

Evacuation and Repatriation of Migrants in Countries Experiencing Conflict or Natural Disaster

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OVERVIEW

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During crises, many migrants who are in countries affected by conflicts or natural disasters must leave dangerous situations with little planning or foresight. Evacuation to home countries is generally a last resort but may be necessary if migrants cannot remain safely where they are and cannot be relocated to another part of the country experiencing conflict or natural disaster. Return and repatriation—to bring or send back a person to his or her country of origin—is the obvious choice for most of those forced to leave a country experiencing a crisis. The fundamental right to re-enter one’s country of origin is laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as other treaties. For some non-citizens, however, return home may not be possible; they are in the unenviable position of requiring evacuation because of life-threatening conditions in one country, only to find equal or greater risks in their home countries—for example, refugees facing persecution in their home country.

Evacuation can present many challenges for migrants. Migrants often need assistance to obtain lost or confiscated documents, to obtain a release from employment, or to secure permission to exit the host country. They may also require help with transportation and need permission to transit third countries. Refugees and others unable to return home must be relocated in new countries, at least until conditions in the country experiencing a crisis improves. All may require help in recovering assets and property, including outstanding wages after being evacuated or repatriated. They often need assistance in the transit and home countries to address health and psycho-social impacts as well as economic problems stemming from crises.

Large-scale evacuations have been undertaken in both conflict and natural disaster situations. This issue brief discusses efforts made by States, international organizations, private sector actors, and civil society to evacuate and, when appropriate, repatriate migrants. Particular attention is paid in this brief to the importance of establishing, before crises occur, contingency plans and financing mechanisms to support evacuation and, when appropriate, repatriation (as well as reintegration). Contingency plans need to address who is eligible for evacuation, how to communicate warnings, where people should gather, how costs will be covered, to where people will be evacuated, which organizations will be involved and how they will be coordinated, and other actions needed for smooth operations. The brief outlines three potential financing models for evacuation and repatriation: 1) Migrant welfare funds and insurance policies that support the evacuation and repatriation of migrants in the event of a crisis. Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand have created migrant welfare funds, which provide a variety of services to migrants, including emergency evacuation and repatriation assistance. 2) Donor financing through international organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the World Bank.

What is the MICIC Initiative?

The Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) Initiative is a State-led undertaking, co-chaired by the Philippines and the United States, which seeks to improve the ability of States and other stakeholders, to prepare for, respond to, and protect the dignity and rights of migrants caught in countries in situations of acute crisis. When countries experience such crises—conflicts or natural disasters—migrants may not be accounted for in response mechanisms and may need specific support to find safety and rebuild their lives. The Initiative examines the roles and responsibilities of States, civil society, international organizations, the private sector, and migrants before, during, and after a crisis. For more information, visit the MICIC Initiative website at: <http://micicinitiative.iom.int/> or contact: MICICSecretariat@iom.int.

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IOM has established the Migration Emergency Funding Mechanism (MEFM), a revolving fund which helps ensure fast action when migrants must be evacuated. Through the Emergency Repatriation and Livelihood Restoration of Migrant Workers Project, the World Bank lent Bangladesh funds to support return of its citizens from the 2011 conflict in Libya, providing another potentially beneficial financing model. 3) Finally, employers and civil society organizations often facilitate the evacuation and repatriation of migrants with their own resources.

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Migrants living, working, studying, traveling, or transiting abroad may be caught when the country in which they are present experiences a conflict or natural disaster. Individuals may lack the resources necessary to return to their home countries. Evacuation and repatriation are expensive undertakings and funding may be necessary to evacuate migrants and to ensure their safe and dignified return home. To be effective, the evacuation and repatriation process requires the involvement, support, and cooperation of diverse international, national, and local actors, including the private sector.

Migrants affected by conflicts or natural disasters may seek temporary shelter or relocate within the country experiencing the crisis when these are viable options. Evacuation is generally a last resort, used only when there are no options for migrants within the country experiencing a crisis. That said, many migrants may need or prefer to return home. When the civil unrest in Libya began in 2011, some 800,000 migrants left the country. Many sought evacuation or repatriation back to their communities of origin. The timing of such returns is generally determined by the crisis, not the preferences of the migrants. Repatriation may be through formal evacuation programs operated by States or international organizations. Alternatively, employers, universities, or companies specializing in evacuation may assist their employees, students, and clients to return home. Often, returns also occur through the individual initiative and resourcefulness of migrants.

