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Human rights of internally displaced persons

Note by the Secretary-General**

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Paula Gaviria Betancur, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 80/211 and Human Rights Council resolution 59/12.

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Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Paula Gaviria Betancur

Summary

In the present report, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Paula Gaviria Betancur, examines reconstruction following armed conflict, generalized violence and disasters, and its role in enabling internally displaced persons to achieve durable solutions or, conversely, in prolonging displacement, contributing to its recurrence or generating new displacement. She analyses the applicable international legal framework, the preconditions for reconstruction, its key elements and promising practices. The report concludes with recommendations to States, the international community, non-State armed groups and business enterprises.

I. Introduction

1. By the end of 2025, an estimated 82.2 million people were internally displaced worldwide: more than 68.6 million by conflict and violence, and almost 13.6 million by disasters.[1] Conflict- and violence-related displacements reached a record high in 2025, and while disaster-related displacements declined from the exceptionally high levels of 2024, they continue to account for tens of millions of new displacements each year. Protracted displacement is the norm; the average duration of displacement exceeds a decade in many contexts.[2]

2. Reconstruction after armed conflict, generalized violence or disasters plays a central role in determining whether internally displaced persons can achieve durable solutions – through voluntary, safe and dignified return, local integration, or settlement elsewhere – and in laying the foundations for more just, inclusive and resilient societies. However, if poorly planned, financed or implemented, reconstruction can perpetuate discrimination and exclusion or generate new or secondary displacement. Reconstruction extends beyond the physical rebuilding of housing, infrastructure and services. It must address both the tangible and intangible dimensions of loss, encompassing civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights as well as environmental and institutional recovery, while advancing peacebuilding, justice and social cohesion. Lasting reconstruction must not only restore what was lost but also address the structural drivers of displacement and aim to prevent the recurrence of conflict and violence, reduce disaster risk, and remedy exclusion, discrimination, and governance failures.

3. The present report examines how reconstruction processes affect communities, including host and return communities and internally displaced persons following mass devastation, and seeks to clarify how such processes should be designed and implemented to advance durable solutions and create conditions for sustainable peace and resilience. In doing so, it addresses the persistent gap between the normative framework governing internally displaced persons' rights and the lived realities of displaced populations in reconstruction contexts. For the purposes of the present report, "mass devastation" refers to contexts in which large-scale destruction has occurred as a result of armed conflict, situations of occupation, generalized violence or disasters, including those associated with sudden and slow-onset effects of climate change. In the report, reconstruction is understood broadly as a multidimensional process that extends beyond the rebuilding of physical infrastructure to encompass the recovery and rehabilitation of institutions, services, livelihoods, communities and social relations, and the restoration of conditions necessary for the enjoyment of human rights and the achievement of durable solutions.

4. To inform the present report, the Special Rapporteur issued a call for inputs[3] and held consultations with representatives of academia, civil society, United Nations organizations and international financial institutions. She thanks the Member States, partners and stakeholders who provided written submissions and participated in the consultations.

II. Legal, policy and institutional frameworks

5. The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement establish the rights of internally displaced persons in relation to return, resettlement and reintegration, the

[1] See https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2026/.
[2] See https://internaldisplacement-panel.org/.
[3] See https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/2026/call-inputs-report-reconstruction-and-internally-displaced-persons-conflict.

primary responsibilities of national authorities and the supporting role of humanitarian and development actors (principles 28–30). Principle 28 requires competent authorities to establish the conditions and provide the means for internally displaced persons to return voluntarily, in safety and dignity, or to settle voluntarily elsewhere, and to facilitate their reintegration. This includes, in practice, reconstructing the material and institutional conditions necessary for sustainable reintegration.

6. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons[4] establishes that humanitarian and development actors, working closely with national and local authorities, should adopt a rights-based approach to supporting durable solutions that places internally displaced persons at the centre. Eight criteria may be used to determine whether and to what extent a durable solution has been achieved: long-term safety, security and freedom of movement; an adequate standard of living, including housing, food, water and sanitation, health care and education; access to livelihoods and employment; restoration of housing, land and property; access to documentation; family reunification; participation in public affairs; and access to effective remedies and justice.

7. In situations of armed conflict, international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (1949), its Additional Protocols and customary norms, imposes obligations on all parties to the conflict regarding the protection of civilian property, the prohibition of forced displacement and the duties of care towards displaced populations.[5]

8. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 calls for "building back better" through recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction, including improved land-use planning and structural standards.

9. The principles on housing and property restitution for refugees and displaced persons affirm that all refugees and displaced persons have the right to have restored any housing, land and/or property of which they were arbitrarily or unlawfully deprived, or to compensation where restitution is factually impossible (principle 2.1). States are required to establish or re-establish national cadastral or other appropriate systems for the registration of housing, land and property rights as an integral part of any restitution programme (principle 15), and to repeal laws that have a discriminatory effect on the enjoyment of these rights (principle 19).

10. The draft guiding principles for reconstruction in conflict-affected countries and territories[6] recognize that reconstruction in the context of armed conflict, prolonged occupation and large-scale destruction requires a reparative rights-based approach addressing both immediate humanitarian needs and the structural conditions that produced the harm, loss and damage. They also state that reconstruction must be grounded in the right to self-determination and that affected communities have the right to determine what is rebuilt, who rebuilds, how and on what timeline (principles 6 and 9).

11. Given the increasing frequency and severity of disasters, Member States are also currently elaborating a legally binding instrument on the protection of persons in the event of disasters, based on the draft articles adopted by the International Law

[4] See https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/other/iasc-framework-durable-solutions-internally-displaced-persons.

[5] See A/HRC/62/47.

[6] See https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/housing/activities/guiding-principles-reconstruction.pdf.

Commission in 2016.[7] In this context, the Special Rapporteur has advocated stronger recognition of the rights and specific needs of internally displaced persons.[8]

12. At the regional level, the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa is the most comprehensive binding regional instrument on internal displacement. Its article XI obliges States Parties to create the conditions for durable solutions, enable displaced persons to make a free and informed choice among pathways, and cooperate with the African Union and international organizations in implementing measures for durable solutions and reconstruction. The European Court of Human Rights has addressed various aspects related to reconstruction, notably housing, land and property issues.[9] In Latin America and the Caribbean, the non-binding Cartagena+40: Chile Declaration and Plan of Action 2024–2034 emphasizes the need to address disaster-related displacement through a solidarity-based approach and coordination with host communities and displaced persons, local authorities and municipalities, and the international community.

III. Preconditions for reconstruction

13. For reconstruction to proceed, the conditions in the area of settlement should not pose threats to the life, safety, liberty or health of internally displaced persons, and an adequate standard of living must be attainable. These conditions are typically undermined during ongoing hostilities or occupation and may be compromised where territorial authority is contested or fragmented.

14. Ongoing hostilities severely constrain displaced persons' access to regular and safe consultation on reconstruction and displace immediate priorities towards survival, protection and humanitarian assistance. In Sudan, reconstruction and return planning remain premature in many areas where siege-like conditions, famine, attacks on civilian areas, obstruction of humanitarian access, gender-based violence, explosive ordnance contamination and fragmented authority continue to define the protection environment.[10]

15. In situations of occupation, the occupying Power is bound to administer the territory for the benefit of the protected population[11] and may not obstruct reconstruction processes that are necessary for the realization of fundamental rights.[12] In practice, continued occupation and control of entry of goods, services, finance and persons have, in certain cases, prevented reconstruction altogether. In Gaza, the occupying

[7] See https://www.un.org/en/ga/sixth/80/disasters.shtml.

