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TEARING DOWN THE WALLS

CONFRONTING THE BARRIERS TO INTERNALLY DISPLACED WOMEN AND GIRLS' PARTICIPATION IN HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS

COVER PHOTO:

After months of fighting between government forces and rebels throughout South Sudan, a group of women were so concerned that their sons would be recruited to the rebel army that they went to the general of the SPLA-IO and offered to fight in place of their children. The general turned them down, but they remain ready to fight in order to protect their children.
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ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW   The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

FDS   Nigerien Defense and Security Forces

FHH   Female-headed household

GBVIMS   Gender-based violence information management system

GP   Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

GP20   20th Anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

HLP   Housing, land rights, and property

IASC   Interagency Standing Committee

IDP   Internally Displaced Person

INGO   International non-governmental organization

IOM   International Organization for Migration

IPV   Intimate partner violence

IRC   International Rescue Committee

NGO   Non-governmental organization

PoC   Protection of Civilians Site

SGBV   Sexual and Gender-based Violence

UNHCR   United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNFPA   United Nations Population Fund

UNMISS   United Nations Mission in South Sudan

UNSCR   United Nations Security Council Resolution

VSLA   Village Savings and Loans Association

WASH   Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

WGSS   Women and girls' safe space

WPS   Women, Peace, and Security

WRC   Women's Refugee Commission

FOREWORD

Meaningful participation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and affected communities is essential to guarantee that any interventions by governments and their humanitarian and development partners are directly relevant and sustainable for the IDPs and communities themselves. As practitioners, we may need reminding that this is not a new direction. International and regional standards strongly emphasize the importance of participation of IDPs in all decisions affecting them at all phases of displacement, as I have stressed in my first report to the UN General Assembly in 2017 specifically dedicated to this topic - a priority for my mandate.

At the same time, as expressed by my predecessor Chaloka Beyani in his 2013 **report** highlighting the particular situation of displaced women and girls, it is vital to apply a gender lens to any displacement response. He noted that despite positive efforts to pay greater attention to the rights and needs of women and girls in emergency and post-conflict situations, and promoting gender-sensitive approaches to humanitarian and development assistance, in many cases responses to internal displacement still do not adequately address the concerns of women, who account for some 50 per cent of IDPs. As IDPs, women experience the various human rights challenges characteristic of displacement situations but in addition to that, they often experience human rights challenges due to interlinked forms of discrimination based on gender and other diversity factors such as age, group affiliation, and their civil or socioeconomic status.

This is why we need to continuously take stock of progress made towards the protection and assistance of women and girls, examining some of the outstanding challenges to effective responses to their human rights and needs and identifying ways forward for addressing these issues. This report directly supports that objective by focusing on the fundamental aspect of women's and girls' ability to fully participate and lead in decisions affecting their lives, and I encourage all of you reading this report to seek ways to put its recommendations into action.

This report is particularly timely and relevant, as it also contributes to the ongoing reflection on how to tackle the challenges to meaningful participation of IDPs in line with **"GP20" Plan of Action for Advancing Prevention, Protection and Solutions for Internally Displaced People** (2018-2020), developed in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement last year. The Plan of Action calls for the active participation of all those displaced in decision-making processes that affect them, including women and girls. This is one of the four priorities the Plan identifies, and it is also a fundamental principle which underpins all other priorities (developing laws and policies on internal displacement, improving data and analysis of displacement situations and addressing protracted displacement through facilitating durable solutions). It is crucial that States, UN agencies as well as national and international organizations use this anniversary as an opportunity to galvanize more collaborative and effective efforts in all these areas.

I am thankful to the author and others behind this publication for shedding light on the reality faced by internally displaced women and girls in Niger and South Sudan. Their voices, coupled with solid analysis and concrete recommendations, are a strong call to action - a reminder that we cannot remain idle and must act to confront these challenges. As Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, I welcome this report and hope it will translate into meaningful advances towards ensuring that the rights of displaced women and girls to participate in decisions affecting them not only exists in theory, but it is guaranteed and upheld in practice.

Cecilia Jimenez-Damary
Special Rapporteur on the human rights
of internally displaced persons (IDPs)

Amer Agoot, a South Sudanese IDP pictured at the port in Bor, South Sudan in November 2014. © UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Internal displacement is one of the most pressing policy and humanitarian challenges standing before the global community. This UNHCR research project is an effort to further investigate the gender dimensions of internal displacement by understanding the barriers facing internally displaced (IDP) women and girls in participating in making decisions that affect all aspects of their lives.

The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify barriers to the full and meaningful participation and leadership of IDP women and girls in national policy and legal mechanisms and solutions;
2. To provide actionable recommendations to overcome barriers to the full participation and leadership of IDP women and girls.

This study's findings are derived from a literature review of global practices and themes related to IDP participation and gender equality in humanitarian settings, and from fieldwork conducted in Niger and South Sudan in late 2018. Borrowing from several theoretical frameworks on participation, our analysis looks at how participation plays out within three spheres: (1) the individual and the household; (2) the local level comprising the community and/or camp; and (3) state/national levels that are often the domain of the elite. This project identifies ways that IDP women and girls can substantively realize their right to participate in decision-making in their households, their communities, and their nation.

Key Findings:

1. **IDP women and girls are often preoccupied with meeting safety and survival needs that take time and energy away from participation:** The effort to secure survival needs and to remain safe is a fundamental barrier to IDP women and girls in claiming their rights to participate and in making decisions about their well-being. The most pressing survival barriers to participation identified in South Sudan and Niger are:

- IDP women and girls exert considerable time and effort to stay safe and meet survival needs, **diminishing time and energy that could be channeled towards activities** that enable them to build confidence and exercise decision-making in their lives and their communities.

- **Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is a significant barrier to the participation of IDP women and girls**, who may be disproportionately affected by SGBV in comparison to non-displaced populations. Domestic violence emerges as a significant hindrance to IDP women and girls' participation, and this study emphasizes the **need to recognize the linkage between domestic violence and women's participation:** if a woman is disempowered in her own home, she is not likely to enter public spaces to participate. **Tackling domestic violence alongside other forms of SGBV is thus critical for increasing IDP women's engagement in decision-making in their homes, communities, and nations.**

- The securitization of the humanitarian space gives rise to **disproportionate risks for women and girls** that can cause a retreat from visible engagement in the public sphere. The proliferation of military actors in South Sudan and Niger and their incursion into civilian spaces is a risk to the safety and mobility of IDP women and girls. **UNHCR is urged to continue its engagement with military actors in these contexts and in other humanitarian settings in order to mitigate protection risks brought about by their presence**.

- IDP women and girls struggle with **the loss of livelihood assets, and with it the sense of agency and decision-making power** that an income can bestow. We argue that scaling up opportunities for economic autonomy that ease the burdens of survival and build agency can activate greater decision-making power for women and girls in the individual and household spheres. **Achieving an active form of participation within apparently humble spaces is in fact necessary to achieve participation in national spaces where hard power decisions are made.**

2. **Participation is not always empowering for IDP women and girls:** Acknowledging the complexity of IDP settings, our findings suggest that the participation mechanisms employed in IDP settings can unintentionally disempower IDP women and girls and reinforce the dominance of men in the following ways:

- **Humanitarian actors and governments are often over-reliant on consultation** as a tool for engaging populations of concern, which has led to "consultation fatigue" among IDP women and girls, as well as a **lack of confidence in the humanitarian system and the government to follow through on commitments and to protect rights.** Consultation is in fact a passive process and can be counter-productive when the participation process stops there and there is no visible redistribution of power to women and girls.

- Women and girls' safe spaces (WGSS) are crucial entry points for women who do not have opportunities for organization and who are denied a sense of ownership of their bodies, their lives, and the places in which they reside. **WGSS are perhaps the first space for participation available to women after they step out of the house** and the first place where women are listened to as individuals. WGSS also **provide linkages to the other participation structures** in a community.

- Income-generating projects represent a concrete step towards the empowerment of IDP women and girls when they **enable participants to wield greater control of resources and thus to make their own financial decisions**—in turn activating their power within the household. However, in Niger and South Sudan economic empowerment **interventions are often too short-lived and lack a strong exit strategy** that enables IDP women to continue on past the expiration date of the project, thus interrupting the momentum gained in increasing women's participation.

- Both South Sudan and Niger reflect the wider trend of the transfer of greater responsibilities and therefore risk to local/national partners in order to reach populations in constrained spaces. **Local/national partners are often not equipped to deliver technically complex programs in women's participation or SGBV.** They are also often asked to implement in remote areas where international actors are less likely to venture or to provide the technical oversight and monitoring critical to the execution of SGBV and women's participation work. This study emphasizes that partnerships with local/national organizations can be an effective means of increasing women's participation, but **it is imperative that local partnerships do not become solely a strategy for redistributing risk from international onto local organizations in contexts where security is constrained**.

- The agency of **international actors in mediating participation structures and forwarding gender equality is highly visible to the IDP women and men** consulted in South Sudan and Niger. South Sudanese IDP women even described international actors as the torch-bearers of women's needs and rights. Yet when international actors take great interest in women and girls and/or become the authors of gender equality, this can **lend participation structures an air of artificiality and lead to blowback from men and boys** who perceive that women and girls receive disproportionate benefits and attention.

- There is a dearth of women's participation projects that **concretely link the local to the national** and take a **long-term, strategic view**. Alongside previous research on women's participation in fragile contexts, we reemphasize that **women's rights organizations and specialized aid actors need ample time and financial resources to dismantle the discriminatory social norms barring IDP women and girls from participation and equality.**

3. **IDP women and girls are not fully benefitting from policies and laws intended to protect them:** While both Niger and South Sudan have advanced in building normative frameworks around gender equality, gaps and inconsistencies remain, particularly in the implementation and follow-through.

- Conflict-affected countries like Niger and South Sudan are in need of **capacity-building and continued pressure and technical support** from the international community to uphold their commitments and implement laws and policies related to displacement and gender equality.

- Women and girls (especially IDPs) are conspicuously absent from positions of power in the spaces of government in Niger and South Sudan. **Women holding positions in government in both Niger and South Sudan face discrimination and intimidation**, revealing a need to more directly confront gender inequality within formal power structures.

- Many government stakeholders interviewed for this study display the tendency to delay women's participation and leadership until peace is realized, symptomatic of the harsh gender discrimination embedded within formal power structures. **The pattern of delaying women's participation disregards the provisions of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and is counterproductive to the realization of peace.** Even in the case where a fragile peace were to be realized without the robust participation of women, it would neither bring about women's participation nor end SGBV unless there is a significant shift in structural inequalities and discrimination against women.

- **It is unrealistic to expect peace agreements in conflict-affected settings to succeed if displaced women and girls are not involved in their development and implementation.** There consequently needs to be significant pressure from the international community to meaningfully include IDP women and girls in the implementation of peace agreements and to push for women to be in leadership positions that wield actual power.

- In order to rectify the gaps in implementation of policies and laws related to internal displacement, it is crucial to **draw out clear and concrete provisions on gender equality in the IDP legislation** that specify *how* and *in which mechanisms and structures* IDP women will participate and, if possible, lead in decision-making. Most importantly, the involvement of IDP women and girls should not stop with consultation; rather, women should be involved in the actual drafting and development of laws.

4. **Gender inequality remains the greatest structural barrier to IDP women and girls' participation:** The gaps in IDP women and girls' participation inevitably come down to gender inequalities embedded and reproduced within social norms, the humanitarian system, and national and international institutions of power. It is imperative to confront these inequalities head-on to improve women's participation.

- **Men's control over decision-making and their attitudes on what women should and should not do are among the most resistant barriers to IDP women and girls' substantive participation**, particularly as they predate and transcend displacement and conflict and penetrate all spaces of participation. There is an evident need to work with IDP men and boys to deconstruct these rigid inequalities through engaging men in accountable practice to women. High-quality, strategic interventions demand a heavy commitment of male and female staff who are technically competent and convinced of the value of gender equality. **Efforts to change men's and boys' attitudes and practices need to be sustained and strategic**; unitary sensitization has not and will not achieve the change necessary to reduce violence against women and girls and carve out space for women's participation.

- Gender equality starts within the humanitarian system itself. **It is unrealistic to aim for substantive women's participation among IDP communities and in governments when humanitarian actors cannot model gender equality.** While security and cultural norms around women's work are undeniable challenges in recruiting female staff in many IDP settings, UNHCR and other humanitarian actors are urged to make efforts to augment the presence of female staff at all levels while ensuring that all staff recognize gender equality as an organizing principle of all humanitarian work.

- It is not realistic to expect that most IDP women and girls will be able to immediately enter the more formal spaces of power to participate in leadership. **Our findings suggest that focusing on and recognizing the legitimacy of IDP women's contributions in all the abstract spaces of participation (individual/household, community/camp, and national) will with time lead to a greater representation and leadership in the formal and visible spaces of power.** We also argue for strengthening the linkages through all these spaces in which IDP women and girls' participation can occur.

As the global Protection Cluster lead, UNHCR occupies a strategic position for ensuring that women and girls' substantive participation is embraced as an integral component of all protection activities, and to lead by example in placing gender equality as an organizing principle of protection—and in fact all humanitarian action. UNHCR and its partners can work alongside IDP women and girls as they dismantle the barriers that keep them from realizing their agency in the present and future of their communities and their countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Safe spaces for women and girls are a lifeboat for participation in humanitarian settings. They provide life-saving SGBV response services that enable women to emerge from the suffering brought about by SGBV and to retake control of their lives. **It is essential to continue to support partners who can carry out technically sound, safe, women-focused safe space approaches with IDP populations** in humanitarian settings to enable IDP women and girls to form networks, organize and support one another. In the most fragile of humanitarian settings, **mobile safe spaces are an effective option to reach women and girls** who are outside the wire of the camps and in remote areas, as well as women and girls who face mobility issues due to age, disability, and other factors.

2. Interventions that enable women to access or increase livelihood activities have the potential to increase women's autonomy and engage women in local participation. **UNHCR and donors are urged to continue and/or scale up support to partners capable of carrying out technically competent women's economic empowerment projects.** It is critical that **all livelihood interventions targeting IDP women and girls both incorporate a strong gender and power analysis during the design stage and sensitize male partners, family members, and other community power-holders** prior to and throughout implementation to reduce the risk of blowback violence against women and girl beneficiaries.

3. Policies and laws related to internal displacement should **draw clear and concrete provisions for the protection, empowerment, and participation of IDP women and girls**. The capacity-building activities that follow legislation should emphasize the provisions related to IDP women's participation, and national stakeholders should have the benefit of **coaching and mentoring during the first stages of implementation** to assure their accountability to IDP women and girls.

4. **The humanitarian system should be leading by example through prioritizing gender equality in program design and implementation, the allocation of resources, and in hiring and training staff who are willing to position gender equality as an organizing principle of all humanitarian work.** As part of this, the United Nations and humanitarian agencies should be recruiting equal numbers of male and female staff and promote the full participation of female staff in decisions made by the agency at all levels. To overcome cultural and structural barriers to women's participation, international and local agencies may need to **make accommodations to enable the eligibility of female staff**.

5. Programs specifically targeted at preventing and responding to SGBV and promoting women's political participation in humanitarian settings are underfunded and often too short-lived to leave a lasting footprint on society. This study reiterates the **need for donors to make a longer-term financial commitment to gender equality in IDP humanitarian settings**. When funding schemes are limited, **donors can pool funds earmarked for the promotion of women's participation** to enable qualified national women's rights organizations and technically competent humanitarian actors to design and implement long-term gender equality programming.

6. Militarization is a prominent and rising concern in IDP contexts globally—including in South Sudan and in Niger—that can introduce risks for women and stifle their participation. It is of critical importance that UNHCR and other leading protection actors **maintain and even step up engagement with military actors to advocate for the protection of IDP women and girls and other civilian populations**, train forces, and remind them of their obligations under international humanitarian law. **When military actors abuse their power over IDP women and girls and other civilian populations, they need to be held accountable.** The work that UNHCR has conducted in Niger, for example, in creating training modules on internal displacement and SGBV stands as a strong example that can be transferred to other IDP settings where militarization is prominent.

