaced population has grown by over 110% in the past decade and is projected to double again by 2030, based on current trends. About 90% of internally displaced people (IDPs) flee their homes due to conflict or disasters occurring alongside conflict and violence. Internal displacement situations are volatile. In 2023, over half of the countries with internally displaced populations experienced new emergencies or were at immediate risk of new conflict-related crises. Additionally, around 75% of those displaced by conflict are in highly climate-vulnerable countries, where worsening living conditions further hinder self-reliance. Conflict-driven displacement is becoming increasingly prolonged and more complex, with nearly 70% of countries experiencing conflict-related displacement for over 10 years. Variations in national capacity, operational context, and political conditions impact the potential for development and community self-reliance, and therefore the level of ongoing reliance on the humanitarian system.

Most IDPs live in sprawling **informal urban areas** with access to basic services, but higher risk of violence and exploitation. However, in some countries, the majority of IDPs are accommodated in camps, where humanitarian actors provide all the basic services. This approach, which was intended for short-term relief, not only limits the decision-making power of the community, but it is also difficult to financially sustain in the long term. The humanitarian system is challenged with adapting its programmes to provide services in rapidly expanding urban and peri-urban areas, as well as in other non-traditional camp settings.

Regardless of context, IDPs, **particularly women and children, face elevated risks of attack, assault and abduction.** They also encounter multiple barriers in enjoying protection of their rights and living dignified lives.

Without **national identity documents,** IDPs struggle to access public services and employment, own land, rent accommodation or participate in public affairs. In many countries, over 50% of IDPs cannot access any protection service. Only 60% of IDPs have **access to adequate housing**, and many face challenges with land tenure, which are critical barriers preventing them from being able to settle, resettle or return home. In 2022, less than a third of IDPs that needed urgent cash or in-kind assistance received it. While the humanitarian system has made significant steps towards better engagement with affected populations, humanitarian actors should engage further IDPs in planning and decision-making[1].

UNHCR's support to IDP situations

Since 2019, UNHCR has been devoting more resources in support of IDP situations. UNHCR's institutional **protection expertise** across sectors, its established relationships with governments, and evident strengths in implementing community-based approaches have been externally recognized, including in the recent evaluation of UNHCR's engagement in situations of internal displacement.

Considering the disparity between growing needs and reduced humanitarian funding, UNHCR aims to institutionalize a **standardized prioritization approach** to its programming, appropriate to **different operational contexts.** It also aims to ensure that from the onset of a crisis, its response incorporates the pursuit of durable solutions in close cooperation with the government and the displaced community. The strategic plan explains how UNHCR will address these necessary shifts, both internally and as part of collective efforts at the inter-agency level.

1 Independent review of the IASC response to internal displacement. L Sida, E Mooney, O Lough, ODI, HPG March 2024.

Vision, Objectives and UNHCR's predictable contribution

The strategic plan is centred on a long-term vision for protection and solutions for internally displaced people:

"Increasing numbers of internally displaced people can find protection from harm, live peacefully as contributing members of the communities in which they live, and find longer term solutions to build a secure future."

The strategic plan sets out five inter-dependent objectives to be achieved by 2029, together with other IASC members and partners, in order for the vision to be realized. These objectives align with UNHCR's global outcome areas and indicators:

1. IDPs benefit from **enabling legal and policy frameworks, administrative procedures and practices** put in place by government authorities.[2]

2. IDPs and the communities that reside with them have increased and dignified access to **quality services to address and prevent protection risks and threats.**

3. IDPs and the communities that reside with them have increased **agency, choice and access to opportunities to lead dignified, safe and self-sufficient lives.**

4. IDPs are increasingly **empowered to play an active role in their own community protection and in finding durable solutions.**

5. IDPs benefit from a **humanitarian and development coordination system that is accountable, predictable, effective and protection-centric, and enables durable solutions.**

The strategic plan sets out a series of programming outputs that UNHCR will seek to deliver in order to contribute to the attainment of the vision. Section 5 provides a prioritization blueprint of UNHCR's contribution, according to three types of IDP situations:

- Emergency and post-emergency,

- Protracted and fragile,

- Protracted with transition to development.

The strategic plan recognizes that these situations can co-exist across different areas in a country, triggering the need for UNHCR to adopt localized and differentiated roles.

2 The term "governments" also refers to de facto authorities where this is relevant.

The strategic plan sets out UNHCR's **predictable and strong operational role** in emergency and post-emergency contexts and in areas pertaining to the three clusters UNHCR leads, namely protection, shelter, and camp coordination and camp management (CCCM). Beyond the first 24 months of an IDP emergency, and where strategically appropriate, the plan sets out a **more targeted and nuanced role** for UNHCR. This entails greater emphasis on catalysing other actors, building the capacity of national and local authorities, and civil society, and advocating for the inclusion of IDPs in development programmes.

Three programming principles and key actions

The strategic plan is guided by three interconnected principles in IDP contexts, namely:

- **Strengthening national ownership,**

- **Stepping up IDP and community-led action by strengthening accountability to affected populations (AAP) and localization,**

- **Increasing sustainability across our programming.**

These principles have long influenced UNHCR's IDP response. The organization now pledges to accelerate its commitment to them, especially from the onset of emergencies. Section 6 explains the pivots that are required and the actions UNHCR will take to achieve this acceleration.

All UNHCR operations that are involved in IDP situations are expected to facilitate its implementation, enabled by a global results framework (annex). Some operations may adapt the plan to their needs, as required by the local context, in order to address country-specific protection risks.
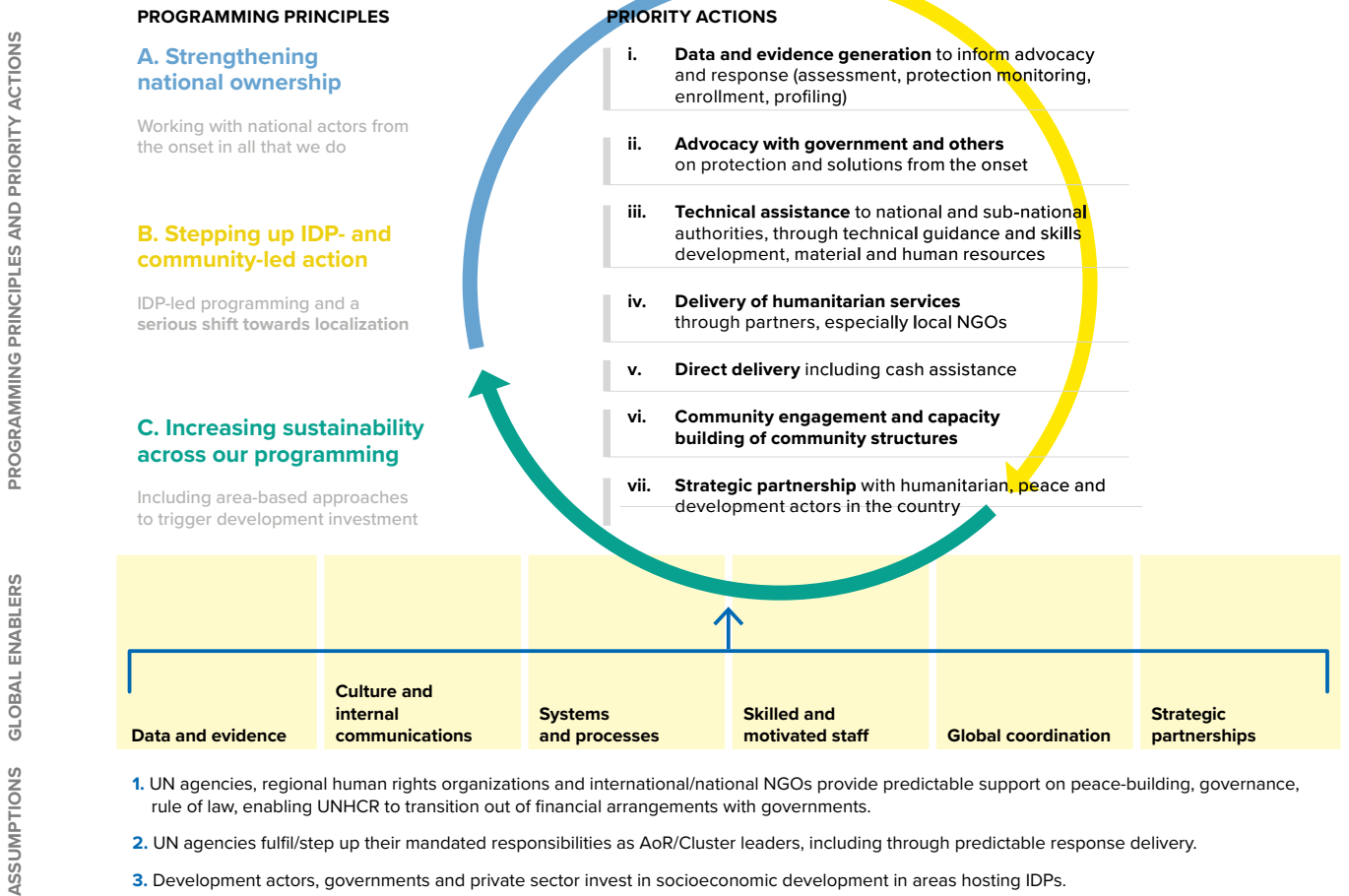
THEORY OF CHANGE

VISION

Increasing numbers of internally displaced people can find protection from harm, live peacefully as contributing members of the communities in which they live, and find longer term solutions to build a secure future

OBJECTIVES*

1 IDPs benefit from enabling legal and policy frameworks, administrative procedures and practices put in place by authorities.

2 IDPs and communities that reside with them have increased and dignified access to quality services to address and prevent protection risks and threats.

3 IDPs and communities that reside with them have increased agency, choice and access to opportunities to lead dignified safe and self-sufficient lives.

4 IDPs are increasingly empowered to play an active role in their own community protection and in finding durable solutions.

