

Joint Oral Statement to UN the Human Rights Council
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NGO Co-Sponsors:

Africa and Middle East Refugee Assistance
BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights
Caritas Internationalis
Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions
Community and Family Services International
Danish Refugee Council
International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims
International Save the Children Alliance
Jesuit Refugee Service
Refugees International
World Vision International

**Item 3: Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political,
economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development**

Extension of the special procedures mandate on the human rights of IDPs

Thank you, Mr. President.

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and NGOs co-sponsors, with the endorsement of three (3) NGOs without ECOSOC statusⁱ, call the attention of the UN Human Rights Council to the situation of internal displacement worldwide. In 2009, the number of people displaced because of conflicts or violence increased by over a million to an estimated 27.1 million IDPs.ⁱⁱ In addition, one report indicates that at least 36 million people were displaced by sudden-onset natural disasters that occurred in 2008 aloneⁱⁱⁱ. In the face of rising numbers of IDPs, NRC and other NGO co-sponsors encourage states to extend the special procedures mandate on the human rights of IDPs in strong terms to ensure that the mandate-holder can continue to engage with national and international actors to comprehensively address the root causes and consequences of internal displacement.

Promoting national responsibility and the development of national legislation and policies

NRC and other NGO co-sponsors call on the Human Rights Council to attach particular importance on strong terms for the special procedure's continued support and capacity-strengthening activities with governments, national human rights institutions and civil society organisations, which have greatly served to promote national ownership, empowerment and responsibility for addressing internal displacement. In particular, the current mandate-holder has been an important advocate and advisor on the development of normative frameworks rooted in international law and based on the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. In 2009, 16 states had a national legal or policy framework specifically pertaining to the protection of IDPs. The Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, in force since 2008,

commits 11 signatory states to incorporating the Guiding Principles into domestic laws and policies and the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, adopted in Kampala in October 2009, further recognises the inherent rights of IDPs as set out in the Guiding Principles.

Strengthening cooperation with the UN to improve the protection of IDPs as a result of conflicts and disasters

NRC and other NGO co-sponsors also urge the extension by the Human Rights Council of a strong mandate that enables the mandate-holder to continue mainstreaming the human rights of IDPs into the UN system, to give special consideration to the human rights of women, children and other sub-groups of IDPs with specific needs and to encourage key UN agencies and mechanisms to collaborate closely in this regard. In particular, the close partnerships with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Development Programme (UNDP) should be strengthened and the mandate-holder should remain a standing invitee to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance.

The humanitarian reform process, which introduced the “cluster approach” in 2005, has strengthened the international response to internal displacement in several complex emergency and natural disaster situations and, at the end of 2009, the cluster approach was applied over 25 countries with internal displacement and the number of IDPs protected or assisted by UNHCR and its partners rose 5% from the previous year to 14.4 million. However, this represents slightly more than half of conflict-related IDPs worldwide and in many countries where there is no or a weak consolidated response by the international community, many IDPs still live in precarious situations or face important barriers to enjoyment of their human rights.

The mandate-holder continues to have a crucial role in liaising with UN agencies and their partners to address the remaining institutional gaps in international response and to help UN agencies mainstream the human rights of IDPs into their work in a way that ensures a systematic and predictable response for IDPs in all situations, whether caused by conflict/violence or disasters, in emergencies, post-conflict and protracted situations of displacement.

NRC and other NGOs co-sponsors look forward to the extension of the mandate of the UN Human Rights Council’s special procedure on the human rights of IDPs for the next three years.

Thank you Mr. President.

ⁱ Fahamu Refugee Programme - Fahamu Trust, Office Africain pour le Développement et la Coopération, Refugees Rights Initiative

ⁱⁱ Internal Displacement: Global Overview of Trends and Developments 2009, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Norwegian Refugee Council (May 2010.)

ⁱⁱⁱ Monitoring disaster displacement in the context of climate change, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Norwegian Refugee Council and Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (September 2009).