

East and Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes Region

January - June 2022



Internally displaced pastoralist Abdullahi Gedi, 55, stands next to the remains of his dead animals in Babacada El-Bahay IDP site in Jijiga, Ethiopia. © UNHCR/Eugene Sibomana

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

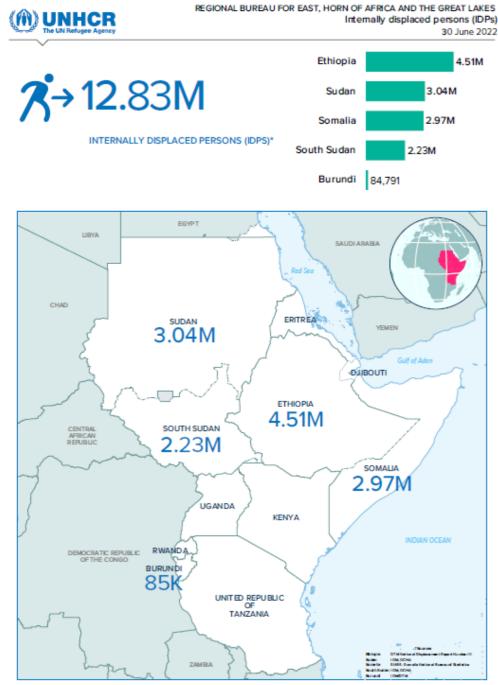
The East and Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes (EHAGL) region is host to a significant number of internally displaced persons (IDPs). As of 30 June 2022, there were approximately 12.83 million IDPs in the region – mainly in Burundi, Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia and South Sudan. The drivers of displacements continue to remain complex, including conflict and persecution, as well as climate related natural disasters, often in situations where the different factors are interrelated or compounded.

Considering that a significant proportion of displacements in the region stem from conflicts, and many conflicts remain active in a very fluid context, the protection focus is mainly on life-saving activities informed by protection monitoring and ensuring the provision of shelters and core relief items (CRIs). At the same time, there is a strong focus in the region on the pursuit of durable solutions. While numerous IDP returns are taking place in the region, most are self-organized rather than facilitated, and difficult to quantify.

In line with the Global tri-cluster leadership approach and revised UNHCR Policy on Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement (2019), UNHCR is leading or co-leading the Protection, Camp Coordination and Camp Management, and Shelter/NFI clusters in most countries. Durable solutions are highlighted as a core priority in the recently launched UN Action Agenda and are a critical element of the IDP response in the East, Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region. While each country in the region has different contextual factors around durable solutions, UNHCR is pursuing a more coordinated approach together with the other actors including development actors and donor to promote and realise durable solutions initiatives in the region.



On 28 June 2022, UNHCR launched the regional Drought Response Emergency Appeal for the Horn of Africa and is appealing for urgent support to help displaced people and local host communities affected by the catastrophic drought. To deliver lifesaving assistance and protection to some 1.5 million refugees, internally displaced people and local host communities affected by the drought in Ethiopia, Kenva. and Somalia. UNHCR is appealing for US\$ 42.6 million, which will cover critical humanitarian needs in IDP and refugee settlements including water, sanitation facilities, nutrition, healthcare, and protection. The appeal is targeting 943,000 IDPs along with their host communities in Ethiopia and Somalia. Response activities will be carried out as mandated in the cluster response mechanism for IDP situations and under the Coordination Refugee Model as relevant. The drought, a stark reminder of the devastating impact of the global climate crisis, is the worst in the region in four decades and is the



culmination of four consecutive failed rainy seasons. Water sources have dried up and crops and livestock have died, stripping people of their livelihoods and the ability to support themselves.

ETHIOPIA

In Ethiopia, conflict, inter-communal violence, natural disasters and other impacts of climate change continue to drive people into displacement. Some have lived in displacement for several years, while others have fled their homes more recently. The State of Emergency in Ethiopia was formally lifted at the end of February 2022. Yet, ongoing hostilities in Tigray and in other regions, climate shocks and a deteriorating economy continue to negatively impact the living conditions of the civilian population in Ethiopia and to exacerbate humanitarian needs.

As of 30 June 2022, it was estimated that around 4.51 million people were internally displaced across the country. Most of the internal displacement is due to conflict, including the expansion of the Tigray conflict into Afar and Amhara, as well as more localized conflicts, including inter-communal violence, in some cases instrumentalized and linked to the Northern crisis, notably in Benishangul Gumuz, Oromia and

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Somali regions.

