

Security Council meeting in Arria formula on Protection of Internally Displaced Persons: Challenges and Role of the Security Council

On 30 May 2014, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation of internally displaced persons, Mr. Chaloka Beyani, participated in a Security Council meeting in Arria formula on the topic of protection of internally displaced persons: challenges and role of the Security Council. The meeting, co-chaired by Chile and Australia, brought together States, representatives of the United Nations and members of civil society, and offered an informal opportunity to exchange views and ideas on internal displacement and to identify ways to address more consistently and effectively the protection of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the context of the Security Council's work, including on the protection of civilians.

The Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation of internally displaced persons, in his address to the Security Council, stressed that internal displacement shatters lives and often the future of entire generations. Violence, armed conflict and hideous violations of human rights, such as arbitrary killings, rape, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or starvation, natural and human made disasters, are causing the flight of millions of people who find themselves often in long term displacement situations. However, internal displacement is not only a result of conflict; in some contexts, it is also a feature or driver of it, a political statement or even a means of warfare, according to the Special Rapporteur. Global estimates of IDPs are going up, with over 33 million people internally displaced by armed conflict, generalised violence and human rights violations at the end of 2013, not only because of new displacement, but also due to unresolved causes of displacement.

Improving the protection of IDPs is a joint responsibility, including of the Security Council and of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur. Not only is there a joint responsibility, stakeholders also have common goals relating to the protection of IDPs:

1. Restoration of national authority and protection. The protection of IDPs is the primary responsibility of national authorities. However, when they are dysfunctional, as authority and governance breaks down, or are among those perpetrating arbitrary displacement, national protection fails. In those cases, our common goal is to restore national responsibility where authorities are functional, accountable, able and willing to protect citizens. Ultimately, only the re-establishment of national protection will allow the sustainable resolution of internal displacement and the restoration of peace and security.

2. Protection of civilians. Where national protection fails, the role of the international community as a whole becomes essential. Protection of civilians is increasingly essential in ensuring safety of IDPs in areas of refuge, during flight and upon return. Ensuring the physical safety and security of IDPs as part of the civilian population goes beyond the important protection role of humanitarian agencies, such as UNHCR or OCHA; protection of civilians is an essential component and responsibility of the international community and Security Council.

3. Durable solutions – resolving displacement, restoring peace. Finding durable solutions for IDPs is a long and complex process that does not only confront humanitarian and development, but equally peacebuilding challenges. Stabilization, peacebuilding and reconciliation at all levels are critical in resolving internal displacement.

The Special Rapporteur commended the Security Council on steps taken towards better protection of IDPs, such as with the adoption of SC resolution 2155 (2014), which bolsters the strength of the United Nations Missions in South Sudan (UNMISS) to protect civilians and quell the violence in the country. He expressed his gratitude to the Security Council for its consideration of IDP protection in the mandates of MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MINUSMA in Mali and MINUSCA in the Central African Republic, and requested the Security Council to pay increased and consistent attention to durable solutions for the displaced as part of its primary interest to restore peace and stabilize nations.

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Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Welcomepage.aspx>

Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IDPersons/Pages/IDPersonsIndex.aspx>

Security Council resolution 2155 (2014): <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2014/sc11414.doc.htm>

UNMISS: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unmiss/>

MONUSCO: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/monusco/>

MINUSMA: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/minusma/>

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