5 IDPs benefit from a humanitarian and development coordination system that is accountable, predictable, effective, protection-centric and enables durable solutions.

PROGRAMMING OUTPUTS

UNHCR will work with **national and sub-national authorities, communities, private sector and humanitarian partners** to provide or ensure:

UNHCR principal role				
1.1 An enabling **legal and policy framework** for IDPs	**2.1 Protection of civilians** and freedom of movement	**3.1 Cash** to live dignified lives and reduce risks	**4.1** IDPs' **participation** in humanitarian programming	**5.1 Quality protection analysis** informs UNCT/HCT strategies, plans and decisions
1.2 Legal ID and **civil documentation** for IDPs	**2.3 Legal aid** services	**3.2 Emergency shelter and NFIs** for protection outcomes	**4.2** IDPs are engaged in their own **community protection** (incl. for social cohesion)	**5.2 Predictable leadership** and adequate coordination for Protection, Shelter and CCCM including clusters
		3.3 Alternative to camps and protection-oriented **IDP site management**		

UNHCR targeted role				
1.3 IDP population data for statistical and response purposes	**2.3 Mental health and psychosocial** support services	**3.4** Secure **housing, land and property rights, sustainable shelter and settlements**	**4.3** IDP participation in **public affairs** and decision-making processes for development	
	2.4 GBV and child protection services			

UNHCR catalytic role				
1.4 Access to justice and effective remedies	**2.5** Access to **other public/sectoral services**	**3.3** Sustainable **economic activities** and financial services		

PROGRAMMING PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITY ACTIONS

PROGRAMMING PRINCIPLES

A. Strengthening national ownership

Working with national actors from the onset in all that we do

B. Stepping up IDP- and community-led action

IDP-led programming and a **serious shift towards localization**

C. Increasing sustainability across our programming

Including area-based approaches to trigger development investment

PRIORITY ACTIONS

i. **Data and evidence generation** to inform advocacy and response (assessment, protection monitoring, enrollment, profiling)

ii. **Advocacy with government and others** on protection and solutions from the onset

iii. **Technical assistance** to national and sub-national authorities, through technical guidance and skills development, material and human resources

iv. **Delivery of humanitarian services** through partners, especially local NGOs

v. **Direct delivery** including cash assistance

vi. **Community engagement and capacity building of community structures**

vii. **Strategic partnership** with humanitarian, peace and development actors in the country

GLOBAL ENABLERS

Data and evidence	Culture and internal communications	Systems and processes	Skilled and motivated staff	Global coordination	Strategic partnerships

ASSUMPTIONS

1. UN agencies, regional human rights organizations and international/national NGOs provide predictable support on peace-building, governance, rule of law, enabling UNHCR to transition out of financial arrangements with governments.

2. UN agencies fulfil/step up their mandated responsibilities as AoR/Cluster leaders, including through predictable response delivery.

3. Development actors, governments and private sector invest in socioeconomic development in areas hosting IDPs.

*To be achieved jointly with IASC members and other partners.

1. INTRODUCTION

The UNHCR Strategic Directions 2022-2026 identify **eight focus areas** requiring renewed attention and accelerated action. The accompanying focus area strategic plans describe how UNHCR will prioritize and refocus its work to achieve transformative and measurable change for forcibly displaced and stateless people, and the populations and governments that host them.

At the end of 2023, 58% of the total forcibly displaced population globally were internally displaced.[3] The term "internally displaced people (IDPs)" refers to those displaced by violence and conflict, or natural disasters/climate events occurring in the context of violence. It also refers to people at risk of internal displacement, and other displacement-affected community members. UNHCR's **Focus Area Strategic Plan for Protection and Solutions for Internally Displaced People 2025-2030** (herein "the strategic plan") sets out a global roadmap for predictable and prioritized action, in line with UNHCR's mandated responsibilities in contexts of internal displacement. The strategic plan delineates UNHCR's specific role and contribution to protection and solutions in contexts of internal displacement, the results it seeks and will measure over a five-year period, the differentiated approaches it will employ in diverse operating contexts, and the immediate actions it will take to advance this agenda.

The strategic plan is informed by the UNHCR **2019 UNHCR Policy and Guidance Package on Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement** and the **2023 Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response.** It also addresses key recommendations from the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)'s **Independent Review of the Humanitarian Response to Internal Displacement.**

It addresses UNHCR's commitments within the **Secretary General's Action Agenda on IDP Solutions**[4], and as such provides **one common and current point of reference** for UNHCR's planned work for internally displaced people (IDPs) between 2025-2030. The plan is accompanied by an institutional roadmap and an implementation guide that will inform the work of UNHCR operations globally.

UNHCR's scope of engagement in internal displacement

In situations of **violence and conflict,** UNHCR's operational involvement is aligned with its leadership and coordination responsibilities in protection, shelter, camp coordination and camp management (CCCM), in line with IASC arrangements.

In situations of **disaster-induced internal displacement,** UNHCR contributes to an inter-agency response, taking the lead on protection, whenever the three criteria of (i) field presence, (ii) government request and (iii) inter-agency agreement are met.

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3 Global Trends Forced Displacement 2022. Available from UNHCR.org/global-trends-report-2022.

4 The United Nations Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement Follow-Up to the Report of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement was published in June 2022. UNHCR released its Institutional Plan on Solutions to Internal Displacement in 2023 which reaffirms the approach to solutions.
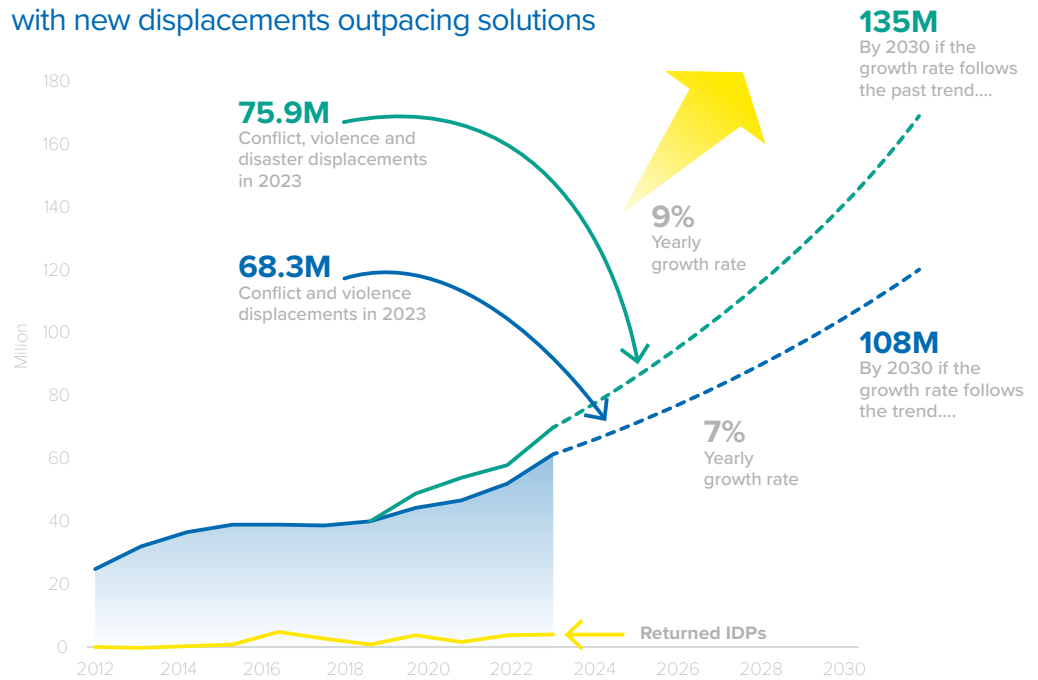
2. PROBLEM ANALYSIS

The global internally displaced population has increased over 110% in the last decade, with new displacements far outpacing the rate at which people can safely return home, fully integrate locally or sustainably settle elsewhere within their home country, without the need for humanitarian assistance.[5] Assuming a steady rate of growth based on historical trends, the number of internal displacements caused by conflict and violence could potentially double by 2030.

Wafaa Abdullah collects water for her family, who are internally displaced in Hudaidah, Yemen.

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5 For more information, see the data available at the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) .

The global IDP population has increased over the last decade with new displacements outpacing solutions

135M
By 2030 if the growth rate follows the past trend....

75.9M
Conflict, violence and disaster displacements in 2023

9%
Yearly growth rate

68.3M
Conflict and violence displacements in 2023

108M
By 2030 if the growth rate follows the trend....