Similar to 2021 and previous years, several regions have also seen climate-related shocks and ensuing natural disaster-related displacements, such as drought and flooding. These dynamics are prevalent in Afar, Gambella, Oromia, Southern Nations, Nationalites and People's Region (SNNPR) and Somali regions.

UNHCR Response

During the first quarter of the year, UNHCR interventions, implemented with partners and in close coordination with authorities, have reached 2.1 million people with protection services, shelter and core relief items, and legal support in nine of Ethiopia's regions. While data for the second quarter is yet to be collected, the trend is expected to be similar. UNHCR's response to the humanitarian needs of IDPs in protection, shelter, and core relief items in northern Ethiopia has grown considerablye since the onset of the crisis in November 2020 in the Tigray region.

In Tigray, from January to March 2022, UNHCR and implementing partners reached over 545,000 IDPs and returning IDPs with protection services, shelter, core relief items and other forms of assistance. UNHCR's response has also been focused on the medium to longer term and creating the possibility of durable solutions. In the period from December 2021 up to early June 2022, around 35,000 IDPs have been assisted by UNHCR to return to their areas of origin. The returnees have been provided with cash assistance and CRIs. UNHCR continues its efforts to provide facilitated and durable returns to such locations as Abi Adi and Adigrat, among others. UNHCR is mindful that a large proportion of the IDPs are farmers who will need to return in alignment with the planting season, which could in turn improve the food situation. UNHCR continues to work with the Ethiopian Government to ensure that there are no forced returns of IDPs.

The needs continue to be enormous with UNHCR's ability to respond given the fluid and difficult context being tested and stretched. UNHCR however continues to have a presence and provide support in all areas where there are displacements. In Amhara's Turkish site, significant advocacy has been conducted with the support of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission in order to ensure the freedom of movement of IDPs of Tigrayan origin and improve their access to basic essential services. Advocacy to ensure that the IDPs of Tigrayan origin have freedom of movement is also ongoing in Afar. Freedom of movement must include the possibility for IDPs to join their families and relatives residing in other parts of the country or to remain in the camp until a suitable durable solution is found. In the latter case, efforts are being made in collaboration with relevant authorities to improve living conditions in the camps and sites for IDPs of all ethnic groups.

UNHCR in partnership with the Universities of Bule Hora, Dila, Wollega, Arba-Minch and Wollo, provides free legal aid and legal awareness services to IDPs, returning IDPs and members of the host community with specific needs. Currently, there are 35 legal aid clinics in East and West Wollega, Gedeo and West Guji zones of Oromia, SNNP and Amhara regions. Between April and June 2022, 7,465 individuals benefited from legal aid and legal awareness activities, which is a 11% increase from the previous quarter. Of those, 2258 individuals (30.2%) received legal aid, while 5207 individuals (69.7%) benefitted from legal awareness activities. Overall, of those supported with legal aid and legal awareness, 60.8% were male and 39.1% female. A Partnership Agreement was signed with Wollo University to deliver free legal aid service through establishing 4 free legal aid centres in the South Wollo, North Wollo, Waghimira and Kemisie zones of Amhara region.

In its IDP response to the drought situation, primarily in the Somali region of Ethiopia, UNHCR has increased distribution of emergency shelter, core relief items, and is also providing emergency education and child protection support. UNHCR is also extending water services to both hosting communities and IDPs who live in close proximity to refugee camps.

SUDAN

As of 30 June 2022, there were over 3 million IDPs in Sudan - mainly in the five Darfur states as well as South Kordofan, White Nile and Blue Nile states. The number of IDPs in Sudan had remained fairly stable



until the withdrawal of UNAMID in 2020 when new displacement started to increase again. The IDP population is spread across the country in settlements and camp-like situations and in urban areas. IDPs in Sudan are mainly displaced due the long-standing conflict in Darfur since 2003. In addition, seasonal floods cause mass displacements in the country every year. Insecurity, mostly in areas of new displacement, has prevented access to life-saving services as well as resources (land, water and firewood) and is the main barrier to durable solutions.