[8] See https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/internaldisplacement/activities/ga6th-committee-joint-letter-treaty.pdf.

[9] Costas Paraskeva, *Protecting Internally Displaced Persons under the European Convention on Human Rights and other Council of Europe Standards: A Handbook* (Council of Europe Project, 2017).

[10] Confidential submission from international non-governmental organization (NGO)/NGO.

[11] Convention respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land (1907), para. 43; and *Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*, *Advisory Opinion*, *I.C.J. Reports 2024*, p. 753, paras. 104 and 105.

[12] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Legal Commentary on the Draft Guiding Principles for Reconstruction in Conflict-Affected Countries and Territories, 2026; Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war (1949), arts. 55, 56, 59 and 60; and Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), art. 69.

Power's[13] control over the entry of all rebuilding materials, equipment and financial resources[14] had already foreclosed any real recovery or reconstruction after successive hostilities in 2008, 2012, 2014, 2021 and 2022. Since 7 October 2023, Israel has devastated the overwhelming majority of homes and civilian infrastructure.[15] Although the ceasefire agreement of October 2025 explicitly called for the immediate resumption of humanitarian aid,[16] reconstruction remains severely constrained by bans or tight controls on so-called "dual-use" items, including steel, cement and heavy equipment.[17]

16. In situations of overlapping or disputed territorial authority, recovery and reconstruction priorities are shaped by multiple decision-making centres and by varying constraints imposed on humanitarian and development activities across areas. This has been observed in Yemen, where displaced persons' capacity to influence reconstruction decisions depends on the extent to which safe and neutral channels exist to transmit their needs within each area of control.[18]

17. The cessation of hostilities and the end of occupation constitute necessary conditions for reconstruction at scale.[19] Ceasefire agreements and security guarantees are critical to establishing the minimum conditions for recovery, including safe and sustained freedom of movement, restoration of livelihoods, access to essential services and access to housing, land and property.

18. Even where hostilities have largely ceased, preconditions for reconstruction may remain incomplete, and their sequencing determines whether returns hold. In some post-conflict settings, explosive ordnance contamination conditions everything that follows, obstructing the resumption of agriculture, the reopening of schools and the start of reconstruction itself. Unresolved housing, land and property claims, absent services and livelihoods, and the fate of missing persons equally determine whether return is sustainable.

19. Reconstruction need not be delayed indefinitely until full security and stability have been restored. However, where camp closures or return targets outpace these preconditions, reconstruction entrenches displacement rather than resolving it; and without parallel attention to the underlying drivers of conflict, occupation or disputed sovereignty, reconstruction rests on fragile foundations.

IV. Reconstruction and internally displaced persons: key elements

A. Durable solutions

20. A durable solution is achieved when internally displaced persons no longer have any specific assistance or protection needs linked to their displacement and are able

[13] *Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*, *Advisory Opinion*, *I.C.J. Reports 2024*, paras. 93 and 94.

[14] Communication ISR 25/2025.

[15] World Bank, European Union and United Nations, *Gaza Strip Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment* (2026).

[16] See https://www.peaceagreements.org/media/documents/PS_IL_251010_Implementation_Steps_for_President_Trumps_Proposal.pdf.

[17] Submission from the State of Palestine; and https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ocha-aid-trickles-into-gaza-amid-limited-access/.

[18] Submission from Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association.

[19] OHCHR, Legal Commentary on the Draft Guiding Principles for Reconstruction in Conflict-Affected Countries and Territories, I (a).

to enjoy their human rights without discrimination.[20] Although return is generally assumed to be the preferred option, local integration may emerge as a preference where physical destruction intersects with instability and unresolved security conditions, or where settlement in urban areas has opened access to education, employment or services. Following disasters, displaced persons typically prefer to return, though this preference weakens where disasters are recurrent or slow-onset processes progressively render areas of origin uninhabitable. Planned relocations have also been increasingly implemented across disaster-affected settings as a measure of last resort.[21] Preferences are shaped by fear, trust in authorities, family unity and prospects for rebuilding safely and may differ within households – older persons often wishing to return while younger members prefer the towns where they have rebuilt livelihoods. Some may choose to return despite the absence of safe and adequate conditions, with previously experienced violence or trauma feeling more familiar than the uncertainties of a new environment.

21. The principles of voluntariness, safety and dignity must govern the process.[22] All pathways must be genuinely available, meaning internally displaced persons can obtain documentation and secure tenure, the right to work, and the full spectrum of human rights without discrimination where they choose to settle. Reconstruction plays a critical part in determining whether these pathways become accessible.

22. Voluntary choice implies freedom from coercion and the realistic availability of each option. It entails access to full, objective, current and accurate information, including on physical, material and legal safety in areas of origin, integration or settlement, and on relevant procedures. Intention and perception surveys are among the most widely used tools for understanding preferences in mass devastation settings.[23] They cannot, however, substitute for informed consent at the point of movement. Such surveys may be complemented by go-and-see visits where feasible, civil documentation support, housing, land and property advice, transport assistance, family tracing, and reintegration support.[24] Coercion may also be indirect: the closure of camps or the withdrawal of assistance must not induce movement, and no internally displaced person may be returned or relocated to any place where their life, safety, liberty or health would be at risk.

23. Return, local integration or settlement elsewhere must ensure the physical and material safety of internally displaced persons, who must themselves perceive the situation as safe.[25] Safety requires not only the absence of immediate threats, but confidence that the violations and conditions that caused the displacement will not recur. Reconstruction should incorporate guarantees of non-repetition, including effective security arrangements, accountable institutions, access to justice, inclusive governance, transitional justice and measures addressing discrimination. Reconstruction should also prevent future displacement risks arising from disasters, climate change and environmental degradation through disaster risk reduction, resilient infrastructure, risk-sensitive planning, early warning systems, environmental monitoring and climate adaptation measures.[26] Where areas become uninhabitable,

[20] Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons* (Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution, 2010).
[21] See A/HRC/56/47.
[22] Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, principle 28 (E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, annex).
[23] See Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Intentions surveys available at https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/solutions/intentions-surveys.
[24] See confidential submission from international NGO/NGO.
[25] Joint IDP Profiling Service, Durable Solutions Indicator Library, available at https://inform-durablesolutions-idp.org/indicators-2/.
[26] Submission from Uzbekistan.

planned relocation may be used as a last resort underpinned by clear legal and policy frameworks, community participation, inclusive planning and adequate financing.[27]

24. Dignity implies that internally displaced persons can resume a life recognizable as their own, one in which they can meet their material needs, re-establish meaningful relationships, sustain themselves and their families, participate in community life and restore a sense of belonging and purpose. In reconstruction, this includes restoration of cultural heritage, places of worship and memory, and the social fabric that sustains community life, as well as truth-seeking and clarifying the fate of missing persons, without which families cannot resolve their own displacement. Access to decent work and livelihoods helps restore self-worth, autonomy and a stake in the communities where displaced persons settle. Dignity also has a critical psychosocial dimension: trauma, loss and distrust in institutions may prevent people from rebuilding their lives even where physical conditions have been restored, making mental health and psychosocial support a central component of dignified solutions. It also requires respecting agency throughout reconstruction and ensuring the meaningful and safe participation of those facing intersecting forms of discrimination, including women, children, young people, older persons, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples and minorities.