7%
Yearly growth rate

Returned IDPs

Source: IDMC data for 2023

2030 projections if the growth rate follows the past 10 years' trend for Conflict and Violence displacements and 5 years' trend for Conflict, Disaster and Violence due to data availability

Conflict-related displacement is increasingly protracted

By 2023, nearly 90% of the 75.9 million IDPs were displaced due to conflict or natural disasters occurring concurrently with conflict and violence. Internal displacements caused solely by natural disasters tend to be temporary, with affected communities usually returning home within a year. In contrast, displacements driven by conflict and violence often become prolonged and complex. In fact, 70% of the countries where the UNHCR provides protection and assistance have experienced conflict-related displacement for more than a decade.
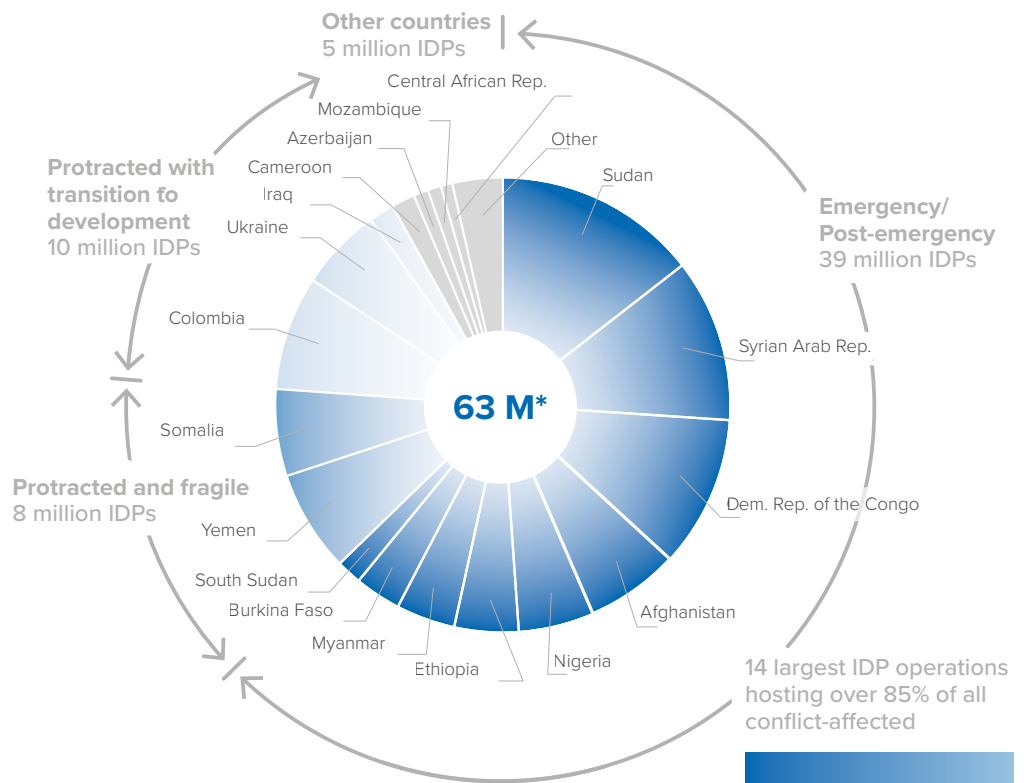
Countries with IDPs are often fragile

Countries with internally displaced populations face differing degrees of instability and fragility, as well as wide disparities in national capacity to manage displacement. In 2023, over half of all countries with internal displacement situations either had new emergencies (both declared and non-declared), or were in the immediate aftermath of, or at extreme risk of experiencing a conflict-related emergency.[6] In countries with protracted internal displacement situations, differences in national capacity, and operational and political context affect the potential for protection, human development and community self-reliance, and therefore the level of reliance on the humanitarian system.

6 Estimations include L1, L2 and L3 emergencies in countries with IDPs.

Countries with IDPs also host refugees and other people on the move

Out of the 20 countries with the largest situations of internal displacement, 12 also host substantial numbers of refugees, and may be transit countries for mixed movements of refugees and migrants. Responding to these situations presents further complexity because each group has distinct legal statuses, rights, needs and vulnerabilities. Additionally, accurate data on the numbers, locations and needs of people in mixed movement contexts is more challenging to gather, complicating effective response planning and implementation.[7]

UNHCR provides protection and assistance to IDPs in more than 30 countries

Other countries
5 million IDPs

Central African Rep.
Mozambique
Azerbaijan
Cameroon
Iraq
Ukraine

Other
Sudan

Protracted with transition to development
10 million IDPs

Emergency/ Post-emergency
39 million IDPs

Syrian Arab Rep.

Colombia

63 M*

Dem. Rep. of the Congo

Somalia

Protracted and fragile
8 million IDPs

Afghanistan

Yemen

South Sudan
Burkina Faso
Myanmar
Ethiopia
Nigeria

14 largest IDP operations hosting over 85% of all conflict-affected

* The countries that UNHCR supports host in total 63 M internally displaced people.

Sources:
- IDMC data for 2023 (2024)
- Global Report 2023. The data is reported only in countries where UNHCR allocated resources for IDPs in 2023. IDMC (2023), UNHCR (2023).

7 UNHCR is promoting a route-based approach to address mixed movements of refugees and migrants, taking into account the entire spectrum of situations that people find themselves in, along routes whether in countries of origin, asylum, transit or destination (see A Route-Based Approach: Strengthening Protection and Solutions in the Context of Mixed Movements of Refugees and Migrants).

IDPs struggle to access basic services and protection

Globally, over 70% of IDPs reside in **informal urban areas**, where there is a better chance of accessing informal job opportunities, basic infrastructure and existing services than in remote rural areas. Despite some levels of availability, services in urban areas are often provided by an unregulated private sector, and can be unaffordable, unreliable and sometimes unsafe. IDPs living in rapidly expanding urban areas also face higher risk of violence, organized crime, exploitation, and environmental disasters.[8] To meet these needs, the humanitarian system is adapting its approach to providing services in rapidly expanding urban and peri-urban areas, as well as in other non-traditional camp settings. While urbanization trends are increasing globally amongst internally displaced, in many countries with large numbers of IDPs (Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia and Nigeria),[9] a significant proportion still resides in camps or camp-like settlements, where new services and structures are established and run under the auspices of the international humanitarian system. Initially intended for short-term relief, the long-term provision of services by humanitarian actors is an expensive and non-sustainable endeavor.

Regardless of displacement context or fragility, internally displaced communities face multiple and overlapping barriers in enjoying **protection of their human rights and the means to lead dignified and self-sufficient lives, at the same level as non-displaced citizens.** As a result of their displacement, millions of IDPs have lost or lack access to national identity documents, and subsequently face barriers in accessing public

During a missile attack in January 2024, Serhii, 57, from Kryvyi Rih, Ukraine, was injured, and his house was severely damaged. Through UNHCR's partners, Proliska and Right to Protection, Serhii received emergency shelter, essential items, psychosocial support, and legal counselling.

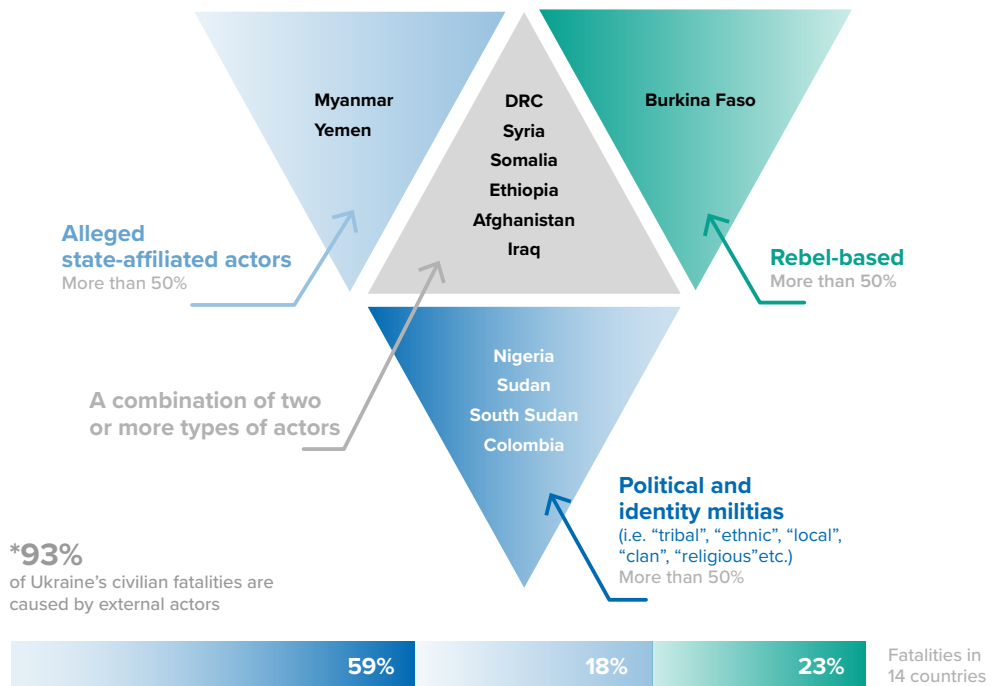© UNHCR/Elisabeth Arnsdorf Haslund

8 ICRC (2018) Displaced in cities: experiencing and responding to urban displacement outside camps.
9 For more information, refer to each country's 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan, produced by OCHA.

services, land and property, moving freely, accessing business, job opportunities, justice and remedies and participating in public and political affairs. Very few countries have adopted **specific laws to protect IDPs.**

Displaced communities face threats from multiple actors, driving complexity and barriers in working towards solutions, especially when the alleged perpetrators are state-affiliated.

The graph below shows threats faced by civilians in 14 countries with the largest numbers of IDPs displaced by conflict.

Myanmar
Yemen

DRC
Syria
Somalia
Ethiopia
Afghanistan
Iraq

Burkina Faso

Alleged state-affiliated actors
More than 50%

Rebel-based
More than 50%

A combination of two or more types of actors

Nigeria
Sudan
South Sudan
Colombia

Political and identity militias
(i.e. "tribal", "ethnic", "local", "clan", "religious"etc.)
More than 50%

*93%
of Ukraine's civilian fatalities are caused by external actors

| 59% | 18% | 23% | Fatalities in 14 countries |

Source: UNHCR's estimations using ACLED Conflict Alert System data (2023).

IDPs often face greater protection risks than the general population and are more likely to experience physical attacks, sexual assault, exploitation and abuse. The majority of IDPs are women and children who - in many contexts - are particularly at risk.

The majority of IDPs face very high or extreme constraints in **accessing services to meet their basic needs**. Globally, almost 60% of IDPs do not have access to affordable and habitable housing or shelter, and many encounter challenges with land tenure, including the right to use and occupy land. For IDPs, access to affordable, safe housing and land tenure are crucial prerequisites for rebuilding their lives, and therefore finding a lasting solution to their displacement.[10] Globally, more than 50% of IDPs require assistance in the form of cash transfers or in-kind support to meet their basic needs.

