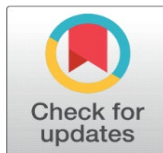
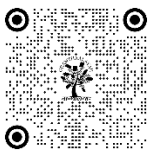


# THE INFLUENCE OF GLOBAL MIGRATION POLICIES ON THE RIGHTS OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

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## ABSTRACT

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are a substantial but frequently neglected section of the global displaced population. IDPs, unlike refugees, remain within their country's boundaries and rely on national frameworks for protection, which are frequently affected by global migration policy. This article investigates how international migration policies, such as asylum limits, border security measures, and financial allocation, indirectly affect the rights and well-being of IDPs. While frameworks like the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998) provide a foundation for IDP protection, their nonbinding character leads to varied implementation across countries. In addition, global migration strategies that prioritize external migration control frequently result in a disproportionate allocation of resources, leaving IDPs out. This paper evaluates the socioeconomic and legal ramifications of these policies on IDPs through case studies from Syria, Venezuela, and Nigeria. It also argues for the inclusion of IDP rights in global migration governance to create a more equal and effective response to internal displacement. By addressing these shortcomings, international and national authorities can contribute to a more holistic and rights-based approach to displacement.

**Keywords:** Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Global Migration Policies, Refugees, Border Security, Asylum Laws, Human Rights

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In an era of incomparable human mobility, global migration policies play an important role in determining the rights and safeguards available to displaced people. While international refugees and cross-border migrants receive a great deal of attention, internally displaced persons (IDPs) are frequently disregarded within national borders, despite confronting identical dangers. As conflicts, climate change, and sociopolitical instability continue to generate large-scale displacement, the efficacy of global migration frameworks in addressing the predicament of IDPs becomes increasingly important. This study investigates how international migration policies, which are primarily intended for cross-border movements, influence national responses to domestic displacement. It studies whether global frameworks, such as the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, translate into practical protections for IDPs, or if legal and policy gaps keep them in limbo. By examining the impact of global migration governance on IDPs' access to basic rights such as housing, employment, and legal recognition, this study emphasizes the need for a more inclusive approach to displacement that bridges the gap between international migration policies and internal humanitarian responses.

“Internally displaced persons are often the invisible victims of conflict and disaster, lacking the international protections afforded to refugees.” – Jan Egeland, (Former UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs)

## THE LEGAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN REFUGEES AND IDPS

International law distinguishes between refugees and IDPs, with refugees protected by the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. However, IDPs do not have a similar legally enforceable framework, instead relying on the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998). The lack of enforcement measures causes differences in IDP protection among states, which are highly influenced by national and international migration policies.<sup>1</sup> Refugees are eligible for international protection and assistance under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) mandate, but IDPs are subject to the jurisdiction of their home countries. This reliance on national authorities frequently leads in inconsistent or insufficient responses, especially in conflict-affected or authoritarian states where governments may be directly responsible for displacement. The lack of a binding international legal instrument for IDPs exacerbates issues of access to humanitarian help, legal identification documentation, and resettlement options. The African Union established the Kampala Convention (2009), which is one of the few regional efforts to develop a legal framework for IDP protection; nonetheless, its impact is confined to signatory states and lacks worldwide applicability.<sup>2</sup>

## THE IMPACT OF RESTRICTIVE MIGRATION POLICIES ON IDPS

Restrictive migration policies in host countries, such as rigorous asylum laws and increased border security, have an indirect impact on IDPs by reducing their options for finding shelter elsewhere. Countries that prioritise border control over humanitarian help frequently diminish financial and policy support for internal displacement crises. This results in inadequate funding for IDPs, leaving them exposed to long-term displacement and human rights violations.<sup>3</sup> In addition to restricting migratory alternatives, these countries frequently devote less financial and policy attention to addressing domestic displacement situations. As a result, humanitarian help becomes scarce or is diverted to bolster border police rather than meeting the basic needs of displaced people. This shift in priority leaves IDPs without enough shelter, food, healthcare, or protection, resulting in the long-term displacement of these vulnerable groups. Their living conditions may worsen with time, increasing their vulnerability to exploitation, sexual and gender-based violence, human trafficking, and other human rights violations. Furthermore, a lack of effective international response implies that the main causes of displacement, such as conflict or natural disasters, are not fully addressed, leading to new cycles of displacement and misery.<sup>4</sup>