7. SGBV is a violation of the rights, safety, and agency of women and girls and prevents them from enjoying their right to participation. While keeping in mind the many ways in which all types of SGBV may curb participation, **SGBV response actors should ensure they place attention on domestic violence as one of the most prevalent forms of SGBV in IDP settings, and consequently among the most rigid barriers to participation.** UNHCR as the lead of the Protection Cluster can set an example in bringing this issue to the forefront through its protection strategy, alongside the GBV sub-cluster and other protection partners.

8. Men and boys continue to hold decision-making power over women in IDP communities. It is therefore critical to **engage men and boys in strategic behavior-change programs that are accountable to the experiences of women and girls**. UNHCR should work with technically competent partners to adapt and implement high-quality and technically intricate men and boy's engagement around gender equality for IDP settings.

9. **IDP adolescent girls** are among the most disempowered groups in humanitarian settings, yet they also show enormous promise for activating IDP women and girls' participation in the future of the country. **Investing in technically intricate programs that teach displaced girls basic skills and their rights from a young age, engage male and female caregivers around the importance of girls' empowerment and participation, and provide formal and informal leadership opportunities for girls** will set the stage for greater participation. IDP adolescent girls are absent from formal discussions around peace negotiations and policy-making, and more efforts should be made to bring them into circles of decision-making on policy and law.

10. UNHCR wields technical expertise and influence on the way that governments create and enact policies around displacement and gender equality, and it should continue its efforts to train and to coach state and military actors in IDP response and empowerment. **Stakeholders in the government and in the military should have an orientation on core concepts of citizen participation to understand what it means and to recognize the concrete benefits of civilian participation**. These trainings should draw clear linkages to IDP legislation and participation, and specifically the rights of IDP women and girls to participate.

11. In IDP settings there is an evident need to **collect, analyze, and put to use sex- and age-disaggregated data (SADD) across all sectors of humanitarian action**, to understand how different segments of the population (including IDP women and girls) experience and participate in aid. This recommendation appears in many reports, but we cannot overstate its importance in understanding how Age, Gender, and Diversity impact the opportunities a person has to make decisions about their life.

12. **Do not delay IDP women's leadership and participation, even in the most recalcitrant, frustrating, and difficult contexts. Delaying IDP women's participation until peace comes will only serve to obstruct peace. IDP women and girls are the leaders in deciding their own durable solutions and in the future of their country.**

INTRODUCTION: WHY A STUDY ON IDP WOMEN AND GIRLS' PARTICIPATION?

"In view of the fact that displaced females generally have less power, a lower social status and fewer opportunities in life than displaced men and boys, and given that such inequalities are often exacerbated in the process of displacement, UNHCR will support and empower women and girls as a means of reinforcing their rights and welfare."[1]

Internal displacement is a continuing reality as we step into the third decade of the 21st century. In 2017 30.6 million new displacements occurred as a result of conflict and disasters, while as of the end of 2017, a staggering 40 million people in the world were estimated to have been displaced internally due to conflict and violence.[2] By sheer numbers, internal displacement is one of the most pressing policy and humanitarian challenges standing before the global community, one interlinked with questions of modern warfare and conflict, climate change, and global and national debates around identity.

This UNHCR research project is an effort to further investigate the gender dimensions of internal displacement by understanding the barriers facing internally displaced (IDP) women and girls in participating in making decisions that affect all aspects of their lives, with a focus on humanitarian settings.

UNDERSTANDING IDP WOMEN AND GIRLS' PARTICIPATION IS A VAST TOPIC THAT WE HAVE STREAMLINED INTO TWO OVERARCHING OBJECTIVES FOR THIS PROJECT:

1. To identify barriers to the full and meaningful participation and leadership of IDP women and girls in national policy and legal mechanisms and solutions;

2. To provide actionable recommendations to overcome barriers to the full participation and leadership of IDP women and girls.

This study has been commissioned in the wake of the 20th anniversary of the groundbreaking Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (GP20) and the rollout of UNHCR's updated Policy on Age, Gender, and Diversity (AGD). As the global Protection Cluster lead, UNHCR stands in a strategic position to ensure that women and girls' substantive participation is embraced as an integral component of all protection activities, and to lead by example in positioning gender equality as an organizing principle of protection—and in fact all humanitarian action. This study thus proposes practical and bold actions to hold UNHCR and its partners accountable to commitments on gender equality and participation in IDP settings.

The findings of this research project are derived from a literature review of global practices and themes related to IDP participation and gender equality in humanitarian settings and from fieldwork conducted in Niger and South Sudan, two diverse countries that are affected by high levels of internal displacement. UNHCR selected Niger and South Sudan as research sites due to the prominence of internal displacement and to the work of the Nigerien and South Sudanese governments on developing and adapting national legislation that holistically addresses internal displacement—efforts that are supported by UNHCR and other partners. We emphasize that this study is not a comparative study of internal displacement in Niger and South Sudan per se. Rather, we take a global view in our discussion of removing barriers to IDP women and girls' participation through calling on the experiences articulated in the existing literature, while foregrounding the findings from Niger and South Sudan as two complex humanitarian spaces from which shared themes emerge.

The choice to focus on the gendered experiences of IDP women and girls is in part motivated by the limited information devoted specifically to their participation in humanitarian settings. Despite the well-deserved attention accorded to women's participation in conflict and post-conflict settings and the growing body of literature on IDPs in the

past two decades, we have scant information that isolates the particular experiences of IDP women and girls in participation and that frames their experiences in terms of strength and not solely vulnerability. It is true that women and girls are disproportionately affected by internal displacement both in terms of numbers[3] and in the ways in which internal displacement robs them of their safety, economic well-being, control over their bodies, and their ability to make decisions for themselves and those that depend on them.

Yet it is not our intent to frame this discussion of IDP women and girls solely in terms of vulnerability or weakness, or for that matter to compare IDP women and girls to other populations of concern such as refugees or migrants. We cannot and should not resort to generalizations about IDPs without considering the intersecting factors of economic status, education, access to resources, ethnicity, and gender of all groups affected by a humanitarian emergency. There are examples where IDPs may have advantages over refugees or host communities or other groups, just as there are numerous cases where IDPs are invisible and go unheard. This study centers on IDP women and girls as a population that has a fundamental right to be seen and heard by their governments, international and local aid regimes,[4] and their own communities and families.

We have tried to isolate factors that are unique to or exacerbated by internal displacement; however, we acknowledge that many of the themes may touch upon other populations as well. Guided by the principle that the participation of IDP women and girls will lead to better outcomes in aid, in the resolution of displacement through the realization of durable solutions, and in achieving longer-term stability of states, this project identifies ways that IDP women and girls can substantively realize their right to participate in decision-making in their households, their communities, and their nation.

We begin this report with a brief description of the methodology used, followed by a definition of the terms and theoretical frameworks on participation that underlie the study. We continue with an introduction to the international legal instruments on internal displacement. We then examine the ways in which the imperative to meet basic sur-

vival needs and to stay out of harm's way presents immediate barriers to the substantive participation of IDP women and girls. Following this, we deconstruct the current modalities of participation available to IDP populations (particularly women and girls) in South Sudan and Niger that find resonance in other contexts affected by internal displacement, and we uncover how these models may unintentionally exclude and/or disempower the most marginalized IDP women and girls. The next section looks at the normative framework around gender equality and internal displacement in Niger and South Sudan and explores the ways in which policies and laws are—and are not—reaching the daily lives of IDP women and girls. The final section explores means of dismantling the barriers that stand before IDP women and girls' well-being and full participation.

METHODOLOGICAL SUMMARY[5]

This study was led by a female researcher specialized in gender equality and sexual and gender-based violence, under the direction of a technical coordination team composed of members from UNHCR's Gender Equality Unit and the IDP section, in collaboration with the Regional Bureau for Africa.

THE DATA FOR THIS STUDY WAS GATHERED USING A COMBINATION OF THE FOLLOWING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS:

a. **Review of literature:** The researcher conducted a desk review that grounds the study in a conceptual framework on women and girls' participation in humanitarian settings and pulls out promising practices.

b. **Semi-structured interviews with key informants in Niger and South Sudan:** The researcher visited selected IDP sites in Niger and South Sudan to meet with key informants, including UNHCR partners, other UN agencies involved in protection issues, international and national NGOs, and members of national and local government bodies involved in the response to the displacement crisis.

c. **Focus group discussions (FGDs) with IDP women and girls in Niger and South Sudan:** The female researcher conducted FGDs with displaced women and girls at research sites in both countries.

d. **Observation of relevant events in Niger and South Sudan:** The researcher attended significant events related to the themes of the project, including a regional consultation on the domestication of the Kampala convention in Niger and two events in Juba (South Sudan) focused respectively on SGBV and women's participation.

The fieldwork was carried out in Niger and South Sudan during October and November of 2018 and was facilitated through the support of UNHCR teams in each country mission. The specific sites for research were chosen on the basis of protracted and/or intensified displacement as well as the engagement of UNHCR and partner organizations with the IDPs and other populations of concern in protection work. In Niger, the researcher visited the capital city of Niamey, the southern region of Diffa on the border with northern Nigeria, and the western region of Tillabery near the border with Mali. In South Sudan, the researcher visited the capital city of Juba, as well as Bentiu Protection of Civilians (PoC) site and Bentiu town in Unity State in the north of the country. The researcher made deliberate efforts to consult with IDP women and girls in both organized/formal sites and those residing in informal rural or urban sites.

The researcher held a total of 13 FGDs with IDP women and girls (including women leaders), and 45 interviews with key informants. As part of the methodology design, the researcher and UNHCR's technical committee developed an ethical framework to guide the conduct of the study (see Annex 1 for further details). The specific names of participants have been withheld from this report to protect their security.

Limitations

The objectives of this study are ambitious, and we were obligated to streamline the scope to account for the limitations of time and access to IDP sites in these two countries affected by conflict and insecurity.

- **Time constraints** (each mission lasted approximately 10 days) and **infrastructural challenges** prevented the researcher from visiting all relevant sites affected by displacement.

- There was a **language barrier** when speaking to IDP women and girls in both Niger and South Sudan. UNHCR and its partner staff provided interpretation, but the quality of interpretation into French or English was not consistent.

- The IDP populations who participated in the FGDs **do not reflect the full diversity of IDP populations** in Niger and South Sudan. For example, in southern Niger, the researcher met with Kanuri communities but not with Hausa or other ethnic groups residing in the area. In South Sudan, the researcher met primarily with Nuer populations, but not with significant numbers of South Sudan's numerous other ethnic groups. A number of IDP sites proved inaccessible due to **security constraints**. Because of our inability to access the most compromised sites, we cannot guarantee that the voices of the most vulnerable IDPs were consulted for this study.

FRAMING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION: ESSENTIAL CONCEPTS OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY

Who is an internally displaced person?

According to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement[6], IDPs are people who are forced to leave their homes in search of protection but have not crossed a recognized international border. They thus remain within their own country and under the protection of their own government. The Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC) Handbook for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons notes that involuntary departure is a defining characteristic of IDPs: that is, IDPs could not have remained safely in their homes of origin and are obliged to leave to maintain their safety.[7] The causes of internal displacement are numerous and vary by context, but the most prominent ones include armed conflict, persecution, human rights violations, disasters brought on by natural hazards such as drought or floods, and other forms of violence.[8]

What do we mean by gender equality?

It is important to ground our analysis in a comprehensive definition of gender equality. We adopt as a frame of reference UNHCR's policy on Age, Gender, and Diversity (AGD), which defines gender equality as the "equal enjoyment of rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women, men, girls, and boys."[9] The AGD asserts that:

"gender equality is fundamental to the well-being and rights of all persons of concern; it is central to UNHCR's AGD approach; and it is relevant to every aspect of UNHCR's work. Our Updated Commitments to Women and Girls implicitly recognize the diversity amongst them, including older women; adolescent girls and female youth; women and girls belonging to national or ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities or indigenous groups; women and girls with disabilities; and women and girls of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities."[10]

This question of the intersectionality of gender with age and other markers of diversity is crucial in an examination of gender equality in IDP settings.[11] This research project thus recognizes that women and girls' participation sits at the heart of all efforts to achieve gender equality in all settings, including those characterized by internal displacement. We also affirm that gender inequality is a cross-cutting issue affecting all women and girls, not just IDPs and not just women and girls in humanitarian settings. In this project we attempt to isolate the ways in which IDP women and girls are acutely affected by risks and barriers as a result of being internally displaced, but in so doing we acknowledge the difficulty of drawing generalizations about diverse populations across diverse global humanitarian spaces.

What is a durable solution?

According to the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions, IDPs have reached a durable solution "when they no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement."[12]

THE IASC FRAMEWORK STIPULATES DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR IDPS THAT MAY BE ACHIEVED IN THREE WAYS:[13]

- **Return:** Sustainable reintegration at the place of origin;
- **Local Integration:** Sustainable local integration in places where IDPs take refuge;
- **Settlement Elsewhere in the Country:** Sustainable integration in another part of the country different from the place of origin or the place where they take refuge.

The IASC framework emphasizes that "the resolution of the immediate cause of displacement… is not sufficient in and by itself to create a durable solution. Mere physical movement, namely returning to one's home or place of habitual residence, moving to another part of the country or choosing to integrate locally often does not amount to a durable solution either (in particular after conflict)."[14]

What do we mean by IDP women and girls' participation in humanitarian settings?

Participation is a broad term that can be easily reduced to a buzzword in media and donor reports. This study takes as a point of departure Sherry Arnstein's writing on citizen participation, which she defines as "the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future."[15] Recognizing that structural inequalities overwhelmingly disadvantage women and girls, this project positions IDP women and girls as the have-nots in displacement settings. We propose a framework of IDP women and girls' participation that examines how IDP women and girls may benefit from this redistribution of power within different spaces of participation.

Borrowing from theoretical frameworks on participation in humanitarian and development settings,[16] this analysis situates IDP women and girls' participation within a spectrum of participation that ranges from passive (non-participation) types to full decision-making power. Alongside this spectrum, we simultaneously look at how participation plays out within three spheres: (1) the space of the individual and the household: (2) the local space comprising the community and/or camp; and (3) state/national levels that are often the domain of the elite. These spaces can be fluid and overlap with each other. We often note disconnects between different spaces: for example, spaces of decision-making in communities are seldom linked to the spaces of formalized power that sit above them at the national level. Importantly, **we do not assign importance to one space over another since it is crucial for women and girls to be active and empowered at all levels in order to have a truly participative system.**

Table 1 below defines each type of participation on the spectrum and provides an example of how IDP women and girls may experience each level in a humanitarian setting. We use this framework to structure our understanding of the extent and quality of IDP women and girls' participation within the mechanisms of power and decision-making, and to draw lines between women's engagement in what might be considered less visible and less powerful spaces to those found in formal realms of power.

Table 1: The Framework of IDP Women and Girls' Participation with Examples

Types of Participation	Spaces of Participation		
	Individual/Household	**Local/Community**	**National**
Passive: No participation, decisions are made for women and girls by those holding more power, often men and boys in either their household or community, or by the government or aid system.	A 13-year old IDP girl's father decides to marry his daughter for a bride price without asking her consent or consulting the girl's mother.	The male elders in the camp committee decide which households will benefit from a pre-natal nutrition program. They choose the wives of the committee members and their extended families.	The government develops a policy on the relocation of several major IDP camps following a peace agreement. The government consults a small handful of the most powerful male community leaders and does not inform or consult IDP women or girls.
Information-sharing: Women and girls have access to information that helps them make decisions that preserve their safety and well-being under the circumstances.	A woman goes to a women and girls' safe space and learns that there is a program for female-headed households to obtain a small plot of land for cultivating vegetables. She learns the vulnerability criteria and where she can go to enroll for the program.	Women leaders in an IDP camp hold an information session for women and girl residents on where they can go to file complaints in the camp when their rights are violated or when they feel they have been unfairly passed over in an aid distribution.	IDP women hear through a radio program broadcast in their language that there are national elections being carried out and that citizens have the right to vote. However, polling stations are situated at a long distance from where the women live.
Consultation: IDP women and girls are provided with opportunities to share their opinions on a project, a policy or a community decision that is led by an entity more powerful than they are (including the tribe, an aid agency, or the government). The opinions they express may or may not have impact on what happens next.	A man tells his wife he is considering relocating the family back to their village from an IDP camp and asks her opinion on whether this is a good choice for the family. She feels it is safer to stay in the camp, but he continues to the village by himself to see if any of his possessions remain, leaving the family in the camp.	A humanitarian agency holds focus group discussions with IDP women and girls participating in a WGSS before commencing a new livelihoods project. The women and girls request that the agency give them a parcel of land that they can cultivate and some basic math and literacy skills that will enable them to sell their products and save the money. The agency says they will consider these requests, but they cannot promise that all will get what they have asked for.	A group composed of educated women activists participating in national peace talks holds consultations with a group of IDP women residing in the capital to ask them to express their wishes for the upcoming peace process. The activists write down what the women share and tell them they will try to raise these concerns during the peace talks.