25. Reconstruction should be grounded in comprehensive, displacement-sensitive needs assessments, including post-disaster needs assessments and recovery and peacebuilding assessments, to identify the scale of destruction and priorities, and inform evidence-based recovery in line with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Framework. Assessments should include household and community-level analysis, disaggregated by sex, age and disability, and account for intersecting forms of discrimination. Internally displaced persons should meaningfully participate in defining benchmarks for durable solutions, informed by up-to-date independent information on ongoing monitoring, and should not be encouraged to pursue particular settlement options before they can safely do so.[28]

B. Participation

26. The meaningful participation of internally displaced persons in the design and implementation of reconstruction is necessary for durable outcomes and operates as a displacement prevention safeguard: exclusion from reconstruction decision-making can reproduce the inequalities, grievances and distrust that contributed to displacement in the first place. Internally displaced persons are nonetheless frequently treated as beneficiaries rather than rights-holders and decision-makers,[29] resulting in participation remaining insufficient, tokenistic or entirely absent.

27. Structural barriers hinder participation. Internally displaced persons may lack civil documentation or proof of housing, land and property, limiting their access to formal processes and their ability to assert claims or register for reconstruction assistance. Distance may hamper participation for those outside the capitals where reconstruction processes unfold. Participation is further constrained by the absence of institutional consultation mechanisms, discrimination, security risks and fear of retaliation, as well as poverty and marginalization.[30] Language barriers, limited digital access, unfamiliarity with bureaucratic procedures and the complexity of

[27] See https://globalprotectioncluster.org/sites/default/files/2025-11/ipeg_commentary_planned_relocations_final.pdf.
[28] Confidential submission from international NGO/NGO.
[29] Submission from Mouyad Al-Ekhwan.
[30] Submissions from Open Doors and World Evangelical Alliance.

reconstruction frameworks compound these obstacles, rendering reconstruction inaccessible to many of those most directly affected.

28. Reconstruction may also be structured through governance mechanisms dominated by national elites or external actors, excluding displaced persons. In relation to Gaza, the Board of Peace, welcomed by the Security Council in resolution 2803 (2025), holds oversight and supervision over transitional governance, and its functions include reconstruction; although the day-to-day running of public services and municipalities is entrusted to a Palestinian committee, that committee operates under the Board's supervision, so ultimate authority over governance and reconstruction remains with a body in which there is no meaningful Palestinian participation. Special procedure mandate holders have warned that its establishment and endorsement are fundamentally contrary to basic principles of international law, including the right to self-determination – a peremptory norm from which no Security Council decision can derogate[31] – and that decisions on the reconstruction and future of Gaza should rest with Palestinians whose right to self-determination extends to decisions on what is rebuilt and on the type of development they wish to pursue.[32]

29. Internally displaced persons facing intersecting forms of discrimination encounter additional barriers. In many contexts, women face discrimination in access to property and inheritance, which excludes them from reconstruction processes.[33] Young people and older persons may also be excluded, and persons with disabilities may be prevented from participating if these processes are not made accessible.[34] Minorities, Indigenous Peoples and peasants similarly tend to be underrepresented in reconstruction and may face additional linguistic or geographic barriers.

30. Strategies to engage internally displaced persons are frequently one-off exercises, limited to complaints desks, hotlines, focus groups or surveys, leaving many feeling ignored or consulted for expediency.[35] Participation tends to focus on physical rebuilding rather than broader questions such as where people want to live, how they will sustain themselves and how community life should be organized.[36]

31. Access to clear information about reconstruction plans, eligibility criteria, compensation procedures, housing, land and property processes, risks and accessible complaint mechanisms is crucial for meaningful participation. Information should be shared in languages that internally displaced persons understand, and through channels with which they are familiar, including community meetings, local committees, civil society networks and trusted local actors.[37]

32. Participation must be safe. Displaced persons may fear expressing views on sensitive issues such as return, property claims, security concerns or experiences of harm. Participation mechanisms should therefore include confidential channels,

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[31] *Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*, *Advisory Opinion*, *I.C.J. Reports 2024*, para. 233; and A/77/10, chap. IV (conclusion 16) and annex (h).

[32] See https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/03/un-experts-condemn-board-peace-call-reparative-rights-based-approach.

[33] Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, general recommendation No. 30 (2013).

[34] Submissions from Committee for Justice, Chad, and Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

[35] Lewis Sida and others, *Independent Review of the Humanitarian Response to Internal Displacement* (London, ODI Global, 2024), available at https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/Independent%20review%20of%20the%20humanitarian%20response%20to%20internal%20displacement.pdf.

[36] See, for example, Kamal Kishore, "Getting post-disaster housing recovery right", 27 December 2025, available at https://www.undrr.org/news/getting-post-disaster-housing-recovery-right.

[37] Submission from Mouyad Al-Ekhwan.

anonymous feedback options, separate consultations for persons belonging to marginalized groups and safeguards against retaliation.

33. Local public authorities and municipalities are essential to reconstruction and the meaningful participation of displaced persons. Their proximity to affected populations enables them to understand the differentiated impacts, convene consultations, coordinate services and translate national reconstruction plans into locally workable processes. Where reconstruction frameworks are shaped through centralized or externally driven approaches, local authorities are often marginalized. [38]

34. Community committees, volunteer groups, women's groups, youth networks and family- and faith-based actors often fill gaps left by formal systems. It is important that these actors not be bypassed in reconstruction processes and that they be adequately resourced and integrated.[39] New technologies can expand engagement by enabling remote participation, bearing in mind challenges such as online harassment, unequal connectivity, and the protection risks arising from the collection and retention of data on displaced persons.

35. Internally displaced persons facing intersecting forms of discrimination bring distinct strengths to reconstruction. Older persons transmit the knowledge, memory and practices that anchor communities to their history and traditions and sustain community life; women often sustain family and community networks and are frequently at the forefront of local recovery; young people contribute skills and vision; persons with disabilities possess expertise on accessibility and inclusive design; Indigenous Peoples and minorities hold knowledge of land, environment and cultural practices, including traditional building techniques, that can strengthen the resilience and cultural continuity of reconstruction.

36. Reconstruction and land restitution have been most responsive and durable where participatory models have been institutionalized. In Colombia, Act No. 1448 of 2011, on victims and land restitution provides displaced communities with formal participation in municipal-level return and reconstruction planning, including Tables for the Effective Participation of Victims (*Mesas de Participación Efectiva de las Víctimas*).[40] This has contributed to shifting the focus from emergency assistance towards recognizing internally displaced persons as actors of recovery. In Ukraine, internally displaced persons councils advise the Government at various levels, channelling those persons' perspectives into decision-making and contributing to community-based solutions, in some cases participating in project implementation by representing the interests of current or future residents. [41]

C. Housing, land and property, and infrastructure

37. The loss of housing, land and property threatens a range of human rights that States have an obligation to respect, protect and fulfil. [42] In reconstruction contexts, the recurrent issues are insecurity of tenure and forced evictions; the secondary occupation of homes; contested restitution and compensation claims; and the loss of the records on which legal rights depend. Housing, land and property grievances are not only a consequence of mass devastation; they are frequently a driver of conflict and displacement. The exercise of these rights rests on well-functioning institutions

[38] Submissions from Romania and the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities.
[39] Submissions from Open Doors and World Evangelical Alliance.
[40] Submissions from Colombia and the Ombudsman's Office.
[41] Submission from Stabilization Support Services.
[42] See A/HRC/47/37.

mandated to adjudicate housing, land and property claims and to issue and replace documentation.