In crisis situations, evacuation and repatriation can be a challenge for migrants. Some migrants may have their own resources or the support of employers, but many will not. Some may have access to valid identity documents, but many will not; their documents may have been confiscated by employers, lost or destroyed during the crisis, or expired during their stay in the host country. Migrants may face challenges obtaining exit visas or other permissions to leave or they may be required to pay exit fees which they cannot afford. They may have assets and property, including savings or outstanding wages that they do not want to abandon. They may fear the loss of their incomes, which they use to support not only themselves, but also their families at home through remittances.

Actors trying to assist migrants also face challenges. The capacity of States to evacuate and repatriate their citizens varies widely. Diplomatic and consular representation varies as well, so migrants may not have access to representatives from their home government in the country experiencing the crisis. Employers and universities may need assistance negotiating evacuation and repatriation of their employees or students, respectively, and many may also lack sufficient resources. Some actors may be unfamiliar with carrying out evacuations and repatriations in crisis situations, and may need assistance from other stakeholders and experts.

Evacuation and repatriation programming must involve a wide range of actors, each providing different types of expertise and funding, in order to address diverse needs. Evacuation and repatriation assistance may be necessary for migrant workers in regular or irregular status, students, tourists, short-term business travelers, and victims of trafficking or smuggled migrants, and each of these groups will have unique needs. The potential that large numbers of migrants may need to return to home countries should be factored into crisis response plans, and States, donors, international organizations, private sector actors, and civil society all need to prepare and assemble the necessary resources and infrastructure to evacuate and repatriate migrants.

At the same time, actors involved in evacuation must recognize that some non-citizens of the country experiencing a crisis can neither remain there nor return home. They may be refugees or asylum seekers who fear return to a country in which they have a well-founded fear of persecution. Or, they may face conflict, natural disasters, epidemics or other life-threatening situations if returned home. Finding alternatives to repatriation for evacuated refugees and migrants will be a challenge in these cases.

Legal and Operational Frameworks and Approaches

Existing frameworks speak to the rights of migrants in the context of evacuation and repatriation. In certain cases, evacuation becomes necessary to protect life, liberty, and security of migrants—rights that are well-established in human rights instruments. Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is explicit in stating that “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.”¹ These fundamental rights are reinforced in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which states: “Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life.”² Although the Covenant allows parties to derogate certain rights in a “public emergency which threatens the life of the nation,” this fundamental right cannot be derogated.³ Other conventions elaborate these rights as they pertain to specific populations. For example, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) states: “States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life.”⁴

Moreover, the UDHR also established that “everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.”⁵ These rights are also reinforced in the ICCPR, which states in Article 12: “Everyone shall be free to leave any country, including his own” and “No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter his own country.”⁶ The 4th Geneva Convention on Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War also includes specific provisions related to non-citizens that affirms, albeit with provisos, their right to exit countries in conflict: “All protected persons who may desire to leave the territory at the outset of, or during a conflict, shall be entitled to do so, unless their departure is contrary to the national interests of the State.”⁷ The Geneva Convention and the CRC pay special attention to the rights of children in conflict, the latter treaty stating: “States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure protection and care of children who are affected by an armed conflict.”⁸ Evacuation and repatriation may be one measure to ensure such protection. Forcible repatriation (refoulement) of refugees is, however, barred by Article 33 of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees regardless of the age of the refugee: “No Contracting State shall expel or return (“refouler”) a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.”⁹ Non-citizens may also be covered under the non-refoulement obligations in the Convention against Torture and other human rights instruments and norms.

Returning migrant workers and their families are also covered under the 1990 Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (MWC). This Convention applies “during the entire migration process of migrant workers and members of their families, which comprises preparation for migration, departure, transit and the entire period of stay and remunerated activity in the State of employment as well as return to the State of origin or the State of habitual residence.”¹⁰ The MWC also reiterates that “Migrant workers and members of their families shall have the right at any time to enter and remain in their State of origin.”¹¹ It guarantees that “Upon the termination of their stay in the State of employment, migrant workers and members of their families shall have the right to transfer their earnings and savings and, in accordance with the applicable legislation of the States concerned, their personal effects and belongings.”¹² While it may be impossible during evacuation in crisis situations to achieve such transfers, the right to these transfers remains in effect after departure.

