



MIGRANTS IN COUNTRIES IN CRISIS INITIATIVE

SAVE LIVES. INCREASE PROTECTION. DECREASE VULNERABILITY. IMPROVE RESPONSE.

Newsletter N°1, July 2015



Bus convoy transporting 243 Ethiopian migrants returning from Yemen on their way to Ethiopia
© IOM Djibouti 2015

CO-CHAIRS WELCOME

By **Imelda M. Nicolas**, *Cabinet-level Secretary of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas under the Office of the President of the Philippines* & **Suzanne Sheldon**, *Director of the Office of International Migration, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, U.S. Department of State*

The Governments of the Philippines and the United States are honored to be co-chairing the Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) initiative. Currently, 10% of the Philippine population lives and works overseas, spread out in more than 200 countries. This makes the safety and protection of the rights of overseas Filipinos a key national concern and a core pillar of the Philippines' foreign policy. Many Filipinos work in countries that have been hit by crises, whether due to disasters or armed conflicts, and despite good policy and planning by our government, we do not always have the capacity to ensure each migrant's safety.

No country is immune to the consequences of crises, as Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy in the United States, the Tohoku triple disaster in Japan, and the current crisis in Yemen so vividly demonstrate. With nearly every country in the world the host and home to migrants, humanitarian responses to acute crises call for coordination and partnerships among countries of origin, host and transit countries, employers, recruiters, international organizations, and civil society - including diaspora associations and migrants themselves - in order to ensure the safety of migrants and the protection of their rights. A non-binding, state-led approach to identify practices that better assist and protect migrants in countries experiencing a crisis can bring together the many creative and innovative measures currently being pursued on an ad hoc basis in various parts of the world. In our mobile world, in which migration is a continuing phenomenon and an important source of opportunity and human development for millions of people, we can and must work together to make migration safe.

The Philippines and the United States are honored to lead this initiative with the assistance of a superb Working Group comprised of Australia, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, and the European Commission, the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of International Migration, and the Special Representative of the Secretary General for International Migration. Together, we can help save lives, reduce vulnerabilities and improve outcomes for migrants and their host and home communities.

ABOUT MICIC

The MICIC initiative is led by the Philippines and the United States of America as co-chairs, in consultation with a small Working Group composed of Australia, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, the European Commission, IOM, UNHCR, Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of International Migration, and the Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for International Migration.

Funding for the MICIC initiative is generously provided by the United States of America, the European Commission, and Australia.

IOM serves as the MICIC Secretariat.

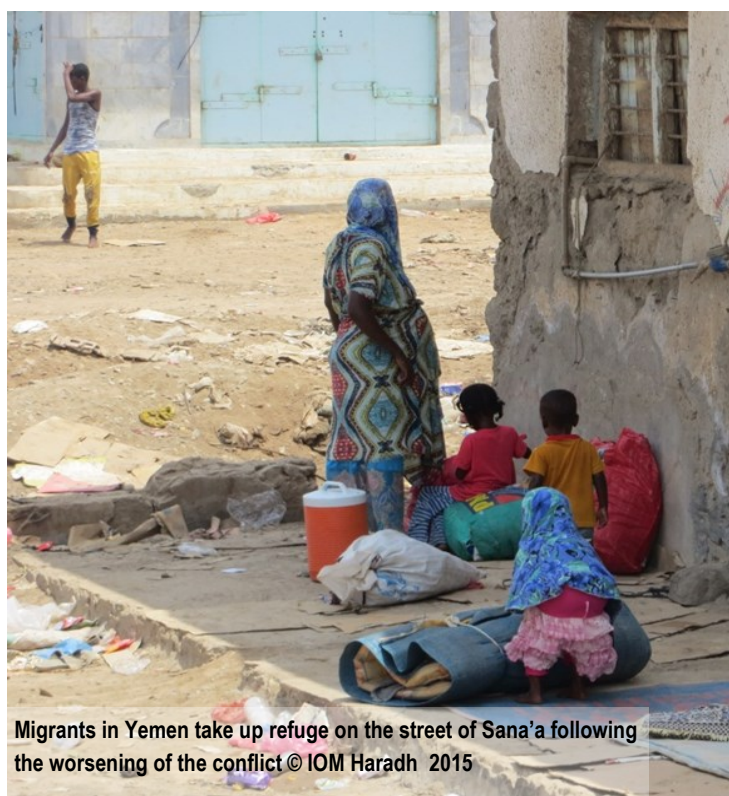
The outcome of the initiative will be the production of non-binding, voluntary Principles, Guidelines, and Effective Practices to better prepare for, respond to, and address the longer term consequences of migrants caught in countries experiencing a conflict or disasters.

