

SPECIAL EDITION: Launch of the MICIC Initiative ‘Guidelines to protect migrants in countries experiencing conflict or natural disaster’



WELCOMING THE MICIC INITIATIVE GUIDELINES

By Anne C. Richard, Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration, United States

The successful launch of the MICIC Guidelines this past June represents the culmination of a robust two year consultation process. I was impressed by the commitment by so many people, representatives of States, civil society, international organizations, and the private sector to share promising practices, acknowledge existing challenges, and to offer the expertise we needed to improve our collective response. The MICIC Initiative focused on only certain situations - conflict and natural disaster. However, stakeholders can apply the Guidelines as they see fit. We ask States to consider how to build on the Guidelines and improve protection for migrants in the wider scope of challenges we face today.

Thank you to the MICIC Initiative Working Group for their partnership. Civil society organizations, through the leadership of the Global Coalition on Migration and the International Catholic Migration Commission, improved the outcome of the MICIC Initiative with their dedicated participation and constructive input.

We hope the Guidelines are welcomed broadly and, more importantly, implemented widely. The MICIC Initiative did not result in anything binding. States are not asked to become a party to anything, simply to use the Guidelines to save lives and to improve protection for migrants. We hope the MICIC Initiative serves as a good example of a state-led effort to take action, with practical solutions to shared migration challenges, and in consultation with many stakeholders.

By Secretary Imelda M. Nicolas, Commission on Filipinos Overseas, Philippines

As the six-year term of Philippine President Benigno S. Aquino III ended on June 30, we, who belong to his official family, are proud to leave to the global community as part of his legacy these *Guidelines to protect migrants in countries experiencing conflict or natural disaster*.

The provenance of the Guidelines long precedes the announcement at the UN of the MICIC Initiative three years ago. The Philippine contribution to the Guidelines is based on our own four decades of human mobility with some 10 million people - 10 percent of our population - now present in more than 200 countries. Many overseas Filipinos have heart-breaking stories of the anguish and suffering brought about by wars and natural disasters they have experienced as international migrants. These human sufferings associated with migration explain why the safety, well-being, and rights of overseas Filipinos are accorded primordial importance by our country.

Our government has created mechanisms, policies, and programs to address these crisis situations. In moments of crisis, we realize again and again that one cannot do it alone – governments, international organizations, the private sector, and civil society must come together to quickly and flexibly assist migrants: to save lives, increase protection, decrease vulnerabilities and improve responses. These are the mantra of the MICIC initiative.

LESSONS FROM A MINI-MULTERALISM EXPERIENCE

By **Peter Sutherland**, *Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for International Migration*

The MICIC Initiative produced a set of Guidelines that are deeply grounded in common sense, a value that is so achingly absent from our prevailing political debates around migration. It bears testament to what a group of well-intentioned States, and committed individuals, can achieve when they focus on solving real-world problems. When I first proposed this initiative during the 2013 UN High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, shortly after the Libyan civil war erupted in 2011, I knew that the United States and the Philippines would be ideal partners to lead it. But I must admit that I am surprised by the true excellence, speed, and diplomacy that characterized the process they led and the product they created.

The Guidelines are heartening evidence of the value of what I call mini-multilateralism. Rather than wait around for a consensus to emerge among States, a small group of pioneers decided to take responsibility for making progress on an issue of global concern. This model of mini-multilateralism is one that I believe must be the backbone of progress on international cooperation in the coming decade, given that so many national governments seem either reluctant to engage on the global level or more generally paralyzed by fear in addressing migration.

It is now incumbent on us all to not see this language stacked on bookshelves, but to put these Guidelines into practice around the world to reduce the suffering and despair of migrants in countries experiencing crises.

THE LAUNCH EVENTS IN NEW YORK AND GENEVA

Watch the New York launch event on [UN Web TV](#).

The MICIC Guidelines were released on June 10 and launched in New York at UN Headquarters on June 15 and in Geneva at the Palais des Nations on June 27.

The launch events in New York and Geneva included speakers from the Philippines, the United States, the European Union, the United Nations, the International Organization for Migration, the Global Coalition on Migration, the International Catholic Migration Commission, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, as well as other members of the MICIC Initiative Working Group, civil society and the private sector.

The Guidelines and the inclusive MICIC consultative process were widely welcomed.



ENSURING SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF MIGRANTS AND SOCIETIES

By **William Lacy Swing**, *Director General, International Organization for Migration (IOM)*

The launch of the MICIC Initiative Guidelines is both timely and critical. Migration is a mega-trend of this century. All countries host a migrant population, and all countries have citizens abroad. At the same time, no country is immune to natural disaster or conflict. IOM's experience is that in every crisis, migrants are always among those affected. And, migrants are often among the most vulnerable. These non-binding, voluntary Guidelines - which bring together human rights, humanitarian and development approaches - are therefore relevant for all of us.