38. Reconstruction is frequently hampered by the destruction, confiscation, loss or falsification of cadastres, property registries and other records proving ownership and residency. The non-recognition of collective, customary or informal tenure may further complicate return and exclude displaced persons from reconstruction programmes. In disaster-affected settings, planned relocation has in some cases left relocated communities feeling insecure when their housing award lacked ownership specifications, exposing them to eviction.[43] The secondary occupation of homes, where affected persons resort to abandoned buildings or informal settlements as a survival strategy, poses a further challenge: its resolution requires safeguards for occupants against arbitrary eviction and homelessness alongside the restitution of the original owner.

39. A number of practices have been implemented to address these challenges. In Kosovo,[44] following the 1998–1999 conflict, the Housing and Property Directorate and its successor institutions developed an alternative evidence framework allowing claimants to establish ownership through witness testimony, secondary documents and historical records, resolving more than 70,000 claims between 1999 and 2019.[45] Land tools have also been adapted from development contexts to mass devastation settings. The social tenure domain model[46] uses community mapping based on pre-conflict or pre-disaster satellite images to link people to spaces and identify pre-existing buildings where destruction is heavy, while the fit-for-purpose land administration approach offers a participatory method for recording all types of tenure rights where registries are inaccurate or missing.[47] In Colombia, the Constitutional Court held in 2012 that no eviction may be carried out unless the territorial authority first guarantees temporary shelter in dignified conditions and the household's inclusion in a housing pathway leading to a permanent solution.[48]

40. Particularly in post-conflict settings, dedicated, accessible and adequately resourced housing, land and property dispute resolution mechanisms are recommended. Local and traditional dispute resolution mechanisms can also play a role but may, in certain cases, perpetuate power asymmetries. Women face heightened risks of discrimination and exclusion in reconstruction-related housing, land and property processes, including in relation to inheritance, ownership, tenure, restitution and compensation, particularly where informal or customary dispute resolution mechanisms reinforce discriminatory norms and practices. This can be mitigated by treating customary justice as a mechanism of first instance or by hybrid mechanisms where officials sit with customary leaders and ensure that decisions respect national law and international standards. Training for traditional dispute resolution actors in mediation, arbitration, non-discrimination and women's rights contributes to improving outcomes.[49]

41. Reconstruction frameworks cannot guarantee housing, land and property rights without broader legal reform. In the Syrian Arab Republic, transitional authorities

[43] See A/HRC/56/47.
[44] References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).
[45] See https://unmik.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/regulations/02english/E2000regs/RE2000_60.htm; and https://omik.osce.org/sites/default/files/f/documents/2/7/454179.pdf.
[46] See https://stdm.gltn.net/.
[47] World Bank and International Federation of Surveyors, *Fit-For-Purpose Land Administration* (2014); and A/HRC/47/37, para. 78.
[48] Submission from the Ombudsman's Office.
[49] See A/HRC/47/37.

have taken initial steps in this regard but left intact legislation adopted since 2012[50] permitting expropriation, redevelopment and the reclassification of areas deemed damaged or informal, and conditioning the retention of rights upon proving ownership and registering claims within short deadlines that many displaced persons cannot meet.[51] With large-scale return already under way, the resolution of these claims is being outpaced by the movements that it should be governing. Such legislation should be amended or repealed before large-scale reconstruction proceeds, with safeguards against forced evictions.[52]

42. Infrastructure is often heavily damaged by disasters or deliberately targeted in conflict, including objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, whose targeting is prohibited under international humanitarian law. The rehabilitation of health, education, water, sanitation, electricity, transport and food systems improves services for displaced and non-displaced populations alike. Reconstruction should account for displacement patterns and barriers faced across urban, peri-urban and rural areas. In cities, displaced persons may face rising housing costs and pressure on services, and investment may be concentrated in formally planned areas while informal settlements remain underserved.[53] In rural areas, the destruction of irrigation systems, roads and agricultural infrastructure may prevent the resumption of livelihoods even after housing has been rebuilt. Equitable reconstruction therefore depends on integrating infrastructure and service rehabilitation with local development planning. Area-based approaches can support equitable reconstruction by combining cross-sectoral damage assessment with data on displacement and pre-existing vulnerabilities to identify needs across sectors and populations.[54]

D. Economic recovery, livelihoods and mine action

43. Internally displaced persons returning to areas of origin, integrating locally or settling elsewhere require access to sustainable income and livelihoods.[55] However, livelihood recovery is frequently treated as a secondary priority, resulting in food and water insecurity, prolonged dependency on humanitarian assistance, and harmful coping strategies, including asset depletion, child labour, early marriage, hazardous or exploitative work, migration and secondary displacement. Returnees often find fundamentally changed local economies: agricultural land damaged or seized, water sources contaminated, supply chains disrupted and communities fragmented. Restoring livelihoods and social protection is therefore not only essential to durable solutions; it can also prevent renewed displacement by reducing dependency, exploitation and harmful coping strategies.

44. The clearance of landmines, other explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices is a prerequisite for livelihood restoration, economic recovery and durable solutions. Contamination threatens lives, restricts access to essential services and livelihoods, including agricultural land, and traps communities in cycles of poverty and insecurity. Land release can improve market access and economic

[50] Legislative Decree No. 66 of 2012, Law No. 10 of 2018, and the Urban Planning Law No. 23 of 2015.

[51] See https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/09/syrian-arab-republic-un-experts-urge-repeal-dispossession-laws.

[52] Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, general comment No. 7 (1997); Basic principles and guidelines on development-based evictions and displacement (A/HRC/4/18, annex I).

[53] See A/80/212.

[54] United Nations Human Settlements Programme and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Sustainable Reconstruction: A Framework for Inclusive Planning and Financing to Support Green Transition in the Arab States Region* (2023).

[55] Submissions from the World Bank and UNDP.

activity. Community engagement, risk education and transparent prioritization can ensure that clearance reflects community priorities. In the Syrian Arab Republic, returnees help identify hazardous areas for clearance and risk education.[56] In Yemen, risk education campaigns have reached more than 2.5 million persons in settlements and camps hosting internally displaced persons and returnees.[57] Mine action also requires comprehensive victim assistance, including medical care, physical rehabilitation, psychosocial support, socioeconomic reintegration and the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.[58]

45. Conflict and disasters also cause extensive environmental damage. Damaged water and sanitation infrastructure, loss of natural and agricultural land and contamination of soil and marine ecosystems by munitions, solid waste and untreated sewage undermine health, food production and livelihoods and increase disaster risks. Debris contaminated with hazardous materials, including asbestos and unexploded ordnance, poses acute health risks and complicates reconstruction. Recovery and reconstruction planning should therefore include early ecological and environmental health assessments and the systematic testing of soil, water and debris. Debris removal should also include safeguards against demolitions that could extinguish housing, land and property claims.