10 UNHCR's Global Report 2023. Estimations are based on the results of 16 operations.

However, humanitarian aid reaches only a minority of those in need.[11] Additionally, in several countries, most IDPs cannot access protection services.[12]

The humanitarian system's response for IDPs is over-stretched, with dwindling resources, especially for protracted conflict situations. In 2023, only 43% of the Global Humanitarian Response for IDPs was funded by donors.[13] A recent independent review of the humanitarian system conducted by the IASC concluded that the system is falling short of meeting the complexity, magnitude and protracted nature of internal displacement, and called for a renewed effort to improve the speed of response, and a shift away from a siloed, supply-driven operating model to a more protection-driven, sustainable and IDP-led model, which prioritizes durable solutions from the onset.

UNHCR's IDP response

UNHCR has been devoting more resources in support of IDP situations in recent years. At the end of 2022, 58% of the total forcibly displaced population globally were internally displaced.[14] In the same year, UNHCR's total expenditure for IDPs comprised US$ 1.1 billion, a significant increase of US$ 346 million over the previous year.

The 2023 evaluation of UNHCR's IDP response re-affirms the organization's commitment to strengthening its IDP response and fulfilling cluster leadership responsibilities. The evaluation made the following key conclusions:

- It acknowledged **UNHCR's comparative advantage in protection** and clear strengths in implementing community-based approaches, outreach to dispersed populations, area-based approaches and localised strategies for complex situations.

- It highlighted the need for UNHCR to better **leverage its protection comparative advantage** and institutionalize a **standardized prioritization approach to its programming**, appropriate to different operational contexts, in light of the disparity between growing need, and reduced humanitarian funding.

- It suggested for clearer programme and thematic boundaries on **UNHCR's role in durable solutions**, consolidated around UNHCR's protection expertise.

- It encouraged UNHCR to strengthen its ways of working with local organizations, to improve communication on, and resource mobilization for IDPs, as well as adapt workforce management in IDP situations.

The strategic plan directly addresses these issues and forms the basis for **operationalizing the evaluation's management response**.

11 UNHCR's Global Report 2023. Estimations are based on the results of 21 operations. Additionally, in several countries, most IDPs cannot access protection services.

12 Global Protection Cluster, Global Protection Update March 2023.

13 OCHA (2024) Global Humanitarian Overview.

14 UNHCR's Global Trends Forced Displacement 2022.

3. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

The strategic plan is centred on a long-term vision for *protection and solutions* for internally displaced people to which UNHCR will contribute, together with the government, local actors, partners and the broader international community:

Increasing numbers of internally displaced people can find protection from harm, live peacefully as contributing members of the communities in which they live, and find longer term solutions to build a secure future.

UNHCR's impact-level indicators enable the monitoring of the obtainment of this vision over the long term (see annex).

The strategic plan sets out **five inter-dependent objectives** to be achieved by 2029. The first four objectives outline the outcomes that **UNHCR aims to achieve, together with other IASC members and partners,** in support of national and local governments, and civil society, to directly contribute to improved protection and solutions. These objectives align with UNHCR's global results framework and are measured through UNHCR's global outcome area indicators. The fifth objective focuses on **UNHCR's contribution and protection leadership within the broader humanitarian system**.

1 IDPs benefit from **enabling legal and policy frameworks, administrative procedures and practices** put in place by government authorities.

2 IDPs and the communities that reside with them have increased and dignified access to **quality services to address and prevent protection risks and threats.**

A woman is preparing food to feed her pigs in a camp for internally displaced people in Kachin State, Myanmar.

© UNHCR/Dumhpau Hkunring

3 IDPs and the communities that reside with them have increased agency, choice and **access to opportunities to lead dignified, safe and self-sufficient lives.**

4 IDPs are increasingly **empowered to play an active role in their own community protection and in finding durable solutions.**

5 IDPs benefit from a **humanitarian and development coordination system that is accountable, predictable, effective, protection-centric** and enables durable solutions.

The five objectives directly align with the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions (see box below), while underscoring UNHCR's focused role in IDP contexts. The theory of change is based on the assumption that key IASC members have the capacity and presence to support equitable access to other key services and opportunities which are also fundamental to the obtainment of rights and the overall vision.

All UNHCR's IDP operations are expected to align to the strategic plan and facilitate its implementation. UNHCR will provide additional support to operations with large internally displaced populations. Local contextualization and deviation from the plan's specific focus may be necessary, especially when addressing country-specific protection risks. Delivery of the strategic plan's ambition will also be calibrated based on available funding and informed by the funding horizon using historical earmarking trends and the potential for resource mobilization.

UNHCR's contribution to durable solutions for internally displaced populations

The strategic plan is based on the premise that internally displaced people have obtained a durable solution when they **no longer have specific assistance and protection needs** linked to their displacement and **can enjoy their rights without discrimination** on account of their displacement. The choice of where to obtain a durable solution should be made by displaced individuals, honouring their **right to freedom of movement and choice of residence** within their country.

The 2010 IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons sets out **eight specific criteria** for defining the attainment of durable solutions. The strategic plan's theory of change and results framework **delineate UNHCR's explicit and focused role in contributing to these eight criteria** and provide operational clarity on what UNHCR will predictably do and deliver for the obtainment of durable solutions in IDP contexts.

The 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, the IASC Framework and the 2019 UN Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement underscore the **primary roles of governments as duty bearers** and of **internally displaced people as right-holders** in a response and for attaining a durable solution. The strategic plan will **facilitate a shift in UNHCR's engagement on internal displacement towards an even greater focus on national responsibility and IDP-led action from the onset of an emergency response**, two critical elements in enabling durable solutions from the start.

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4. UNHCR'S DIFFERENTIATED APPROACH ACROSS THE HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT NEXUS

As more internal displacement situations become protracted, UNHCR, and the humanitarian system at large, lack sufficient resources to maintain "care and maintenance" or subsistence programming for extended periods. In the absence of predictable support from development actors to governments in countries with internal displacement, often affected by conflict and fragile economies, IDPs remain reliant on humanitarian assistance for their survival. The extended delivery of parallel humanitarian services risks undermining national responsibility and creating unsustainable dependence on a humanitarian system that is not designed to provide this kind of support.

The strategic plan proposes a differentiated approach to planning an operational response for IDPs, based on three key factors: (a) the level and scale of humanitarian need, (b) the country's capacity and willingness to handle the displacement, (c) the potential for self-reliance amongst the internally displaced population, considering the elevated protection risks that IDPs face. UNHCR's predictable contribution to the objectives of the plan (see section 5 below) will be dependent upon the type of context in which it operates, driven by these three factors.

Emergency and post-emergency contexts are internal displacement situations declared as emergencies in line with UNHCR's Emergency Policy (the initial period of "declared emergencies" is six to nine months) and/or in which the IASC scale-up protocols are applied. They also include other emergency situations centred on internal displacement that have not been declared as emergencies, countries at risk of an internal displacement-focused emergency that require emergency preparedness and countries in the immediate aftermath of an emergency (for a period of up to 24 months).

Transitional contexts

a. **Protracted and fragile contexts** are those that have experienced more than two years of internal displacement, but no recent emergency. They are typically situated within lower- and lower-middle-income countries. In these contexts, IDPs continue to face high levels of protection risks and significant barriers to enjoying their rights on a par with non-displaced communities, impacting the potential for self-sufficiency and development.

b. **Protracted with transition to development contexts** are those where internal displacement has been ongoing for more than two years. They are typically situated in lower-middle- and upper-middle-income countries, where most of the overseas development assistance comes from development actors, rather than humanitarian sources. There is growing national capacity for handling the displacement situation, and government efforts to address barriers to protection and advance durable solutions.

These two contexts are not a rigid categorization of countries, but rather generalized descriptions of different types of situations UNHCR operates in. They may not always be applicable countrywide, and in some countries, two or more contexts may co-exist at a given time. For example, both Nigeria and Ukraine have areas of emergency, and areas of transition to development. To this end, UNHCR operations will likely have a distinct approach for different parts of the country and will design their operational response accordingly. The post-emergency timeline of 24 months should also be seen as somewhat fluid, as in some situations, it may be necessary to apply an emergency approach beyond this initial phase.

In the Lushagala IDP site in Goma, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNHCR has introduced biometric registration for internally displaced people to enhance data management and provide targeted assistance to people with specific needs.

© UNHCR/Blaise Sanyila

5. UNHCR'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

UNHCR is already contributing towards achieving the strategic plan's overall objectives across more than 30 country operations,[15] its regional bureaux and headquarters.

15 As of May 2024.

The strategic plan marks UNHCR's global shift in (a) aligning around **common programming areas and key output results** that can be measured and tracked, and (b) providing **greater predictability, global coherence, specificity, and sustainability** in its planned and prioritized operational response for IDPs in different contexts, in accordance with coordination arrangements, under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator.

The following section lists UNHCR's intended contribution to the objectives in the plan. The operational role UNHCR will take in achieving these outputs will depend on the context, and the presence, and capacity of national authorities, civil society, humanitarian partners and IDP communities, as set out in the prioritization table below.

OBJECTIVE I

IDPs benefit from enabling legal and policy frameworks, administrative procedures and practices put in place by government authorities.

Outputs – By 2030:

1.1 National and sub-national authorities have increased capacity to provide an **enabling legal and policy framework** and **administrative procedures** for IDPs.

1.2 National and sub-national authorities have increased capacity to provide **legal identity and civil documentation** for IDPs.

1.3 National and sub-national authorities have increased capacity to collect, compile, analyze and use comprehensive **IDP population data** for statistical and response purposes.

1.4 National and sub-national authorities have increased capacity to provide **access to justice and effective remedies.**

OBJECTIVE II

IDPs and the communities that reside with them, have increased and dignified access to quality services to address and prevent protection risks and threats.

