

Peacebuilding Commission Annual Session
Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees in the Context of Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention
2 December 2024
Chair's Summary

On 2 December 2024, the Peacebuilding Commission convened its Annual Session on the theme of internally displaced persons and refugees in the context of peacebuilding and conflict prevention. The discussion emphasized the critical importance of prevention and the pursuit of durable solutions rooted in the humanitarian, peace, and development nexus. Likewise, participants highlighted the immense scale and severity of the crisis of displacement and its far-reaching impacts, underscoring the need for comprehensive and integrated responses. The session also recognized the PBC's unique role in convening the diverse stakeholders and partners required to address this complex issue.

1. **H.E. Mr. Sérgio França Danese, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission**, addressed the stark reality of displacement, which is marked by unprecedented levels of refugees and IDPs. He underscored that developing countries host the vast majority of displaced persons. He also noted that displacement disproportionately affects women and girls, who face higher risks of gender-based violence and resource scarcity. The Chair made reference to the 2030 Agenda and the Pact for the Future, which recognize IDPs and refugees as vulnerable groups. He highlighted the critical role that the PBC can and does play in furthering prevention, building resilience, and mitigating the causes and impacts of displacement. The Chair further called on the Commission to redouble its efforts to ensure that no one is left behind.

2. **Mr. Robert Piper, Assistant Secretary-General, Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement**, noted that it is critical to consider displacement through the lenses of development and peacebuilding. He highlighted that most forcibly displaced people are IDPs, 76 million across 116 countries, and noted that violent conflict remains the leading driver of internal displacement. He also underlined that displacement has become increasingly protracted. The Special Adviser deplored the glaring shortcomings of conflict management mechanisms, as evidenced by the 20.5 million new internal displacements recorded in 2023, which were prompted in large part due to the conflicts in Sudan, Gaza, Ukraine, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He further drew attention to climate shocks as vulnerability multipliers. He stressed the importance of preventing new displacements and resolving existing displacement. The Special Adviser further called on the PBC to continue shining a spotlight on the crisis of displacement; leverage its convening authority to holistically link peacebuilding, humanitarian efforts, climate action, and development; support the PBF; and ensure that internal displacement gets considered as part of the 2025 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture.

3. **H.E. Mr. Sidi Mohamed Laghdaf, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania**, briefed the Commission on the ways in which Mauritania has engaged productively with the PBC. The Ambassador highlighted the importance of the PBC and the PBF as mechanisms for conflict prevention and post-conflict recovery, underlining that his country's relations with the Commission have been exemplary. He further commended the support Mauritania has received through a portfolio of PBF-financed projects, to the tune of \$22 million, which have, among other efforts, enabled services for Malian refugees, and which have made investments in job creation, social cohesion, water management, and climate security, in Mauritania and in the wider Sahel. Furthermore, the Ambassador, echoing the Pact for the Future, underscored the importance of development finance and support for countries hosting refugee populations.

4. **Ms. Rez Gardi, Co-Managing Director, Refugees Seeking Equal Access at the Table (R-SEAT)**, highlighted the transformative role that refugees can play in peacebuilding. She said that refugees and displaced persons should not be viewed solely as victims or as passive beneficiaries of aid, but also as active agents of change with unique perspectives shaped by their lived experiences. Ms. Gardi emphasized the need to institutionalize meaningful refugee participation in decision-making processes. She cited her organization's work with certain countries to establish Refugee Advisory Mechanisms that strive to ensure that the voices of refugees are heard through formal, institutionalized mechanisms. She underscored the importance of addressing displacement through comprehensive approaches, rooted in the HDP nexus, and called for leadership and political will to implement them. She noted that the PBC is well-placed to champion inclusivity and comprehensive approaches.

5. **Ms. Ruvendrini Menikdiwela, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, UNHCR**, recalled the severity of the displacement crisis. She stressed that displacement levels have been rising for 12 consecutive years, while displacement is also increasingly protracted. She emphasized the importance of tackling root causes. She spoke of Myanmar and Sudan, citing locally driven peacebuilding efforts involving refugees, host communities, UNHCR and partners. The Assistant High Commissioner applauded Mauritania for having adopted inclusionary policies, which have included refugees in national income-generation programmes and have made them eligible for social protection schemes. She further cited examples of promising efforts that are underway in Colombia, Nigeria, and across East Africa. The Assistant High Commissioner made reference to the Multi-stakeholder Pledge on Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention launched at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum, and commended seven countries of origin for having made commitments as part of the pledge (Burkina Faso, CAR, Colombia, DRC, Honduras, Somalia, South Sudan). She encouraged Member States to make commitments that match those of these countries. Furthermore, the Assistant High Commissioner said that the PBC is a critical forum for collaborative peacebuilding, and underlined the importance of the PBF as a catalytic source of financing.