As crises present special challenges for return, IOM’s Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF) provides specific guidance. The MCOF takes into account migration management tools to supplement humanitarian response for migrants, including “technical assistance for humanitarian border management; liaison to ensure that migrants have access to emergency consular services; referral systems for persons with special protection needs; and the organization of safe evacuations for migrants to return home, which is often the most effective method of protection for migrants caught in crises.”¹³ The MCOF creates a framework through which IOM and its partners can collaborate to address the needs of migrants in crises, identifying specific sectors of assistance which are useful for different types of needs. While the MCOF addresses a wide range of needs, from disaster risk reduction efforts to reintegration policy, the sectors of IOM assistance which most specifically address evacuation and repatriation include those related to humanitarian communication assistance, emergency consular assistance and transport assistance for resettlement, repatriation, return of internally displaced persons (IDPs), assisted voluntary return and reintegration, relocation, and emergency transportation.¹⁴

The Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Operational Guidelines on the Protection of Persons in Situations of Natural Disasters (Guidelines) is also relevant to evacuations of migrants during crises. The Guidelines emphasize that “the life, physical integrity and health of persons exposed to imminent risks created by natural disasters, including in particular of persons with specific needs, should be protected, to the maximum extent possible, wherever those persons may be located.”¹⁵ It goes on to say that “if such measures are not sufficient to protect them, the departure of endangered persons from the danger zone should be facilitated.”¹⁶ If they cannot leave by themselves, they should be evacuated but persons unwilling to leave should be forced to evacuate only if it is provided for by law; is absolutely necessary to respond to a serious and imminent threat to their life or health, and there are no less intrusive measures to avert the threat, and those to be evacuated are informed and consulted.¹⁷

Building on the IASC Guidelines, the Comprehensive Guide for Planning Mass Evacuations in Natural Disasters (MEND Guide), prepared by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), IOM, and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), addresses broader themes related to evacuations but includes provisions pertinent to the situation of migrants.¹⁸ Mass evacuations are those in which whole communities, neighborhoods, or geographical areas are affected, creating the need for coordinated responses. The MEND guide emphasizes the need for “participatory development of community/neighbourhood-based disaster risk assessments and evacuation plans, including information in accessible languages and formats on potential evacuation zones, early warning systems and safe shelter.”¹⁹ It also recognizes the need for transport, communications, shelter, relief and protection requirements of populations in potential evacuation zones.

Evacuation of non-citizens in detention presents particular challenges as they are unable to achieve their own departure in times of crisis. Article 9 of the UDHR establishes that “no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention,” a principle also enshrined in article 9 of the ICCPR. Continued detention in the face of life-threatening conditions, such as conflicts or natural disasters, may be considered to be arbitrary. There is no clear guidance in international law, however, as to the rights of detainees or the responsibilities of States with regard to evacuation from the country, except in barring refoulement of those covered by such provisions.

National Practices

National governments and institutions can play a significant role in funding and supporting evacuation and repatriation. Both host and origin countries need to plan for crises and know how to reach migrant or citizen populations (as appropriate) in the event of a natural disaster or conflict.²⁰ Governments play an important role in coordinating movements of people, providing documentation to enable migration, and communicating information about the crisis and available resources.

In this context, countries of origin have set up migrant welfare funds to support the evacuation and repatriation of migrants in case of a crisis. Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand have created migrant welfare funds which provide a variety of services to migrants, including emergency repatriation, loans, and life and medical insurance. These funds take different forms. In the Philippines, a special government agency within the Department of Labor and Employment manages the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA).²¹ The OWWA is a single trust fund pooled through mandatory \$25 membership contributions from foreign employers, land-based and sea-based workers, investment and interest income on these funds, and income from other sources. It is entirely self-funded and receives no budget allocation from the national government.²² The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) provides “on site” welfare services in countries that have a significant Indian population. These services include emergency medical care and air passage to stranded overseas Indians.²³ The Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF) manages the Pakistani fund. Under a 1979 law, all Pakistani migrant workers automatically become eligible for OPF membership and are required to pay a fee of Rs.2,000 (\$20). They remain OPF members as long as they stay abroad and continue to be eligible for OPF services for a period of three years after their permanent return to Pakistan.²⁴