46. Access to decent work and livelihoods is a central component of recovery,[59] yet legal and administrative barriers – including documentation requirements for business registration, land access and employment – disproportionately affect displaced persons who have lost identity documents or whose tenure and residency status is unresolved. Simplified procedures, flexible documentation requirements and legal reforms can ensure non-discriminatory access to employment and business opportunities. The skills of displaced persons may also not be suited to the labour market in the areas where they have settled. In Mozambique, for example, coastal communities displaced inland lost their fishing-based livelihoods while lacking the land, tenure or experience needed for agriculture.[60] Reconstruction programmes should provide tailored skills training, employment services and vocational and financial literacy training, based on local labour markets and the trajectories of displaced persons[61] and designed to be accessible to women and to persons with disabilities.

47. Social protection is another critical dimension of livelihood recovery and the prevention of renewed displacement. Displacement-affected persons working informally are often excluded from contributory social security schemes. Legal and policy reforms should ensure that displaced persons and returnees can enrol in social protection schemes regardless of employment status or location, including through portable benefits, simplified registration and coverage of informal workers.[62]

48. Micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises are often the backbone of local economies but face informality, limited finance, disrupted infrastructure and weak market access. Private sector engagement can create shared economic opportunities across displacement-affected groups and strengthen local markets and social cohesion. Under the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations “Protect, Respect and Remedy” Framework, companies operating in conflict-affected and high-risk areas should conduct

[56] Submission from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.
[57] Submission from Yemen.
[58] Submission from the Mine Action Service in Colombia.
[59] International Labour Organization (ILO), Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205).
[60] See A/HRC/56/47/Add.1.
[61] Submission from the World Bank.
[62] ILO, Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202).

enhanced, context-sensitive and continuously updated human rights due diligence, including regarding land acquisition, dispossession and forced eviction, risks arising through business relationships, and impacts on conflict dynamics and human rights. Economic initiatives should ensure transparency, non-discrimination, fair access and accountability.[63]

49. Public works and cash-for-work programmes provide displaced persons with income while contributing to physical recovery and restoring public goods and services.[64] They should comply with decent work standards, including equal pay for work of equal value, occupational safety and health protections, the prohibition of child labour, and equitable access for displaced persons, returnees and host communities alike. Such programmes are short-term instruments and cannot substitute for durable livelihoods; nor should participation or wages be conditioned upon a decision to return or relocate, which would compromise the voluntariness of that choice.

E. Peacebuilding, justice and social cohesion

50. Durable solutions cannot be achieved while the drivers of displacement remain unaddressed. Preventing recurrence requires measures addressing those drivers, including through security sector reform, the rule of law, accountable governance, non-discrimination measures, housing, land and property reform, disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and the meaningful participation of affected communities.

51. Addressing material and economic grievances after mass devastation is necessary but insufficient without attending to the relational and psychosocial dimensions of displacement. In conflict settings, reconstruction can rebuild trust and social cohesion or reinforce the patterns that contributed to displacement. Unequal access to housing, land, property and services, including perceptions of bias in aid distribution, can deepen divisions between internally displaced persons and host communities. Reconstruction should respond to the needs and priorities of both while strengthening participation, belonging and existing social networks. Civil society, faith-based groups and traditional leaders can foster dialogue and trust through art, cultural and sports activities, dispute resolution and reconciliation mechanisms. The Special Rapporteur has stressed that physical reconstruction alone cannot heal the consequences of displacement.[65]

52. Reparations – including restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, measures of satisfaction and guarantees of non-recurrence – support recovery by restoring dignity and acknowledging the individual and collective harms caused by displacement. Reconstruction must be accompanied by accountability and transitional justice processes. Truth-seeking mechanisms, including truth commissions, can establish the causes of displacement and inform measures to prevent its recurrence,[66] and clarification of the fate of missing persons is integral to these processes.

53. Memory is an integral dimension of recovery and peacebuilding.[67] Schools, universities, the media, museums, memorials and other cultural interventions can help internally displaced persons make sense of loss, preserve collective memory and

[63] Submission from the International Trade Centre.
[64] See https://www.ilo.org/projects-and-partnerships/projects/community-based-emergency-employment-cash-work-and-reconstruction-project.
[65] See https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/07/syria-has-historic-opportunity-transform-displacement-recovery-needs-global.
[66] A/79/334, para. 49.
[67] See A/HRC/25/49; and A/HRC/45/45.

cultural continuity through language and traditions, strengthen belonging and intergenerational resilience and foster inclusive narratives that enable communities to envision sustainable futures. Memorialization should incorporate multiple perspectives and encourage civic engagement; where it advances a single narrative, it can entrench the divisions that caused displacement. Memory is particularly important where displacement becomes permanent: in the Marshall Islands, contamination from nuclear testing prevented return for generations, and the recognition of past harm remains central to affected communities' claims.[68] The right to memory should be integrated into national adaptation plans and other relevant policy and planning tools, including those addressing displacement, climate change, recovery and reconstruction, so that the histories, identities and experiences of affected communities are preserved and reflected in long-term responses.

54. Mental health and psychological well-being are foundational to recovery and social cohesion and shape attitudes towards return, integration and participation.[69] Trauma, fear, loss, distrust and experiences of violence may affect displaced persons' ability to seek services, pursue livelihoods and rebuild a sense of purpose. Reconstruction may itself cause harm when it excludes internally displaced persons from decision-making, relocates communities without adequate consultation or fails to acknowledge their experiences. Mental health and psychosocial support[70] should therefore be integrated into reconstruction through accessible, confidential, culturally appropriate and inclusive services, including community-based, survivor-centred and specialized services, such as referral pathways and family tracing, responsive to the backgrounds, gender perspectives and other circumstances of affected persons. Such support remains among the most underfunded and overlooked components of recovery.

F. Data, monitoring and accountability

55. Displacement data are a critical component of reconstruction planning and monitoring, ensuring that recovery processes respond to the needs and aspirations of internally displaced persons and host communities over time. Reconstruction planning that does not distinguish between displaced and non-displaced populations, or that fails to disaggregate data by gender, age, disability and location, risks misallocating resources and reproducing pre-existing inequalities. National statistical systems should be the point of departure for strengthening production, ownership and coordination of data for solutions to internal displacement.[71] Where nationwide displacement tracking has been established, it can become a primary evidence base for recovery planning, complemented by indices assessing conditions in communities of return against criteria for safe and sustainable reintegration and by the digitization of property records so that displaced persons can establish ownership and resolve disputes. However, in many contexts, data on internal displacement remain absent from official statistics, and where available, the systematic integration of the data into reconstruction programming is uneven.

56. Linking displacement tracking with damage and needs assessments, recovery monitoring and local planning helps reconstruction reach affected populations.

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[68] See A/HRC/59/46/Add.1.

[69] See A/80/212.

[70] See https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-task-force-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-emergency-settings/iasc-guidelines-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-emergency-settings-2007.

[71] European Union and United Nations, *International Recommendations on Internally Displaced Persons Statistics (IRIS): Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics (EGRISS)* (Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2020).