By **Sir Peter Sutherland**, *UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on International Migration*

Throughout human history, people have migrated to improve their prospects and the lives of their families. Today, with improved communication and transport, migration has become even more prevalent. Almost 3% of the world's people live outside of their birthplace. Millions cross national borders to work, study, or join their families. Others are forced from their homes by conflict or disasters and seek safety and livelihoods in a new country. Both migrants and refugees can and do make great contributions to their new communities all over the world.

Yet these migrants and refugees are very often forgotten when a crisis - war or environmental crisis or natural disaster - strikes. Migrants have traditionally not been considered in emergency preparedness planning or in humanitarian responses, despite their serious and unique vulnerabilities in crisis situations.

During the 2011 Libyan crisis, millions of migrants were caught in the middle of civil war, and more than 220,000 were evacuated by IOM and other agencies. This brought attention to the special needs of migrants caught in crises and planted the seeds for some new thinking about how to organize international collaboration to ensure that migrants do not 'fall between the cracks' when it comes to humanitarian responses. The MICIC initiative is designed to address the gaps in protection of migrants. It does this through bringing together the ideas and expertise of national authorities, international entities, and civil society to develop a practical and realistic set of guidelines for attention to migrant needs during emergencies. I am confident that the MICIC discussions and the resulting guidelines will be important as states continue to assume leadership and address the gaps in protection for migrants.



Migrants in Yemen take up refuge on the street of Sana'a following the worsening of the conflict © IOM Haradh 2015

TIMELINE OF CONSULTATIONS

IGC PLUS CONSULTATION
Geneva, 2-3 February 2015

**REGIONAL CONSULTATION FOR SOUTH,
EAST AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA**
Manila, 23-24 March 2015

**BRIEFING FOR PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE
UNITED NATIONS**
Geneva, 17 April 2015

**REGIONAL CONSULTATION FOR
EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA**
Brussels, 25-26 June 2015

**REGIONAL CONSULTATION FOR
NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST**
TBC, 8-9 October 2015

PRIVATE SECTOR CONSULTATION
Geneva, 2-3 December 2015

**REGIONAL CONSULTATION FOR WEST
AND CENTRAL AFRICA**
TBC, 7-8 December 2015

CIVIL SOCIETY CONSULTATION
Geneva, 28-29 January 2016

**REGIONAL CONSULTATION FOR EAST
AND SOUTHERN AFRICA**
TBC, February 2016

**INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
CONSULTATION**
Geneva, 16-17 March 2016

**REGIONAL CONSULTATION FOR
CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA**
TBC, April 2016

* Civil Society Organizations organize parallel regional MICIC consultations prior to the governmental meetings, to which their representatives participate as standing invitees.

** EC/DEVCO is funding the six dedicated MICIC regional consultations, assisted by ICMPD.

© IOM, 2015

By **Michele Klein Solomon**, *Director of the MICIC Secretariat, IOM*

IOM is honored to serve as the Secretariat for the MICIC initiative, supporting the state-led process of inclusive consultations and the development of principles, guidelines and effective practices to better prepare for, respond to and address the longer term implications for migrants, and their home and host communities, of migrants caught in countries experiencing a crisis. This work builds on IOM's years of operational experience rescuing migrants in crisis to safety, the reflection IOM did following the 2011 Libya crisis which led to the development of the IOM Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF) -- focusing on interventions and actions that can be taken pre-crisis, during a crisis and post-crisis to better protect and assist migrants, the IOM International Dialogue on Migration dedicated to this theme in 2012, and the endorsement by IOM Member States of the MCOF the same year.

IOM fully supports both the need for and the approach of the state-led MICIC initiative, and is pleased to see that the consultations that have taken place to date have already generated a rich repository of innovative practices and ideas addressed to each of the three key phases, and from a wide range of actors, including countries of origin, transit and destination, as well as the private sector, partner international and civil society organizations.

It is already clear from the first consultations that several key common themes are emerging:

- The better protected migrant's rights are in normal times, the more resilient and able to help themselves they will be in times of crisis.
- Pre-crisis preparedness and planning -- specifically and explicitly integrating migrants and their particular needs and vulnerabilities in disaster preparedness and management plans and programs -- is critical. This may be the single most important way to save lives and protect rights.



- Migrants are not simply victims but also agents of their own protection, and they and their networks are often the first responders when crisis hits. They need to be recognized and empowered.
- Communication and coordination are essential -- first and foremost with and on behalf of migrants; between and within governments at the local, national, regional and global levels, and between ministries and officials responsible for, amongst others, consular assistance and protection, disaster response, migration, development cooperation, etc.; with private sector entities, including employers and recruiters of migrants; with international organizations including IOM, UNHCR, ICRC, IFRC; ILO, etc.; and with civil society, including migrant and diaspora associations.
- The issues involved in the MICIC initiative need to be seen and addressed in a development context, as they bear directly on the human development of individuals and their ability to live safe and productive lives, as well as on the socio-economic development of their home and host countries.