Types of Participation	Spaces of Participation		
	Individual/Household	Local/Community	National
Women are in the room but not at the table: Women are convened to participate in formal and informal structures that issue decisions, but their roles are subsidiary to those of more powerful persons, usually men.	An IDP woman receives seeds and a small parcel of land from a humanitarian agency and uses it to cultivate vegetables; her husband takes the vegetables, sells them in the market and gives 10 percent of the profits to his wife.	A humanitarian agency responsible for managing an IDP camp appoints 10 men and 10 women to serve as representatives; the men have an office and take charge of meetings and decisions made about aid within the camp, while the women have no office and have to hold sessions with their constituents in their houses.	Women are appointed to high positions in the Ministry concerned with women and children's issues. A delegation of women is brought to a peace negotiation but several of the male parties refuse to discuss the agreement with the women.
Collaboration in decision-making: Women are not only present in circles of decision-making, but they have the ability to bring forth and act upon their interests and concerns and those of other women and girls.	Several IDP adolescent girls participating in a WGSS create a village savings and loan association. They vote to make decisions about who can use the money and when. They decide to use the money to purchase a plot of land where widows and disabled women can grow crops and keep chickens.	A camp management committee in an IDP camp is composed of a chairman and a chairlady who are chosen through open elections, and a male and female leader are selected by people from each zone of the camp. All decisions in the committee are made jointly and democratically through the women's and the men's sides of the leadership.	A coalition of IDP women from an ethnic minority traditionally marginalized participates in a post-conflict national dialogue, voicing their particular concerns and advocating that these be redressed in the transitional constitution.
Full decision-making power and leadership: women and girls are able to dictate the agenda equally to men and other stakeholders and wield the resources to make their decisions happen.	An IDP woman earns an income and makes all decisions on how money is spent in her household and on her family.	An IDP woman heads a dual-gender local justice committee in an informal IDP settlement that issues decisions on complaints based on the nation's actual laws and policies.	Women hold many seats in the parliament and lead several hard power Ministries, in which they have the ability to issue decisions about financial, security, and political issues. They ensure that legislation that protects women's inheritance rights is passed and implemented.

Box 1: International Instruments Governing the Protection and Rights of IDPs

There exist a number of instruments that recognize the vulnerability of IDPs and establish frameworks for their protection. **The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement**, a landmark document that establishes 30 standards for the protection of IDPs, were developed in 1998 and translate international human rights and humanitarian law (including refugee law by analogy) to the specific situation of IDPs.[17] The Guiding Principles recognize national authorities as the primary actor responsible for the protection of IDPs and the provision of humanitarian assistance, while emphasizing the participation of IDPs in decisions that impact their lives.[18] Though the Guiding Principles are non-binding, **a number of laws and policies on internal displacement reflecting the Guiding Principles have been adopted across the world**. National responsibility has thus been integrated into national frameworks, enabling governments to apply the Guiding Principles according to their own contexts and national reality.

By the end of 2017, Sub-Saharan Africa hosted 46.4% of all IDPs displaced by conflict globally (more than any other region) and 13.6% of the global total of IDPs displaced by natural disasters.[19] **The African Union Convention on the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons, more commonly called the Kampala Convention**, is a groundbreaking and legally-binding framework adopted in 2009 that draws extensively on the Guiding Principles. The Kampala Convention establishes the commitments taken by the African Union towards IDPs in Africa and outlines the commitments of signatory states to uphold international and humanitarian law, ensuring protection from internal displacement, and their obligations to bear primary responsibility for providing protection and assistance to IDPs without discrimination. Importantly, the Kampala Convention affirms the role of international organizations within the framework of the UN interagency approach, including UNHCR's role in the protection of IDPs.[20]

Within these frameworks, **UNHCR's responsibility is to "play a leading role in the protection of conflict-related IDPs, the provision of emergency shelter to such populations, as well as the coordination and management of IDP camps."**[21] It is crucial to note that the protection of IDPs sits within the decidedly broader principle of the Centrality of Protection, which affirms that the protection of persons affected within a humanitarian setting—including IDPs—stands at the heart of all humanitarian decision-making. UNHCR additionally has critical obligations towards states to enable them to carry out their role in providing for IDPs.[22] UNHCR's activities (and those of its partners) are thus intended to be highly contextualized according to the political will, capacity, and limitations of the State in which a humanitarian emergency is unfolding. The centrality of the State's role in providing for IDPs (and its consequent influence over their lives and rights) is of particular importance in exploring the question of gender equality: a state's willingness to prioritize gender equality may sometimes be at odds with that of UNHCR and other humanitarian actors, a fact that has impact on the services, opportunities, and rights that IDP women and girls can or cannot access.

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement also establish **provisions that single out the rights of IDP women and girls to protection** and urges parties to assure their rights and participation. Principles 18, 19, and 20 of the Guiding Principles respectively call for the **full participation of women in the planning and distribution of basic humanitarian supplies, attention to the health needs of women, services for survivors of SGBV, and women's equal right to obtain all necessary documentation issued in their own names.**[23] The Kampala Convention also underlines the commitment of signatory states towards several gender-specific concerns, notably: to protect IDPs against SGBV, to provide special protection and assistance to female heads of household and mothers with young children, and to take measures to provide for the sexual and reproductive health of IDP women and to provide psychosocial support for survivors of SGBV. It also notes that women and unaccompanied children have equal right to obtain identity documentation issued in their own names.[24]

UNHCR also acknowledges the rights of IDP women and girls and enshrines their well-being in its work. The **UNHCR AGD Policy** mentioned above articulates ten Core Actions that are obligatory in all UNHCR operations, including collecting sex- and age-disaggregated data for the purposes of programming, employing participatory methodologies at each stage of operations, communicating transparently with all members of an affected community, promoting feedback and organizational learning, and ensuring 50 percent female participation in management and leadership structures under UNHCR's authority.[25] UNHCR's Commitments to Refugee Women[26] was updated and incorporated into the AGD policy as **UNHCR's Updated Commitments to Women and Girls** in order to articulate and expand the scope of the Commitments to include all populations of concern, including IDP women and girls, in recognition that in many parts of the world, IDPs will compose the majority of the population of concern. The attention paid to gender equality in the existing framework for the protection of IDPs represents a step forward in improved outcomes for IDP women and girls' protection and participation in humanitarian settings. The provisions on women and girls are instruments through which UNHCR and partners can maintain accountability towards such participation.

Food distribution at Doro Camp in Mabaan County, South Sudan. © UNHCR/Sebastian Rich

PART 1: SEEKING SURVIVAL: THE LARGEST BARRIER TO THE MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION OF IDP WOMEN AND GIRLS

In this section we consider how the effort to obtain essential survival needs and keep safe is a fundamental barrier to IDP women and girls in claiming their rights to participate and in making decisions about their well-being. An extensive body of literature tells us that in humanitarian settings, women and girls overwhelmingly bear the burden of survival to obtain shelter, food, income, and basic needs for themselves and for those who depend on them.[27] Displacement, whether it is caused by armed conflict, disasters, or the consequences of climate change, exacerbates structural gender inequalities, and the inevitable result is that women and girls experience disproportionate stresses and violence. This reality is embedded in the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 framework, which notes that displacement results in strained access to basic needs, economic responsibilities, separation from partners, social networks, and other traditional protection systems.[28]

The number of difficulties that IDP women and girls voiced in Niger and South Sudan is so numerous that we do not list these exhaustively; rather we focus on the most prominent challenges barring IDP women's agency and participation that find relevance in other IDP contexts. These most immediate and often quotidian barriers revolve around staying safe and meeting basic needs.

Staying Safe and Staying Alive

"Of course, the first thing we want is peace, it is security. That you can sleep easy at night, and then when you wake up in the morning you can walk out of your house and feel safe. This has become a dream for us."

– IDP woman, western Niger

Internal Displacement in South Sudan at a Glance

As of the end of 2017, 1,899,000 people were displaced internally in South Sudan. The majority of displacements are occasioned by South Sudan's five-year conflict that ignited in 2013 after President Salva Kiir accused former Vice President Riek Machar of a coup, leading to a conflict between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition. The ensuing conflict exacerbated already low development levels and preexisting ethnic tensions. Blistering, indiscriminate violence against civilians has been a troubling feature of this conflict, which has led to the proliferation of numerous different armed groups and fractionalization. A peace agreement was signed in September 2018 after several previous peace agreements ended in renewed violence.

Sources:
http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/south-sudan
https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/will-south-sudan-s-new-peace-deal-stick

Our meetings with IDP women and girls in Niger and South Sudan bear out the enormous time and energy IDP women exert to meet basic survival needs. IDP women and girls were above all preoccupied with concerns about existential threats to their safety and that of their dependents, and this was inevitably the first issue they raised when asked about their daily lives. IDP women in Niger and South Sudan (including in informal and formal camp sites) were secondly concerned with having safe shelter, enough food to feed their children, and medical care. These concerns were raised by women who resided with partners and by female-headed households (FHH). However, the struggle to meet basic needs should not be framed solely in terms of vulnerability or weakness, as in many cases women are rising to the occasion to fulfill these needs. Responding to a question asking women to consider the ways that they are strong, a woman in PoC 3[29] in Juba stated, "We are strong because we get up early in the morning and we prepare food for the children, because we go to the market, we get the water, and we go collect firewood. Women are strong because we support the family when the husband is not around."

Yet being the sole provider for the family, while it illustrates inner strength and determination, is not in and of itself empowering for IDP women when it is their only option to satisfy survival needs. The amount of time and energy needed by IDP women to stay safe and alive diminishes time and energy that could be channeled towards activities that enable them to build confidence and exert decision-making in their lives and their communities. In a poignant illustration of this, women and girls at women and girls' safe spaces in Bentiu town in South Sudan were so physically drained after a morning spent collecting firewood, gathering water, and conducting other survival tasks that they lay down on the mats in the safe space to sleep rather than take part in the activities. The women in the safe space indicated that many of their other "sisters" were still outside collecting firewood and seeing to other duties and were thus not able to come to the safe space at all even though they would like to speak with UNHCR. That women do not have the time and energy to participate in a consultation speaks volumes about the difficulty of sustaining survival. It is understandable that women and girls who do not know if they will be able to put food on the table tomorrow do not express an immediate interest in political participation, even though they are aware that political processes shape their lives.

The Loss of Livelihoods Assets

"Raising animals used to be our livelihood. Now, having animals is a risk, if you take them out into the bush to graze you can be attacked by criminals who will steal the animals or worse. Land is outside our villages and it is not safe to go there to cultivate."

–IDP woman, western Niger

Displacement dispossesses women of their livelihoods and the sense of agency and power, however modest, these granted them in their original homes. The IDP women consulted in southern and western Niger described how displacement had removed them from traditional forms of economic decision-making and power that they held in their homes through their roles in agriculture, fishing, and animal husbandry. Actively participating in or leading these activities accorded them a certain

Internal Displacement in Niger at a Glance:

Like its neighbors in the Sahel region, Niger has been troubled by violent extremism that has tested a country with some of the lowest performance on development indicators. At the end of 2017, Niger registered 144,000 people who had been displaced as a result of conflict and violence; in 2018 the country saw 52,000 leaving their homes due to ongoing violence in the western areas near Niger's borders with Mali and Burkina Faso. Niger has also become the site of military operations, with spillover from Operation Barkhane and the G5 Sahel Forces that are tasked with fighting violent extremist groups in the region.

Sources:
http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/niger
https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2018/12/5c122b944/violence-displaces-50000-western-niger-year.html

Taphisa Nyaboul, 23, an internally displaced South Sudanese woman whose husband was killed and is a mother to four children, weeds and rakes the ground at Bor camp. © UNHCR/Richard Ruati

power and autonomy that has dissolved with displacement. "In our villages," women in an informal site in Diffa explained, "we had our land and many opportunities, especially in agriculture, but these opportunities have disappeared." Coping with the loss of livelihoods diminishes personal agency and the ability to make decisions within the household. Yet most IDP women do not wait around to reclaim economic power through the often limited means available to them. In South Sudan, for example, women and girls risk their safety by going outside protection sites or their villages to search for firewood and elephant grass that they can sell; other women sell tea or small items or cook in the market. It is not surprising that IDP women and girls unanimously requested support for sustained income-generating activities and identify their ability to earn an income as a source of power and agency that will vastly improve their daily lives.

Profoundly interlinked with the loss of livelihoods is the dispossession of land that often accompanies displacement. Many IDP women in southern Niger are skilled farmers and fisherwomen, but they are highly dependent on access to land to employ these skills and generate income. Women and girls in both countries brought up uncertain access to land in their sites of displacement as a barrier to income generation. Housing, land, and property (HLP) rights are of utmost concern to IDP women when they look towards resolutions to their displacement. While return and reintegration was not the most immediate concern of women and girls consulted by UNHCR (since women in both countries were not yet at a point of returning to their homes of origin), experience from other IDP contexts tells us that HLP access will be an important barrier to overcome to ensure their survival and autonomy in the future. Women and girls are often denied property rights

prior to displacement, and in a conflict situation the denial of HLP rights threatens women's livelihoods (and by extension their safety and survival) and obstructs the process of durable solutions.[30] UNHCR's 2018 consultations with South Sudanese IDPs over legal frameworks related to internal displacement revealed concerns over HLP as an impediment to solutions, as in the wake of five years of war the law lacks the legitimacy and reach to enforce accountability around land rights.[31] In this sense, it is critical to focus on the linkages between women's economic autonomy, safe access to HLP rights, and the resolution of their displacement.

Sexual and Gender-based Violence is an Impediment to IDP Women and Girls' Participation

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is a violation of the human rights, safety, and agency of women and girls, and it is a significant barrier standing between women and girls and their right to meaningful participation. SGBV is a fundamentally disempowering experience that denigrates a woman psychologically, economically, and physically, and the heightened risk of SGBV curbs women's engagement in the public sphere.[32] While SGBV is a great concern for all women and girls, evidence from multiple conflicts suggests that displaced women and girls suffer more intensely from SGBV due to their especially low status and the other risks brought about by displacement.[33],[34] In this UNHCR study, we never pointedly asked IDP women and girls to share personal experiences of violence due to the ethical imperative to respect confidentiality and avoid stigmatization of survivors, but we did not need to: many IDP women and girls and other key informants spoke at length on the multiple forms of violence that afflict women and adolescent girls in their community. Women in South Sudan in particular were explicit in describing the experience of rape and sexual exploitation that displaced women and girls face as they go about obtaining basic needs, including rapes committed against women and girls while collecting firewood and other basic survival materials.

While not denying that sexual violence is an enormous barrier to women's right to safety and participation, several UN and INGO participants noted that the focus on sexual violence can obscure the other forms of SGBV and discrimination that prevent women and girls from experiencing their rights. In South Sudan, for example, domestic violence is likely to be more prevalent than sexual violence[35] and is an equal if not greater barrier to women's participation than sexual violence. In Niger, multiple participants singled out domestic violence as the most prominent form of SGBV; IDP women shared with UNHCR's researcher that there tend to be more disputes between husbands and wives within the household because the crisis has left women more dependent on male family members. Staying mindful of the many ways that SGBV disempowers women and girls, we need to recognize the linkage between domestic violence and women's participation: if a woman is disempowered in her own home, she is not likely to enter public spaces to participate.[36] Tackling domestic violence is thus critical for increasing IDP women's engagement in decision-making in all spaces. Recalling that the individual/household also represents a space of participation, it is important to simultaneously encourage feasible alternatives to public participation for those women and girls who are unable to immediately enter public arenas.