Household and area-based assessments, participatory consultations and spatial technologies adapted to local contexts can help visualize displacement patterns, identify territorial risks, monitor recovery and support evidence-based planning.[72] Innovative tools can also document destruction: the Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, established by the Council of Europe, records claims of war-related damage, loss and injury, submitted by affected persons through an online platform that will serve as the first component of an international compensation mechanism.[73] Monitoring should assess both reconstruction and remaining risks, including renewed displacement, forced eviction, insecurity, discrimination, unresolved housing, land and property claims, exclusion from services, disaster risk and social tensions, linking findings to early warning, preventive action and financing. Data must be collected, stored and shared in accordance with the confidentiality guarantees of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.[74]

57. Displaced persons need not only data documenting their situation, but channels through which that evidence can be used to claim redress and hold reconstruction actors accountable for harms such as exclusion from housing assistance, discriminatory allocation of land or forced relocation. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, annex 7 of the 1995 General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina affirmed the right of refugees and displaced persons to return to their homes of origin and to have restored to them property of which they were deprived, and established the Commission for Real Property Claims of Displaced Persons and Refugees to adjudicate such claims. In some cases, constitutional complaint mechanisms have removed common barriers to individual redress, for example by being designed without legal fees or mandatory legal representation.[75]

58. Non-judicial mechanisms are essential where courts are compromised, inaccessible, or overwhelmed by reconstruction-related claims. Administrative frameworks may provide all forms of reparation, including restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-recurrence.[76] National human rights institutions and ombudspersons can monitor reconstruction assistance, investigate complaints and issue recommendations. Community-level grievance mechanisms embedded within reconstruction programmes – including feedback hotlines, community liaisons and complaint registers – provide further channels for displaced persons to raise concerns. After the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, the National Reconstruction Authority operated a multi-tier mechanism to address complaints over beneficiary lists, incorrect damage assessments or delays in receiving reconstruction grants.[77] Such mechanisms can process claims quickly but, when administered by reconstruction bodies, cannot substitute for independent oversight. All mechanisms must be accessible, without requiring documentation lost through displacement, physical presence in the area of origin, or deadlines that displaced persons cannot meet.

59. Across all these mechanisms, legal aid is indispensable. It should be funded as a structural component of reconstruction accountability frameworks and be extended beyond property restitution claims to issues such as exclusion from reconstruction programmes, inadequacy of the rebuilt housing and infrastructure, and forced relocation.

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[72] Submission from the World Bank.

[73] Council of Europe, Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, available at https://www.rd4u.coe.int/en/.

[74] See https://unstats.un.org/fpos/.

[75] Submission from Colombia.

[76] Ibid.

[77] World Bank, “Lessons in earthquake reconstruction: five proven approaches from Nepal”, 1 December 2021.

V. Enabling reconstruction

A. Financing

60. The scale of global reconstruction needs is unprecedented and growing. In conflict settings, recovery and reconstruction needs are estimated at $587.7 billion over 10 years in Ukraine;[78] at $216 billion in the Syrian Arab Republic;[79] at $71.4 billion in Gaza;[80] and at $11 billion in Lebanon.[81] In disaster settings, assessments record needs that routinely exceed the fiscal capacity of the affected State: at least $16.3 billion for resilient rehabilitation and reconstruction following the 2022 floods in Pakistan;[82] $3.2 billion following cyclones Idai and Kenneth in Mozambique in 2019;[83] $1.8 billion following the 2023 floods in eastern Libya;[84] and $402.9 million following the 2023 earthquakes in Herat, Afghanistan.[85] Globally, the annual cost of disasters, including cascading and ecosystem impacts, exceeds $2.3 trillion.[86] Needs are accumulating faster than resources can be mobilized, and at a time of contracting official development assistance.

61. Fragile and conflict-affected States often face acute fiscal constraints and high debt vulnerability, which reconstruction can intensify.[87] Grants and highly concessional financing should be prioritized, with debt sustainability integrated into financing decisions from the outset and external support paired with domestic resource mobilization. Financing may also be constrained by sanctions, counter-terrorism measures and banking de-risking, which can restrict transfers, procurement and payments even where exemptions formally exist. Often, the easing of such measures does not immediately restore financial channels needed for reconstruction. Humanitarian and reconstruction activities should be effectively carved out and the practical effects of de-risking monitored.

62. Large flows are vulnerable to corruption, elite capture and diversion, and reconstruction can itself become a vehicle for political control, demographic engineering or reshaping ownership in ways that adversely affect displaced populations. Robust safeguards, including independent oversight, public disclosure of contracts and accessible grievance mechanisms, are therefore essential. The gap between emergency response funding and the sustained investment that durable solutions require further complicates these challenges. Multi-year, predictable funding channelled through pooled mechanisms, multi-donor trust funds and

[78] See https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2026/02/23/updated-ukraine-recovery-and-reconstruction-needs-assessment-released.
[79] See https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2025/10/21/syria-s-post-conflict-reconstruction-costs-estimated-at-216-billion.
[80] See https://www.un.org/unispal/document/report-gaza-strip-rapid-damage-20apr26/.
[81] See https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2025/03/07/lebanon-s-recovery-and-reconstruction-needs-estimated-at-us-11-billion.
[82] See https://www.undp.org/pakistan/publications/pakistan-floods-2022-post-disaster-needs-assessment-pdna; and https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/4a0114eb7d1cecbbbf2f65c5ce0789db-0310012022/original/Pakistan-Floods-2022-PDNA-Main-Report.pdf.
[83] See https://www.undp.org/publications/mozambique-cyclone-idai-post-disaster-needs-assessment-pdnadna.
[84] See https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/libya/joint-world-bank-eu-un-report-assesses-damages-caused-catastrophic-flooding-libya_en.
[85] See https://afghanistan.un.org/en/261117-herat-earthquakes-2023-post-disaster-needs-assessment.
[86] *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction: Resilience Pays – Financing and Investing for our Future* (United Nations publication, 2025).
[87] See https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/blog/debt-sustainability-fragile-and-conflict-affected-states-heightened-risks-and-needs.

co-financing arrangements has helped bridge that gap[88] while reducing fragmentation and the administrative burden on recovering governments.

63. The post-disaster needs assessment[89] and similar methodologies used in conflict-affected settings assist governments in producing actionable recovery strategies and mobilizing financial and technical resources. Displacement has traditionally been addressed within individual sectors rather than as a cross-cutting theme, although recent assessments integrate it more systematically.[90] This should become standard practice, with displaced persons and host communities participating in assessments.

64. International financial institutions play an increasingly prominent role in financing reconstruction. The Asian Development Bank has offered financing packages for reconstruction in multiple post-conflict and post-disaster contexts spanning a range of sectors, in some cases including an emphasis on skills transfer for disaster-resilient infrastructure. Other institutions have structured financing around displacement objectives: the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European Commission, for example, support an affordable housing facility for displaced persons in Ukraine, through rental and rent-to-own models.[91] While such initiatives can help address specific needs, they risk confining displacement considerations to certain sectors. Financing instruments should instead recognize internally displaced persons as a cross-cutting policy group and systematically assess the implications of reconstruction investments for durable solutions across all sectors.