## GLOBAL ASYLUM POLICIES AND THEIR INDIRECT CONSEQUENCES

Asylum rules in affluent countries have serious consequences for IDPs. Stricter asylum laws limit the chances for displaced people to seek international protection, causing many to remain in perilous situations in their home countries. Furthermore, foreign aid is frequently prioritized for refugee crises over domestic displacement, leaving IDPs with insufficient resources for survival and reintegration.<sup>5</sup> Global asylum policies have secondary implications, including the politics of displacement and migration concerns. While stressing border security and limiting refugee access, developed countries frequently portray displacement as a "security threat" rather than a humanitarian issue. This framing may result in the marginalization of IDPs' demands, as governments prioritize national security concerns over international commitments to safeguard displaced people. As a result, the international community may fail to meet its legal obligations under agreements such as the 1951 Refugee Convention, which calls for the protection of those fleeing violence, persecution, and conflict.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> United Nations, "Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement," UNHCR (1998).

<sup>2</sup> African Union, "Kampala Convention on IDPs," African Union (2009).

<sup>3</sup> Betts, Alexander, "Survival Migration: Failed Governance and the Crisis of Displacement," Cornell University Press (2013).

<sup>4</sup> Crawford, Neta C., "Human Rights and International Refugee Law," *Harvard International Review*, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Hathaway, James C., "The Rights of Refugees under International Law," Cambridge University Press (2005).

<sup>6</sup> IOM, "World Migration Report 2022," International Organization for Migration (2022).

## THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN IDP PROTECTION

Organizations such as the UNHCR, International Organization for Migration (IOM), and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) play critical roles in IDP protection. However, their effectiveness is frequently hampered by global migration agendas, which impact funding and reaction plans. While these groups campaign for IDP rights, their emphasis on cross-border migration control results in insufficient attention to internal displacement.<sup>7</sup> In many situations, donor countries' political focus on limiting cross-border migration and refugee flows diverts resources away from dealing with internal displacement. As countries prioritize border security, international financing and policy initiatives may shift to assist refugees, leaving IDPs with insufficient attention and resources. This imbalance in priority might jeopardize the operational capabilities of organizations like the UNHCR and IOM, restricting their ability to effectively meet the needs of IDPs. Furthermore, when governments in countries with large internal displacement populations refuse to acknowledge or address displacement, international organizations confront significant challenges in providing real protection and solutions.<sup>8</sup>

## CLIMATE CHANGE, MIGRATION, AND INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

Climate-induced displacement is quickly becoming a major global concern, with extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and desertification causing millions of people to relocate within their own countries. While much attention is focused on cross-border migration as a result of climate change, the issue of internally displaced people (IDPs) is sometimes disregarded. Global migration policies, especially those addressing climate refugees, frequently omit IDPs, depriving them of unambiguous legal status or protection. Existing legal frameworks, such as the 1951 Refugee Convention, fail to account for climate-related internal migration since they do not identify environmental considerations as acceptable causes for refuge or protection. Although the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (2018) recognizes climate-induced migration, it lacks specific provisions for IDPs, creating a substantial gap in meeting the needs of persons displaced by environmental conditions within their own nations. This lack of defined policy and legal mechanisms exacerbates the vulnerability of climate-induced IDPs, who face difficulties in receiving humanitarian help, protection, and long-term solutions, such as relocation or resettlement within their boundaries.<sup>9</sup>

## 2. THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF GLOBAL MIGRATION POLICIES ON IDPS

Migration policies that limit labor mobility can have serious economic effects on internally displaced people (IDPs). Stringent labour movement rules in host nations can hinder displaced workers' capacity to find jobs abroad, reducing remittance flows to their families and communities. Remittances have been an important source of income for many displaced people, alleviating economic burdens, supporting local economies, and funding key services for IDPs. When migration rules limit these chances, IDPs lose financial support, which can worsen their already tough living situations. Economic help is frequently disproportionately channelled to nations that host refugees, rather than addressing the root causes of internal displacement. This disparity in aid distribution leaves IDPs with insufficient assistance to reestablish their livelihoods, access vital services, or increase their chances of reintegration. The emphasis on refugee resettlement and the disregard of IDP needs to create cycles of displacement and economic instability, making it more difficult for displaced people to reclaim economic autonomy and stability in their home countries.<sup>10</sup>

## HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND IDPS

Internally displaced people (IDPs) frequently face significant human rights violations because they are denied necessities including proper shelter, healthcare, and education. These transgressions are exacerbated by migration policies that put border control and external movement management ahead of IDP protection. As resources are redirected to manage cross-border migration, IDPs confront substantial gaps in humanitarian support, leaving them unprotected and with limited access to basic services. In many circumstances, the lack of legal identifying documents for

<sup>7</sup> IDMC, "Global Report on Internal Displacement," Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2022).