Migrants often fall between the cracks of existing protection mechanisms and are not accounted for in governmental and other responses. After IOM's experience assisting more than 230,000 migrants caught in the civil strife in Libya in 2011, we took very concrete steps to be better prepared for the future. There is more work to do, however, including to incorporate migrants and their needs into humanitarian and development policies and plans. The Guidelines address these issues, and provide practical advice on how all of us can improve the way we manage the mobility dimensions of crisis.

Migration contributes to economic development and enriches the social and cultural fabric of our communities. These benefits can be frustrated, however, when a crisis hits. Economies that rely on migrants for their workforces can suffer if migrants leave because of a crisis and communities faced with mass returns can experience social tensions, and strains on local resources and services. The Guidelines address these issues as well, with recommendations on how migration can contribute to resilience, recovery and the well-being of our communities and societies - they are therefore a critical contribution to the global discussion on migrants and refugees happening this year.



Migrants awaiting to be evacuated from the besieged city of Misrata, Libya © IOM 2011

THE VALUE OF PARTNERSHIP AND MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION

By **H. E. Peter Sørensen**, Ambassador and Head of Delegation, Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations in Geneva and **Ioannis Vrailas**, Deputy Head of Delegation, Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations in New York

Migration is one of the defining challenges of our 21st century. We will be defined by how we respond as global actors, including in situations where migrants are caught up in countries in crisis. As we all know, many of the factors that drive displacement – such as poverty, climate change, regional conflicts – have no patience for national borders. They are global challenges that require a global, coordinated response.

The European Union has a long history of working with partner countries to support displaced populations and vulnerable migrants. We are proud to have participated together with the other core MICIC partners and with partner countries around the world in the groundwork leading to the finalization of the MICIC Guidelines.

The broad consultative process led by the MICIC Initiative, that we had the honor to support, has truly been a collaborative and multi-stakeholder effort that brought together governments, civil society, international organizations and the private sector around the world. I believe that the Guidelines are an important step in the right direction of ensuring a truly global and joint effort in promoting safe and rights-respectful migration management. We hope that the MICIC Guidelines will help generate broader systemic change applied to a greater range of crises and scenarios for the treatment of vulnerable migrants.

CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT IN THE MICIC INITIATIVE

By **Colin Rajah**, Former International Coordinator, Global Coalition on Migration (GCM) and **John Bingham**, Head of Policy, International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)

As migrants impacted directly by crises, as the first responders to crisis situations, and as NGOs supporting and advocating for migrants before, during and after crises, the inclusion and engagement of civil society is broadly reflected in the Guidelines. We would like to thank the working group and the MICIC Secretariat for encouraging and facilitating this throughout the process.

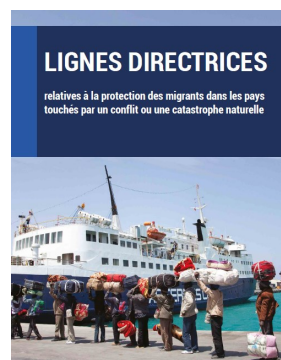
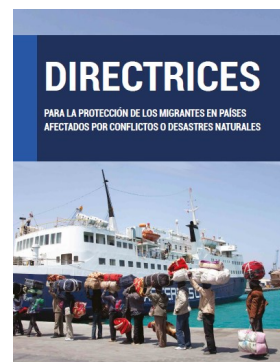
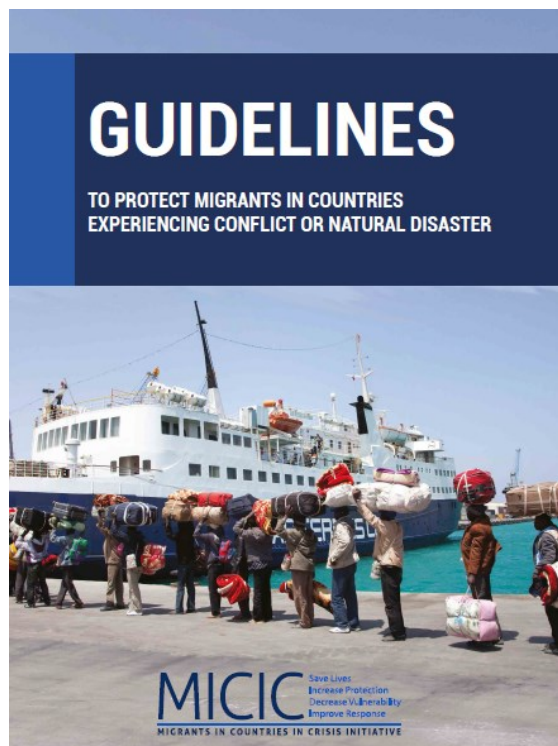
When the MICIC co-chairs announced the initiative, we strongly welcomed it. And taking a step further, the GCM, in partnership with ICMC's migration and development civil society network (MADE), organized a series of [regional civil society consultations](#) that were held in conjunction with the States' consultation. These consultations were very useful to brief our civil society colleagues working on the ground in each region about MICIC, engage them and extract their key inputs, much of which is reflected throughout the Guidelines.

