

GUIDELINE 10: Facilitate migrants' ability to move to safety

In the immediacy of a conflict or natural disaster, migrants, like many other affected populations, will seek to flee to safety by relocating within the host State to areas unaffected by the crisis, across borders to States of transit as a temporary haven, or back to States of origin. Normal immigration processes are disrupted by crises and States may need to clarify how disruptions affect such processes.

Migrants may need support to reach safety. Identity and travel documents can be destroyed, lost, or left behind in the chaos or intensity of a crisis. Some migrants, particularly victims of trafficking or migrants in other exploitative situations, may have had their identity and travel documents confiscated. Yet others may have arrived in the host State without authorization and never possessed valid documentation.

Access to valid identity and travel documents is crucial for migrants seeking to cross international borders to escape harm. Migrants may be required to present such documents in order to flee to safety within the host State or to obtain assistance. States of origin depend on identity and travel documents to determine citizenship and to assist citizens to evacuate or return to their homes.

Migrants seeking safety may face barriers in meeting visa requirements, securing immigration exit visas, paying immigration fees or penalties for overstay, and fulfilling entry requirements (particularly in States of transit). Migrants' ability to move to safety may be limited by visa and work permits that restrict them to particular geographic areas or employers. Waiving restrictions or lifting penalties for violating restrictions during a conflict or natural disaster can help save lives and improve migrants' access to help.

In addition to dangers in a crisis that prevent all affected populations from fleeing (insecure areas, blocked ports of exit, destroyed transportation infrastructure), migrants in detention are particularly vulnerable. If custodians of detention facilities flee their posts, migrant detainees may be unable to get out of harm's way and access humanitarian assistance.

Sample Practices

- *Waivers or exceptions to exit, stay, and entry requirements.*
- *Timely issuance of laissez-passer and replacement of other identity and travel documents.*
- *Deployment of consular assistance teams to borders, airports, or other transit points.*
- *Provision of temporary or humanitarian protection status for migrants.*
- *Evacuation plans for detention facilities and migrant shelters.*
- *Advocacy with and among States on keeping borders open to facilitate movement to safety.*