Following the 2011 Libyan crisis, government delegates at the 2011 Fourth Ministerial Consultations of the Labour Sending Countries in Asia, known as the Colombo Process, recommended the development of standard operating procedures for the protection of migrant workers in complex emergencies. These would provide for the institutional structures and contingency planning required to address crisis situations in the future, providing detailed

information on *in situ* protection measures, relocation, evacuation, and repatriation. The Colombo Process member States also recommended establishing a formal funding mechanism to ensure a rapid and structured response during times of crisis, rather than follow the flash-appeal process used following a humanitarian crisis.²⁵ The Colombo Process self-funding mechanism was brought to the Ministerial Meeting in 2016 for final endorsement.²⁶

Collaboration of military and civilian forces among and within States is important in ensuring proper use of resources when evacuations require military support. The North American Treaty Organization (NATO) promulgated the Allied Joint Doctrine for Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations, which emphasizes that such evacuations require “that diplomatic and military elements work as a team.”²⁷ It recognizes that the responsibility for evacuations rests with individual NATO members but anticipates that NATO itself may be involved in such enterprises. Individual governments have issued similar guidance. For example, the United States military promulgated its rules for “Noncombatant Evacuation Operations” in 2015, describing such operations as the evacuation of US citizens and nationals and other designated persons “whose lives are in danger from locations in a foreign nation to an appropriate safe haven.”²⁸ A *Memorandum of Agreement between the Departments of State and Defense on the Protection and Evacuation of US Citizens and Nationals and Designated Other Persons from Threatened Areas Overseas* spells out more specific roles and responsibilities for carrying out these operations.²⁹



Chadians being evacuated from conflict in the Central African Republic 2014 © IOM Craig Murphy

International Organizations and Institutions

International organizations can also play an important role in funding, executing, and providing expertise in situations where national governments do not have the capacity to manage evacuation and repatriation of citizens. In 2012, the IOM established the MEFM, a revolving loan fund, which bridges the gap in time between when emergencies occur and when donor funding is received. The funds can be used to deploy staff and to cover the costs of evacuation and other life-saving endeavors. It assumes, however, that other sources of funding will be forthcoming so the fund can be replenished.³⁰

Between February and November 2011, nearly 800,000 migrants fled the violent civil war in Libya to Tunisia, Egypt, Chad, Algeria, Niger, Greece, and Italy. Forty-five percent of migrants had no means of returning to their countries of origin. By the end of November 2011, IOM arranged for the repatriation of 217,060 migrants through ground, sea, and air transportation.³¹

Of the migrants leaving Libya, the largest return movement outside of Africa was to Bangladesh.³² The World Bank provided a one-time cash grant to help meet the immediate needs and support livelihoods restoration for Bangladeshi workers who fled from Libya after the conflict erupted in 2011. The Emergency Repatriation and Livelihood Restoration of Migrant Workers Project supported the government of Bangladesh to repatriate its migrant workers, who had fled the ongoing conflict in Libya, from camps in neighboring countries. The project also provided a one-time cash grant as a transitional safety net measure to help Bangladeshi migrants meet immediate financing costs of repatriation and begin the process of livelihood restoration. With the aid of IOM, approximately 30,000 Bangladeshis had been repatriated through this project by April 2011.³³ In 2014, IOM played a significant role in helping migrants repatriate from the Central African Republic (CAR) in the midst of conflict. In March, IOM organized evacuation flights from Cameroon, which was hosting many people who had fled CAR, to Mali to help 672 Malians stranded by the violence. The flights were funded through IOM's revolving MEFM.³⁴ IOM also provided support through the MEFM to Chadian migrants returning to Chad, providing transportation to government transit centers, registration, food, non-food items, basic healthcare, and onward transportation to their communities of origin.³⁵

In 2014, IOM also assisted 1,950 Sudanese returnees fleeing emergencies in other countries, including 110 fleeing the crisis in CAR, 54 fleeing the conflict in Syria, and 170 fleeing Libya. IOM also assisted 1,554 Sudanese migrants who were expelled from Chad following conflicts in the Tibesti gold mines. IOM used cross-border land transportation, commercial flights, trucks, escorting migrants by foot to return migrants to Sudan. IOM maintained mobile tracking hubs in displacement and return areas, monitoring population movement trends and conducting registration and verification. IOM also provided return assistance for those returning, including medical screenings, onward transportation to migrants' final destination, food, and water.³⁶