6. Twenty six Members of the Commission delivered statements. Four Members were represented by Capital-based representatives, namely Norway, the United States of America, the

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Germany. Ten Members were represented by their Permanent Representatives to the United Nations, namely China, Croatia, Egypt, Japan, Kenya, Nepal, Poland, Rwanda, Timor Leste and Uruguay. Seven Member were represented by their Deputy Permanent Representatives to the United Nations, namely Algeria, Bangladesh, Denmark, France, Qatar, Republic of Korea and Russia. Five Members were represented by experts, namely Canada, Morocco, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and South Africa.

7. Observations made by Members of the Commission included, but were not limited to, the following:

- The scale of contemporary displacement is unprecedented, with more than 122 million people displaced worldwide, due to the multiplication of armed conflicts.
- Displacement has a multitude of adverse impacts, such as hindering post-conflict recovery, reversing development gains, deepening inequality, and geopolitical destabilization. Displacement was further described as both a consequence and cause of violent conflict.
- While displacement is largely viewed through a humanitarian lens, it should equally be viewed through the prism of development and peacebuilding, in line with the HDP nexus.
- Given the multiplicity and complexity of drivers of displacement, addressing its root causes would require enacting measures such as providing for employment and livelihoods, ensuring access to education, building resilient institutions and ensuring inclusive governance, and administering justice. Women and youth inclusion in peacebuilding efforts is critical.
- The Peacebuilding Commission is well-positioned to convene diverse actors whose contributions are needed to pursue comprehensive and integrated solutions.
- The Peacebuilding Fund is a valuable mechanism to address forced displacement through comprehensive approaches. Awareness should be raised of the Fund's accomplishments.
- Durable solutions should be ensured for displaced populations, foremost returning to their areas of origin, or, where returning is not feasible, resettlement elsewhere. At times, returnees may find that their erstwhile property, such as land and housing, becomes occupied by others, which is an issue that should be addressed.
- References to various international and regional instruments were made, drawing attention to their pertinence in addressing forced displacement. These included: the Pact for the Future; the Global Compact on Refugees; the 2030 Agenda; the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action; the Kampala Convention; and the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. References were also made to the New Agenda for Peace and the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement. Further references were made to the Internal Displacement Solutions Fund, the G20's Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, and the Peacebuilding Impact Hub.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on equitable burden and responsibility sharing when addressing forced displacement.

- Displaced people should not be viewed merely as victims but also as active agents of change whose voices ought to be included in efforts to resolve displacement.
- Investment in political solutions to conflict is necessary to resolve the crisis of displacement.
- The climate crisis is also a factor that drives displacement and needs to be addressed.
- Emphasis was made on national ownership and the inclusion of measures to prevent displacement in national peacebuilding strategies.
- The 2025 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture presents an opportunity to strengthen the PBC and equip it better to tackle complex issues and address funding shortfalls.

8. With the Commission's consent, the Chair accorded the floor to additional speakers. The representative of the **Department of Peace Operations** spoke to how peacekeeping missions create conditions conducive to political solutions to conflict and support durable solutions to displacement. He noted that forthcoming mission transition processes, the 2025 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, and the review of peace operations mandate in the Pact for the Future, present opportunities to further strengthen the intersection of peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The representative of the **Food and Agriculture Organization** underlined that displaced people are among the most vulnerable to food insecurity. She discussed the FAO's efforts, including through PBF-financed projects, to invest in resilience and local conflict-resolution mechanisms, among other related areas. Finally, the representative of the **African Development Bank**, spoke to the importance of development finance to address fragility and promote resilience, thereby contributing to the prevention of displacement. He noted that the AfDB has been increasingly financing solutions to forced displacement, in partnership with humanitarian and peacebuilding actors.

9. **Ms. Elizabeth Spehar, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support**, reiterated the need for holistic approaches to tackle the increasingly untenable and ever-growing rates of displacement. She recounted witnessing firsthand the challenges of displacement during a recent visit to Chad. She highlighted a UNDP and UNFPA project in Chad, supported by the PBF, which is actively promoting social cohesion and the shared use of available natural resources between displaced populations, returnees, and host communities. She also commended the inclusive approach taken by Mauritania, underscoring the important support role that the PBF has played. She also highlighted the PBC's capacity to convene and to facilitate partnerships in support of nationally led initiatives. The ASG encouraged States to engage with the Commission and noted the PBSO's efforts to ensure meaningful participation of refugees and IDPs in its work, mentioning the upcoming Civil Society Dialogue which is set to include several groups representing displaced persons. She also highlighted the importance of cooperation with regional organizations, such as the African Union, citing the landmark Kampala Convention as an example of AU leadership. The ASG further emphasized the opportunity provided by the 2025 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture to enhance the Commission's effectiveness.

10. The **Chair** closed the Annual Session by inviting countries facing displacement-related challenges to engage with the PBC to share concerns, good practices, and lessons learned, and to solicit the Commission's accompaniment to mobilize support.