Militarization Introduces Additional Risks for IDP Women and Girls

"You do not say no to a soldier."

–IDP woman, South Sudan, Juba

Crowded with foreign, state, and non-state military actors, Niger and South Sudan are illustrative examples of the securitization of the humanitarian space in which IDP settings often unfold.[37] Both contexts reflect a wider phenomenon, in which the burgeoning number of IDPs has coincided with the post-Cold War era of civil conflicts that have seen militarization and constrained access to the humanitarian space—a phenomenon that has affected the nature and visibility of displacement. IDP contexts are often more unstable and difficult to access than refugee settings, including in areas not under the control of recognized national authorities.[38] We can look here to the

Nyakit, a 48-year-old internally displaced South Sudanese woman, was forced to leave her home in Malakal when soldiers threatened to kill her. She was reluctant to come to the Protection of Civilians site. Without friends or family, she felt isolated and attempted to take her own life. © UNHCR/Will Swanson

prominent examples of Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Somalia—all highly militarized contexts in which IDPs largely reside in areas under the control of armed non-state actors who may be hostile to the agenda of the UN and aid agencies.[39]

The securitization of the humanitarian space gives rise to disproportionate risks for women and girls that can cause their retreat from visible engagement in the public sphere. In southern Niger, UNHCR's researcher was informed of incidents in which national Nigerien forces and military forces from Chad deployed in the region to counter the Boko Haram insurgency were implicated in acts of rape and exploitation against IDP women and girls. In South Sudan, armed actors (both state and non-state) regularly cross into civilian sites; for example, during an FGD with IDP adolescent girls in a space reserved for humanitarians in Bentiu town, armed

government soldiers ambled around WGSS and shelters used for NGO activities.

Research also tells us that militarized contexts circumscribe civilian decision-making power even for elite men,[40] and we have many examples to look towards in which we find that militarization resulted in greater dangers and violence for displaced women and girls, including Nigeria, Liberia, and the Central African Republic.[41] While deliberate steps have been taken in Niger and South Sudan to curb exploitation and blowback against women and girls, we know from experience that this type of violence may happen under the radar. The proliferation and impunity of armed actors profoundly undermine women's participation, particularly for IDPs who live outside the wire of formal sites and camps and where state and non-state military actors can act with less visibility and fewer inhibitions.

Double Discrimination Against Adolescent Girls

Displaced adolescent girls are perhaps the most disempowered group in humanitarian settings: they face disproportionate risks of SGBV, have fewer educational opportunities than boys, and bear an enormous domestic burden in comparison with their male peers.[42] Despite a growing awareness among humanitarian actors of the acute vulnerabilities of adolescent girls, the strategic focus on empowering IDP adolescent girls through technically intricate and targeted interventions remains lacking. Humanitarian actors interviewed emphasized the need for activities that would enable displaced adolescent girls to develop life skills, self-esteem, and literacy, which will pave the way for improved participation now and as they mature into adults who will be moving forward to future solutions. One UN SGBV actor interviewed in South Sudan emphasized the need for programs in reproductive health and SGBV for displaced adolescent girls based on the environment they are raised in where domestic violence is a norm and most youth programming favors boys while girls are kept busy all day with a heavy domestic burden, having little to look forward to apart from marriage and a life of subservience to their husbands and other men. It is therefore critical to single out IDP adolescent girls and focus on empowerment from an early age to build self-esteem and leadership skills that will enable them to be more resilient and to participate courageously in all spaces.

Displaced girls and boys in Niger's Diffa border region study in a makeshift tented classroom. Many IDP sites dont even have schools or teachers because of lack of funds. © UNHCR/Hélène Caux

A Focus on Safety and Survival as Pathways to Participation

Reflecting on the time and energy they sacrifice and the dangers they face for the imperative of survival, it is hardly surprising that IDP women and girls do not immediately express ambitions towards participation in spaces beyond those in which their daily lives play out. This is not to say that IDP women and girls do not have opinions about the decisions that are made in the highest spheres of power—on the contrary, they recognize how decisions made by those who wield hard power and resources cut deeply into the core of their daily lives as "ordinary" women. Many women in South Sudan, for example, see that the lifespan of the revitalized peace agreement rests primarily in the hands of men, in particular with the men who wield power and resources, while they are conscious that they as women will suffer most if the war reignites.

IDP women and girls are largely focused on ways that they could be independent and make decisions about their own lives and families in their own places of residence and communities. Returning to the framework of participation, we argue that scaling up opportunities for economic autonomy which ease the burdens of survival and build agency can activate greater decision-making power for women and girls in the abstract spaces of the individual and the household. **Achieving an active form of participation within these apparently humble spaces is in fact necessary to achieve participation within national spaces where hard power decisions are made.** It is unrealistic to ask women to organize and demand their rights to participate in national legal and policy mechanisms when they are so preoccupied with the task of staying alive.[43]
When UNHCR asked the IDP women and girls to probe past their immediate needs, it was clear that many women recognize that when they have a handle on their survival needs and they possess an income, they wield the ability to make decisions within the household that are related to larger questions of women's rights and equality. For example, women in Bentiu town in South Sudan spoke of how household resources enabled them to send daughters to school, an opportunity that they themselves never had. "We have not gone to school, but we have our daughters and younger girls who do go to school and they can be leaders in the future. We send our daughters to go to school so they can learn. They will not be like us." These women made a clear linkage between decision-making power related to their survival needs and a long-term ambition for their daughters to be safer and more empowered to make decisions about their lives than their mothers have been. This is a poignant example of how participation within spaces that may be overlooked or dismissed as modest is in fact linked with ambitions towards involvement in more public realms of leadership and policy; we should respect these expressed desires and focus on building the linkages between each space at which participation plays out to achieve greater equality for IDP women and girls over time.

A discussion on Gender Based Violence run by UNHCR partner IRC takes place in Mingkaman, South Sudan on 2 December 2014. © UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

PART 2: WHEN PARTICIPATION IS DISEMPOWERING: CURRENT MODALITIES OF IDP WOMEN AND GIRLS' PARTICIPATION

"The power of women in our community is very limited. Women do not really participate in decisions made by the community. Some women may give input on issues related to women, such as children."

– IDP women in Diffa, Niger

Recent decades have seen greater reflection and stocktaking within the humanitarian system, which has brought to light the linkages between the participation of affected populations and stronger outcomes in aid and conflict resolution. This study acknowledges the efforts the humanitarian system has exerted in engaging the participation of populations in decision-making and in advocating and working alongside states and other governance actors to practice citizen participation with the aim of good governance.[44] Acknowledging the complexity of IDP settings where we see the entanglement of violence, competing interests, and entrenched power structures that favor men, our findings from Niger and South Sudan suggest that the participation mechanisms employed in IDP settings do not inherently empower the women participating or bring forth the interests of the least powerful. In this section, we will interrogate the mechanisms of participation and decision-making that are widely used to forward women and girls' participation in IDP settings, visiting the positive aspects of these mechanisms but also uncovering how they can disempower IDP women and girls and tarnish efforts towards achieving gender equality in those settings.

Consultation Fatigue

"Our main concern is that what we say to you translates into reality."

– IDP woman in Tillabery, Niger

Consultation is a commonly used tool and a starting point for the participation of affected populations. The process of listening to communities, when it is done in a participatory way that isolates and compares the differential experiences of persons of different ages, gender, and diversity, can be an empowering experience for all involved and is a core strategy of UNHCR.[45] Much of the international rhetoric on participation of conflict- and disaster-affected populations revolves around consultation. But consultation can in fact be counterproductive if it stops there. IDP women and girls in South Sudan and Niger expressed a lack of confidence in the humanitarian system and in their governments to translate rhetoric into action. Women are very often convened for FGDs by aid agencies, they explained, but see nothing concrete materialize afterwards. In South Sudan, this was termed "consultation fatigue" by a high-level UN staff member, who explained that aid actors often "think that if we asked women one day at what time do you want to come to the women's group and on what day, that is participation. But it is not meaningful and high-level."

Consultation is also a preferred tool for collecting input into policy and other forms of formalized power. UNHCR, along with the governments and partners, convened consultations with IDPs in both Niger and South Sudan to feed into the development of internal displacement laws. In both cases, efforts were often made to convene women and girls as part of the IDPs consulted (in South Sudan, an equal number of women were consulted as men), and IDPs were given a chance to voice their concerns regard-

ing humanitarian assistance, their rights, and their concerns related to durable solutions and reintegration. While an important first step in engaging IDPs in law and policy, this process also seems to reflect the pattern of falling back on consultation to carry out rhetorical commitments to participation without advancing to a more active form of participation or bringing information back to the participants on how and why their inputs did or (did not) affect the development of the law.

It is difficult to mobilize women and girls to participate in decision-making about aid or policy when they lack confidence in the system and question whether their participation leads to positive changes. This is not to say that IDP women and girls do not value being consulted; on the contrary, they absolutely want to be consulted, but they need to be reassured that the process does not end with an aid worker ticking off a box in a logical framework matrix or the government convening a number of internally displaced persons to a meeting about a national law. In the bigger picture, consultation remains a largely passive mode of participation, especially when the persons consulted do not see or hear the outcomes of their time and input.

While this invokes the looming question of managing expectations and aid dependency in contexts of prolonged displacement, it focuses on the harm that occurs when agencies engage with women and girls but do not meet their concerns, particularly if agencies do not set clear expectations when they convene consultations and when they pelt the same group of individuals with the same types of questions over time, with no corresponding redistribution of power.[46] Several of the IDP women and girls were not afraid to hold UNHCR and others accountable to our rhetoric about empowering women. For example, after an FGD with the UNHCR researcher in Juba PoC 3, a woman stood up and said "so now you will tell us how we will hear the feedback of what we have said today…. We are sending you to Geneva to say you have seen women in the PoC in Juba and they are suffering a lot. We have received many visitors with many interviews and nothing has changed." This pointed remark stands the image of the meek and voiceless IDP woman on its head—if women are calling out the humanitarian system on our own shortcomings, we should be listening carefully and encouraging them to speak out.

Safe Spaces, Committees, and Livelihoods: Archetypes of IDP Participation in Camp-based Humanitarian Settings

In many IDP contexts, the camp is an important site of local and community-level participation for IDPs, and it is the space in which the archetypes of women's participation in humanitarian settings have been developed and honed. This bears out in Niger and in South Sudan, where aid actors have facilitated the establishment of camp governance and management structures that incorporate women in various iterations to see that their needs are brought to the table. We note that three main archetypes for women's participation are often used by international actors: the women and girls' safe space (WGSS), involvement in collective structures such as committees that oversee decisions about aid and protection issues, and livelihood activities aimed at women and girls.

Women and girls' safe spaces rank among the classic approaches to responding to SGBV in humanitarian settings. Defined as a formal or informal physical space solely for women and girls, where they can feel safe, socialize with other women, and obtain succor from trauma and the stresses of displacement, WGSS have been shown to be effective in increasing women's and girls' social connectedness, self-esteem, and access to confidential SGBV response services such as psychosocial support and case management.[47] UNHCR's researcher visited multiple WGSS in PoCs and informal sites in South Sudan. These were often humble structures furnished with mats and perhaps a few plastic chairs and offering simple yet meaningful activities; yet they are accessible spaces for women who do not have opportunities for organization and who are denied a sense of ownership of their bodies, their lives, and the places in which they reside. The WGSS are perhaps the first space for participation available to women after they step out of the house, and the first place where women are listened to as individuals. IDP women and girls in South Sudan expressed appreciation for these spaces which were in many cases the only places where they were not distressed; in western Niger, an IDP woman pointed to the need for spaces for women to "pass the time and forget their bad memories." WGSS also provide linkages to the other participation structures in a community and are thus a departure point for women's participation at large.

Camp management structures are another common modality of participation. In the PoCs in South Sudan, there are multiple structures that are facilitated by international actors. These largely take the form of camp management committees which serve as mechanisms for the representation of IDP needs and dialogues between humanitarian actors and the camp population, or as protection committees that identify and elevate protection issues to humanitarian actors and refer cases. In southern Niger, humanitarian actors have established protection committees for each site to which they have access, and women leaders are appointed to such committees, often in equal numbers to men. In both cases, international actors impose quotas for women's seats on the committee. For example, in Bentiu PoC in South Sudan, there is a chairman and a chairlady that notionally share leadership of the committee, and both men and women are chosen to serve as leaders for different zones of the PoC. Appointing women to committees was also named as one of the primary tools of gender mainstreaming in other sectors, which establish quotas for the presence of women, for example in Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) committees.

Income-generating activities aimed at women and girls are another archetype of IDP women's participation and take the form of time-bound donor projects. As IDP women and girls made very clear to UNHCR, the loss of their livelihood impacts their personal agency and sense of power. Yet as an IDP woman, livelihood options are often limited, incur protection risks, and consume considerable time and energy.[48] Income-generating projects are consequently a logical strategy for building women's ability to make decisions and to mitigate economic coping mechanisms that may lead to exploitation and harm. Income-generating projects are what IDP women themselves ask for and they represent a concrete step towards the empowerment of IDP women and girls when the projects enable them to wield greater control of resources. This in turn enables them to make their own financial decisions, thus activating the women and girls' power within the household. IDP women and girls do not wait around for international actors to put in place programs to economically empower them; they resort instead to the opportunities available to them—for example gathering firewood and elephant grass to sell in South Sudan, or doing agricultural day labor or working informally as domestic workers in local homes in southern Niger. Women recently displaced in highly volatile western

Niger had sold their livestock and jewelry, once their most valuable possessions, to have money for food.[49] While it is well-recognized that livelihoods projects for women that align with their skills and the local market are effective, interventions are often poorly designed, too short-lived, and lack a strong exit strategy that would enable women to continue on past the expiration date of the project, thus interrupting the momentum gained in increasing women's participation.

Outside the Wire: Building Participation Structures for IDPs Residing Outside of Camps

The aforementioned modalities of participation are predicated on traditional humanitarian response models that center services around a square, structured space where the population can be easily contained and organized. The limitations of this model are clear in settings where the majority of IDPs reside outside of camps, particularly on sites that are not readily accessible to humanitarian actors. A number of key informants in Niger and South Sudan regretted that agencies overcrowd services on the organized and accessible sites but are hesitant to venture out into the spaces where the majority of IDPs reside, despite a wide recognition that the greater numbers and needs lie outside the camp walls. IDP women and girls in camps that are accessible and serviced by aid actors generally have greater opportunities for organization; for example, in Niger, a national women's association traditionally active in the Tillabery region pointed out that the refugee women in the camps are organized into groups because aid actors have been able to access these sites. Yet the informal sites where recent waves of IDPs have congregated since the early part of 2018 are not consistently accessible to aid actors and thus structured participation mechanisms mediated by international actors do not yet exist.

The imperative to transcend the traditional humanitarian response models that center on the contained space of a camp has been increasingly acknowledged in recent years.[50] Yet many agencies remain risk-averse and base their response on facility of access and security of staff and assets, reflecting the wider securitization of the humanitarian space previously

discussed. The level of *access to* and *visibility of* the populations have great impact on the ability of actors to respect the centrality of protection and the organizing principle of gender equality in IDP settings. The least visible populations are also the most likely to be marginalized from decision-making regarding the distribution of life-saving aid, let alone to be engaged in formalized processes that profoundly impact their lives such as in the development of legislation. In South Sudan, UNHCR and partners have been taking proactive and deliberate steps in moving outside the camp, which extends to the work carried out by partners in participation. UNHCR's researcher visited Bentiu town where women leaders had been chosen to represent different blocks of the town, in a model not dissimilar to that utilized in Bentiu PoC. A lot of work remains to be done to extend past the camp, and to several participants this means increasing the appetite for risk and creativity. "[Women's participation] is hit-and-miss [outside the camp]," acknowledged an SGBV specialist working in South Sudan; "it is not as easy as in a camp where you have camp management. So, I think that it's a challenge, but it is not an insurmountable challenge to have that women's village-level engagement."