A number of other financing mechanisms have been used to support repatriation of migrants from countries experiencing crises. The mass displacement of migrants resulting from Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1991 led to a UN Security Council resolution that required Iraq to pay compensation for losses and damage suffered by foreign governments, individuals, and corporations. The UN Compensation Commission (UNCC) was established to hear all claims, including those from migrants who had been forced to repatriate. Migrants forced to leave as a result of the conflict were eligible to file for compensation for losses sustained during their evacuation and repatriation. An expedited process was put in place to hear most of these claims. Typically, the compensation for those who were evacuated was \$2,500 for individuals and \$4,000 for families. If the applicant agreed not to make any other claims to compensation, the amount was raised to \$4,000 for individuals and \$8,000 for families. Under the expedited process, the applicants only needed to provide evidence of residence in Kuwait or Iraq at the time of the invasion.³⁷ Usually, governments represented their citizens during the claims process. For example, Pakistan's OPF administered more than \$300 million in compensation to Pakistani workers evacuated from Iraq and Kuwait during the 1991 conflict. Egypt's Central Bank worked with the UNCC to gain compensation for Egyptians for the non-transfer of remittances by Iraqi banks to beneficiaries in Egypt. In other cases, international organizations, including the UNHCR, the UN Relief and Works Administration for Palestinian Refugees and the UN Development Program, were authorized to represent those unable or unwilling to file under the authority of their countries of nationality. In all, more than 920,000 individual claims, mostly from migrant workers who were evacuated from Iraq, were filed and more than 850,000 were verified and received compensation of US\$3.149 million.³⁸

These partnerships between national governments and international organizations are extremely important in funding and supporting evacuation and repatriation. In partnership, States and international organizations have greater financial resources and improved logistical capacity to ensure safe and dignified return.

Private Sector and Civil Society

The private sector can provide resources that the international community or national governments lack, and these different sectors can work in cooperation to facilitate evacuation and repatriation. A wide range of private sector actors have been involved in return of their workers, and this source of funding and support is crucial. Private corporations are an important source of information for their employees about the risks of remaining or returning home. Employers often take responsibility for evacuating their personnel working abroad. Too often, however, this assistance applies only to citizens of the countries in which the corporations are registered or is limited to

executives, managers, and professional staff. Lower-wage migrant workers may not be afforded assistance from companies for whom they work, particularly when such migrants are hired locally rather than recruited from their home countries.

Private sector actors can play an important role in supporting safe and efficient evacuation and repatriation. Companies should plan for transportation for the evacuation or repatriation of employees; safe accommodation in transit and at destination; security of employees in transit; healthcare facilities and medical escorts in transit and in the country of origin; communication; financial services, including ways to cover payrolls of those who are evacuated; and liaising with airline companies on agreements to reschedule without extra cost return flights in the event of a crisis.³⁹ Qantas Airlines, for example, sent planes to Thailand, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives following the 2004 tsunami to evacuate Australian tourists, without regard to which airline passengers had booked their original flights.⁴⁰ The company also sent its medical staff to these locations to aid in the evacuation of passengers who may have been hurt during the natural disaster. Also during the tsunami, which affected the resort area in Phuket, Thailand and two islands in the Maldives, the hotel chain Club Med airlifted its guests and employees out of the areas immediately affected by the tsunami. More than a thousand international guests were reported safe and accounted for through the coordination of Club Med crisis teams working from a regional office in Singapore and its headquarters in Paris.⁴¹

The JW Marriott Hotel in Tripoli, which opened just a few days before the 2011 crisis began in Libya, also helped to organize safe evacuation for guests and migrant employees in the face of the conflict. The evacuation was coordinated by the Marriott regional operations teams and the senior leadership crisis team at US headquarters. Regular communications and flow of information between these two teams helped to make the evacuation safe. All migrant employees were moved from the workers compound to the hotel while the evacuation was being organized, and hotel leadership distributed phones so that workers were able to communicate with each other and their families. The hotel also had sufficient cash to ensure the payment of salaries for hotel security. Hotel management ensured that migrant employees were able to confirm to where they would be evacuated and that they had identification documents and exit visas. For those employees whose passports were held by the Libyan government as part of the standard practice of registration, exit visas were obtained. During the evacuation, the migrant employees faced several obstacles; Marriott chartered a plane from Royal Jordanian Airlines and was able to obtain a landing permit for the plane in Tripoli, but the confusion at the airport on the day of the evacuation meant that exit procedures at the airport took approximately ten hours to complete, and at the pre-arranged transit stop in Amman, Jordan, some of the employees required transit visas for Jordan. Marriott was able to arrange assistance from Jordanian immigration officials in advance, who helped to expedite the issuance of visas. Marriott stayed in contact with the evacuated employees, and all of them were offered positions in other Marriott locations.⁴²



