

## PRESS STATEMENT

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On the 22nd anniversary of the adoption of the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, a group of leading United Nations displacement experts and institutions have come together to reiterate the importance of a united global response to internal displacement.

“Whilst much progress has been achieved in terms of recognition of the rights of those internally displaced in the over two decades since the adoption of the Guiding Principles, their relevance has never been more pertinent,” stated the group, composed of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons\*, the Global Protection Cluster Coordinator,\*\* and the GP20 Plan of Action.\*\*\*

“Displacement and the protection risks it creates and exacerbates is becoming increasingly driven by mutually reinforcing trends of conflict, violence, climate degradation, natural disasters, human rights violations and violent extremism. Furthermore, this year’s commemoration of the Guiding Principles takes place in extraordinary circumstances, at a time when the extreme risks, exposure, vulnerability and marginalization faced by millions of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) worldwide and their host communities are often deepened and compounded by the threats posed by spread of COVID-19,” noted the consortium.

“Indeed, while much of the world’s population is urged to stay at home – millions of IDPs, forcibly displaced from their homes and habitual residences, live in crowded, unsanitary conditions, in camps, informal settlements or in peri-urban areas, with limited or very poor access to health services. Recommendations to mitigate transmission of COVID-19, including social distancing and isolation measures, therefore remain challenging or even impossible for many IDPs, heightening the risk for COVID-19 to take root and spread among already extremely vulnerable communities.”

“Moreover, the socio-economic impact of the measures to combat COVID19 are increasing protection risks for millions of IDPs, especially children, survivors of gender based violence, older people and persons with disabilities.”

The group reiterated their support for the United Nations Secretary General call for a global cease fire. “Ongoing conflicts force people to flee to safety despite the need to minimize population movements to avoid further spread of COVID19,” stressed the group.

“In these uncertain times, the application of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, and meaningful IDP participation in decisions affecting them, are as relevant as ever. We also welcome the

increasing global recognition of the dedicated attention to be paid to IDPs, as reflected by each of our complementary and mutually reinforcing mandates,” noted the group.

“We will continue to work in collaboration across mandates and regions, with the united goal of promoting the Guiding Principles to prevent future displacement, protect those displaced and support durable solutions for them. Further, at a time when IDPs are particularly at risk, we welcome the establishment, earlier this year, of a [High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement](#) that will provide recommendations to the Secretary-General for achieving better solutions to internal displacement. This objective is more relevant than ever. We also welcome the growing attention of peace and development actors on internal displacement.”

“The numbers of displaced persons globally remain staggering. At least 40 million IDPs have fled from violence and conflict, in addition to those who remain displaced because of natural disasters, human rights violations and development projects. These people are still far from achieving a durable solution and need continued, if not increased, support,” the group observed.

“We call on States to continue to support, promote and most importantly, take concrete steps to implement the [Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement](#),” the group said. We further recognize that this is the last year of the [GP20 Plan of Action](#), and call on all states, national and international partners to take concerted effort to build on its gains to more effectively implement the Guiding Principles.”

ENDS

*\* **Ms. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary**, a human rights lawyer specialized in forced displacement and migration, has over three decades of experience in NGO human rights advocacy and capacity-building. She was appointed [Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons](#) by the Human Rights Council in September 2016. As a Special Rapporteur, she is part of the [Special Procedures](#) of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council’s independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures’ experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization, and serve in their individual capacity. For more information and **media requests for the Special Rapporteur**, please contact: Jacqui Zalcborg ([jzalcborg@ohchr.org](mailto:jzalcborg@ohchr.org))*

*\*\* **Mr. William Chemaly**, Global Protection Cluster Coordinator. The [Global Protection Cluster](#) is a network of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations and United Nations (UN) agencies, engaged in protection work in humanitarian crises including armed conflict, climate change related and natural disaster. The GPC is mandated by the IASC, led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), governed by a Strategic Advisory Group, co-chaired by the GPC Coordinator and an operational NGO, and serviced by a multi-partner Operations Cell. For more information and **media requests for the GPC**, please contact: Eva Garcia Bouzas ([garciab@unhcr.org](mailto:garciab@unhcr.org)).*

*\*\*\* To mark the **20th anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (GP20)**, the [GP20 Plan of Action](#), a multi-stakeholder 3-year plan was launched, the **Plan of Action for Advancing Prevention, Protection and Solutions for Internally Displaced People (IDPs) 2018–2020**. For more information and **media requests to the GP20**, please contact: Nadine Walicki ([walicki@unhcr.org](mailto:walicki@unhcr.org)).*