

GUIDELINE 1: Track information on conflicts and natural disasters, and potential impact on migrants

To protect migrants, States, private sector actors, international organizations, and civil society need to understand risks and exposure to crises in regions, countries, and localities. They also need to understand the ways in which crises can affect people, including migrants, and their assets. The period before the onset of a full-scale conflict or natural disaster is a critical time to undertake efforts to protect and assist people, including migrants, and to secure essential resources and infrastructure.

Not all conflicts and natural disasters are entirely unpredictable. Conflicts may be preceded by various signs, including protests, xenophobic violence, and civil unrest. Local actors, close to the source of an impending conflict, and with the experience to interpret signs and events, may often possess the most timely and accurate information. They can be an important source of knowledge for others.

Understanding regional, national, and local natural disaster risks and overlaying this information with information on the location and characteristics of migrants can inform preparation and response efforts. As in conflict situations, local sources of knowledge may also be important. While many natural disasters occur with great immediacy, different regions, countries, and localities are prone to specific types of natural disasters. Those related to weather events often occur with some forewarning. Some are cyclical and recurrent and the warning signs will be familiar to those who have experienced them before. A number of early warning systems exist to forecast and monitor natural disasters and alert stakeholders and communities of impending crises.

Sample Practices

- *Early warning systems for natural disasters adapted and tested to reach migrants in multiple languages.*
- *Assessments to understand the potential effects of natural disasters on migrant communities and their assets.*
- *Inclusion of migrant characteristics in disaster vulnerability assessments by analyzing how factors, such as immigration status, language proficiency, or gender reduce access to information, resources, or protection.*
- *Community-based risk assessments that engage migrants in the identification of natural disasters, vulnerability, and capacities.*
- *Inclusion of migrants' presence and vulnerability in early warning and early action mechanisms.*
- *Structures to share information on developing civil unrest or conflict.*

PRACTICES TO IMPLEMENT GUIDELINE 1: Track information on conflict and natural disasters, and the potential impact on migrants

States

Access to information on natural disasters and conflicts

States collect, analyze, and disseminate knowledge on natural disasters and conflicts and on risks faced by communities. They can use such data to develop and send warnings to citizens and migrants to prepare them in the event of a crisis. States could obtain information from other States and develop common understandings of risks by establishing arrangements for bilateral, regional, and international cooperation, access, and use of data and information.

Host States

Mapping migrants' exposure to natural disasters

Understanding the potential impacts of natural disasters on communities and their resources, including migrant communities and their assets, contributes to effective, targeted preparedness. The collection and analysis of information on migrants' exposure to natural disasters may be based on:

- Compilations of existing sources of data on exposure to natural disasters, including maps, disaster-loss databases, risk atlases, and data on migrants' presence, including immigration records and data from employers, recruiters, placement agencies, and tour operators;
- Multi-level analyses, that encompass nation-wide distribution and local-level assessments, in particular in high immigration areas;
- Consideration of long-term, seasonal, weekly, and daily trends as a key element of migrants' presence and distribution;
- Collaboration among relevant actors, including disaster management, immigration, and consular authorities.

Migrant characteristics in natural disaster vulnerability assessments

To understand potential impacts of natural disasters on migrants, risk assessments should capture characteristics of migrants that result in vulnerability in the face of such crises. This includes:

- Collecting and analyzing past natural disaster losses to identify patterns of vulnerability in high immigration, disaster-affected communities;
- Integrating data on language proficiency, immigration status, communication avenues, local networks, and the ways migrants respond to emergencies into vulnerability and risk assessment tools and analyzing whether and how these factors reduce access to information, resources, or protection during disasters.

Community-based risk assessments

At-risk populations, including migrants, can help produce assessments of natural disaster risk and should be involved in the identification of risks, vulnerability, and capacities. Community-based processes to collect and compile relevant information are low-cost, produce a detailed understanding of local patterns, and promote awareness of risks within communities. Such processes could include:

- Engaging migrants or migrant representatives to assess natural disaster risk and making sure they understand and support the purpose of the exercise;
- Fostering widespread dialogue, in particular with migrants and other minorities, who might be marginalized;
- Taking stock of and leveraging local capacities relevant for reducing risks;
- Respecting community views in the definition of priorities and follow-up actions;
- Respecting diversity of language, culture, and communication methods among migrants.

Incorporation of migrant observations in crisis monitoring

In setting up monitoring and forecasting systems, stakeholders can incorporate migrant community-based observations. To incorporate migrant information, States may:

- Reach out to migrant communities to explain early warning systems and solicit their cooperation;
- Provide training on recognizing indicators that are relevant to early warning of natural disasters and conflicts, particularly indicators on which migrants may be particularly knowledgeable (e.g., increases in violent attacks against minorities);
- Enable migrants to provide early warning information in their own language.

Early warning and alert systems for natural disasters adapted to reach migrants

Early warning systems in host States should be adapted to overcome migrants' conditions of vulnerability, such as limited language capabilities, lack of trust for authorities, differences in risk awareness and perceptions, and differences in access to media and communication channels. To adapt early warning systems, States could:

- Translate warnings into languages spoken by migrants through automated translation or by using bilingual workers or rosters of translators;
- Modify warnings to use clear, simple language, avoiding terms and idioms migrants may not understand, and providing specific information on how migrants can access assistance and services;
- Use media and communication channels that are used and accessed by migrants, including State of origin sources;
- Disseminate and validate warnings locally, including through door-to-door visits or confirmation of warnings by actors whom migrants trust.

States of Origin

Mechanisms to share conflict or natural disaster analysis among stakeholders

States of origin can monitor and assess risks for citizens abroad, in particular by focusing on major countries of destination. Mechanisms to regularly share and exchange conflict or natural disaster analysis with other actors, including private sector actors and civil society, can facilitate informed decision-making. Measures to facilitate information sharing include:

- Establishing a central network involving State authorities, employers, recruiters, and other private sector actors, and civil society to monitor and exchange information on risks abroad;
- Establishing national or regional forums bringing together consular personnel with other relevant actors present in the host State to share timely information about security issues of mutual concern that pertain to citizens abroad in the context of crises;
- Creating a website to provide information on conflicts and natural disasters and links to other relevant websites, such as consulates and early warning systems.

International Organizations

Inter-agency early warning and early action mechanisms

Early warning, early action, and other crisis monitoring systems used by organizations could systematically integrate information on the presence and conditions of migrants. Migrants and migrant groups can contribute to the collection and analysis of relevant data. This information can be useful for analyzing risks for migrant populations and for informing preparation, including contingency plans. Relevant information may include:

- Number of migrants;
- Nationalities;
- Locations;
- Demographic profile, gender, and age breakdown;
- Data on the immigration status of migrants, including those in an irregular immigration situation;
- Vulnerable groups of migrants, including victims of trafficking, children, and disabled migrants;
- Information on risks that may affect migrants disproportionately, such as specific labor sectors.

Civil Society

Input from local civil society

Local civil society actors often have first-hand knowledge of incipient conflicts or natural disasters as well as knowledge on potential impacts on migrants. To incorporate civil society

information into early warning systems, stakeholders could:

- Reach out to local civil society to explain early warning systems and solicit their cooperation in obtaining and relaying information;
- Provide training on identifying indicators that are relevant to early warning of natural disasters and conflict, including indicators that occur at a community level, on which civil society may be particularly knowledgeable (e.g., increases in attacks against minorities);
- Provide multiple means through which to communicate information about emerging crises;
- Incorporate feedback mechanisms to ensure civil society receive early warnings of crises that affect them and migrant communities.