



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

POLICY ON UNHCR'S ENGAGEMENT IN SITUATIONS OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

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1. PURPOSE

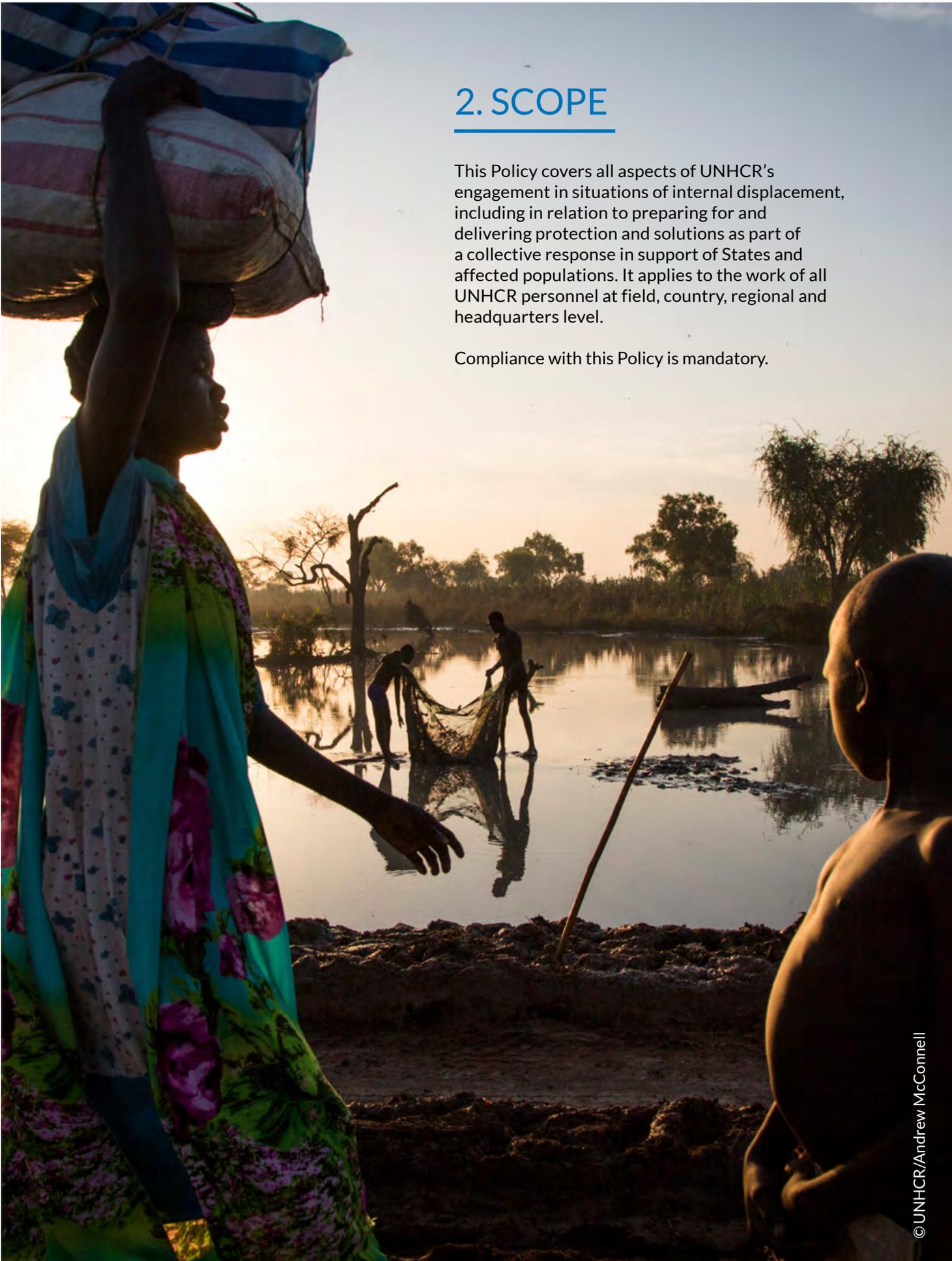
This Policy reaffirms UNHCR's commitment to a decisive and predictable engagement in situations of internal displacement, as an integral aspect of our operations worldwide, and of our protection leadership role in humanitarian crises.