<sup>8</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2024*, IDMC, 2024.

<sup>9</sup> IOM, "World Migration Report 2022," International Organization for Migration (2022).

<sup>10</sup> World Bank, "Migration and Development Brief 2022," The World Bank Group (2022).

IDPs increases their vulnerability by preventing them from obtaining healthcare, education, or work prospects. Without official recognition, displaced people are sometimes denied access to government services and programs, making them invisible to the state and international society. This lack of legal protection not only exacerbates their poverty, but also puts them at risk of exploitation, such as forced labor, trafficking, and other forms of abuse. As a result, IDPs' human rights are consistently infringed, with little avenues for justice or restitution.<sup>11</sup>

## CASE STUDIES OF SYRIA, VENEZUELA, AND NIGERIA

The crises in Syria, Venezuela, and Nigeria are clear illustrations of how global migration policy and internal displacement interact, frequently with disastrous results for displaced communities. The ongoing conflict in Syria has displaced more than 6.8 million people internally. While the international community has prioritized providing asylum and relocation opportunities for Syrian refugees escaping across borders, internal displacement issues have been largely overlooked. The majority of humanitarian help and finance has gone to neighboring countries hosting refugees, such as Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan, leaving people remaining in Syria without appropriate support. The problem is exacerbated by limited international acknowledgement of IDPs' rights and needs since resources and attention are diverted away from reintegration and long-term solutions. As a result, Syrians who remain internally displaced confront ongoing issues in terms of access to shelter, healthcare, education, and security.<sup>12</sup>

Venezuela's economic collapse and political instability have driven millions of people to emigrate, with more internally displaced. While neighboring nations such as Colombia and Brazil have accepted a large number of refugees, rigorous asylum rules and border controls have forced many Venezuelans to remain in deteriorating conditions in their native country. This scenario is exacerbated by the Venezuelan government's failure to respond to the internal displacement crisis. IDPs in Venezuela are frequently denied basic amenities, and the lack of a coordinated response has made reintegration into local communities exceedingly difficult. In some circumstances, they are subjected to violence and exploitation with few options for safety or justice.<sup>13</sup>

## THE EMPHASIS ON COUNTERTERRORISM

In Nigeria, the continued conflict and bloodshed, mainly by Boko Haram, have resulted in huge internal displacement, with more than 2 million IDPs in the country's northeast. Despite international policies aimed at counterterrorism and migratory control, IDPs in Nigeria continue to suffer considerable obstacles, particularly in terms of integration. Many IDPs live in congested camps or informal settlements, which have limited access to healthcare, education, and employment prospects. International help has been minimal, and the Nigerian government and international institutions have not coordinated efforts to give long-term solutions. The emphasis on counterterrorism measures has frequently eclipsed the protection and aid needs of IDPs, compounding their misery.<sup>14</sup>

These case studies highlight broader trends in global migration policies and their implications for internal displacement. While international attention is often focused on migrants crossing borders, the needs of IDPs are routinely overlooked, leaving them with insufficient support and long-term solutions. As climate change, conflict, and political instability continue to drive migration, a more comprehensive strategy to internal displacement becomes increasingly necessary.

## 3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTEGRATING IDPS INTO GLOBAL MIGRATION POLICIES

Internally displaced people (IDPs) are one of the most vulnerable groups affected by displacement, although they are frequently disregarded in global migration strategies. While international frameworks offer comprehensive safeguards to refugees crossing borders, IDPs lack a legally mandated system of protection, resulting in insufficient resources and governmental attention. To fully address IDP rights, global migration policies must include the following measures:

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<sup>11</sup> Human Rights Watch, "World Report 2023: Rights Trends in Displacement," Human Rights Watch (2023).