Outputs – By 2030:

2.1 National and sub-national authorities, communities and humanitarian partners have increased technical capacity and evidence to ensure **protection of civilians** and **freedom of movement.**

2.2 National and sub-national authorities, communities, private sector and humanitarian partners have increased technical capacity, resources and evidence to provide **legal aid services.**

2.3 National and sub-national authorities, communities, private sector and humanitarian partners have increased technical capacity, resources and evidence to provide mental health and **psycho-social support services.**

2.4 National and sub-national authorities, communities, private sector and humanitarian partners have increased technical capacity, resources and evidence to provide **GBV and child protection services.**

2.5 National and sub-national authorities, communities, private sector and humanitarian partners have increased knowledge to provide non-exclusive and protection-sensitive access to **other public and sectoral services.**

OBJECTIVE III ▶ **IDPs and the communities that reside with them, have increased agency, choice and access to opportunities to lead dignified, safe and self-sufficient lives.**

Outputs – By 2030:

3.1 Humanitarian partners and UNHCR have increased resources to provide internally displaced people with **cash assistance, enabling them to live dignified lives and reducing related risks.**

3.2 National and sub-national authorities, communities and humanitarian partners have increased technical capacity, resources and evidence to provide **emergency shelter and non-food items.**

3.3 National and sub-national authorities, communities and humanitarian partners have increased technical capacity, resources and evidence to provide alternative solutions to camps and protection-oriented **IDP site coordination and management.**

3.4 National and sub-national authorities, communities, private sector and humanitarian partners have increased technical capacity, resources and evidence to ensure **housing, land and property rights and provide sustainable shelter and settlements.**

3.5 National and sub-national authorities, communities, private sector and humanitarian partners have increased knowledge to ensure people have access to **sustainable economic activities, and financial services.**

OBJECTIVE IV ▶ **IDPs are increasingly empowered to play an active role in their own community protection and in finding durable solutions.**

Outputs – By 2030:

4.1 Communities and humanitarian partners have increased technical capacity, resources and evidence to ensure that **IDPs participate in humanitarian programming.**

4.2 Communities and humanitarian partners have increased technical capacity, resources and evidence to **engage IDPs in their own community-based protection,** including for social cohesion.

4.3 Communities and humanitarian partners have increased technical capacity, resources and evidence to ensure **IDPs' participation in public affairs and decision-making processes for development.**

OBJECTIVE V ▶ **IDPs benefit from a humanitarian and development coordination system that is accountable, predictable, effective, protection-centric and enables durable solutions.**

5.1 UNHCR systematically **provides quality protection analysis and uses it** to inform UN Country Team/Humanitarian Team (UNCT/UNHT) strategies, plans and decisions.

5.2 UNHCR systematically ensures **predictable leadership and adequate coordination for protection, shelter, and camp coordination and camp management (CCCM).**

UNHCR's prioritization blueprint: planned differentiated roles according to context

Operational: UNHCR will **predictably** allocate substantive resources and personnel to address the needs of IDPs, directly or through partners.

Targeted: UNHCR will play an operational role when others are not present or do not have capacity, or where there is strategic imperative.

Catalytic: UNHCR will leverage a broad range of actors to address the needs of IDPs, including through advocacy and strategic partnerships.

Scale down: UNHCR will actively scale down its operational engagement and pursue cluster deactivation.

Table outlining UNHCR's planned role in different operating contexts

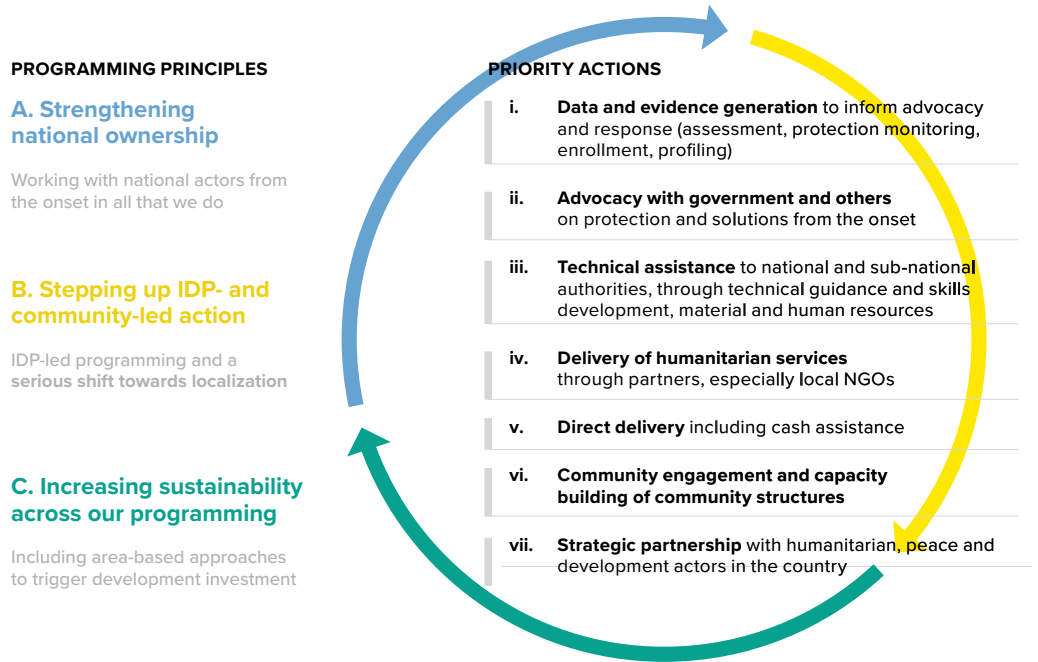| Objectives	Programming outputs	Emergency/ Post-Emergency	Protracted and Fragile	Protracted with Transition to Development
1. Enabling legal and policy frameworks, administrative procedures and practices put in place by authorities	**1.1** Enabling legal and policy framework	Operational	Operational	Operational
	1.2 Legal ID and civil documentation	Operational	Operational	Operational
	1.3 IDP population data for statistical and response purposes	Targeted	Targeted	Targeted
	1.4 Access to justice and effective remedies	Catalytic	Catalytic	Catalytic
2. Dignified access to quality services to address and prevent protection risks and threats	**2.1** Protection of civilians and freedom of movement	Operational	Operational	Scale down
	2.2 Legal aid services	Operational	Operational	Targeted
	2.3 Mental health and psychosocial support services	Targeted	Targeted	Catalytic
	2.4 GBV and child protection services	Targeted	Targeted	Catalytic
	2.5 Access to other public/sectoral services	Catalytic	Catalytic	Catalytic
3. Increased agency, choice and access to opportunities to lead dignified safe and self-sufficient lives	**3.1** Cash to live dignified lives and reduce risks	Operational	Targeted	Scale down
	3.2 Emergency shelter and NFIs	Operational	Targeted	Scale down
	3.3 Alternative to camps and IDP site management	Operational	Targeted	Scale down
	3.4 Secure housing, land and property rights, sustainable shelter and settlements	Catalytic	Targeted	Targeted
	3.5 Sustainable economic activities and financial services	Catalytic	Catalytic	Catalytic
4. Empowerment to play an active role in their own community protection and in finding durable solutions	**4.1** IDPs' participation in humanitarian programming	Operational	Operational	Operational
	4.2 IDPs' engagement in their own community protection (incl. for social cohesion)	Operational	Operational	Operational
	4.3 IDPs' participation in public affairs and decision-making processes for development	Targeted	Targeted	Targeted
5. An accountable, predictable, effective and protection-centric humanitarian and development coordination system that enables durable solutions	**5.1** Use of protection analysis by UNHCR to inform UNCT/HCT strategies, plans and decisions	Operational	Operational	Operational
	5.2 Predictable leadership and adequate coordination for protection, shelter and CCCM	Operational	Operational	Scale down

6. HOW UNHCR WILL BRING ABOUT CHANGE

KEY PROGRAMMING PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITY ACTIONS

The strategic plan is underpinned by three inter-connected programming principles that inform the key actions UNHCR takes in IDP contexts.

Wael, his wife Walaa, and their daughters Souad, Malak and Tasnim, stand at the door of their home in Deir-ez-Zor, Syria. After being internally displaced for seven years, he returned with his family in 2019. UNHCR and its partner ADRA supported the rehabitation of the family home.

© UNHCR/Vivian Toumeh

While these principles have historically influenced its IDP response, UNHCR now intends to **further deepen its commitment to these principles in all contexts, including from the very onset of emergencies**.

PROGRAMMING PRINCIPLES

A. Strengthening national ownership

Working with national actors from the onset in all that we do

B. Stepping up IDP- and community-led action

IDP-led programming and a **serious shift towards localization**

C. Increasing sustainability across our programming

Including area-based approaches to trigger development investment

PRIORITY ACTIONS

i. **Data and evidence generation** to inform advocacy and response (assessment, protection monitoring, enrollment, profiling)

ii. **Advocacy with government and others** on protection and solutions from the onset

iii. **Technical assistance** to national and sub-national authorities, through technical guidance and skills development, material and human resources

iv. **Delivery of humanitarian services** through partners, especially local NGOs

v. **Direct delivery** including cash assistance

vi. **Community engagement and capacity building of community structures**

vii. **Strategic partnership** with humanitarian, peace and development actors in the country

A.   Strengthening national ownership: working with national actors from the onset

Programming in urban contexts: UNHCR aims to strengthen national ownership, IDP-led action, and sustainable programming in rapidly expanding urban and peri-urban areas.

In accordance with the UNHCR Urban Policy, UNHCR IDP operations adapt their programming to address the specific opportunities and challenges of working in rapidly expanding urban areas housing both internally displaced and non-internally displaced populations (mixed situations). To achieve this, we use the following best practices:

We work with and enhance the capacity local authorities (e.g. mayors) to facilitate inclusion in local and municipal plans and programmes.

1.   **We build on existing local services** instead of creating parallel systems by:

 • **Carefully assessing and mapping existing capacity and actors** for referral and mobilization for the provision of services to IDPs.

- **Convening space for all service providers.** Our one-stop shops/multi-purpose centres are open to the whole community and bring together existing local service providers and other actors, fostering social cohesion within the community.