JW Tripoli Marriott Hotel staff at airport for evacuation to Jordan in 2011 © Marriott

Civil society also plays an important role with regard to evacuation and repatriation. In the country experiencing the crisis, civil society organizations help migrants obtain information needed to make informed decisions about remaining *in situ*, relocating within the country, or returning home. They also provide crucial assistance to migrants pursuing each of these options. The role of civil society is particularly important in assisting irregular migrants who need assistance to evacuate or repatriate. During the massive floods in Thailand in 2011, civil society was critical in advocating for protection of migrants from Myanmar, providing them food and other assistance, and supporting their evacuation and repatriation.⁴³ Civil society organizations also work with communities of origin to integrate returnees into schools, health care systems, and jobs. They also assist returnees re-migrate to countries in the post-crisis phase and to other potential destinations.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

Evacuating and repatriating migrants in the context of crises requires cooperation among diverse international, national, and local actors, including the private sector at all phases of a crisis—before, during, and in the aftermath. Although evacuation and repatriation is generally a last resort to be used only if migrants cannot remain *in situ* or relocate within the country experiencing a crisis, evacuation and repatriation is often a necessary response when the safety of migrants would otherwise be at risk.

Contingency planning is essential to guarantee effective evacuation and repatriation. Before a crisis occurs, country of origin governments should know the location of their citizens living abroad and have a means of contacting them in case a crisis requires evacuation or other forms of repatriation assistance. They need to spell out the terms under which they will carry out evacuations, including who is eligible for evacuation (e.g., citizens only or non-citizen family members), how the costs of evacuation will be covered (e.g., are migrants expected to repay the costs), and how information about evacuations will be shared (e.g., through texts, emails, social media, websites). Agreements among governments can be negotiated as well, with rules established regarding the evacuation of each other's citizens during crises. In the case of conflict, in particular, agreements on evacuation need to set out the ground rules for engagement of military actors and the use of force in hostile environments.

Similarly, host country governments should know about migrant populations and provide them with information about crises and emergency resources, disseminating information in relevant languages to improve the ability of migrants to make informed decisions about evacuation and repatriation, including available transportation, safe routes, and required documentation to exit and transit other countries. These governments as well as donor governments also play an important role in providing resources that enable migrants to return home safely and with dignity.

Evacuation and repatriation is most effective when host, origin, and donor governments work together to coordinate crisis preparedness and contingency plans including plans for evacuation, when needed, and voluntary assisted return and reintegration of migrants. Governments, the private sector, and civil society should work together to ensure that migrants can recover their back wages and lost property. These plans should also spell out referral mechanisms to international organizations, such as the UNHCR, if non-citizens are in need of evacuation but cannot return to their home countries.

In previous crises, funding for evacuation and repatriation has come from multiple sources and most fall into one of three prevailing models. The first uses welfare funds or insurance policies to support evacuation and emergency repatriation. These funds and policies have been used to finance evacuation and repatriation of large numbers of migrants affected by a crisis. The financing of these welfare funds and insurance policies can come from migrants, employers, or national governments. The second relies on donor funding, usually through international organizations, such as IOM or the World Bank, to enable evacuation and repatriation. In the third model, the private sector has assumed the financial cost of evacuating and repatriating their staff and others for whom they assume responsibility. All of these models can play a role in ensuring adequate resources are available. During the pre-crisis planning phase, assessments should be carried out as to the feasibility of each model for financing potential evacuation and repatriation activities. Full funding for IOM's MEFM, for example, would help make available additional funds that can be activated early enough to enable safe evacuation and repatriation of migrants.

TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Evacuation: In situations of urgency where risk is imminent, the rapid physical movement of people away from the immediate threat or impact of a hazard to a safer place.⁴⁴

Reintegration: Empowerment and protection of returnees by providing them with the necessary tools and assistance for their reinsertion into the society of their country of origin, while generally contributing to the sustainability of return.⁴⁵

Repatriation: To bring or send back a person to his or her country of origin.

Return: means return to the country of origin, including through evacuation or repatriation.

AUTHORS

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- ¹⁵ Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement and the Interagency Standing Committee (2011) IASC Operational Guidelines on the Protection of Persons in Situations of Natural Disasters, p.15, http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/reports/2011/1/06-operational-guidelines-nd/0106_operational_guidelines_nd.pdf
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ Ibid., p.16.
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