INTEGRATING IN RELATED WORK AND INITIATIVES

The integration of migrants in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

By **Lorenzo Guadagno**, *Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Expert, IOM*

The explicit inclusion of migrants in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) 2015-2030 was the subject of a lively debate throughout the consultations leading up to the Sendai Conference: human mobility was largely considered an unavoidable, yet politically sensitive, issue. The newly established Framework identifies migrants as a key group that should be involved in, and can contribute to, the design and implementation of DRR policies and actions (paragraphs 7 and 36). It also recommends improving the capacity of, and resources available to, local authorities to include migrants in risk management planning (paragraph 27.h).

These references reflect the growing attention by the international community to the specific vulnerabilities migrants might face in the

immediate term and in the aftermath of natural hazards, as well as the increased interest in better understanding and harnessing migrants' potential contribution to the resilience of home and host communities. These points were consistently conveyed by a number of governments throughout the consultation process, not least through a panel discussion on "Building the resilience of migrants in disaster situations", supported by the MICIC Secretariat, the Philippines and Bangladesh, which took place as part of the Sendai World Conference program.

While the SFDRR is not a legally-binding text, these provisions lay the ground for more systematic efforts at local, national, and international levels, to reduce migrants' vulnerability to disasters. A number of measures can be concretely adopted to this aim, including: pre-departure risk-awareness and preparedness in countries of origin; development of linguistically and culturally appropriate preparedness, response and recovery systems in countries of destination; proactive efforts to involve migrants in risk management bodies in host communities, including to leverage their knowledge and resources for resilience-building; and improved opportunities for formal employment in reconstruction and in disaster-affected destination sites. The SFDRR 2015-2030 is available in multiple languages at www.wcdrr.org/preparatory/post2015.

Focus on the current crisis in Yemen and its implications for migrants

By **Mike Gray**, Head of the Resettlement and Movement Management Division & **Vincent Houver**, Head of the Preparedness and Response Division at IOM's Department of Operations and Emergencies

Yemen hosts a significant number of migrants and refugees whose lives and security have been heavily affected by the current conflict. Yemen is experiencing the fourth month of a severe humanitarian crisis which has plunged the country into chaos, making an already destitute and food insecure population more vulnerable. As has been the case in virtually every conflict and disaster setting of the past few years, migrants are among the most exposed to violence and threats to their lives. IOM is running a life-saving, emergency evacuation operation in a particularly challenging environment. Three aspects make this response unique and extremely complex:

1. The extreme vulnerability of migrants and refugees in Yemen, many of whom are essentially trapped within the country's borders, and whose return back to their countries of origin poses important protection concerns in the case of refugees and practical dilemmas for the humanitarian community. Those who left their countries in search of economic opportunities are reluctant to return to fragile countries leaving everything behind – even more so when they have created a family in Yemen.
2. The operational challenges posed by an evacuation operation run in the midst of a conflict zone, where institutions and administrations are disrupted and logistical arrangements (such as



providing a safe zone for migrants in transit, negotiating landing permits for planes, clarifying documentation requirements for migrants and families holding multiple nationalities) are extremely challenging.

3. The protection of migrants and the delivery of assistance inside the country, where humanitarian access remains limited and there are no well-established mechanisms in the current humanitarian architecture to meet the full extent of migrants' emergency needs, in addition to evacuation assistance.

IOM is encouraged by the growing recognition that migrants face unique challenges in accessing assistance when they find themselves in locations experiencing conflict and disaster, and hopes that it will lead both governments and humanitarian stakeholders to reinforce their commitment to identifying solutions to improve migrants' safety in such circumstances.

MICIC TERMS AND CONCEPTS

How does the initiative define 'crisis'?

This initiative focuses on two types of crises whose magnitude demands a significant humanitarian response by the authorities of the country experiencing a crisis and/or by the international community: those triggered by (1) natural disasters (e.g. hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, etc.); and/or by (2) conflict (e.g. civil unrest, generalized violence, international or non-international armed conflict). A crisis can affect the whole country or parts of it, as in a natural disaster limited to one locality.

Subscribe to this Newsletter at

<http://micicinitiative.iom.int/connect/join-newsletter>

ENGAGE IN THE MICIC INITIATIVE

Share your practice

The MICIC Secretariat would like to invite interested persons and entities to share their notable practices, tools and innovative ideas for protecting and assisting migrants in countries experiencing a crisis. Inputs will contribute to the Initiative's knowledge gathering component.

As a consultative and collaborative process, the MICIC Initiative will be collecting information from a variety of sources and through different processes as the basis to produce non-binding, voluntary Principles, Guidelines, and Effective Practices for all relevant stakeholders – governments, international organizations, civil society, the private sector and migrants themselves.

You can contribute to the Initiative by sharing your practice through our [online form](http://micicinitiative.iom.int/) on the MICIC website: <http://micicinitiative.iom.int/>