2. **We adopt flexible and innovative approaches to engage with communities,** including for information-sharing, and receiving and responding to feedback (AAP), by:

   - Establishing **mobile desks** to reach an urban population who is often mobile, settled in various locations or in areas impacted by insecurity.

   - Creating **virtual feedback and response mechanisms** adapted to an urban context (e.g. hotlines), considering that access to mobile phones and other technologies is often available in these areas.

   - Supporting **internet sites and platforms** for information-sharing and support.

3. **We focus on access to legal documentation** to ensure that IDPs can use services and enjoy housing, land and property rights. We also provide **legal aid services** in case of evictions and land disputes, including through close collaboration with informal and customary law systems.

4. **We adapt shelter support to the urban context** by:

   - Promoting IDPs' transition to stable, individual housing options within the communities they reside in.

   - Focusing on rehabilitation of existing housing structures rather than tents to prevent proliferation of gathering sites and informal settlements.

   - Combining **cash for rent** with livelihoods initiatives to ensure sustainability.

5. **We strengthen coordination among humanitarian actors and strategic partnerships** by:

   - Enforcing the **tri-cluster approach** with closer planning and implementation among the protection, CCCM and shelter clusters.

   - Advocating for the early **establishment of a cash working group** to facilitate collaboration among cash actors, and ensure standardization of cash interventions, noting that cash is often the most appropriate form of response for urban contexts.

   - Establishing **partnerships with development actors, including UN agencies,** that have the capacity to implement large-scale projects, allowing UNHCR to sustainably disengage.

WHERE WE ARE NOW:

Given the nature of humanitarian situations, humanitarian actors often need to establish services for displaced communities when there is a critical gap in the response from the national authorities or civil society. While such parallel services are lifesaving in the immediate aftermath of an emergency, their ongoing maintenance over time risks undermining national ownership, and missing the opportunity to build national capacity to respond in the longer term. The issue is most salient where camps or camp-like settings are established and maintained. UNHCR has a well-institutionalized policy of avoiding the establishment of camps unless absolutely necessary. However, it still faces challenges in fully implementing it.

In some contexts, UNHCR has supported governments in establishing new IDP-specific entities to oversee and manage displacement, rather than investing in the capacity of existing ministries at national and local levels. This set-up can help facilitate effective national coordination but can also result in other line ministries excluding IDPs from their sector-specific plans and priorities. Inclusion and mainstreaming of IDP services within national and local departments is preferred over siloed IDP-specific government entities. Additionally, related financial support provided by UNHCR to government entities is not always strategic or sustainable, and it risks creating long-term dependency on UNHCR.

WHERE WE WANT TO BE:

Data and evidence generation: Reliable data and evidence are necessary to inform effective programmes and policies. Through systematic protection monitoring in all contexts, UNHCR will identify barriers for IDPs to access national systems and services, inform capacity-strengthening needs, and generate evidence for advocacy and technical assistance for any needed adaptation to administrative procedures and the legal and policy frameworks. IDP profiling will be utilized especially in protracted contexts to identify systematic barriers to the progression of durable solutions and to advocate for the change and adaptation needed to hand over to national authorities.

Advocacy with government and others: UNHCR, alone or as cluster lead agency, and as part of the HCT/UNCT, will champion evidence-based advocacy with the government on their primary responsibility to assist, protect and enable durable solutions for their displaced citizens. This includes advocacy for the assumption of this responsibility at all levels of government, for necessary changes to legal, administrative, or policy frameworks to address access barriers and deficiencies in public services for IDPs. UNHCR will always leverage other HCT/UNCT members, NGOs and civil society actors to uptake such advocacy with their respective line ministries and to make sure respective sectoral services are accessible and meet IDPs' needs.

Technical assistance to government: Leveraging its expertise, UNHCR will advance its role as technical advisor to governments on laws and policies on internal displacement as they tailor the administrative, legal and policy framework to the realities of displacement. Specifically, UNHCR will build on its experience in providing technical assistance and capacity-building to governments to develop and implement laws that comply with international and regional instruments.[16] UNHCR will make a

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16 These include the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa.

deliberate pivot towards strengthening government ownership and leadership of IDP responses through local and national sectors, as opposed to working with IDP-specific government departments. This will include national statistics offices, where it will promote nationally owned population data and will share its expertise on displacement data and data protection. Where UNHCR provides financial support to government partners, it will limit or make such payments time-bound, based on an agreed-upon transition plan, and avoid committing to payment of recurring staff salaries directly to the government.

Delivery of humanitarian services and assistance: In the delivery of humanitarian services and assistance for protection, shelter, and site management, UNHCR will expand its partnerships with national civil society organizations, including national human rights institutions (NHRIs) and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), particularly those led by IDPs. UNHCR will more regularly seek public entities as partners for service delivery and expand the capacity of existing public services to avoid parallel systems. After an emergency, UNHCR will re-evaluate its response to facilitate a handover to national authorities, humanitarian principles permitting, and national civil society. UNHCR will continue to prioritize alternatives to camps and where such exist, proactively seek to end parallel service delivery. While it will continue to implement cash-based interventions directly through its financial service providers, UNHCR will also seek collaboration with social protection government counterparts.

Community engagement and strengthening of community structures: UNHCR always advocates for and prioritizes a strong role of IDPs and other displacement-affected communities as an indispensable part of a nationally owned response.

Strategic partnership: UNHCR plans to play a catalytic role, rather than an operational role, in sectors where other UN entities support relevant ministries, such as livelihoods, education and WASH. Catalyzing others involves targeted advocacy, joint planning, data- and evidence-sharing and collaboration. This is important to ensure that services provided by other actors are protection-sensitive, safe and equitable for all members of internally displaced communities, regardless of gender, socio-economic status or ability. Catalysing others will also involve UNHCR leveraging strategic partnerships with HCT/UNCT members, NGOs and civil society partners to align advocacy and technical assistance and reduce parallel systems. Specifically, UNHCR will engage HCT members for an early transition of the cluster coordination system to a more solutions-oriented coordination model after an emergency, in accordance with the UNCT and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). Where relevant, UNHCR will systematically participate or take a lead role in durable solutions working groups and seek to leverage these to ensure that all actors have concrete plans for solutions to displacement, including from the start of an emergency. From emergency preparedness onwards, UNHCR will proactively identify entry points for development partners and peace actors in its response. Through leveraging existing strategic partnerships with development actors, international financial institutions (IFIs) and the private sector, UNHCR will seek to catalyze their action, notably on access to justice, data, economic and financial inclusion of IDPs, urban development and public service delivery capacity.

B. Stepping up IDP- and community-led action: a shift towards stronger accountability to affected populations (AAP) and localization

WHERE WE ARE NOW:

Although UNHCR has been a leading humanitarian actor on community-based approaches, engaging communities in the identification of needs, protection risks and their root causes, and supporting community-led initiatives, more is required. There is a need to further empower IDP communities and systematically mainstream community engagement in all UNHCR operations to ensure that they can influence decisions that affect their lives. This is particularly important for marginalized groups and persons with specific needs.

Furthermore, in countries with displaced populations, IDPs continue to face obstacles in exercising their right to participation in public and political life, which contributes to their disenfranchisement and their exclusion from decision-making in society.

WHERE WE WANT TO BE

Community engagement: UNHCR will prioritize two-way communication and meaningful engagement with internally displaced people from the outset of designing and planning for an intervention. To promote clear and consistent information-sharing, participation and inclusion, UNHCR will identify the IDPs' preferred means of communication.

In order to ensure that the views of IDPs inform programs and activities, UNHCR operations will continue to establish and promote feedback and response systems, including for confidential complaints.

UNHCR will continue gathering and analyzing information on the diverse characteristics of the population and the specificity of the context and situation in order to provide the best possible assistance and protection, while supporting the capacities and agency of displaced communities and individuals. It will enhance engagement with and support to community-based and other local organizations, with a view to improve local ownership and sustainability.

UNHCR, together with partners will advocate for and support the wider participation of IDPs in public affairs.

Delivery of humanitarian services through humanitarian partners: UNHCR will increasingly partner with IDP-led organizations for the delivery of its operational response. It will make commensurate investments in the formation and capacity of such organizations on a continuous basis. UNHCR will utilize fully fledged partnership agreements and simplified grant agreements to partner with these organizations. When implementing cash interventions, UNHCR will aim to provide cash directly through financial service providers rather than partners.

Stepping up IDP-led action: guidance from internally displaced communities on UNHCR's strategic plan

UNHCR's five-year plan for IDPs signals a renewed commitment to empower internally displaced people, and the community members they live with, as agents of change. Our aim is to prioritize the meaningful participation of members of the IDP community in UNHCR programming, as well as empower and strengthen IDP-led organizations.

UNHCR conducted consultations with members of internally displaced communities from ten different countries to gather their views on this important part of the strategic plan. We asked them what UNHCR needs to do differently to advance this agenda.

Several good practices emerged from the discussions, providing opportunities for further expansion and development:

• IDPs in Ukraine, Colombia and Honduras pointed to the value of **establishing consultative councils or exchange platforms** that enable forcibly displaced people to engage directly with local authorities and to collaborate on addressing short- and long-term needs.

• In South Sudan, IDPs described the importance of participating in consultations on the making of the new constitution, often facilitated by UNHCR and other agencies.

• In Burkina Faso and Nigeria, regular focus group discussions and participatory evaluations created opportunities for IDPs to inform programming for both emergency response and durable solutions.

Building upon such good practices, we can do more to help overcome barriers to meaningful participation. This includes:

• Providing training and capacity building on civic engagement, advocating for the rights of IDPs and ensuring that they have access to information on how to get involved in humanitarian programming or policy decisions.

• Resolving logistical issues, such as limited access to mobile phones and internet services, and addressing language barriers.

• Fostering a safe and protective environment that will be conducive to inclusive participation.