Both South Sudan and Niger also reflect the wider trend of the transfer of greater responsibilities—and therefore greater risk—to local/national partners in order to reach into these securitized spaces. Remote implementation is both a coping strategy and an unintended consequence of the complex set of geopolitical factors that have over time blurred humanitarian agendas with foreign military and political campaigns and placed aid workers more squarely in the line of fire. The question of local partnerships is complex and fraught with ethical dilemmas about the safety of staff and the effectiveness of humanitarian action.[51] Certainly, international partnerships can yield positive outcomes in indigenous response capacity, ownership, and of course access to areas too dangerous for international actors. Yet it can simultaneously compromise humanitarian principles, produce fraud, and reinforce the invisibility of the IDPs residing beyond the walls to international donors and organizations. Local/national partners are often not equipped to deliver technically complex programs in women's participation or SGBV, and they are often asked to implement in remote areas where international actors are less willing to venture—or provide the technical oversight and

monitoring that are critical to the execution of SGBV and women's participation work. Our point is not to say that local partnerships are ineffective means of increasing women's participation, but **it is imperative that handing over projects in women's empowerment not be solely a strategy for redistributing risk onto local organizations**.

Foreign Authors of Gender Equality

"African men do not listen to women. Even that man that sits next to you [a foreigner] now, if no foreigners were here and we were alone with him, he would not listen to us. You [the international community] are the ones to give us support."

– IDP adolescent girl, Bentiu PoC

An important misgiving around these archetypes of IDP women's participation is that they are often initiated and mediated by (and arguably dependent on) agents of the international community. They may thus create inorganic, parallel, and unsustainable leadership structures that can potentially undermine women's agency and power. The agency of international actors in driving these structures is highly visible to IDP women and men consulted in South Sudan and Niger. South Sudanese IDPs appeared to take this fact for granted, describing international actors as the torchbearers of women's needs and rights. South Sudanese IDP women overwhelmingly displayed a lack of confidence in both their government and in their own communities to consider their needs: "If there is a problem," a woman in an FGD in Bentiu shared with the researcher, "we go running to the humanitarians, not to the government." Participants consulted in both countries also credited international actors with influencing any attention paid by the government to women's rights.

Yet when international actors take great interest in women and girls and/or become the authors of gender equality, this can lend participation structures an air of artificiality and lead to blowback from men and boys who perceive that women and girls receive

disproportionate benefits and attention. An international protection stakeholder lamented that well-intentioned projects to increase economic autonomy of IDP women in southern Niger have too often led to domestic violence as men grew uneasy when the control of household assets changed hands from husband to wife too quickly for the man's comfort. UNHCR's researcher also heard examples of men and boys subtly wresting control of economic empowerment activities from women in both countries. For example, an IDP woman may be given the agricultural inputs and a small plot of land to grow vegetables, but it is her husband who takes the product to the market to sell and then pockets the money. While male blowback to women-focused projects is by no means limited to IDP contexts, we have to consider how displacement can rapidly magnify and tighten discriminatory gender roles and cause undue stress between women and their partners and male family members. Violence and spoilage may therefore be more imminent risks for IDP women and girls than those who have not experienced displacement. In IDP contexts, moreover, projects are often billed as "quick-impact," which sometimes means that they cut back on time and effort spent in creating an enabling environment (such as through sensitizing men and engaging community leaders) for activities that risk upsetting traditional gender roles and creating violence.

The very fact that response models in IDP humanitarian settings are too often characterized by haste potentially disrupts any momentum in women's participation. Several international and national participants involved in women's rights activities emphasized a need to break this pattern of unitary projects that produce scant lasting impact, to focus instead on interventions that situate economic empowerment as a step in a process that leads, over time, to more substantive and influential participation and leadership. What is rather disappointing is that many humanitarian and government actors interviewed for this study also did not seem to look past these unitary and often temporary models of women's participation and consider how to bridge the gap between community-level participation mediated by international actors and the intermediate and national spaces where IDP women and girls are often conspicuously absent or brought up as a side-note.

There is a dearth of programs that transcend these models of women's participation to concretely link the local to the national. The few projects that take a strategic, long-term view towards women's participation seldom last beyond six months; for example, a national women's rights organization in South Sudan explained that a project ongoing at the time of research, aimed at disseminating the revitalized peace agreement in South Sudanese communities, lasted only three months. In IDP settings, donors are averse to funding projects in the long-term when they sense that displacement is too volatile or too fast-moving to make a commitment lasting more than several months. Realizing meaningful and substantive women's participation demands a long-term commitment that will withstand unexpected challenges (such as resurgences in violence and changes in displacement patterns) and transcend fragmented project funding cycles. Alongside previous research on women's participation in fragile contexts,[52] we reemphasize that **women's rights organizations and specialized aid actors need ample time and financial resources to pull down the discriminatory social norms barring IDP women and girls from achieving equality**. As a solution, several participants proposed that donors who cannot commit to long-term funding frameworks pool funds into a pot earmarked solely for partners capable of delivering technically intricate projects in women's participation and the many categories that fall under this umbrella, including SGBV response and prevention, women and girls' access to justice, and adolescent girls' empowerment and leadership.

Women are in the Room, but not at the Table

"I sit on the local court in the PoC, and I may as well just be a photograph. I cannot give my opinion on the decisions the court makes, it is the men who do that."

– IDP woman leader, Juba PoC

When speaking with IDP women and girls, it is very clear that sitting on a camp protection committee or serving as a woman leader is not inher-

ently empowering to the woman participating, nor is she always able to advance women's concerns. The physical presence of women in committees does not always translate to substantive participation: UNHCR's researcher was repeatedly told that women may come to a meeting and sign their names on an attendance sheet, but women will then sit on the sidelines while men take the floor—and then make the decisions. IDP women leaders in Bentiu town in South Sudan, interviewed in the women and girls' safe space operated by a UNHCR partner, regretted that they lack the trappings of leadership that would lend their roles greater legitimacy, saying "When we are here [in this women and girls' safe space] we are leaders. But then we go home, we are just women again [and we have no power]. Maybe when women have high positions, when there is a commissioner who is a woman [we will be more respected]." Some women and girls speak more readily when convened in separate meetings just for women, after which point their concerns are brought to men leaders. Creating space for participation within a women-only space can create a disconnect between what women want and decide and what is decided by the male power-holders in the community.

Similarly, the women members of the camp management committee in a PoC in Juba, South Sudan, expressed frustration that their male counterparts hold the sway to make decisions and often do so regardless of the women's standpoint. They complained that international aid agencies approach the chairman's office first without consulting the women, reinforcing these unequal power dynamics between the women's and men's leadership. The women leaders regret that they sit in their office[53] and have little to offer besides words to the women and girls who come to them. Apart from these demoralizing aspects of their post, the time that they spend doing a difficult job without compensation detracts from time spent in small livelihood activities. Leadership becomes disempowering when it is a barrier to economic activities and when it does not forward the well-being or agency of women and girls in their jurisdiction in the camp or town.

In highlighting the flaws in the system and women's frustrations, it is not our intention to devalue

the participation structures that are relied upon in humanitarian settings. Even if IDP women's participation does not yield dramatic and immediate changes, that does not mean we should disregard the less visible positive outcomes or assume that all IDPs have poor experiences. Participation in an activity that builds social connectedness has value in and of itself. A joint International Organization for Migration and Women's Refugee Commission pilot project aiming to increase women's opportunities to equal and meaningful participation in camp governance structures across five different displacement contexts (including Bentiu PoC in South Sudan) found that a combination of skills-building activities, training of women in leadership, and other women-led empowerment activities yielded positive outcomes in women's sense of agency, self-esteem, and social connectedness, even while the bigger-picture constraints of gender inequality and militarization continued to curb women's participation beyond the local level.[54] During our fieldwork, similar positive outcomes were evident at the level of the women and girls' safe spaces, where women and girls are able to build solidarity and help one another through the most difficult times of their lives. Women in southern Niger also praised their own ability to bring about cohesion among the women, starting a small savings pot that women could access for urgent needs.

Yet while increased self-esteem, connectedness, and well-being at the level of individual IDP women and girls are all important outcomes that should be built into programs in IDP contexts, we must be mindful of the larger power structures at work in any setting, and to set realistic expectations for what IDP women and girls can hope to achieve within the overarching barrier of discriminatory social norms. The question then becomes how we can begin to confront harmful power structures and dismantle norms that frame the opportunities for IDP women and girls' participation. These looming questions underlie the following sections of this study.

Nyathay Duop, 22, Nyaruach Malol, 30, and Nyuot Duop, 24, walk back to their family after registering their arrival with the local authorities in Leer, Unity State, South Sudan in November 2014. The women are amongst the 1.5 million South Sudanese who have had to flee their homes since conflict erupted in 2013. © UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

PART 3: THE DEVIL IS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION: CONFRONTING THE GULF BETWEEN POLICY AND PRACTICE IN IDP SETTINGS

As IDP women and girls remain under the laws and protection of their own governments, it is crucial that states affected by internal displacement develop, adopt, and implement a solid normative framework that upholds gender equality and stipulates concrete, feasible procedures for protecting the rights of IDPs. Harmful power structures and discriminatory gender norms are often embedded in and legitimized by national laws and policies, and therefore working alongside governments to rectify these inequalities is obligatory for upholding women and girls' rights. Yet even with the existence of a robust legal framework, policies and laws are meaningless when they are not accessible, comprehensible, and accountable to the people whose lives they are intended to benefit.

Both Niger and South Sudan have advanced in constructing normative frameworks that uphold gender equality, though there remain important gaps and inconsistencies in the protection of women and girls' rights. Both countries have also been making efforts, with the support of UNHCR and other partners, to elaborate national laws on internal displacement that integrate the content of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the Kampala Convention. But the fact remains that laws and policies risk sitting on paper without touching people's daily lives. In this section we will visit the gaps in the policy and legal architecture in South Sudan and in Niger with regards to internal displacement and gender equality. Our even greater concern is to interrogate the gulf between existing frameworks and the everyday realities of being an IDP woman or girl. We also seek to understand the ways that IDP women and girls are and are not participating in the existing mechanisms as well as playing a role in the development of new policies. This section centers on the case studies of Niger and South Sudan, but we note that similar gaps and the gulf between rhetoric, standards, and daily life can be easily recognized in many displacement settings.[55]

Unpacking the normative framework around gender and displacement in Niger and South Sudan

For a young country that has been plagued by war for much of its existence, South Sudan possesses relatively robust policy architecture around gender equality, much of which has been strongly influenced (and in some cases driven) by the technical support of INGOs and donors. Many policies contain progressive language that reflects international norms, though there are inconsistencies between different frameworks. Niger displays some contradictions in its record of laws and policies around women's rights. This is in part a byproduct of the colonial past that placed considerable power in traditional mechanisms (especially in matters of family law), and which reflects the embattled debates that have flared between women's rights groups and conservatives.[56] Niger became the first African country to domesticate the Kampala Convention when it adopted a national law on the protection and assistance of IDPs in December of 2018,[57] while South Sudan's law is still under development.

Table 2 below summarizes the normative framework and gaps around gender equality and displacement in both Niger and in South Sudan. The table is meant to be descriptive rather than an exhaustive analysis of the policy architecture and the gaps related to gender equality and displacement.

Table 2: Policies and Laws Around Gender Equality and Internal Displacement

	Gender Equality Instruments, Laws, and Policies	Displacement and Humanitarian Instruments, Laws, and Policies	Gaps in the Policy and Legal Architecture
Niger	• **CEDAW** was ratified in 1999 with reservations on article 5a) with regard to the modification of social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, in that the government "considers that social and cultural patterns of conduct that are deeply rooted in the collective consciousness cannot be modified simply by enacting legislation", and submitted a report on progress in 2001.[58] • **An affirmative action law requires a gender quota** of 10 percent women's representation for all elected offices, and 25 percent for positions in public administration and government. [59] A proposal to raise the quotas to 15 and 30 percent respectively is under consideration.[60] • Niger has a **National Gender Policy** published in 2008, which affirms basic principles of the rights of women to have equal opportunities and advances their participation in economic and social activities.	Niger ratified the **Kampala Convention** in 2012, and in 2018 the government completed the domestication of the Convention **through developing a law on IDPs.** This process was started in February of 2018 and included a committee comprising the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management,[61] the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of the Promotion of Women and Child Protection, and the Ministry of Justice. UNHCR sat on the committee and provided support in the process of drafting the law and in conducting regional consultations with IDPs. The law was published on 2 December 2018.[62]	• Multiple attempts to reform **Niger's family code** have been unsuccessful, and it maintains discriminatory practices on marriage, divorce, and inheritance, which remain mostly governed by customary law and Islamic courts. • Child marriage is not criminalized.[63] • The adoption of the **Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol)** has been repeatedly rejected.

	Gender Equality Instruments, Laws, and Policies	Displacement and Humanitarian Instruments, Laws, and Policies	Gaps in the Policy and Legal Architecture
South Sudan[64]	• The **Transitional Constitution of 2011,** which is considered the supreme authority, accords among other things women's equality with men, the right to equal pay, and the right to participate equally in public life. It also stipulates that everyone is equal before the law regardless of their religion, politics, sex, language, etc. It further stipulates that **persons must give consent to marry** and that parents cannot make decisions regarding marriage on the behalf of the child. **Women also have the right to "own property** and share in the estates of their deceased husbands together with any surviving legal heir," and women are granted the right to participate equally with men in public life, stipulating a minimum of **24% affirmative action** "to redress imbalances created by history, customs, and traditions." • South Sudan's **Penal Code** criminalizes rape, abduction (and sexual assault by analogy), and kidnapping with the intent of forced marriage. • The **Child Act,** which protects from early marriage, forced circumcision, and other cultural forms of body marking, grants equal rights to girls in participation in public life and access to education. It also prohibits female children from being expelled from school due to pregnancy or "after one year of lactation." • South Sudan is signatory to **CEDAW** and is due for its first progress report in 2018. • The **1325 National Action Plan for 2015–2020**[65] has provisions under the four pillars of UNSCR 1325. • The **Strategic National Action Plan to End Child Marriage** was launched in 2018.	• South Sudan has a **Framework for Return, Reintegration and Relocation of Displaced Persons: Achieving Durable Solutions in South Sudan**[66] that was issued by the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management in 2017. It recognizes "children, women, widows, persons with disabilities" in the provision of public services and it stipulates that "IDPs are able to participate in all public affairs on an equal basis to all other citizens," but does not reference or make provisions towards IDP *women and girls'* participation specifically. • South Sudan signed the **Kampala Convention** in 2013 and there are activities underway to ratify and domesticate the Convention into the national legal framework. A Task Force on the Kampala Convention is led by both UNHCR and the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization.[67]	• South Sudan lacks a law specifically addressing **domestic violence**. • **Marital rape is not defined as such or criminalized in the Penal Code**, which states that "Sexual intercourse by a married couple is not rape," implying that **sexual intercourse with someone under 18 is not rape within marriage.** UNDP notes that this is "inconsistent with the provisions of the Transitional Constitution, the Child Act and Local Government Act, which protect children from under-aged sex, harmful traditional practices and early and forced marriage."[68] • While kidnapping for the purposes of marriage is a crime, the **Penal Code allows the matter to be resolved according to local customs** which often discriminate against women, meaning that women and girls can be married against their will if their parents or families consent. • The **Child Act** permits women and girls to be expelled from school for one year after giving birth, discriminating against girls who give birth but placing no restrictions or penalties on boys who father children while in school.

Barriers to Making Laws and Policies Work for IDP Women and Girls

"When you read our laws, we do not see women there. They give men more strength. For example, if you want to divorce, this is easy for men, but very hard for women. You have to go to your relatives and get back all the cows that had been given for your dowry, and you cannot keep custody of your small children. A man can just get tired of his wife and leave her…we want to change this, we want [the laws] to be right in South Sudan. Women have no law to fall back on. Even if there is a gap between traditions and laws, if your rights are violated then you can say that there is a law."