The Policy requires country, regional and global operations to mobilize and deploy resources and capacities in support of UNHCR's longstanding pledge to work in partnership with others to strengthen protection and secure solutions for internally displaced people (IDPs).

In line with UNHCR's Strategic Directions 2017-2021, it commits UNHCR to leveraging fully the synergies between our engagement with refugees, internally displaced people, returnees, stateless people and others affected by humanitarian

crises, while taking into account our different responsibilities vis-à-vis different categories of forcibly displaced people, and relevant inter-agency arrangements. It also commits UNHCR to progressively adjusting internal systems and processes to enable the organization to work seamlessly and effectively across the full spectrum of forced displacement.

The Policy empowers and requires Representatives to be proactive in preparing for and stepping into emergencies that result in significant internal displacement, as part of a humanitarian response under the UN country leadership, and based on a sound protection and context analysis. Representatives will be supported to follow through on inter-agency commitments, to place protection at the centre of humanitarian action and to design, implement and sustain a meaningful, solutions-oriented operational response to internal displacement that is backed up by global advocacy and resource mobilization.



2. SCOPE

This Policy covers all aspects of UNHCR's engagement in situations of internal displacement, including in relation to preparing for and delivering protection and solutions as part of a collective response in support of States and affected populations. It applies to the work of all UNHCR personnel at field, country, regional and headquarters level.

Compliance with this Policy is mandatory.

3. RATIONALE

Responding rapidly and robustly to humanitarian crises with large-scale forced displacement is a reflex that sits deep within UNHCR’s organizational culture. UNHCR’s capacity to save and secure lives, to protect rights and pursue solutions to forced displacement has been built over decades. Yet, UNHCR’s operational engagement with the internally displaced has not always been as consistent and predictable as its support to refugees, and the volume, scope and results of our activities in situations of internal displacement have been variable.

As the causes of conflict, violence and forced displacement become more complex, with climate change being an accelerating factor in many

instances, it is vital for UNHCR to ensure more coherence and consistency across all areas of our work – from prevention, response to internal displacement, to statelessness, to cross-border flows, to solutions. A number of regions are increasingly affected by overlapping refugee movements, internal displacement and statelessness, thereby necessitating a strategic and joined-up approach to forced displacement that UNHCR is uniquely positioned to provide.

It is upon this foundation that the High Commissioner has resolutely committed to reposition UNHCR to be more predictable and decisive in situations of internal displacement, working intensively with partners in planning, framing and delivering a protection-driven response that helps advance solutions to forced displacement for all.

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4. VISION

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

In support of this vision, UNHCR will pursue measures and approaches that equip us to anticipate and respond effectively to situations of internal displacement within an evolving UN system and with an expanding network of partners, including

development and financial institutions, ensuring a firm emphasis on reinforcing State responsibility and enhancing national and local protection capacities – including those of forcibly displaced and wider displacement-affected communities.

Our engagement is grounded in the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and emphasizes the centrality of protection in humanitarian action. It enables UNHCR to contribute to collective outcomes that enhance protection and promote solutions for IDPs and wider displacement-affected communities, as well as paving the way for the voluntary repatriation and reintegration of refugees where relevant.



5. GUIDING CONSIDERATIONS

In each instance where we engage with IDPs and wider displacement-affected communities, UNHCR will:

- Promote the primary responsibility of the State, and where relevant, non-State actors, to prevent, respond to and resolve internal displacement while complementing and reinforcing national response efforts, and taking into account the political complexities and particular challenges presented when displacement is itself a result of government action or inaction;
- Promote respect for human rights and international law, as a core purpose of the United Nations informing programme
- Put in place safeguards so that our actions, assistance and advocacy do not cause any unintended harm;
- Be accountable to all those that we serve by ensuring, to the extent feasible, the proximity and community engagement that gives a first-hand understanding of their diverse perspectives, priorities, risks, needs, capacities and expectations, through an age, gender, disability and diversity lens, and by enabling them to participate in decision-making and claim their rights. This culture of accountability is underpinned by zero-tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse alongside awareness raising and enhanced detection and response;
- Promote solutions for IDPs from the outset of our engagement while, simultaneously, strengthening their resilience, including through their inclusion in local and national systems and services and

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