

Inputs from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Policy brief on the New Agenda for Peace

15 March 2023

In 2023, the world faces a record level of forced displacement, with more than 100 million people forced to flee due to persecution, conflict, violence and human rights violations. UNHCR's [2022 Global Trends Report](#) shows that the unprecedented mass displacement of recent years is largely due to the high- or medium-intensity armed conflicts.

The root causes of conflict and forced displacement are both interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Today's triple crisis of climate insecurity, economic downturn, and armed violence both drive displacement and disproportionately affect displaced populations. This is the situation facing, for example, the Sahel, where [UNHCR predicts](#) that a combination of climate impacts, governance challenges, socio-economic and political marginalisation, and population movements could exacerbate underlying ethnic tensions, recruitment to armed groups, and ultimately, insecurity and drive further forced displacement over the next half century.

The ever-growing impact of conflict on displacement is also the result of the changing nature of war, which, in the last 30 years, is increasingly within borders, between groups, involving non-state armed actors, and targeting civilians and urban settings. More and more civilians are forced to flee their homes either as a collateral consequence of the means and methods of warfare, or because they are targeted.

Moreover, protracted, sub-national violence continues to drive displacement and inhibit the safe and dignified return and reintegration of forcibly displaced populations. Protracted displacement situations, if not properly addressed, can severely undermine peaceful coexistence and social cohesion in countries at risk of or trying to recover from armed conflict.

The call for a New Agenda for Peace (NAP) made by the Security General in Our Common Agenda is more pressing than ever. We need to step up collective efforts to prevent, manage, and resolve conflict through improved understanding of its drivers, better mitigation of emerging risks, and more effective collective security responses. **Understanding and responding to the drivers of conflict is part and parcel of doing so for the drivers of forced displacement.**

Given the intrinsic interrelationship of conflict and displacement, **the New Agenda for Peace should highlight the following issues and priorities:**

- **Fulfilling the commitments made to building and sustaining peace is essential to address forced displacement.** Finding durable solutions for the displaced is a necessary element of effective peacebuilding. Conversely, peace and security are necessary to facilitating the safe, dignified and voluntary return and reintegration of displaced persons into their home communities and political societies.
- **The New Agenda for Peace should highlight the importance of joined up humanitarian, development and peace efforts to prevent and resolve conflict, remove obstacles to return, and enable conditions favourable to voluntary repatriation and reintegration.** Humanitarian agencies have an important role to play in fostering a conducive environment for peace, including through implementing early warning, promoting social cohesion, assisting recovery, and ensuring conflict

sensitive programming. Efforts to strengthen national judicial systems, capacitate governments on policymaking, and advocate for ratification of international human rights treaties support protection and solutions for the displaced and have preventive and peacebuilding effects. Finally, peace operations should consistently engage in preventing displacement-related tensions, addressing root causes, and ensuring participation of displaced communities in peace processes.

- **Scaled up peacebuilding efforts should address displacement and protect displaced populations.** Providing security and creating conducive conditions for return through demobilisation, de-mining and re-establishing rule of law; solving housing, land and property-related problems and disputes; fostering reconciliation between host communities and returnees; transitional justice; and post-conflict reconstruction through re-establishing access to basic services, infrastructure, and livelihoods are crucial in displacement contexts. These should be operationalised through the provision of sustainable financing mechanisms for programming at the intersection of conflict and displacement.
- **Local and national governments require support for strengthening capacities related to early warning and participatory conflict resolution mechanisms and other peacebuilding initiatives from the onset.** This is essential to managing the tensions that may emerge from displacement crises and preventing further displacement.
- **Engagement of children and youth** in sports and cultural activities, language learning, and education, and harnessing the power of civil society and the media can contribute to combatting discrimination, including of displaced populations, and fostering respect, understanding and peaceful coexistence to prevent conflict and further displacement.
- **The inclusion and leadership of forcibly displaced, including refugee, internally displaced and stateless, voices are essential to effective peace processes – recognising their membership in conflict-affected communities and their crucial contributions to community wellbeing.** Inclusion is a necessary condition for effective national and local level conflict resolution, dialogues, negotiations, institutional strengthening, and transitional justice. This likewise extends to the inclusion of women and youth, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable populations, who together make up a majority of the persons affected by displacement.

As noted by the Secretary-General, peace is the central promise of the Charter of the United Nations and one of the principal global public goods the United Nations was established to deliver; it is essential to advance socio-economic development and human rights for all including the forcibly displaced. We ask Member States to use the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) and this year's [Global Refugee Forum \(GRF\)](#) as steppingstones to commit to inclusion of refugees.