–IDP woman leader, Bentiu, South Sudan

Though there is plentiful work needed to achieve a gender-equal legal regime, the greater challenge remains the profound gap between policies, rhetoric, and follow-through: laws are not well-enforced, and IDP women and girls mostly look to other means of redress when their rights and access to justice are violated. Even the most robust and progressive policies or peace negotiations are meaningless if there is no concrete and visible follow-through. As an SGBV specialist working in South Sudan explained, even in the cases where women are involved in the drafting of a formal document such as a peace agreement or law, the "devil is always in the implementation." The reasons behind this gap are complex and numerous: lack of human and financial resources, inadequate government capacity to implement laws, and conflict, compounded by structural gender inequalities. **While these difficulties in implementation are vast, they are not insurmountable and do not excuse us from efforts to achieve the full participation of all women and girls, including IDPs.**

In both South Sudan and in Niger, the governments' conspicuous absence from many areas outside the capitals obstructs the implementation of policies for women and girls. Limited state sovereignty hinders the ability of states to uphold their commitments to their own citizens, including IDPs and the host communities in which they reside. The word "capacity" tellingly appeared in every discussion about state actors and their ability to uphold rights and maintain a handle on the displacement crises. It is true that in both countries capacity is lacking in protection (and particularly SGBV) responses, but it is evident that many government stakeholders would benefit from a better understanding of citizen participation and what that might look like in their own contexts. Government actors themselves even acknowledged the difficulties in taking charge of crises according to international standards: all but one of the government stakeholders interviewed in both countries pointed to the need for capacity-building to enable them to implement policies, alongside the need for financial resources (which was also unanimously cited as an issue).

Constant turnover in government positions also means that trainings have to be repeated periodically. Furthermore, government officials need the chance to practice the concepts they have learned and benefit from coaching during the first stages of implementation. UNHCR and partners have invested plentiful time, resources, and efforts in building the capacity of the governments in South Sudan and Niger in the displacement legal framework, protection principles, and other concepts of humanitarian response. Yet repeatedly **falling back on the need for capacity-building should not obscure the long-term vision, which is for the state and its civil society to pick up the torch and protect citizens of their own accord by budgeting for and using legal instruments to protect their citizens.**

Capacity is a challenge that can be addressed; moving political will is decidedly more difficult. The question of political will to meaningfully address gender equality and open the circles of power to marginalized women and girls is critical to bridging this gulf. We do not generalize that political will to implement policies is entirely absent, as there are dedicated members of state authorities working to the best of their ability to ethically meet the overwhelming challenges of

displacement crises. There are many examples in which governments have been open and cooperative with international actors in integrating gender equality efforts into their response and have taken positive steps in this direction.[69] Yet a number of respondents observed that the governments, while quick to agree to requests regarding gender mainstreaming and other protection issues, often fall short in the follow-through. Most of the government officials interviewed, while not a representative sample of the state authorities in either country, were not able to elaborate the concrete steps that need to be taken towards the implementation of policies related to gender equality so that they touch women's live. Rather they often reiterated the need for financial resources and other forms of support from the international community and said that the policies will be implemented if the peace agreement holds.

Women cannot enjoy the rights given to them under a law or a policy if they are not aware of its existence, let alone its content. In both Niger and South Sudan, IDP women and girls are too often reliant on word of mouth from peers and community leaders for information, meaning that the information is often filtered through persons in a position of power over them. IDP women and girls thus lack comprehensive knowledge about the policies and laws that uphold their rights. Moreover they hold little confidence that their governments are able to protect them from harm.[70] Keeping in mind the burden of survival on IDP women and girls, we are reminded that they often lack the mobility, time, and resources to approach the government or security structures tasked with safeguarding their protection. If women are able to reach the formal services, there is no guarantee that the agents of the state and the justice system would side with the woman's rights.[71]

Turning 1325 Upside Down: Delaying Women's Participation until Peace

IDP women are conspicuously absent from positions of power in the government spaces in Niger and South Sudan. Globally, the women who manage to reach these high-level spaces of participation tend to be more privileged and have had the benefits of education and a supportive family, which are often not advantages enjoyed by IDP women.[72] Women holding positions in government in both Niger and South Sudan face discrimination and intimidation; they are often given positions in Ministries considered to be light or dealing with "women's issues" (such as the Ministry of Gender in South Sudan or the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and Child Protection in Niger) rather than hard power positions such as the Ministry of the Interior or the Ministry of Defense. When women reach the circles of higher power, they may be dismissed as less educated and qualified than their male counterparts. One UN participant in South Sudan explained this discrimination, saying:

They will just throw them [women] positions [in the lesser ministries] in the Minister of Gender, they say here, take this. I say, why not give women positions as the Minister of the Interior or the Minister of the Defense? [Discrimination] has deep roots, even if peace comes it will take years. Women will have to fight twice. Even if they are in parliament, they [the men] will say you are just here because of affirmative action. They will say you are not educated, they will use different ways to discriminate and intimidate them. They will ask why you were not brought by your in-laws, whose wife are you. They do not look at you and what you bring to the table.

Getting women out of their homes and into their communities and the government is a major step—but women's participation stops there if these subtle forms of gender discrimination are not confront-

The South Sudan Revitalized Peace Agreement: WPS Considerations

Key points on women's participation and gender equality on the South Sudan revitalized peace agreement by the Global Protection Cluster include:

- The Agreement does not elaborate on the requirements for women to serve in the Transitional Government, especially for senior and executive positions.
- The Agreement refers to victims of the conflict as "IDPs and returnees" rather than disaggregating women, girls, men, and boys.
- The Agreement refers to South Sudan's "youth" without recognizing that young girls and women have different experiences and needs than young men and boys.
- The particular humanitarian needs of women and girls are not disaggregated from the populations of refugees and IDPs and civilians in need of protection.
- The section on economic, financial, and resource management does not look to gender equality as a guiding principle for reforms to institutions nor does it see women's participation as central to the management and use of natural resources.
- The Agreement acknowledges the importance of the inclusion of women in transitional justice.

See "Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in The Republic of South Sudan (R-Arcss), Analysis from a Women, Peace and Security Perspective," Protection Cluster of South Sudan.

ed within formal power structures. If women and girls who enjoy comparative privileges struggle to reach the higher rungs of decision-making and then exercise power when they reach them, then there is significant work needed to dismantle the walls that separate marginalized groups of women and girls from agency and power.

Following the revitalized peace agreement in South Sudan in 2018, women in South Sudan advocated for pushing the quota of women's representation from 25% to 35%. Yet we know from other contexts that while quota systems can be an important tool to lobby for women's participation, women are too often delegated to political roles not considered "serious."[73] This also bears out in the revitalized peace talks in South Sudan, where parties brought women who were present at the talks, but in a familiar pattern, though the women were in the room they were not sitting at the table. Adolescent girls were also conspicuously absent from this official process. Internally displaced South Sudanese women were not directly involved in the most recent peace negotiations, though they feel the most acute impacts of the conflict and therefore have the greatest interest in the provisions of the peace agreement. IDP women were consulted by the Women's Bloc and the Women's Coalition while the laws were being revised prior to the signing of the peace agreement, and some

of their concerns ended up in the document.[74] This reflects patterns from other conflict negotiations, where women have been engaged in Track II and III but there is a cut-off point at Track I.[75]

Government stakeholders interviewed in South Sudan stated that it will be possible to implement policies and practices and place women in high leadership if/when peace comes. One government participant stated that high leadership positions are too dangerous for women to hold at this time since hard power positions—such as the state commissioners—were held primarily by soldiers (that is, men with weapons) during the conflict. He opined that women can hold any position they want when it is "safe" for them to do so: "We do not have women appointed as commissioners [actors who hold more power at the state level]. During the crisis, all commissioners were soldiers. So, women could not become commissioners. During peacetime, women can be commissioners; they can be anything they want."

Such rhetoric is symptomatic of how harsh gender discrimination within power structures is self-perpetuating and counterproductive to stability: hinging women's leadership on the condition of lasting peace denies them of their rights in the implementation and realization of peace. **Even in the case that a fragile peace were to be realized without the robust**

participation of women, it would neither bring about women's participation nor end SGBV unless there is a significant shift in structural inequalities and discrimination against women. The UN gender specialist mentioned above explained the culture of subtle discrimination in the government saying:

"[the government] is just using peace as the scapegoat, but that is not the underlying problem. Even if peace comes, that does not mean we will have women's participation. The 25% or 35% affirmative action is receiving challenges, the government has refused to institutionalize the fact that women are part and parcel of this country and they need to be treated equally...if peace comes, it does not mean that it will bring gender equality. It might reduce sexual violence, but domestic violence will continue. Child marriage will continue."

The pattern of delaying women's participation disregards the provisions of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and is counterproductive to the realization of peace. Comparative studies have identified more positive outcomes in negotiations that involved the meaningful participation of women's groups, while statistical and qualitative analyses of conflict data sets have demonstrated a positive correlation between the involvement of women in peace processes and the likelihood of an agreement being reached and implemented.[76] It is therefore unrealistic to expect a peace agreement to succeed if women are not involved in its development and implementation. There needs to be significant pressure from the international community to meaningfully include IDP women in the implementation of the peace agreement and to push for women to be in leadership positions that wield actual power. UNHCR, in its capacity as the lead UN Agency for protection, is well-placed to ensure that the government and other stakeholders understand the concrete value of women's participation as part and parcel of protection, and to hold all stakeholders accountable to their commitments to women and girls' participation in formal processes.

Making Policy Accountable to IDP Women and Girls

"Women have to be involved in the laws, they need to be given their rights. Women do not necessarily demand to be ministers, to be governors, but we want to have laws that will keep us safe in our homes."

– IDP woman, Bentiu, South Sudan

International actors often focus on the content of policies, legal frameworks, and peace agreements, but we need to own up to the fact that too often policy and laws end on paper. The work conducted by UNHCR and its partners to create a strong policy and legal architecture is significant and should continue: many of the participants who gave inputs on the government underscored the need to continue to provide technical support, financial resources, and robust monitoring of implementation. But **really changing the way in which IDP women and girls experience policies and laws that give them their rights means confronting the inequalities embedded within policies and systems and being bold in redefining both these policies and the role of women and girls in them.**

In order to rectify the gaps in implementation of policies and laws, it is crucial to draw out clear and concrete provisions on gender equality in the IDP legislation that specify *how* and *in which mechanisms and structures* IDP women will participate and, if possible, lead in making decisions. It is not sufficient to stipulate that IDP women and girls have the right to participate in solutions; policies and laws need to spell out these details to the extent possible, while still allowing some flexibility for the period of implementation. Most importantly, the involvement of IDP women and girls should not stop with consultation. Rather, women should be involved in the actual drafting and development of laws. This may mean selecting certain IDP women who show particular interest in being involved in laws and developing their skills as activists, which also means not dismissing IDP women who cannot read or write but who still

wish to participate in legislation that affects their lives. Moreover it means putting a lot more time, toil, and resources into the processes to transcend the usual approach of consultations and FGDs with coalitions of IDPs.

Once legislation is issued, all provisions on gender equality and IDP women's rights to participate merit focused attention during capacity-building activities of the stakeholders involved in implementation and monitoring. Governments and other stakeholders who are party to policies and legal frameworks require consistent pressure to ensure that IDP women and girls understand their rights and are actively involved. They also need support in elaborating concrete and realistic steps for making this happen. Change will come from redefining how we work with IDP women and girls in policies and laws that radically impact their lives while tackling gender inequality.

A discussion on Gender Based Violence (GBV) run by UNHCR partner IRC takes place in Mingkaman, South Sudan on 2 December, 2014. © UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

PART 4: TEARING DOWN THE WALLS: CONFRONTING THE STRUCTURAL BARRIERS TO IDP WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

"I remember when we did our first rape case, it was a 13-year-old girl who was raped by a 19-year-old boy. The chief had wanted to marry the girl to the boy [to rectify the matter], but then the parents said no, she is too little, she is 13, she cannot even cook for herself. They wanted the matter to go to court, and when it did the boy was sentenced to 8 years. The maximum penalty is 14 years. So, when the family returned to the village, they were excited. We went to the community to see their perception of this judgment, and the same chief who had wanted to marry the girl to her rapist in the village said, 'I want more of this to happen'...he said the judgment should be an eye-opener, for women who experience rape they should report to him and he will bring the matter to court."

– South Sudanese women's rights activist and member of a women's rights organization

Throughout this study we have returned again and again to a fundamental reality: the gaps in IDP women and girls' participation inevitably come down to gender inequalities embedded and reproduced within social norms, the humanitarian system, and national and international institutions of power. Gender inequality profoundly cuts across all societies, wealthy and poor, those at peace and those at war. A study on women's leadership throughout the world notes that "the gap between women's formal and actual power is also about prejudice and sexism—often unconscious. Even in countries with liberal multi-party politics and progressive constitutions, common beliefs and expectations about what women and men can and should do block women's political power and advancement."[77] So where do

we begin to start taking down these barriers to IDP women's participation?

In the first part of this section, we will examine gender inequality as the most prominent barrier to achieving meaningful participation of IDP women and girls. We will then put forward ways of widening the scope for IDP women and girls' participation in each space in which participation plays out. We aim to transcend the clichés of consultation and to realize a minimum level of active collaboration in decision-making, in all abstract spaces where decisions may be made that concern the lives of IDP women and girls: the individual/household, the community, and the national levels.

Engaging Men and Boys to be Accountable to Women and Girls

"Men do not know what we have gone through. They create the war and then we become victims."

– IDP woman in Bentiu town, South Sudan

"It is the men who make decisions in our communities. Women participate if the decision concerns them. But more and more women are involved in decision-making."

– IDP male community leader from western Niger

Men remain the decision-makers in the home and the community in most IDP settings, and this will not change soon, nor will it change without a strategic and dedicated effort. In Niger and South Sudan men dominate the circles of decision-making whether there are women in the room or not. Humanitarian actors are often obligated to approach male family

members as gatekeepers to enable women and girls to participate in projects and participation structures. While necessary to prevent spoilers and blowback, this practice can also subtly reinforce the power of men to make decisions for women and girls. For their part, men and boys often perceive that humanitarian actors disproportionately target women and girls in aid programs, and they respond with violence when female household members suddenly hold assets traditionally controlled by men. In displacement situations, gender roles may be rapidly overturned or may become even more rigid, so it is critical to influence men and boys immediately after displacement to enable women and girls to continuously participate.

Men's control of decision-making and their attitudes on what women should and should not do are among the most resistant barriers to women and girls' substantive participation, particularly as they predate and transcend displacement and conflict, penetrating all participation spaces. There is consequently an evident need to work with men and boys to deconstruct these rigid inequalities. This need is widely recognized by many protection actors, but it sits mostly at the level of rhetoric. In South Sudan and Niger, men's engagement often consists of youth clubs with sports activities (which cater more to boys who are unencumbered by the domestic tasks borne by their female peers) and awareness-raising sessions. These activities lean heavily in the direction of light psychosocial support rather than high-quality engagement of men and boys in strategic and technically sound interventions that are accountable to the voices and experiences of women and girls.

Past and ongoing programs to engage men in Niger and in South Sudan have also been too short-lived or of insufficient technical quality to deconstruct the wall of gender inequality. The greater issue, as UNHCR's researcher heard from several protection specialists, is a poor understanding among humanitarian actors and governments about what meaningful and accountable men and boy's engagement looks like. This in many ways underscores the technical complexity and subtlety of such interventions: **they require a heavy commitment of male and female staff who are technically competent and who are themselves both convinced of the value of gender equality and able to convey this to their peers in a culturally palatable way.** High quality interventions do not simply stop at speaking with men and telling them that violence against women is bad,

nor do they dwell on the experiences of men; rather, they bring in the voices of women to help men understand women's experiences and difficulties, develop empathy and respect for them, and question and eventually reconfigure the way that they view and relate to women and girls.[78]

Furthermore, as many participants emphasized, efforts to change men and boys need to be sustained and strategic. Unitary sensitization has not and will not achieve the change necessary to reduce violence against women and girls and carve out space for women's participation. A longer-term commitment of staff and resources means engaging men in accountable practice, a challenging prospect in IDP settings where the population may remain mobile and donors are gun-shy to commit resources for more than a few months. **While the evidence we have on its effectiveness in humanitarian settings is regrettably limited at this time, the available research suggests that engaging men in ways that are accountable to women and girls can potentially reduce domestic violence, which as we have seen is one of the major barriers holding women back from stepping out of the home to participate in the public sphere.**[79] In this sense, UNHCR, the Protection Cluster, and SGBV actors and the GBV sub-cluster have a role to play in advocating for more funds and space to work with men and boys, and for pooling funds from multiple donors to enable technically qualified partners to carry out sustained engagement with men and boys that is accountable to women and girls.