The urgency of this initiative cannot be over-stated. Throughout our consultations, we heard about the various crises in each region and how migrants, more often than not, were disproportionately and deeply affected. Many of our colleagues underscored how the lack of, or inadequate, human rights protections exposed our fellow migrants to even greater vulnerabilities. One of the cross-cutting themes in the consultations was the protection of migrants' rights in ordinary times, which is reflected in the Principles section of the Guidelines. We encourage States to work together and with us to achieve the MICIC Guidelines in order to prevent greater exposure during times of crisis.

We are also pleased to hear that the U.S and Philippines have recommended the development of broader guidelines to assist vulnerable migrants. The broadening of the scope of this initiative was one of the primary recommendations from civil society all throughout the consultation process. We agree that the model this process has presented, particularly the strong partnership, can be a strong and useful model for further guidelines and processes to come. We now look forward to working together on the implementation of the Guidelines and hope to see strong commitments from States and all other actors and stakeholders.



Civil society consultation in Beirut © Caritas Lebanon 2016



THE GUIDELINES AT A GLANCE

By **Michele Klein Solomon**, Director, MICIC Initiative Secretariat, International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The *Guidelines to protect migrants in countries experiencing conflict or natural disaster* are the result of a bottom-up, global [consultative process](#) that saw the active engagement of States, civil society, international organizations and the private sector, under the leadership of the MICIC Initiative [Working Group](#). An advance copy of the MICIC Guidelines was released on 10 June. The final version of the document and the Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish translations of the Guidelines are now available on the [MICIC website](#).

The MICIC Initiative developed these Guidelines as an important step to help strengthen local, national, regional, and international action to better protect migrants in countries experiencing conflicts or natural disasters. The Guidelines provide practical guidance for multiple stakeholders to protect migrants. They apply to situations in which migrants are present in a country experiencing a conflict or natural disaster and relate to crisis preparedness, emergency response, and post-crisis action. The Guidelines do not create new international law obligations, or limit or replace any existing frameworks and mechanisms. They are non-binding and voluntary.

The Guidelines include *Principles*, *Guidelines*, and *Practices*. Each element serves a different purpose:

- The **Principles** are foundational, cross-cutting ideas drawn in many instances from international law, to inform and guide actions by all stakeholders to protect migrants. They urge all stakeholders, for instance, to save lives first and to protect migrants' rights at all times, irrespective of immigration status.
- The **Guidelines** are targeted suggestions, organized by theme to identify in broad terms the actions needed to better protect migrants. They are organized by phase of a crisis. Guidelines in the preparedness phase include incorporating migrants in preparedness and emergency response systems and setting up effective communication channels with migrants, so stakeholders know how to reach migrant populations when a crisis hits.
- The **Practices** are a non-exhaustive selection of examples that illustrate ways to implement the Guidelines. They are based on existing practices as well as recommendations and can be adapted to suit particular contexts and priorities. Relevant practices include the establishment of 24-hour hotlines, mobile applications and liaison networks including migrant, consular, or other focal points.

Over the next several months the MICIC Initiative will keep producing relevant tools. A repository of existing practices will be available online on the MICIC Initiative website. The repository will offer a non-exhaustive collection of practices that stakeholders shared through consultations, other events, and individual submissions. The Initiative will also continue to work with different stakeholders around the globe to raise their awareness on the MICIC Guidelines and encourage implementation. This includes the participation in events and the organization of briefings for global networks, federations and coordination mechanisms in the humanitarian, development and migration arenas.