<sup>12</sup> UN Refugee Agency, *Syria Crisis Overview*, UNHCR, 2023.

<sup>13</sup> International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Displacement Tracking Matrix: Venezuela Report*, IOM, 2023.

<sup>14</sup> Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2023: Nigeria*, HRW, 2023.

**Legal Recognition:** A serious vacuum in international law is the lack of a legally binding instrument that ensures IDP protection. The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998) establish a non-binding framework but lack enforcement tools. Creating an international agreement similar to the 1951 Refugee agreement will ensure that IDPs are recognized as a separate group with unique rights and safeguards. This would also motivate national governments to implement comprehensive IDP policy and hold individuals accountable for human rights violations.<sup>15</sup>

**Equitable Resource Allocation:** Humanitarian aid is frequently allocated disproportionately toward refugees and cross-border migration situations, leaving IDPs with few resources. Many IDPs face food shortages, insufficient healthcare, and a lack of educational options due to financial deficits. A more equitable distribution of humanitarian help is required to guarantee that IDPs receive equal assistance as refugees. The international community must establish a structured funding mechanism that ensures sustainable financial support for IDP initiatives such as housing, livelihoods, and reintegration efforts.<sup>16</sup>

**Inclusion in Global Migration Frameworks:** While global agreements like the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (2018) and the Global Compact on Refugees (2018) recognize displacement, they provide no particular provisions for IDPs. Strengthening IDP safeguards within these frameworks would guarantee that internal displacement is prioritized globally rather than domestically. International agencies, such as the UNHCR and the IOM, should broaden their mandates to include direct assistance and advocacy for IDPs within national borders.<sup>17</sup>

**Enhanced National Responses:** Governments must design and implement effective policies that include IDPs in national development initiatives. This includes providing legal identification documents to ensure access to critical services including healthcare, education, and employment. Additionally, reintegration initiatives should be strengthened to assist IDPs in rebuilding their lives and reducing their reliance on humanitarian aid. National governments should collaborate with international groups to find long-term solutions for IDPs rather than depending primarily on emergency measures.<sup>18</sup>

**Climate Adaptation Strategies:** Climate-induced displacement is becoming an increasingly serious issue, yet there are no legal structures in place to manage it effectively. While the Global Compact for Migration acknowledges climate displacement, it makes no actionable commitments for IDPs afflicted by environmental calamities. Governments and international organizations should create clear legal protections for climate-induced IDPs, such as planned relocation programs, disaster risk reduction strategies, and regional cooperation mechanisms to manage displacement caused by rising sea levels, desertification, and extreme weather events.<sup>19</sup>

## 4. CONCLUSION

The impact of global migration policies on the rights of internally displaced people (IDPs) reveals a significant vacuum in international protection frameworks. While migration strategies largely address cross-border displacement, IDPs, who make up a sizable proportion of the displaced population, are sometimes disregarded. The lack of legally enforceable international mechanisms, unbalanced resource allocation, and the exclusion of IDPs from global migratory frameworks have resulted in millions of people lacking proper protection, humanitarian support, and long-term reintegration possibilities. To remedy this disparity, the international community must take a more inclusive approach to displacement, incorporating IDPs into existing migration policies, strengthening national response mechanisms, and providing equitable support for both refugees and IDPs. Furthermore, legal recognition of climate-induced displacement is critical for protecting persons compelled to relocate for environmental reasons. Without significant reforms, IDPs would continue to experience long-term displacement, economic instability, and human rights violations.

A just and effective global migration policy must acknowledge that displacement, whether internal or cross-border, is a humanitarian concern that cuts across political and geographical boundaries. Strengthening IDP safeguards in international accords, improving national policies, and increasing global cooperation will all be critical to ensure that IDPs receive the respect, rights, and help they deserve. Only by taking a comprehensive and rights-based approach can

<sup>15</sup> United Nations, *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, UN, 1998.

<sup>16</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *The Global Report on Forced Displacement 2023*, UNHCR, 2023.

<sup>17</sup> United Nations, *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration*, UN, 2018.

<sup>18</sup> United Nations, *Global Compact on Refugees*, UN, 2018.

<sup>19</sup> International Organization for Migration (IOM), *World Migration Report 2022*, IOM, 2022.

global migration policy adequately address the needs of all displaced people, regardless of whether they have crossed an international border.