

Seeking durable solutions: SCR 1325 in action for return, local integration or resettlement

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Abstract

We have sufficient resolutions, methodology and tools available and accessible to human rights and humanitarian actors to ensure implementation of SCR 1325. Consequently humanitarian organisations have no excuse for failing to mainstream gender into all programmes, or for neglecting to involve women in all processes related to displacement issues.

Gender related protection issues that arise during displacement are predictable and can be mitigated.

However, without a strong commitment from policy-makers and management at all levels, including the field, achieving durable solutions for displaced persons is neither probable nor possible.

The key gender related protection issues that affect the displaced population and hamper durable solutions include:

Physical protection

Sexual violence is a protection issue for men, women, boys and girls, often exacerbated in situations of conflict and displacement and extremely difficult to mitigate. Women and girls in particular are exposed to rape, which during conflict is frequently used as a weapon of war. Young boys and men especially experience forced recruitment as child soldiers, which increases the risk of them becoming perpetrators. The problems created by sexual assaults do not suddenly stop when a war or conflict is over, but continue and seriously hamper people's return and recovery.

Human rights

Land rights are determined by gender in a number of countries. So too are the rights to humanitarian assistance, to earn money, to select whom to marry, and to move freely. This again leads to invisibility as well as altering of survival techniques.

Impunity

Although the new SRSG for Sexual Violence in Conflict addresses impunity for perpetrators and reaching justice for survivors, more must be done. We must deal with impunity beyond sexual violence, to decrease all violations of human rights. Impunity and justice for survivors can only be reached through participation of both men and women in peace processes, by establishing reporting and monitoring systems for violations, and through a functioning judicial system.

Responsibility and accountability

Who is responsible and accountable for the implementation of SCR 1325? How can identified actors be held accountable? Experience shows that unless individuals at a high level are held accountable - and that there are consequences for non-action - little will happen. Therefore, the responsibilities of donors, international humanitarian and development actors, beneficiaries, and not least politicians and senior decision-makers, must be identified and those identified must be held accountable.

Access

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement state that all authorities must provide humanitarian organisations with access to internally displaced persons, yet experience shows that such access is often purposefully hindered. Local authorities are not the only challenge to access; donors, military and other actors who misuse aid also constitute equal obstructions to access. Humanitarian organisations can increase access to female and male displaced persons by conducting participatory research and

strengthening data collection to unveil access restrictions as well as solutions, and by employing both female and male staff.

Examples from the field that illuminate gender-related protection issues

Local integration of IDPs is perceived as a complex and long-term process which is often hindered by a number of factors, including specific vulnerabilities of the displaced as well as lack of motivation and acceptance from the locals. Lack of awareness of the different needs and vulnerabilities of men, women, girls and boys, as well as a lack of willingness to address these issues in an adequate way, is one of the Major obstacles in the way of social integration of IDP women and girls.

In **Southern Sudan** humanitarian and development actors have failed to implement SCR 1325 in protection approaches and programmes. Last year it was noted that women and girls were increasingly being targeted during internal conflicts, although this was not reflected in increased programming to address these concerns; in fact funding for the protection sector has consistently decreased since 2008.

In **Liberia** gender related protection problems became evident in the return and early recovery phases of NRC's work for the displaced population. It is estimated that 70% of Liberian women are survivors of sexual violence. The justice system is non-functioning and despite enormous resources from the international community having gone into addressing sexual gender-based violence, severe violations persist.

In NRC's Shelter Programme in **Georgia**, women were actively involved in the process of finding alternative shelter as well as designing rehabilitation programmes. Women have also taken an active role in the rehabilitation work being performed in their shelters. A gender-disaggregated survey amongst individual house beneficiaries was carried out. Based on the survey results, the house designs were modified in order to provide washing facilities and ensure privacy through the installation of internal doors. It is worth noting that children constitute 20% of the project beneficiaries. Safe and healthy living conditions were improved for children through this project, and since most of the land plots are close to their previous place of residence, children could continue to access their own schools.

In today's emergency in **Pakistan**, we see yet again that women have become invisible. It is men who make the decisions, who are consulted, and who are the recipients of aid. After all the disasters and emergencies the world has had to deal with in the last years, humanitarian actors are yet again slowly realizing that women are once again those who lose out because they are not part of the process, they do not have a voice and those making and implementing decisions do not know what their needs are.

Recommendations

All humanitarian programmes and projects need to include minimum standards by using the **IASC Gender Marker and checklists** developed for individual Cluster activities at all stages of the project cycle. These tools, designed to assess the value of a project for men, women, girls and boys, are widely available and practically designed. With our knowledge and experience that women are the ones who most often lose out, it is crucial to use such tools systematically in project design and implementation - if not we risk missing our target.

The IASC Gender Capacity Stand-by Project **GenCap** (a roster of gender advisers) and **ProCap** (a roster responding to priority gaps and needs in emergency protection response) both of which are run by NRC, are designed specifically for this purpose.

We should refer to the revised **Framework for Durable Solutions**, and use this document to guide assessments on achieving durable solutions, as well as in the profiling of IDPs, to ensure women and girls achieving durable solutions on par with other IDPs.

The importance of collecting sex **disaggregated data** on the ground cannot be reiterated enough. Collecting information on specific needs in terms of assistance and protection, and using this disaggregated data in the identification and design of programmes, is essential to securing durable solutions for IDPs women and girls.

In addition, we must further develop **follow-up, monitoring and reporting mechanisms** to ensure universal use of the existing tools and adherence to SCR 1325. We are aware, through numerous reports and evaluations, of the lack of implementation. However, there are currently no repercussions for having a non-gender sensitive strategy or an approach that neglects to actively include women in all parts of the process, including decision-making, to achieve the protection of displaced persons. These mechanisms must be improved to cover all gender related protection issues, beyond the aims of SCR 1888, which only covers sexual violence.

The IASC e-learning course 'Different Needs – Equal Opportunities' is a powerful training tool, and should become mandatory amongst all humanitarian actors, including field workers as well as policy makers. This has already been made mandatory for all OCHA staff by the previous ERC.

Lastly, not a recommendation but a reminder to all duty bearers that gender mainstreaming in humanitarian assistance is not optional. Nor is it optional to decide whether or not to include women. Through the **humanitarian principles and a rights-based approach** all humanitarian actors are decreed by the human rights framework not to discriminate and assist selectively, but to actively aim to assist those in need, regardless of gender.

Management at all levels need to take responsibility for the implementation of the recommendations above, and **policy makers** need to advocate for implementation for these recommendations in all relevant fora and relations.