Over the course of 2021, the protection environment in Sudan faced several challenges and impacts were felt into 2022. The withdrawal of UNAMID in Darfur was followed by an increase in localized and cyclical conflict, with violence in Darfur increasing to levels unseen since the mid-2000s. There is also an increase in violence in the South Kordofan and, to some extent, in the Blue Nile State. The military coup d'état essentially put in limbo both the Juba Peace Agreement (JPA) and the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians (NPPOC). The state of emergency was lifted on 29 May 2022 but the impact of this is yet to be seen.



Residents of Goz Minu and Um Sayyala in the Jebel Moon area were displaced to the Johana area after their villages were burned down during intercommunal violence that broke out in the mountainous Jebel Moon region of West Darfur. The clashes have displaced thousands of people since November.© UNHCR/John Mwate

Protection of civilians and security arrangements constitute a crucial chapter of

the JPA and among them the most concrete provision is the establishment of a 12,000-member joint force, composed half of rebels, half of government forces, tasked with protecting civilians and specifically "filling the potential security vacuum after the departure of the UNAMID forces". The lack of progress on the implementation of these key elements of the JPA has had significant repercussions in Darfur, where following the withdrawal of UNAMID, West Darfur witnessed five waves of violence, the most recent of which was in Kulbus in June 2022 and resulted in the new displacement of around 50,000 persons.

In South Kordofan and in the Blue Nile States, violence continues and has resulted in new displacements. Since January 2022, 2,861 new displacements have been reported, whilst in West Kordofan, there have been 3,024 new displacements. In Blue Nile, there has also been tension between the signatories and non-signatories of the JPA. Limited humanitarian access to some areas in Darfur and South Kordofan states impeded humanitarian response. The ability of humanitarian agencies to deliver services is directly linked to the capability and willingness of authorities to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and assets.

IDP returns on any scale are still not feasible in the current political context. In May, a trilateral mechanism, composed of AU-IGAD-UNITAMS began to engage in indirect talks with different national stakeholders, with the aim of reaching an agreement between the Sudanese parties to end the current political crisis in the country. However, on 6 July the mechanism ceased to function due to the decision of the military component not to participate in the talks.

In addition, disputes over power-sharing, land ownership, competition over resources and criminality are fuelling continuous intercommunal clashes and factional fighting. Despite some efforts by the Government, clashes between herders and farmers continue with impunity. Following outbreaks of violence, nomadic tribes or unidentified armed groups forcefully evict IDPs and vulnerable local populations from their land. This fragile situation has been exacerbated by the gradual return of Darfuri fighters from Libya and the remobilization of armed forces of some forces of parties to the Juba Peace Agreement.



UNHCR Response

In Sudan, UNHCR is leading the protection and shelter/NFI clusters and working in coordination with partners in protection monitoring (including remote protection monitoring), responding to individual protection needs through protection desks, distribution of CRIs, cash for shelter, psychosocial support, legal assistance and information counselling.

In coordination with key Government counterparts and partners, UNHCR aims to provide IDPs with legal assistance, including counselling and support, to bolster access to legal advice, civil documentation and Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights, including for those returning to areas of origin.

In the current operational context, UNHCR has had to pivot toward remote protection monitoring for hotspot areas and distributed hotline numbers through established Community Based Protection Networks (CBPNs). In 2021 UNHCR expanded support to over 106 networks in the country and continues to support these networks in 2022. Remote protection monitoring has generally been effective across the country helping to keep offices updated on specific protection situations when there is insecurity and lack of access – although the complex situation in Darfur made it particularly challenging. UNHCR engages with multiple committees and networks at different locations, including CBPNs, youth and women networks, in addition to the community leaders and local administration structures. UNHCR reaches out to them for monitoring the situation and has provided training to CBPNs to reach out to UNHCR in any emergency.

Overall, assistance provided to IDPs remains limited and irregular. Many rely on day-to-day income generating activities including manual labour, which continued to be impacted by earlier COVID-19 restrictions. Without direct support, households are coping with multiple stressors, which could eventually result in various protection concerns.

SOMALIA

Internal displacement in Somalia is characterized by complex and often interlinked conflict and climatic drivers. As of 30 June 2022, Somalia had about 3 million IDPs. In the first half of 2022, the UNHCR-led Protection and Return Monitoring Network (PRMN) implemented by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has recorded 809,000 displacements, including secondary displacements, of which 674,000 (83 per cent) have been primarily associated with the ongoing drought emergency.