Overall, IDP representatives across the globe made a strong call for **their inclusion from the outset in the creation and shaping of assistance and solutions programmes,** rather than merely being asked about their needs and wants. As one forcibly displaced person in Colombia said, IDPs should be empowered "so they are not only seen as poor victims, but rather as strong people able to transform their lives." This aligns with a core approach of the strategic plan: to engage IDPs as citizens and residents with rights and agency, not simply as beneficiaries in need of assistance.

C.   Increasing sustainability across our programming

WHERE WE ARE NOW:

Planning for solutions from the start is paramount to avoiding the creation of parallel systems and the heightened risk of long-term legacy programmes that foster dependency. Many UNHCR operations already engage with other UN agencies, development actors and government ministries throughout their programming, but this engagement does not systematically begin at the onset of an emergency and does not always include concrete plans for transitioning to national systems, or national civil society, where relevant. UNHCR country operations' multi year strategies for protection and assistance for IDPs often have a fixed set of annual activities, which at times lack a forward-looking vision toward durable solutions. UNHCR's adoption of COMPASS, its results-based management approach, provides strategic entry points to stop and – if necessary – recalibrate operational plans for IDPs, including scaling back or handing over to others, a capacity that can be further utilized.

Area-based approaches for mixed populations offer the opportunity for UNHCR to plan and deliver cross-sectoral interventions together with other actors, allowing for UNHCR's planned scale-back. However, the approach requires further elaboration and guidance (see box below). While some promising **blueprints for multi-partner solution projects** exist, these are still at a pilot stage and require further support from development partners to achieve scalability and replicability.

WHERE WE WANT TO BE:

UNHCR seeks a purposeful change from continuous "care and maintenance" or subsistence programming towards IDP self-reliance and solutions, whenever the operational context and policy space allow. To **facilitate transition and promote sustainability,** UNHCR will systematically **lay the ground for solutions** throughout emergency preparedness, design and implementation of the emergency response. This will entail strengthening engagement with national actors and civil society, including national NGOs, from the outset of the response and pursuing inclusion in national development programmes, including through stronger area-based approaches**.**

UNHCR's programme calendar includes opportunities to update and refine the strategic plan, including the strategic moment of reflection (SMR) at the end of each annual cycle, and review of the strategy by the regional bureau. More of UNHCR's country teams will pilot and showcase scalable projects/blueprints on durable solutions, **working with governments and other strategic partners such as UN agencies, development partners, civil society and international financial institutions from the onset,** in preparation for transition/scale-up.

> **Area-based approaches at UNHCR**
> Area-based approaches (ABAs) are **multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral** planned responses to address the needs of **all population groups living in a defined geographic area**. They typically have a community-engagement component, with the objective of strengthening capacity of local authorities and communities

in the long term. They may be initiated by humanitarian actors to address short-term needs but, by definition, plans for ABAs are **aligned with national and local development priorities.**

ABAs feature in UNHCR's corporate policies and guidance, but the application of these approaches varies, and they have not been widely implemented. The 2023 IDP evaluation highlights the need for UNHCR to engage more systematically in ABAs and to ensure that UNHCR's contribution to ABAs is timebound without incurring recurrent long-term financial commitments, more suited to development actors, in accordance with UNHCR's 2022 Strategy for Engaging with Development Actors.

UNHCR's role

ABAs are by nature multi-stakeholder. In this arrangement, UNHCR has a **catalytic and coordinating role** bringing different actors together to address communities' multisectoral needs, based on mutual comparative advantage. In some instances, this may involve kick-starting services or implementing quick impact projects for an area, which other actors then assume as part of their longer-term contribution to local development plans. However, this should not result in UNHCR providing operational support in the long term to support local government with early recovery or local development. Leveraging its protection expertise, UNHCR should focus on advocacy with national and local authorities to ensure inclusion of forcibly displaced people in national and local development plans, which are funded and supported by other actors, and in building the capacity of community protection structures and civil society.

Promising practices

Case studies from Afghanistan (PARRS), UNHCR Iraq, Nigeria (Labondo Local Integration Modell Initiative) and South Sudan (Pockets of Hope) point to some promising practices in implementing ABAs:

- **Aligning ABA with national and local development plans and inter-agency frameworks (Humanitarian Response Plan/UNSDCF), and UNCT and government durable solutions strategies and plans, supported by international solution platforms.** In Nigeria, Afghanistan and South Sudan this promoted government commitment and supported transition from early recovery to development.

- **Bringing in different actors from the start to leverage their comparative advantage and meet the multi-sectoral humanitarian and development needs within the specified area.** In Afghanistan and South Sudan, this included UN and government partners, development actors, civil society organizations and private sector entities.

- **Applying a community-driven and consultative approach to inform design and implementation.** In Nigeria, this ensured projects were tailored to the local context, building the capacity of the community.

- **Considering the needs of all population groups, including displaced, returnees and stateless people, as well as local populations, irrespective of status.** This approach prevented or reduced tensions and promoted social coherence in Afghanistan and Nigeria.

- **Incorporating sustainability analyses and exit strategies into project design.** In Iraq, this enabled UNHCR to gradually disengage after its initial investment, with government and development agencies assuming longer-term support.

Case study

The Labondo Durable Solutions Initiative, led by the Adamawa State government and supported by UNHCR Nigeria, facilitates the reintegration of IDPs and refugee returnees, and supports host communities. Addressing extreme vulnerability, this area-based approach enhances access to basic services, economic opportunities, and social cohesion. Government and UNHCR's negotiation for land with the host community, and partnerships with UNHabitat and UNFAO for spatial planning and aquaculture, have been crucial for its success. UNHCR ensured access to sustainable housing, community centers, and upgraded facilities, and involved internally displaced people and the community that resides with them in the construction, leveraging their skill and contributing to the local economy. This initiative also led the state government to recruit more teachers and health workers and open a secondary school. It is modeled to pave the way for transition to broader, government-led programs that align with the 2024 Adamawa State Homegrown Durable Solutions Action Plan for Internal Displacement.

Once internally displaced, teenagers Fatima and Hadiza are rebuilding their lives in their new home in Labondo, Nigeria.

© UNHCR/Birma Jesse

7. GLOBAL ENABLERS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

UNHCR will take measures to internally recalibrate in order to support operations in delivering the plan's actions and results. Six enablers have been identified to facilitate a more effective global effort, in accordance with UNHCR's Management Response to the Evaluation of UNHCR's Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement. A separate roadmap, internal to UNHCR, sets out a more granular plan for each enabling area. Some early-identified measures are set out below.

Luai Mowafag, a Syrian refugee, lives in Bandar School, located in Wad Madani, Sudan. He started a initiative to provide education to the internally displaced children who also sought shelter in the school following the outbreak of the crisis in 2023.

© UNHCR/Ala Kheir

1 Culture and community of practice

- UNHCR will accelerate efforts to foster a global culture of IDP programming excellence. This will include building its knowledge management through an IDP-Representatives group that meets annually for knowledge-exchange and cross-fertilization of best practices.

2 Systems and processes

- UNHCR will continue to review and adapt its partnership processes to facilitate IDP-led action.

- UNHCR will increase the visibility of the impact of its work in IDP settings by capturing its advocacy, cluster-lead and convening roles and contributions to solutions through its new results structures.

3 Skilled and motivated personnel

- UNHCR will seek to upskill its senior management on their leadership function in IDP contexts.

- UNHCR will build the skills and understanding of its personnel in collaborating with government and local authorities to enhance the sustainability of capacity development and solutions-focused initiatives.

4 Global coordination

- UNHCR will step up its global commitment and oversight for a more predictable operational response for sectors relevant to the three clusters it leads.

- UNHCR will leverage synergies and complementarities among the three clusters, where it either leads or co-leads, to promote collaboration, overcome silos and ensure coherence in joint analysis, data and logistics, advocacy, and complementary programming.

5 Strategic partnerships

- UNHCR will review and – where needed – revise our global agreements with key UN partners to improve operational predictability, including on data-sharing and analysis.

6 Data and evidence

- UNHCR will review its protection data systems and make strategic decisions about investment for the future in order to ensure a predictable contribution of quality protection analysis to inform UNCT/HCT strategies, plans and decisions.

- UNHCR will leverage the Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement and its collaboration with the World Bank to inform policy and programming to advance solutions.

An internally displaced girl takes part in the "Juntanza por el Territorio, la Lengua y la Memoria", in Montería, Colombia. In this gathering, the indigenous women discuss protection needs, human rights and opportunities for community empowerment.

© UNHCR/Luisa De la Espriella Blandón

8. MONITORING

The results framework (see annex) sets out a concise list of indicators that UNHCR will use to monitor progress towards achieving the five objectives of the plan and their corresponding programming outputs. By January 2025, UNHCR operations will have aligned their multi-year strategies in a phased approach. Targeted support will be given to the 14 largest IDP operations in implementing the plan.