65. International financial institutions are also integrating displacement across their portfolios: the World Bank and the African Development Bank have incorporated internal displacement solutions into their corporate scorecards.[92] Their environmental and social safeguard frameworks, which govern land acquisition, restrictions on land use and involuntary resettlement, remain the principal instrument through which financed reconstruction can avoid causing displacement, including for persons without formal title.

66. Financing mechanisms should explicitly strengthen, rather than substitute for, national ownership. While external resources are often indispensable in mass devastation settings, reconstruction is more sustainable when led by national and local actors, aligned with national priorities and supported by participatory decision-making. International cooperation should also strengthen the institutions and governance structures capable of driving recovery, reducing future risks and sustaining durable solutions over time. Financing frameworks should therefore include incentives and benchmarks for preventing future displacement, including through investments in risk reduction, social cohesion, inclusive governance, conflict prevention, climate adaptation and institutional resilience.

67. Aid and other sources of finance must also remain sensitive to political economy dynamics and the underlying drivers of fragility.[93] Financing decisions that overlook

[88] Submission from UNDP.
[89] European Commission, United Nations Development Group and World Bank, *Post-Disaster Needs Assessments: Volume A – Guidelines* (2013).
[90] Submission from UNDP.
[91] See https://www.ebrd.com/home/news-and-events/news/2025/ebrd-launches--100-million-affordable-housing-initiative-in-ukra.html.
[92] Robert Piper, *Building Solutions for the World's 83 Million Internally Displaced Persons: Recent Lessons on How* (Geneva, International Organization for Migration, 2025), p. 13.
[93] Cushla Thompson, *Financing in Fragile Contexts*, OECD Development Cooperation Working Paper, No. 8 (Paris, 2020).

power relations, inequality, unresolved grievances or patterns of exclusion risk reinforcing the very conditions that drove displacement.

B. Humanitarian, development and peace nexus

68. Working across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus is necessary to address immediate needs while supporting long-term solutions, [94] requiring development and peace actors to engage from the outset of displacement crises rather than only as humanitarian assistance is phased down.

69. In practice, development and peace actors frequently engage late. Internally displaced persons may return before security, services and economic opportunities are restored or housing, land and property disputes are resolved. Camp closures have led to secondary displacement when displaced persons had no option but to return before the conditions to rebuild their lives had been restored, as in Iraq. [95] In the Syrian Arab Republic, the Special Rapporteur welcomed the "Syria Without Camps" vision while stressing that camp closures must be the outcome of rights-based durable solutions and not a substitute for them. [96] Poor coordination among humanitarian and development actors, State entities and territorial authorities can create duplication in some areas while neglecting others. [97] These risks increase when humanitarian funding contracts before development financing is in place, leaving a gap that neither set of actors is resourced to fill.

70. Addressing these shortcomings requires breaking down the silos across humanitarian, development and peace efforts, as well as climate action and disaster risk reduction. Transition should not be a sequential handover but an integrated process in which these efforts proceed in parallel. Nexus arrangements must also preserve the distinct character of humanitarian action: assistance must be based on need and must not be conditioned on participation in return or reconstruction plans.

71. Progress towards such integration includes the global solutions architecture for internal displacement, [98] which brings together humanitarian, development and peace actors in support of government-led solutions at country level. However, effective transition to government-led recovery, development and peacebuilding remains a challenge in many contexts. In the Syrian Arab Republic, for example, the reactivation of nationwide displacement tracking and a shared evidence base on conditions in areas of return have strengthened coordination, but development financing has not followed at the same pace.

72. Structuring recovery and reconstruction around shared outcomes rather than sectoral needs alone can help address the drivers of displacement, not just its consequences. Collective outcomes should be strategic, specific and developed inclusively, with indicators monitored across humanitarian, development, peace and climate dimensions and complemented by context monitoring tools. Cross-sectoral working groups can support reconstruction planning and should link the national,

[94] Development Assistance Committee - International Network on Conflict and Fragility, "Common position of DAC-INCAF members supporting the Global Compact on Refugees on addressing forced displacement with an humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach", November 2023.

[95] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Report on Internal Displacement* (2024), p. 45.

[96] See https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/07/syria-has-historic-opportunity-transform-displacement-recovery-needs-global.

[97] Submission from the Ombudsman's Office.

[98] United Nations Sustainable Development Group and Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *Guidance on Solutions to Internal Displacement* (2025).

subnational and local levels rather than operating solely at the central level.[99] In Somalia, for example, working groups under the Somalia Development and Reconstruction Facility address nexus-related issues, including durable solutions.[100]

VI. Conclusions

73. **As armed conflict, violence and disasters drive unprecedented levels of displacement and destruction, rethinking reconstruction has become an urgent priority. In the aftermath of mass devastation, reconstruction is not a neutral or purely technical exercise of rebuilding what was damaged or destroyed: its ultimate test is not the number of buildings rebuilt but whether people can rebuild their lives without fear of renewed displacement. Prevention and guarantees of non-recurrence should therefore be understood as core elements of durable solutions and sustainable reconstruction. At the same time, reconstruction offers a unique opportunity not merely to restore pre-existing conditions but to address structural inequalities and build more inclusive, resilient and rights-based societies.**

74. **There is no universal model for reconstruction. Each context calls for a tailored approach that is conflict- and climate-sensitive, responsive to the specific drivers of displacement, and attentive to the differentiated needs, perspectives and aspirations of affected populations, including women, children, young people, older persons, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples and minorities.**

75. **Rights-based reconstruction requires a holistic and integrated approach. It should bring together the restoration of housing, land and property, equitable access to services and infrastructure, economic recovery and livelihoods, environmental recovery and mine action, and peacebuilding, justice and social cohesion, recognizing that these areas are interdependent and that progress in one is seldom sustainable without progress in the others. Where reconstruction gives rise to harms, exclusion or rights violations, affected persons must have access to effective accountability and remedy mechanisms. Internally displaced persons should be recognized as agents of recovery and meaningfully participate in the decisions that shape reconstruction, from the design of reconstruction strategies through to their implementation and monitoring.**

76. **Such an approach is most effective and sustainable when it is nationally owned and led, and anchored in the long-term priorities of the affected State. While national authorities bear the primary responsibility for ensuring rights-based reconstruction, that reconstruction also depends on sustained international cooperation and adequate, predictable financing aligned with national priorities. Humanitarian, development and peace efforts must be coherent and mutually reinforcing, and international support should enable recovery, strengthen local capacities and enhance preparedness for future risks so that displacement can be prevented.**

[99] OECD, “The humanitarian-development-peace nexus and forced displacement: progress, insights and recommendations for operational practice”, OECD Development Policy Papers, No. 57 (2024).

[100] Centre on International Cooperation, “The triple nexus in practice: toward a new way of working in protracted and repeated crises”, December 2019, p. 30.