Most have moved from rural areas to informal sites in urban and peri-urban locations. IDPs frequently live in undignified and hazardous circumstances, where they face multiple protection risks/threats such as, unlawful evictions, overcrowded and unsanitary environments with limited access to basic services, exposure to explosive hazards, increased risk of Gender Based Violence (GBV), negative coping mechanisms - child marriage and child labor, and tension with the host community.

IDPs are faced with overall lack of access to services, such as health care services and humanitarian assistance due to limited access to certain geographical areas and security roadblocks. This also further exposes people, in particular women and girls, to risk of violence including GBV. The worsening drought has led to risk of famine, affecting an estimated 7 million individuals. According to the famine risk analysis by Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU), as of May 2022 some 5.2 million individuals were already experiencing crisis level conditions or worse.





Internally displaced Somali children Ali Abdulahi, Osman Abdulahi and Mohamed Abdulahi stand near the carcass of their dead livestock following severe droughts near Dollow, Gedo Region, Somalia. © Reuters/Feisal Omar

UNHCR Response

UNHCR contributes to the IDP response through its leadership/co-leadership role in coordinating the Protection, Shelter, and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) clusters. As a provider of last resort, UNHCR ensures an adequate and appropriate response in line with its tri-cluster leadership role. Between January and May 2022, more than 1.47 million IDPs had been reached by the Protection Cluster, more than 1.33 million IDPs had been reached by CCCM cluster, and over 127,000 IDPs had received support from the Shelter Cluster.

UNHCR continues to support the implementation of the Protection & Return Monitoring Network (PRMN), which remains a flagship IDP protection activity in Somalia, and to strengthen complementarity between PRMN and the UNHCR-led Somalia Protection Monitoring System (SPMS). Protection monitoring allows UNHCR and partners to identify the main reasons for displacement, with climate related causes a key factor for internal displacement in addition to insecurity and protection concerns.

UNHCR's engagement in IDP protection includes conducting protection monitoring directly or through partners, as well as responding to protection needs through identification and referral mechanisms for assistance, distribution of CRIs, dignity kits, and provision of emergency shelter kits through a cash-based approach. In the first six months of 2022, more than 142,000 IDPs have been reached through protection partner projects.

Specifically in its drought response in Somalia, UNHCR is targeting 180,000 IDPs along with their host communities. The response includes emergency shelter kits, core relief items and cash transfers, targeting the most vulnerable. Since the beginning of the year, UNHCR has assisted 77,541 drought-affected IDPs with shelter and CRI support. Key protection interventions are prioritized through protection monitoring to better target assistance with focus on GBV prevention and response interventions.

Evictions are among the biggest protection risks facing displaced populations across Somalia with over 140,000 evictions recorded in 2021 and 80,000 evictions recorded in the first six months of 2022. Through the PRMN project, UNHCR supports information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA) activities to enhance recognition of IDP housing, land, and property (HLP) rights. In 2022, UNHCR has also started or completed the construction of 548 permanent/hybrid shelters in IDP relocation projects across Somalia, which includes the provision of individual land title through negotiation with local authorities.

In December 2021, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) renewed the Somalia HCT Centrality of Protection Strategy and Action Plan for 2022-2023, developed under the leadership of the Protection Cluster, to mainstream protection across the humanitarian response. A UNHCR shelter and settlement strategy is also in place to enable a harmonized and effective response and in May 2022 the Shelter Cluster published a new advocacy document, Dignified and Safer Living Conditions for IDPs in Somalia.

UNHCR has a catalytic role on durable solutions for IDPs and provides ongoing support to government leadership in the development and implementation of the National Durable Solutions Strategy (NDSS). In 2022, UNHCR successfully advocated with the responsible ministry to initiate a Durable Solutions Taskforce, whose members includes humanitarian and development agencies, that will be responsible for, among others, identifying projects, estimating costs, and setting timeline, after weighing the opportunities against the existing needs and gaps.

SOUTH SUDAN

As of 30 June 2022, there were over 2.2 million IDPs in South Sudan, dispersed around the country with the majority living within host communities and in spontaneous settlements.

Climate-change driven floods are now impacting about one million people in South Sudan every year, aggravating an already precarious situation for one of Africa's most fragile and conflict-affected countries. In other parts of the country, many more people have been tipped into food insecurity as droughts have killed livestock and disrupted crop cycles. To escape both flooding and drought, pastoralists have moved their animals far beyond the traditional transhumance routes, bringing them into fierce conflict with sedentary communities, including South Sudanese who have recently returned home from exile.