In both Niger and South Sudan there are opportunities to engage with IDP populations in in-depth interventions that dismantle harmful gender norms. In areas where population movements have stabilized, there is space for strategic, high-quality engagement with IDP men and boys through the technically adept protection partners operating on the IDP sites. In South Sudan, as the country proceeds through the pre-transitional and transitional phases and IDPs look towards durable solutions, there will be opportunities to embed accountable practices focusing on the engagement of men and boys into efforts to assist return, local integration, and settlement in another part of the country. For example, IDP men and boys can be referred to men and boy's engagement programs that will also assist in building social cohesion while focusing on reducing violence against women, resulting in better outcomes for stabilization during the process of resolution of displacement.

Leading by Example: Holding the Aid System Accountable to Gender Equality

Gender equality in humanitarian settings starts within the humanitarian system itself. **It is unrealistic to aim for substantive women's participation among IDP communities and in governments when humanitarian actors cannot model gender equality.** The humanitarian system still has a long way to go in enshrining gender equality as an organizing principle of all decisions made around staffing, programs, and the use of resources.[80] The first step in rectifying gender inequality in the humanitarian system is to augment the presence of female staff at all levels of agencies. Female staff are more approachable to displaced women and girls and can also serve as positive role models of women and girls' participation, particularly when IDP women and girls themselves are working. Though this is especially salient for programs in SGBV and protection, increasing the presence and leadership of women staff should be a multisectoral effort if the humanitarian system is to truly embrace gender equality.

Experiences from emergency responses in the Philippines and Jordan suggest that legitimizing the work that women already do as frontline humanitarian responders and increasing their formal involvement in agencies will improve outcomes in humanitarian action and can help reverse perceptions of women as victims, being seen instead as strong role models.[81] Yet in the sites visited in Niger there were few female aid workers visible in the field, even areas of response where women tend to be more active such as protection and SGBV response. During the times when UNHCR's researcher encountered national female aid workers, they deferred to male colleagues or appeared to lack confidence in their own expertise. Women staff had to be urged to speak up when sitting in a room full of their male colleagues—a dynamic that seemingly sets the precedent for the committee structures within the IDP camps where these agencies are operating. There were decidedly more South Sudanese women aid workers working in the SGBV programs in WGSS in Bentiu and Juba.[82] But on sites where security is compromised or when it comes time for decision-making in aid agencies, men still sit at the head of the table. In a familiar pattern, male-dominated aid agencies invoke women's safety as an argument for keeping women from leadership roles, revealing

that agencies need to invest more time and effort in engagement with male staff to ensure that they themselves buy into gender equality as a way of organizing their work both theoretically and practically, and not just as boxes in an Excel sheet of indicators.[83]

In Niger and many other IDP settings where women's workforce participation is circumscribed, there are undeniable difficulties in recruiting local women staff: according to UN and INGO staff interviewed, few women have the minimum level of education to qualify for staff roles. Those that are educated depend on the consent of family members to work and must balance their job duties with a heavy domestic workload at home. To say that women are not qualified to serve within the aid system is to fall back on a tired excuse for excluding women from participating that yet again reflects gender discrimination. IDP women and girls are not afforded equal opportunities to education as men and boys, and so to bar them from participation on this basis amounts to punishing them for being victims of an earlier act of discrimination.

There are many opportunities to put gender equality into practice in humanitarian agencies. It starts with relaxing qualifications when possible; meeting women where they are; and being willing to invest capacity-building resources in promising women. In South Sudan, a UNFPA employee described working with the Ministry of Health to recruit and train midwives. When it became evident that more men were applying for the midwifery programs in part because women lacked the educational qualifications, the criteria for women applicants was softened to empower more women to participate. These accommodations enabled the participation of women who demonstrated intelligence and determination but lacked opportunities to finish their education. These women in turn worked setting a strong example for their cohorts. Equity in staffing should extend to international and national partner organizations as well, through prioritizing women-led organizations and structures. In settings with large numbers of IDPs and where employment does not present protection concerns or create additional labor burdens for women, UNHCR and partners should work to engage IDP women and girls in employment and volunteer opportunities, which will help extend UNHCR's reach among IDP women and girls in the community while providing opportunities for IDP women and girls to gain work experience.

Promising Practices in Promoting Women and Girls' Participation: Examples from the Literature

The following promising practices in women and girls' participation are drawn from humanitarian and development settings, which include, but are not limited to, settings affected by internal displacement.

Individual/Household Space:

- Interventions that **confront unequal gender norms within the household** can lead to greater participation in household labor for men and a reduction in physical Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), as well as men's increased ability to manage hostility and feelings of anger.[84]
- Interventions that enable **women to increase or access livelihood activities** can increase women's autonomy from male partners, yet it can also potentially upset gender roles in the household and exacerbate IPV. It is important to go about these activities with care through sensitizing men prior to initiating the projects and throughout implementation, while being conscious of other protection risks that arise out of livelihood interventions.[85]
- When **women control household resources,** they are more likely than men to use these to benefit other members of the family.[86]

Community Space:

- The benefits of **women and girls' safe spaces** in humanitarian settings include broadening social networks, building social cohesion, increasing access to positive social relationships, greater access to services such as psychosocial support and critical information, and improved feelings of self-worth. [87]
- **Participation in activities in the public sphere that bring women together** yields improved feelings of self-worth and self-esteem.[88]
- The **robust participation of women and girls in humanitarian relief, recovery, and economic** development (one of the pillars of UNSCR 1325) yields more effective humanitarian interventions.[89]

National Space:

- Peace negotiations that include the **substantive participation of women's groups** have better outcomes: analyses of conflict data sets demonstrate a **positive correlation between the involvement of women in peace processes and the likelihood of an agreement** being reached and implemented.[90] However, gains for women after the agreement often remain uncertain.[91]
- **Women's activism in civil society and social movements** is linked to gains in peace agreements and constitutional reform. Furthermore there is a correlation between women's organized collective activism in post-conflict and transition settings, and the gender-sensitivity of peace and constitutional agreements.[92]
- **Locally-driven peace and political processes** tend to have more positive outcomes than agendas and processes perceived to be emanating from international actors.[31]
- There is a correlation **between women's activism and the adoption of electoral quotas** in constitutional texts.[32]

Activating Meaningful Women's Participation in all Spaces of Participation

"In general, you do see that women [in Niger] are advancing. More women are making their own decisions, more girls go to school at least until ten years of age. When you go to the villages, you see more women who are economically independent, perhaps they sew clothing, they sell things in the market. We of course want to see women in high levels, women lawyers, sociologists, doctors, jurists, teachers. But this takes time, and you have to start at the level of the house, with girls. Women need autonomy, you need this before you are involved in decision-making. If not, then you are obliged to accept the decision made for you."

–Nigerien gender specialist, Niamey

"The current level of participation [in South Sudan] it is a good beginning. Let women participate in whatever is there now. Gradually they are building their self-esteem and confidence... Whatever participation we can expect, it has to go with capacity. Women did not go to school, they were not engaged in politics [before now]. Given capacity, given confidence, women can climb the ladder."

–Gender specialist working in South Sudan

It is not realistic to expect that most IDP women and girls will be able to immediately enter the higher spaces of power to make decisions about their country; even if they do, their decisions may not be respected or taken into account by those to whom society has granted greater power and resources.

But IDP women and girls can empower themselves if the opportunities are present for them and can meet them where they are at this moment without judgment. UNHCR has consecrated the importance of the representation of women of concern in humanitarian action through one of the Core Actions in its AGD Policy, which stipulates as a minimum "50% percent female participants in management and leadership structures under UNHCR's authority, and will advocate the same with partners, including Governments."[93] Our findings suggest that focusing on and recognizing the legitimacy of IDP women's contributions in all the abstract spaces of participation will with time lead to a greater representation and leadership in the formal and visible spaces of power. We also argue for strengthening linkages, visible and invisible, through all these spaces in which IDP women and girls' participation can occur. We emphasize the need to work on IDP women's participation within all three spaces, without assigning hierarchies or favoring one space over the other.

Strengthening the Individual/Household and Linking to the Community:

- **The women and girls' safe space is the lifeboat of women and girls' participation in humanitarian settings**. The WGSS is often the first space for IDP women and girls after they step outside the home where they can actually be heard and participate. For some IDP women and girls, it is the first space in their lives that they feel ownership of and the first time that they have felt safe and valued. WGSS also have the advantage of being highly adaptable to a security situation: for example, mobile WGSS have been used in displacement settings to increase social connection, emotional support, and access to services.[94] Mobile approaches can therefore be used or scaled up in IDP contexts where the population is highly mobile and the situation is unstable; they also have the advantage of being functional in both urban and camp settings. WGSS are spaces that are owned, staffed, and led by women—a fact which is empowering for women and girls who have experienced the dispossession that comes with displacement. And they are spaces where women can see role models of IDP leadership: as one activist in South Sudan explained, "it is easy for us as women, because women listen to women. There

Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, is welcomed by displaced people living in the settlement of Mainé-Soroa, in the Diffa region of Niger. © UNHCR/Roberta Russo

is so much community listening to women…you do the projects with [the women]."

- **Sustained livelihoods projects that reflect local market needs and make use of the specific talents and capacities of IDP women and girls** can enable IDP women and girls to break patterns of dependency on male family members and are consequently critical forms of individual empowerment and participation. This research project is certainly not the first to recognize this point; however, we reiterate that economic autonomy is what the IDP women demand. **Furthermore, economic decision-making power is linked to longer-term, "big-picture" ambitions towards positive change and participation: women who can earn and make their own decisions on how to use their income are positioned to assist other IDP women and girls to realize participation**, through helping other IDP women financially, setting a precedent for participation and economic empowerment for other IDP women and girls, and sending their daughters to school.

WGSS are excellent places from which to base livelihood activities targeted at women. Yet livelihood interventions should not be regarded as a panacea for displaced women and girls, as poorly designed livelihoods programs can potentially reinforce rigid gender roles, add to women's high household burden, and introduce women to new activities and places that impose new protection risks, which our research in Niger especially bears out.[95] Livelihoods projects must always incorporate a strong sensitization angle for the men to prevent domestic violence and overtaking of the process.

Strengthening the Community Spaces and Linking to the National:

- Community-based participation structures such as camp management committees, women's protection committees, and local women's peacekeeping teams are with few exceptions removed from the decision-making in intermediate and national government spaces. Despite the fact that the international community is

conscious of the imperative to more concretely join grassroots Tracks II and III processes with the formalized power-holders at Track I, these linkages continue to stop short at consultations with coalitions of women or with prominent women leaders. UNHCR and its partners can be more proactive and assertive in **identifying opportunities for women participating in community mechanisms to have a direct audience with the power-holders in the government and those at the negotiations table in peace talks.** An IDP woman leader in Bentiu, South Sudan, suggested a radical way of bringing the lives of "ordinary" women to the attention of the men at the head of the table at peace negotiations and how she would tell them about her life without sparing the details and indignities. "If women came to the table and were to speak face-to-face with our president and tell them what we women are going through. Tell them that in the camp we even have to squat and go to the bathroom in the open. The men are not like us, they do not hear us."

Strengthening the Individual and Community and Linking to the National:
- **IDP adolescent girls are among the most disempowered group in humanitarian settings and yet are also a missing link in realizing long-term women's participation**. Investing in adolescent girls' protection and education is without a doubt one of the strongest ways to activate long-term IDP women and girls' participation and to strengthen the linkages between the different participation spaces. IDP mothers with whom UNHCR's researcher spoke recognized that their daughters have the potential to be more powerful in their personal and civic lives, and mothers ask for opportunities for their daughters to be educated. As we have seen, there exists a growing recognition of the prospective benefits of providing technically advanced SGBV response, prevention, and empowerment interventions with girls. These types of interventions are of utmost importance in IDP contexts where girls are denied the opportunity to go to school or to complete their educations. Girls who did not have the chance to attain formal education should not be denied participation in community and higher-level mechanisms. IDP girls should be brought into decisions about legislation; IDP girls should have opportunities to be mentored by women activists and to meet with male and female leaders in the higher circles of power to express their needs, hopes, and desires.

Going beyond technical competencies and funding frameworks, there is also a role for being courageous, honest, and patient in the way that we confront gender inequality and empower women and girls in IDP settings. The story shared at the beginning of this section by the South Sudanese activist—in which a small group of women activists changed the dynamic for dealing with rape cases in the community—shows that persistence and the willingness to take risks can bring about a significant change; in this case, a group of women activists stood before a wall of rigid inequalities in the community and the justice system and took the wall apart, brick by brick.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

"In older times, women were property, the men paid the dowry and then the family saw the new bride as a servant. But things are different between me and my daughter. The reason is that young women are becoming educated about their rights. Because she is educated, she can contest for a governorship. Because she is educated, she can go to another country. In modern times, if the girl can be educated, they will be equal like the man. No one will be able to say to her, 'I am bigger than you.'"

– IDP Woman in Juba PoC 3, South Sudan

Participation is the process of the redistribution of power; it is through this process that IDP women and girls can reclaim their personal and collective agency during the most difficult moments in their life. The IDP women that UNHCR consulted in South Sudan and Niger did not immediately express ambitions to participate in policy or in the visible realms of leadership and power; they asked for ways to earn an income, be independent and keep themselves and those that depend upon them safe. But digging deeper, we found that women through these humble forms of participation have ambitions for their daughters to claim their rights and to have the choices and make decisions that their mothers could not.

Participation is an abstract process and it does not proceed in logical and linear ways. We need to recognize the less visible linkages between participation in the house and in the community and women's involvement in the traditionally more glorified spaces of the government, policy, and peace negotiations. Policies and laws that uphold the rights of IDP women and girls and spell out the concrete ways in which they contribute to decisions about the future of their countries are of great importance. Nevertheless, we also need to own the fact that too often laws and policies, including those for IDPs, end on paper. We need

to pay greater attention to the ways in which IDP women and girls experience the policies and laws that stipulate their rights through confronting inequalities in established power structures. We need to be bold in redefining these frameworks and the role of women and girls in them.

The rigid power structures that keep women on the sidelines change slowly, and we need to be courageous and persistent in confronting these inequalities in communities, the humanitarian system, and in national and local normative frameworks and institutions. IDP women and girls are the leaders in deciding their own durable solutions, and this fact should be an organizing principle in any IDP response. Participation is an integral aspect of protection, and the participation of women and girls is imperative for ensuring gender equality in protection in IDP settings and across all global responses. UNHCR is well-placed to take a leading role in ensuring that participation of IDP women and girls informs all protection activities. IDP women and girls are already trying to tear down the walls that stand between them and safe and fulfilled lives in which they make decisions about their bodies, their families, and their future. UNHCR and its partners can work alongside IDP women and girls as they dismantle these barriers which keep them from realizing their agency in the present and future of their communities and their countries.

ANNEX 1: DETAILED METHODOLOGY

This study was led by an international female researcher specialized in gender equality and gender-based violence, under the direction of a technical coordination team composed of members from UNHCR's Gender Equality and IDP sections, in collaboration with the Regional Bureau for Africa.