9. ANNEX

Results framework

	Indicators	Data source	Reported by	Contributing to UNHCR's global outcome areas
VISION	**Increasing numbers of internally displaced people can find protection from harm, live peacefully as contributing members of the communities in which they live, and find longer term solutions to build a secure future**			**Impact Areas: 1, 2, 3, 4**
	Impact indicators			
	Level of freedom of movement enjoyed by IDPs	COMPASS		Impact Area 1
	Proportion of people residing in physically safe and secure settlements with access to basic facilities	COMPASS		Impact Area 2
	Proportion of people feeling safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark	COMPASS		Impact Area 3
	Extent IDPs are able to voluntarily chose their place of residence in the pursuit of a durable solution	COMPASS		Impact Area 4
	Other actors contributing to this impact: Other UN agencies, NGOs, development actors, regional bodies, national human rights institutions, legal practitioners, academic institutions, private sector			

OBJECTIVE I	**IDPs benefit from enabling legal and policy frameworks, administrative procedures and practices put in place by government authorities**			**Outcome Areas: 1, 3, 6**
	Outcome indicators			
	Proportion of people with legally recognized identity documents or credentials	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 1
	Output indicators			
Output 1.1	**An enabling legal and policy framework for IDPs** *National and sub-national authorities have increased capacity and evidence to provide an enabling legal and policy framework and administrative procedures for IDPs*			
	Number of countries where UNHCR has engaged in legislative and judicial processes to strengthen laws and policies for the protection of refugees, IDPs, returnees and stateless people and/or the reduction and prevention of statelessness	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 3
Output 1.2	**Legal ID and civil documentation for IDPs** *National and sub-national authorities have increased capacity and evidence to provide legal identity and civil documentation for IDPs*			
	Number of countries where national and/or sub-national authorities received capacity development support to issue proof of legal identity	COMPASS*	Country Operations	Outcome Area 1
Output 1.3	**IDP population data for statistical and response purposes** *National and sub-national authorities have increased capacity and evidence to collect, compile, analyze and use comprehensive IDP population data for statistical and response purposes*			
	Number of countries where national and/or sub-national authorities received technical and/or capacity-building support to implement the EGRISS recommendations on refugees, IDP and stateless statistics and/or other data systems for response purposes	COMPASS*	Country Operations	Outcome Area 1

Output 1.4	**Access to justice and effective remedies** *National and sub-national authorities have increased capacity and knowledge to provide access to justice and effective remedies*			
	Number of countries where UNHCR has taken structured advocacy action to strengthen State's provision of access to justice and effective remedies	COMPASS*	Country Operations	Outcome Area 6
	Other actors contributing to this objective: Other UN agencies, NGOs, regional bodies, national human rights institutions, legal practitioners/academic institutions			

OBJECTIVE II	**IDPs and communities that reside with them have increased and dignified access to quality services to address and prevent protection risks and threats**			**Outcome Areas: 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12**
	Outcome indicators			
2a	Proportion of people who know where to access available GBV services	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 4
2b	Proportion of children who participate in community-based child protection programmes	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 5
	Output indicators			
Output 2.1	**Protection of civilians and freedom of movement** *National and sub-national authorities, communities and humanitarian partners have increased capacity and evidence to ensure protection of civilians and freedom of movement*			
	Number of countries where UNHCR has taken structured advocacy action to ensure protection of civilians by parties to conflict and other stakeholders	COMPASS*	Country Operations	Outcome Area 6
	Number of countries where UNHCR has supported authorities and communities to ensure people are protected from arbitrary displacement, including forcible return or relocation	COMPASS*	Country Operations	Outcome Area 6
Output 2.2	**Legal aid services** *National and sub-national authorities, communities, private sector and humanitarian partners have increased capacity, resources and evidence to provide legal aid services*			
	Number of people who received legal assistance	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 6
Output 2.3	**Mental health and psycho-social support services** *National and sub-national authorities, communities, private sector and humanitarian partners have increased capacity, resources and evidence to provide mental health and psycho-social support services*			
	Number of consultations in UNHCR-supported mental health and psychosocial support services	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 10
	Number of countries where UNHCR has taken structured advocacy action to ensure provision of mental health and psychosocial support services	COMPASS*	Country Operations	Outcome Area 10
Output 2.4a	**GBV services** *National and sub-national authorities, communities, private sector and humanitarian partners have increased capacity, resources and evidence to provide GBV services*			
	Number of people who benefitted from specialized GBV programmes	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 4
	Number of countries where UNHCR has taken structured advocacy action to ensure provision of GBV services	COMPASS*	Country Operations	Outcome Area 4

Output 2.4b	**Child protection services** *National and sub-national authorities, communities, private sector and humanitarian have increased capacity/resources and evidence to provide child protection services*			
	Number of children and caregivers who received child protection services	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 5
	Number of countries where UNHCR has taken structured advocacy action to ensure provision of child protection services	COMPASS*	Country Operations	Outcome Area 5
Output 2.5	**Access to other public/sectoral services** *National and sub-national authorities, communities, private sector and humanitarian partners have increased capacity and knowledge to provide a non-exclusive and protection-sensitive access to other public/sectoral services*			
	Number of countries where UNHCR has taken structured advocacy action to ensure access to public/sectoral services	COMPASS*	Country Operations	Outcome Area 16
	Other actors contributing to this objective: Other UN agencies, NGOs, regional bodies, development actors, private sector			

OBJECTIVE III	IDPs and communities that reside with them have increased agency, choice and access to opportunities to lead dignified safe and self-sufficient lives			**Outcome Areas: 8, 9, 13,16**
	Outcome indicators			
3a	Proportion of people that receive cash transfers and/or non-food items	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 8
3b	Proportion of people living in habitable and affordable housing	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 9
3c	Proportion of people with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile money service provider	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 13
3d	Proportion of people with secure tenure rights to housing and/or land	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 16
	Output indicators			
Output 3.1	**Cash to live dignified lives and reduce risks** *National and sub-national authorities, communities, private sector and humanitarian partners have increased capacity, resources and evidence to provide cash assistance for basic needs*			
	Number of people who received cash assistance	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 8
Output 3.2.a	**NFIs for protection outcomes** *National and sub-national authorities, communities, private sector and humanitarian partners have increased capacity, resources and evidence to provide NFIs for protection outcomes*			
	Number of people who received non-food items	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 8
Output 3.2b	**Emergency shelter for protection outcomes** *National and sub-national authorities, communities, private sector and humanitarian partners have increased capacity, resources and evidence to provide emergency shelter*			
	Number of people who have emergency shelter	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 9
Output 3.3	**Alternative to camps/sites and protection-oriented IDP site management** *National and sub-national authorities, communities, private sector and humanitarian partners have increased capacity, resources and evidence to provide alternative solutions to camps and protection-oriented IDP site coordination and management*			
	Number of people who benefited from site management and coordination services	COMPASS*	Country Operations	Outcome Area 9
	Number of countries where national and sub-national authorities, communities and/or humanitarian actors received capacity development support to manage and/or contribute the provision of alternative solutions to camps/sites	COMPASS*	Country Operations	Outcome Area 9

Output 3.4a	**Sustainable shelter and settlements** *National and sub-national authorities, communities, private sector and humanitarian partners have increased capacity, resources and evidence to provide sustainable shelter and settlements*			
	Number of people who have durable shelter	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 9
	Number of people who benefited from climate-resilient enhancement of their settlement	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 9
Output 3.4b	**Secure housing, land and property rights** *National and sub-national authorities, communities, private sector and humanitarian partners have increased capacity, resources and evidence to secure housing, land and property rights*			
	Number of countries where UNHCR has taken structured advocacy action to ensure secure housing, land and property rights	COMPASS*	Country Operations	Outcome Area 16
Output 3.5	**Sustainable economic activities and financial services** *National and sub-national authorities, communities, private sector and humanitarian partners have increased capacity and knowledge to ensure people have access to sustainable economic activities, and financial services*			
	Number of countries where UNHCR has taken structured advocacy action to ensure access to sustainable economic activities and financial services	COMPASS*	Country Operations	Outcome Area 13
	Other actors contributing to this objective: Other UN agencies, NGOs, regional bodies, development actors, private sector			

OBJECTIVE IV	**IDPs' are increasingly empowered to play an active role in their own community protection and in finding durable solutions**			**Outcome Areas: 7**
	Outcome indicators			
4a	Proportion of people who have access to safe feedback and response mechanisms	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 7
4b	Proportion of women participating in leadership/management structures	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 7
4c	Extent participation of displaced and stateless people across programme phases is supported	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 7
	Output indicators			
Output 4.1	**IDPs participate in humanitarian programming** *Communities and humanitarian partners have increased capacity, resources and evidence to ensure that IDPs participate in humanitarian programming*			
	Number of people consulted through participatory assessments	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 7
	Number of people who used UNHCR-supported feedback and response mechanisms to voice their needs/concerns/feedback	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 7
	Proportion of feedback received which have been acted upon	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 7
Output 4.2	**IDPs are engaged in their own community protection (incl. for social cohesion)** *Communities and humanitarian partners have increased capacity, resources and evidence to engage in their own community protection, including for social cohesion*			
	Number of community-led projects that are supported by UNHCR and partners	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 7
	Number of community-led projects where peaceful coexistence is the primary project purpose	COMPASS	Country Operations	Outcome Area 7

Output 4.3	**IDPs participate in public affairs and decision-making processes for development** *Communities and humanitarian partners have increased capacity, resources and evidence to ensure IDPs' participation in public affairs and decision-making processes for development*			
	Number of countries where internally displaced people's participation in public affairs and decision-making is supported by UNHCR	COMPASS*	Country Operations	Outcome Area 7
	Other actors contributing to this objective: Other UN agencies, NGOs, development actors			

OBJECTIVE V	**IDPs benefit from a humanitarian and development coordination system that is accountable, predictable, effective, protection-centric and enables durable solutions**			**Enabling Area: 20**
	Outcome indicators			
	Proportion of HCTs that undertook collective protection advocacy	OCHA	HQ	Enabling Area 20
	Output indicators			
Output 5.1	**Quality protection analysis informs UNCT/HCT strategies, plans and decisions** *UNHCR has increased capacity, resources and evidence to provide quality protection analysis and use it to inform UNCT/HCT strategies, plans and decisions*			
	Number of countries where regular protection (and other) analysis issued and communicated to HCT/UNCT to inform decision making	COMPASS*	Country Operations	Outcome area 3
Output 5.2	**Predictable leadership and adequate coordination for protection, shelter and CCCM including clusters** *UNHCR ensures predictable and adequate coordination and leadership of protection, CCCM and shelter, including clusters*			
	Proportion of HCT meetings where the needs of protection, CCCM and shelter sectors/clusters are represented by UNHCR	COMPASS*	Country Operations	Enabling Area 20
	Other actors contributing to this objective: Other UN agencies, NGOs, development actors			

* New indicator introduced in 2024 for monitoring to begin in 2025.

To learn more, read UNHCR's Global Results Framework.

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https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-protect/internally-displaced-people