VII. Recommendations

77. **The Special Rapporteur recommends that States:**

(a) **Adopt and implement reconstruction frameworks explicitly grounded in international law and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons, and assess durable solutions against its eight criteria, namely: long-term safety, security and freedom of movement; an adequate standard of living; access to livelihoods and employment; restoration of housing, land and property; access to documentation; family reunification; participation in public affairs; and access to effective remedies and justice;**

(b) **Ground reconstruction in comprehensive, displacement-sensitive damage and needs assessments to determine the scale of destruction, identify priorities and inform evidence-based recovery;**

(c) **Ensure that reconstruction is adequately financed, including by integrating displacement into national development frameworks and leveraging existing financing instruments, while ensuring that investment is subject to human rights safeguards;**

(d) **Ensure that reconstruction frameworks do not contain provisions that could coerce internally displaced persons into pursuing certain settlement options over others;**

(e) **Ensure that all stages of reconstruction processes are participatory, inclusive and gender-responsive, including by:**

(i) **Making reconstruction processes and information about them accessible to internally displaced persons, including persons with mobility restrictions, persons with disabilities and older persons, through appropriate technologies and by providing clear and timely information in relevant languages and accessible formats;**

(ii) **Ensuring the meaningful and safe participation of women, children, young people, older persons, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, minorities and others facing intersecting forms of discrimination, including through confidential channels, separate consultations and safeguards against retaliation;**

(iii) **Ensuring access to the documentation necessary to participate meaningfully in reconstruction processes, or simplifying documentation requirements;**

(f) **Establish or strengthen frameworks to resolve housing, land and property issues faced by internally displaced persons, including by:**

(i) **Establishing or re-establishing cadastral and civil registration systems as an integral part of reconstruction;**

(ii) **Recognizing collective, customary and informal tenure, as well as the rights of renters and those in informal settlements;**

(iii) **Adopting flexible evidentiary frameworks for restitution and compensation claims where records have been lost, destroyed or falsified;**

(iv) **Creating dedicated, accessible and adequately resourced dispute resolution mechanisms, complemented by legal aid;**

(v) **Designing housing, land and property resolution mechanisms to prevent renewed displacement, forced evictions and discrimination;**

(g) **Amend or repeal legislation permitting expropriation, redevelopment, reclassification or unreasonable claim deadlines that risk causing forced evictions, and embed specific safeguards against them in reconstruction frameworks, including genuine consultation, adequate notice and legal remedies;**

(h) **Ensure that infrastructure and basic services support durable solutions by addressing the specific needs of internally displaced persons and host communities in urban, peri-urban and rural areas;**

(i) **Prioritize the survey and clearance of landmines and explosive remnants of war as an early recovery priority and a precondition for return to contaminated areas, integrate risk education into early recovery interventions and ensure comprehensive victim assistance;**

(j) **Remove legal and administrative barriers to decent work for internally displaced persons and returnees, including through simplified registration, flexible documentation, skills training matched to local labour market needs, and the extension of social protection;**

(k) **Underpin recovery and reconstruction planning with an early ecological and environmental health assessment, including the systematic testing of soil, water and debris;**

(l) **Promote social cohesion among affected communities, including internally displaced persons, through mechanisms for dialogue, inclusive community development projects and peacebuilding initiatives;**

(m) **Ensure that physical rebuilding is complemented by accountability, transitional justice and reparation frameworks, including measures to clarify the fate and whereabouts of missing persons;**

(n) **Integrate mental health and psychosocial support, the safeguarding of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and inclusive memorialization into reconstruction;**

(o) **Establish accessible, independent, safe and confidential remedy mechanisms to address reconstruction-related harm, and fund legal aid as a structural component of reconstruction;**

(p) **Strengthen data collection and disaggregation and link them to land records, damage assessments, recovery monitoring frameworks and local planning while ensuring that monitoring frameworks include indicators on displacement risk;**

(q) **Integrate prevention into reconstruction by addressing the root causes and drivers of displacement, conducting conflict- and displacement-sensitive analysis and incorporating disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation;**

(r) **Comply, in situations of occupation, with international humanitarian and human rights law, including by ensuring that reconstruction benefits the protected population and is not used to consolidate occupation or effect annexation or demographic change. Occupying Powers should preserve land and civil records and respect housing, land and property rights, facilitate the entry of humanitarian assistance and necessary reconstruction materials and refrain from the unlawful destruction or appropriation of civilian property, the forcible transfer of protected persons and the transfer of their own civilian population into occupied territory.**

78. **The Special Rapporteur recommends that the international community, regional and multilateral organizations, entities of the United Nations system, international financial institutions and donors, in accordance with their respective mandates:**

(a) **Ensure that humanitarian, development and peace programming explicitly addresses all durable solutions pathways and that resource allocation supports internally displaced persons' genuine freedom of choice;**

(b) **Recognize and support the capacities, leadership and collective structures of internally displaced persons and affected communities to engage directly in reconstruction processes and, based on comprehensive context analysis, work with and through national and local governments and community-based organizations while ensuring the participation of persons facing intersecting situations of vulnerability;**

(c) **Support the development and strengthening of national and local capacities for rights-based reconstruction planning, including through financial resources, technical assistance and capacity-building;**

(d) **Prioritize grants and highly concessional financing in fragile and conflict-affected settings, integrate debt sustainability analysis and provide flexible and predictable multi-year funding with indicators related to displacement prevention;**

(e) **Ensure that sanctions regimes and counter-terrorism measures contain effective humanitarian and reconstruction carve-outs, and monitor and address the effects of financial de-risking on reconstruction in affected countries;**

(f) **Include specific safeguards against corruption, elite capture and diversion in financing decisions, including independent oversight, public contract disclosure and accessible grievance mechanisms;**

(g) **Ensure that international financial institutions apply environmental and social safeguard frameworks governing land acquisition, restrictions on land use and involuntary resettlement consistently in reconstruction operations, including for persons without recognized legal rights to land;**

(h) **Ensure that humanitarian, development, peace and disaster risk reduction programmes incorporate a results-based approach linked explicitly to the achievement of durable solutions and to the prevention of internal displacement;**

(i) **Ensure effective coordination, information-sharing and coherence among humanitarian, development, peace and disaster risk reduction actors throughout the response to mass devastation, with complementary efforts proceeding in parallel to support durable solutions and prevent renewed displacement;**

(j) **Ensure that official development assistance supports inclusive, rights-based and displacement-sensitive reconstruction and is responsive to locally identified priorities.**

79. **The Special Rapporteur recommends that non-State armed groups comply with international humanitarian law and the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, including by refraining from displacing civilians except where required for their security or by imperative military reasons, and then only temporarily; refraining from pillage and unlawful destruction of civilian objects and objects indispensable to civilian survival; allowing and facilitating rapid and unimpeded access for humanitarian, mine action and reconstruction actors; and**

refraining from diverting, taxing or conditioning reconstruction assistance or using it as a vehicle for coercion, discrimination, demographic change or forced displacement.

80. **The Special Rapporteur recommends that business enterprises:**

(a) **Design their engagement to create shared economic benefits and opportunities in relation to internally displaced persons, returnees and host communities, with safeguards for transparency, non-discrimination, fair access, privacy and accountability;**

(b) **Conduct human rights due diligence in line with the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights that is enhanced in conflict-affected and high-risk areas, context-sensitive and regularly updated, and responsive to risks of land acquisition, dispossession and forced eviction, and adverse impacts arising through business relationships and companies' influence on conflict dynamics, as well as their potential involvement in adverse human rights impacts through their own activities;**

(c) **Provide for or cooperate in remediation where their actions have caused or contributed to adverse human rights impacts.**