Floods in Thailand affected thousands of migrants in 2011 © IOM Thailand 2011

THE MICIC INSIDER: RESEARCH AND CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVES

By **Lorenzo Guadagno**, Programme Manager, International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Under the framework of the MICIC Initiative, IOM has developed and implemented a capacity building programme funded by the US Government to support the implementation of the MICIC Guidelines. This programme is the first effort to systematically address the vulnerability of migrants caught in emergency situations while abroad by working with governmental and non-governmental actors both in States of origin and of destination of migrants.

Over the last year IOM has been piloting a series of capacity building activities in Myanmar and Guatemala, Thailand and Mexico, countries respectively of origin and destination of large numbers of migrants along two of the most significant migration corridors worldwide. The work is now being extended to include several additional countries.

All the activities have drawn upon the findings of our research component – comprising four [desk studies](#), one in each pilot country. Based on the information collected through these studies, we have been working on tools to strengthen the capacity of key institutions including a manual to enhance the emergency management capacity of consular staff, a registration and travel advice smartphone app and a training course targeting the personnel of emergency management actors in States of destination. Working at both ends of the migration flows should facilitate the creation of synergies and coordination among a broader spectrum of relevant institutions, enhancing the protection of migrants in case of an emergency.

Building on the momentum created by the MICIC Initiative through targeted implementation efforts will be key to advancing towards the Sustainable Development Goals, the objectives of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the creation of a more inclusive humanitarian system. IOM is fully committed to further support Governments and other partners to this end.

By **Lukas Gehrke**, Director of the Southern Dimension, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

ICMPD facilitated MICIC regional consultations that contributed directly to the development of the “MICIC Guidelines”. The transposition of these principles and guidelines into national and regional measures will be crucial. To this aim, ICMPD is following up on the practical implementation of the MICIC Guidelines through complementary EU-funded research and capacity building initiatives. In collaboration with Oxford University, the research project adopts an in-depth case study approach spanning 20 countries. Through these studies, ICMPD is bridging knowledge gaps and strengthening the evidence base on the effectiveness of existing preparedness and protection mechanisms as well as the long-term effects of returning migrants and how countries of origin can prepare for large influxes of returning nationals.

ICMPD is also launching a global capacity building programme to follow up on recommendations of the MICIC Initiative and other related fora such as the Rabat and Khartoum Processes, the Valletta Summit and the Nansen Initiative. The aim of the capacity building programme is to strengthen responses and better address the needs of migrants caught in crises. Targeting states and civil society in particular, ICMPD is providing technical assistance in key thematic areas such as: crisis preparedness and consular contingency planning, integrated border management, coordination and cooperation, return and reintegration planning, and communication and outreach. In collaboration with the Commission on Filipinos Overseas of the Government of the Philippines, co-chair of the MICIC initiative, ICMPD will kick off the capacity building in Beirut, Lebanon, launching a pilot training on consular contingency planning in six regions around the world.

<https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/cross-cutting-initiatives/>

<http://research.icmpd.org/projects/migration-governance/micic/>

VIEWS FROM CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

"All migrants are entitled to rights and access to protection, irrespective of their migration status. And migrants are resilient actors who need to be included as actors in our preparedness and emergency response efforts. Civil society has a critical role to play in reaching out to and engaging migrants. It would be very important to build trust amongst stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation of the MICIC Guidelines and build our capacities to more effectively support migrants in vulnerable situations."

Mpilo Shange-Buthane, Executive Director, Amnesty International, South Africa

"Employers should always be involved, as resources or otherwise in processes like the MICIC Initiative, because they have such a significant impact and role to play. Marriott's experience in the Libya crisis, where we had to evacuate our migrant employees of more than 20 nationalities, showed us how important good planning and cooperation with States is to manage evacuation operations in extremely challenging situations."

Jack Suwanlert, Director of Support & Intelligence, Global Safety & Security Department, Marriott International

"The MICIC Guidelines have compiled very useful practices and identified important gaps. It encourages us all to innovate and pilot new practices to increase our preparedness and capacity to help migrants in distress. How do we now push for implementation? I propose the 'hyperactivity of the devoted'. Let those who are able and those who are willing to act, be intense and unrelenting in delivering good practices. This way, the very standard of what constitutes good practice would have been enhanced."

Gibril Faal, Director, GK Partners

"The 15 very concrete, useful Guidelines developed by the MICIC Initiative can support us today and tomorrow in all kinds of practical ways to compassionate help. Guideline 3 calls on us to empower migrants to help themselves. This is precisely the approach Caritas is supporting throughout our work in crises all around the world - putting people at the center of our work, supporting people to make positive differences."

Joseph Cornelius Donnelly, Permanent Delegate of Caritas Internationalis to the United Nations



Evacuation of migrant workers from Lebanon 2006 © IOM/S. Brent

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