UNHCR continues to register a significant number of persons willing to return to their areas of origin or alternative locations while a steady flow of spontaneous returns also continues. Other IDPs are not ready to return due to the ongoing floods and conflict in some areas of return.

Recent conflicts coupled with climatic shocks such as unprecedented flooding in Unity, Jonglei and Upper Nile states as well as the economic shocks resulting from COVID-19 have led to a deterioration of the situation and hampered efforts by humanitarian actors. At the same time, successive analyses and reports continue to highlight intercommunal violence rising sharply over the past year. As of March 2022, intercommunal tensions in the Abyei Administrative Area led to an estimated displacement of 41,200 IDPs into Twic and Gogrial West Counties in Warrap State.

In Eastern Equatoria, attacks by armed cattle keepers displaced an estimated 19,350 people in Magwi County. Armed attacks by cattle keepers in several locations in Juba County and Central Equatoria have displaced 3,000 households in Langabur, Lirya Payam and some 7,000 people in Gumbo. Conflict between armed factions in Maiwut County in Upper Nile displaced some 14,000 people to Ethiopia. In Leer County, an estimated 25,000 persons were displaced into 11 sites. The displaced people are predominantly women and children and are in dire need of humanitarian assistance.





Children pump clean drinking water from a partially submerged borehole in Old Fangak, South Sudan. While the wetland region has always been prone to heavy rains and flooding, residents say the patterns shifted sharply four years ago. © UNHCR/Samuel Otieno

UNHCR Response

In South Sudan, UNHCR is leading the Protection and Shelter Clusters, and co-leads CCCM both at the national level and in certain field locations specifically in Unity, Upper Nile, Jonglei, Western Bahr El Gazal and Central Equatoria. UNHCR also implements specific CCCM activities in Mangala, Phangak, Ulang and Nassir.

As the lead protection agency, UNHCR conducts protection monitoring with partners, responding to individual protection needs through protection desks and ensures the distribution of material assistance. UNHCR identifies persons with specific needs (PSNs) and provides limited and targeted cash assistance to vulnerable persons. UNHCR also conducts protection incident tracking through partners in the camps and IDP collective sites. UNHCR South Sudan is piloting the enrolment of IDP Persons with Specific Needs (PSNs) to enhance data management and assistance to the most vulnerable IDPs. As of June 2022, a total of 15,381 IDP PSNs have been enrolled in UNHCR's database.

UNHCR also continues to co-lead the Solutions Task Force both at the national and state level together with the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC). The main role of the taskforce is to support displaced populations within the country with access to durable solutions either through return or local integration. UNHCR co-chairs the National and State level taskforce meetings, provides secretariat service for the taskforce, supports the RRC in coordination and participates in areas of return assessments and supports in facilitating voluntary return movements of IDPs to their places of origin.

To enhance law and policy development processes, advocacy and capacity building, UNHCR conducted trainings, workshops, and roundtable discussions with the government and other relevant stakeholders to operationalize the state level task forces. Participatory assessments were conducted with IDPs as a



process of building partnerships with IDP men and women of different age groups and backgrounds and thereby promoting meaningful participation through structured dialogue to gather accurate information used to inform planning interventions for the displaced population.

UNHCR has established a presence in Abyei with an objective to build the capacity of the protection partners on ground, conduct protection monitoring, advocate and provide assistance to the most vulnerable IDPs in displacement sites.

BURUNDI

As of 30 June 2022, the IDP population in Burundi was estimated at 85,000 persons (displaced since 2013) according to IOM's Data Tracking Matrix (DTM). This is the only operation where IDP numbers have reduced in the last year (from more than 100,000 a year ago). Many are residing within host communities; some living in makeshift or temporary shelters and have serious protection needs.

In 2022, humanitarian needs and vulnerabilities in Burundi remain significant due to the combined effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters (in particular torrential rains, floods and strong winds), and the significant return of Burundian refugees from neighbouring countries. The many shocks facing the country continue to affect already fragile and vulnerable communities. Flooding caused by the continued rise in water levels in Lake Tanganyika and the overflowing of the Rusizi river pose a particularly difficult challenge for households formerly displaced and affected by the various flood cycles that have occurred since 2018 displacing respectively 17,878 people in 2018; 13,856 people in 2019; 44,222 people in 2020; 35,727 people in 2021 and so far 1,792 in 2022. It is important to note that a number of displacements caused by the floods are cyclical, and the people displaced return to their houses once the water levels have diminished, only to be displaced again during the next flood. Due to a lack of international attention and therefore funding, there is very little being done to provide a durable solution to these cyclical displacements.

There is a lack of a comprehensive national institutional framework on IDP protection, mainly affecting those displaced by several cycles of political and social-economic crisis since 1993. This population is also the most exposed to protection risks due to the sensitivity of their profile and lack of support by authorities and may not be willing to return to areas of origin. Comprehensive structured and systematic verification of IDPs was last conducted in 2011 by the Joint IDP Profiling Service(JIPS) with UNHCR support. A similar initiative is being considered for 2022-2023 towards provision of information for protection support and durable solutions while taking into account current data collection exercises by IOM.

UNHCR Response

While the inter-agency cluster system has not been activated in Burundi, UNHCR leads the protection coordination through the Protection Sector Group (PSG). The Shelter/NFI and CCCM coordination groups are led by IOM whilst UNHCR is co-facilitator together with UNDP of the Durable Solutions Technical Working Group.

To improve the protection response and mitigate protection risks affecting IDPs and other vulnerable groups in Burundi, the PSG proposed to the Humanitarian County Team (HCT) a concept note, which was approved in March 2021. The plan is divided in 4 strategic areas identified as critical to be developed to assure the centrality of protection in humanitarian action and achieve progress towards sustainable solutions. This led to the development of a work plan in 2022 which was validated in May 2022.

One of the strategic areas of this action plan is to strengthen information management systems within the PSG, so that data collection systems currently in place by different actors can be reinforced, harmonized, analysed and coordinated towards one framework (common indicators, joint analysis, etc.), that can effectively support advocacy efforts and progress towards durable solutions.

In 2022, UNHCR is stepping up its Protection coordination role within the inter-agency system to ensure the integration of Protection in the response to IDPs needs by all relevant partners, in line with the principle of the centrality of protection and protection mainstreaming. Thus far, training on accountability to affected



populations, disability inclusion and communication with communities has been undertaken with all sectors. Specific training on protection mainstreaming with sectors is planned. In addition, UNHCR has has received funds to provide shelter assistance as well as protection and educational support to IDPs in 2 communes.

Shelter is the most pressing need for IDPs in Burundi and UNHCR, as co-lead of the Shelter and NFI sector group, proposes to provide durable shelter kits to vulnerable female-headed households. Those female-headed IDP households are in a situation of extreme vulnerability rendering the children within these households particularly vulnerable to protection risks, in particular school drop-outs (due to lack of resources) and Gender-Based Violence.

UNHCR Burundi is advocating for the ratification of the Kampala Convention, which was signed in October 2009. In the meantime, the National Reintegration Strategy is the main framework that serves as a reference for the protection of IDPs in Burundi aiming at the socio-economic reintegration of people affected by disasters in Burundi. The strategy has been renewed in 2022 but is not yet fully implemented.

Recognizing the opportunity to strengthen this existing frame of reference in the field of protection and promotion of the rights of internally displaced persons and other categories of vulnerable populations, the Independent National Commission for Human Rights, in collaboration with UNHCR, conducted, in December 2021, an advocacy workshop, with a view to the establishment of internal legislation that would be in alignment with the Kampala Convention. This workshop targeted various ministries such as foreign affairs, interior, social affairs, justice as well as the Parliament and Senate. One of the recommendations of this workshop was to organise another high-level workshop directed at different commissions of the Parliament and involve ministries on a larger scale. The workshop was held on 13-14 July 2022 and launched by the Minister in charge of Solidarity and Social Affairs who is committed to move the ratification process forward.

In addition to the 85,000 IDPs enumerated in the DTM, the Government of Burundi has acknowledged that there are 78,948 IDPs displaced due to earlier conflicts (civil war) from 1993 to 2005. The Burundian government still considers these persons as IDPs, and they reside in IDP sites. On 25 July, the Burundi UN Resident Coordinator also referred to these IDPs in conversations with the Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement Robert Piper and Steering Group members. One of the recommendations of the meeting was to obtain further information on this group of persons (statistics, current situation etc) to inform any actions of UNHCR and other actors.

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