THE DATA FOR THIS STUDY WAS GATHERED USING A COMBINATION OF THREE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS:

a. **Review of literature:** The researcher conducted a desk review that grounds the study in a conceptual framework on women and girls' participation in humanitarian settings and pulls out promising practices in the empowerment of displaced women and girls. The desk research was used to fill in gaps in information that could not be obtained through in-field qualitative methods, particularly where security and time constraints prohibited access to IDP populations.

b. **Focus group discussions (FGDs) with IDP women and girls in Niger and South Sudan:** The female researcher conducted FGDs with displaced women and girls at research sites in both countries, with the assistance of interpreters provided by UNHCR or one of its partner organizations. FGDs were based on a semi-structured questionnaire and were held in locations where a minimum level of privacy could be guaranteed, primarily in women and girls' safe spaces (WGSS) in South Sudan, and in the UNHCR offices in Niger. FGDs in Diffa, Niger were held outdoors in shaded areas at a slight distance from the community due to the lack of private indoors space. IDP women and girls were invited to participate on the basis of their presence at the displacement sites of UNHCR and its partners, meaning that safe access to the sites was important in enabling women and girls to participate. Some of these participants had previously taken part in consultations and data-gathering exercises conducted by UNHCR or its partners; a small handful of women had taken part in national consultations.

c. **Semi-structured interviews with key informants in Niger and South Sudan:** UNHCR's researcher visited prominent IDP sites in Niger and South Sudan to meet with key informants that included UNHCR partners, other UN agencies involved in protection issues, international and national NGOs, and members of national and local government bodies associated with the response to the displacement crisis.

d. **Observation of relevant events in Niger and South Sudan:** In addition to these three principle methods, the researcher attended and recorded observations of significant events related to the themes of the project, including a regional consultation on the domestication of the Kampala convention in the Tillabery region of Niger; the meeting of the GBV sub-cluster in Juba, South Sudan; and a national workshop on women's role in peace-building held by an INGO in Juba.

The fieldwork was carried out in Niger and South Sudan during October and November of 2018, and was facilitated through the support of UNHCR teams in each country mission. The specific sites of research were chosen by the UNHCR country missions on the basis of protracted and/or intensified displacement as well as the engagement of UNHCR and partner organizations with the IDP and other populations of concern. In Niger, the researcher visited the capital city of Niamey, the southern region of Diffa on the border with northern Nigeria, and the western region of Tillabery near the borders with Mali. In South Sudan, the researcher visited the capital city of Juba, as well as Bentiu Protection of Civilians (PoC) site and Bentiu town in Unity State in the north of the country. The researcher made deliberate efforts to consult with IDP women and girls in organized/formal sites and those residing in informal rural or urban sites.

Table 3 below describes the number of interviews and FGDs carried out in each site for each major informant type. The table denotes the number of specific consultations, not the number of persons; on multiple occasions the researcher met with multiple protection and government stakeholders in a group. FGDs with women and girls were usually conducted in WGSS, and the number of participants ranged from 2 to as many as 35 women and girls.

Table 3: Breakdown of Interviews and Focus Group Discussion per Major Research Site[96]

	Niger			South Sudan			
	Niamey	Diffa	Tillabery	Bentiu PoC	Bentiu Town	Juba PoC 3	Juba Urban
Government Stakeholders *(Interviews and FGDs)*	4	1	1	N/A	1	N/A	2
Protection/GBV Cluster Coordinators/Coordination Structures *(Interviews and FGDs)*	3	1	1	1	N/A	1	2
INGOs/NGOs engaged in Protection Work/UNHCR partners/Other UN Agencies *(Interviews and FGDs)*	2	3	1	1	1	1	7
IDP Women Community Leaders *(FGDs)*	N/A	1	N/A	1	1	1	N/A
IDP Women and girls *(FGDs)*	N/A	1	1	2	3	1	1
Other (male community leaders, military stakeholders, UNHCR consultants)[96] *(Interviews and FGDs)*	1	1	1	1	N/A	1	3

Limitations

The objectives of this study are ambitious, and we were obligated to streamline the scope to account for the limitations of time and access to IDP sites in these two countries affected by conflict and insecurity.

- Each mission lasted approximately 10 days during which it is difficult to capture the complexities of displacement crises that are geographically dispersed and affect diverse groups of people (including IDPs, refugees, and host communities). Infrastructural challenges in South Sudan—where IDP sites outside of Juba are reachable only through United Nations Humanitarian Air Service—prevented the researcher from visiting sites besides Bentiu and Juba.

- There was a significant language barrier when speaking to IDP women and girls in both Niger and South Sudan. UNHCR and its partner staff helpfully provided interpretation, but the level of translation into French and English was not consistent. In some sites in Juba in South Sudan, there was a double language barrier as staff spoke the Juba dialect of Arabic to Nuer- and Dinka-speaking women and girls for whom Arabic is a second language. To mitigate language barriers, the FGD questionnaires were simplified in South Sudan to ensure that questions were approachable to the FGD participants and the interpreters.

The IDP populations consulted in the FGDs do not reflect the full diversity of IDP populations in Niger and South Sudan. For example, in Niger, the researcher met with Kanuri communities but not with Hausa or other ethnic groups residing in the area, and in Tillabery the researcher met with Touareg women and men but did not speak with Peuls, another common ethnic group that has been affected by displacement in this region. In South Sudan, the researcher met primarily with Nuer populations, but not with significant numbers of South Sudan's numerous other ethnic groups.

- A number of IDP sites proved inaccessible due to security constraints; for example, the presence of armed groups and criminal gangs prevented the researcher from travelling directly to the primary IDP sites in the Tillabery region in western Niger. Because of our inability to access the most compromised sites, we cannot guarantee that the voices of the most vulnerable IDPs were consulted for this study.

Ethical Considerations and Protection of Research Participants

As part of the methodology design, the researcher and the UNHCR technical committee developed an ethical framework to guide the conduct of the study. This framework articulated the strategies for protection of participants, the introduction of the study to prospective participants in a way that clearly communicates how and why the information collected will be stored and used, and the protocol for consent. We made efforts to clearly communicate the participant's rights, including the right to refuse participation or withdraw consent at any time during the interview process. The questionnaires were designed to minimize emotional harm to participants and excluded questions about personal experiences of violence (especially SGBV). The researcher and UNHCR sought to hold consultations in private places to the extent possible. In the field, the researcher took notes and assigned codes based on participant type and the location of the interview, and the information was subsequently uploaded into a password-protected Dropbox account.

Mindful of the compromised security of both Niger and South Sudan, the specific names of participants have been withheld from this report to protect their security.

ANNEX 2: QUESTIONNAIRES

Please note that these questionnaires are to serve as a general guide and may be adapted or contextualized to be sensitive to security, political, gender, or diversity issues.

Questionnaire 1: Protection Cluster/Working Group Coordinator(s)

Date of Interview	
Location of Interview	
Respondent ID	

1. *Thank you for taking the time to speak with me. This UNHCR study is particularly interested in the experience of IDP women and girls, and in how they are participating in decisions that affect their life at local levels (such as in camps and in communities), intermediate levels (such as those in the humanitarian clusters), and at higher levels (such as in peace talks or in the development and implementation of government legislation).*

   I would like to first ask you about some of the general context. What are the primary protection concerns for IDP women and girls in this specific context?

2. How do the protection concerns of IDP women and girls differ from those of women and girls who are not internally displaced, such as refugees? How do they differ from women and girls in host communities? How do they differ from those of IDP men and boys?

3. How do the protection concerns of IDP women with girls in camps differ from IDP women and girls living within urban or peri-urban host communities?

4. Can you please provide a larger sense of what the participation of civilians (including IDPs) looks like in this context? For example, how do IDPs (particularly women and girls) here generally access essential information?

5. Based on your experience here, how would you compare the participation of IDP women and girls versus other groups (IDP men and boys, refugee women and girls, refugee men and boys) in humanitarian decision-making processes? *(Including, for example, food distributions and what is included in food handouts? In protection cluster discussions/decisions?)*

6. What informal structures exist for the participation of women? What formal structures exist for the participation of women and girls? How meaningful and substantive are these structures? *(For example, do women and girls actually make use of them? What groups of women and girls do not make use of them, and why?)*

7. How do the opportunities for participation in decision-making differ between IDP women and girls residing in formal camps, and those residing in non-camp settings? (*This includes informal camps and urban IDP settlements*)

8. In your experience, how are the other humanitarian clusters/working groups mainstreaming the needs of IDP women and girls in their response? *(Including in particular WASH, FSL, and Camp Management)*

9. If you are comfortable, I would like to discuss the experience of the Protection Cluster/Working Group in collaborating with the government in the response to IDPs, particularly IDP women and girls. According to your experience, how does the government uphold commitments to gender equality (such as in obligations under the Kampala Convention, or the CEDAW convention, or UNSCR 1325)? How does it implement legislation for the protection of women and girls?

10. One thing that has been seen in other humanitarian settings that are affected by armed conflict is that women and girls often have less mobility, are more vulnerable to repeated displacements, and are even more invisible. Can you talk about how military and/or non-state actors in this setting impact the protection of civilians more generally, and specifically that of displaced women and girls?

11. Based on your experience, how can the Protection Cluster/Working Group increase the participation of IDP women and girls in local and intermediate humanitarian decision-making? What resources does the Protection Cluster/Working Group need to increase participation?

12. Is there anything else you wish to share with me on this subject?

Questionnaire 2: GBV Sub-cluster/ Working Group Coordinator(s)

Date of Interview	
Location of Interview	
Respondent ID	

1. *Thank you for taking the time to speak with me. As I mentioned, this UNHCR study is particularly interested in the experience of IDP women and girls, and in how they are participating in decisions that affect their life at local levels (such as in camps and in communities), intermediate levels (such as those in the humanitarian clusters), and at higher levels (such as in peace talks or in the development of government legislation).*

   Keeping in mind the diversity of people who are affected by the conflict in this context, how would you describe the main challenges of internally displaced women and girls? How do their concerns and opportunities differ from other groups of women and girls in this context?

2. Do IDP women and girls have specific GBV concerns, in comparison to other groups of women and girls? If yes, please describe.

3. In your experience, what is the level of participation of women and girls more generally in local-level and intermediate decision-making mechanisms in the humanitarian system? *(Humanitarian decision-making includes, for example, food distributions and what is included in food handouts, GBV sub-cluster discussions/decisions)*

4. Are there certain groups of women and girls that have been less engaged in/marginalized from decision-making mechanisms? What are the reasons for this?

5. How do the GBV risks faced by women and girls—particularly IDP women and girls—affect their ability to participate in local and intermediate decision-making?

6. What sort of mechanisms does the GBV sub-cluster utilize to engage women and girls in making decisions about the role of aid distribution?

7. Based on your experience, what efforts are employed to engage displaced adolescent girls in humanitarian decision-making? What sort of specialized empowerment programs exist for internally displaced adolescent girls?

8. What formal structures exist for the participation of women and girls? What informal structures exist for the participation of women? How meaningful and substantive are these structures? *(For example, do women and girls actually make use of them? What groups of women and girls do not make use of them, and why?)*

9. One thing that has been seen in other humanitarian settings that are affected by armed conflict is that women and girls often have less mobility, are more vulnerable to repeated displacements, and are even more invisible. Can you talk about how military and/or non-state actors in this setting impact the protection of civilians more generally, and specifically that of displaced women and girls?

10. What other barriers are there to the meaningful participation of IDP women and girls in humanitarian decision-making at local levels, such as at the level of the camp/host community?

11. If you are comfortable, I would like to discuss the experience of the GBV Sub-cluster/Working Group in collaborating with the government in the response to GBV and in promoting gender equality in this context. According to your experience, how does the government uphold commitments to gender equality (such as in obligations under the Kampala Convention, or the CEDAW convention, or the 1325 Framework)? How does it implement legislation for the protection of women and girls?

12. Is there anything you wish to share with me on this subject?

Questionnaire 3: Government Stakeholders

Date of Interview	
Location of Interview	
Respondent ID	

1. *Thank you for taking the time to speak with me. As I mentioned, I am a researcher who has been commissioned by UNHCR to speak with displaced people in this community about their experiences, so that I can share this information with UNHCR and other organizations that are here to protect and empower displaced people to help them provide better services. While we recognize that all IDPs and refugees have important needs, this study is specifically concerned with IDP women and girls. I would like to start by asking some general questions.*

    According to your experience, who are the persons who have been mostly affected by internal displacement in the past year/several years? What are their specific vulnerabilities?

2. I know that the government has done a lot of important work with UNHCR and other UN and international partners to help address the needs of IDPs in this country in the past several years. Can you please describe the strategies employed by the government to provide protection and assistance to women and girls affected by the crisis, especially internally displaced women and girls?

3. What sort of policies and initiatives does this government carry out that empower women and girls in formal decision-making more generally? *(This includes having quotas for women's participation in local and national government bodies, initiatives to engage women in elections, etc.)*

4. What sort of international instruments for the protection of women and girls is your government signatory to? Can you please describe how the government implements the international instruments for the protection of women and girls? For the protection of IDPs?

5. In your opinion, what would it mean to have a solution for displaced persons in this country? *(For example, does this mean that they would go back to their homes? That they would integrate into the communities in which they are currently residing?)*

6. How do you see IDP women and girls contributing to the future of this country? *(For example, involvement in peace talks? In holding important positions in local or national government?)* How do you envision making this happen?

7. What initiatives has the government undertaken to consult with IDPs in making decisions about the future of this country?

8. What are the strategies that the government is taking to ensure that women and girls participate in decisions made in the government? How does the government engage IDP women and girls specifically in these strategies?

9. Can you please provide examples from recent experiences in which the government has had consultations with IDP women and girls (formally or informally)?

10. Thank you again for taking the time to meet with me. Is there anything else you would like to share with me on this subject today?

Questionnaire 4: Women's Rights Organizations

Date of Interview	
Location of Interview	
Respondent ID	

1. *Thank you for taking the time to speak with me. As I mentioned, I am a researcher who has been commissioned by UNHCR to speak with displaced people in this community about their experiences, so that I can share this information with UNHCR and other organizations so that they can provide better services. This study is especially concerned with IDP women and girls, and so we want to speak with organizations concerned with women's rights and protection. I would like to start by asking some general questions.*

   What are the main challenges of IDP women and girls in this context? How do the needs and experiences of IDP women and girls compare to other groups? *(Including IDP men and boys, refugee women and girls? Members of the host community?)*

2. Can you please tell me about the work you do with IDP women and girls in this context? *(Are there projects that specifically target IDP women and girls?)*

3. In your experience, what is the level of participation of women and girls more generally in local-level and intermediate decision-making mechanisms in the humanitarian system?

4. Are there certain groups of women and girls that have been less engaged in/marginalized from decision-making mechanisms? What are the reasons for this?

5. If you are comfortable, I would like to speak about the government and their role in protecting women and girls in this context. What would you say are the main priorities of the state or other actors that assume governance in this area? How do they relate to the priorities of civil society/organizations such as yours that work in women's rights?

6. It has been the experience of some women's organizations that their ideas about women's rights/ gender equality sometimes run counter to local perspectives and practices. Given the special characteristics of this environment, can you tell me what gender equality would look like in this context?

7. How does the decision-making power of IDP adolescent girls differ from IDP women?

8. What can international actors such as UNHCR do in your context to positively influence the lives of IDP women and girls and increase their participation?

9. Thank you again for taking the time to speak with me today. Is there anything else you would like to share with me on this subject?

Questionnaire 5: UNHCR Relevant Partners

Date of Interview	
Location of Interview	
Respondent ID	

1. *Thank you for taking the time to speak with me. As I mentioned, I am a researcher who has been commissioned by UNHCR to speak with displaced people in this community about their experiences, so that I can share this information with UNHCR and other organizations that are here to protect and empower displaced people to help them provide better services. This study is specifically concerned with IDP women and girls, and so we want to speak with organizations concerned with women's rights and protection. I would like to start by asking some general questions.*

   What are the main challenges of IDP women and girls in this context? How do the needs and experiences of IDP women and girls compare to other groups? *(Including IDP men and boys, refugee women and girls? Members of the host community?)*

2. Can you please tell me about the work you do with IDP women and girls in this context?

3. As you know, one aspect of participation is access to information, and I am curious to understand how women and girls here access information about basic decisions that affect their lives—*for example, how they can register, where they can go for medical care, shelter, food.*

4. What sort of feedback mechanisms exist that are tailored for displaced women and girls? How were these designed, and how are women and girls informed about them?

5. In your experience, what is the level of participation of women and girls more generally in local-level and intermediate decision-making mechanisms in the humanitarian system?

6. Are there certain groups of women and girls that have been less engaged in/marginalized from decision-making mechanisms? What are the reasons for this?

7. It has been the experience of some women's rights/international organizations that their ideas about women's rights/gender equality sometimes run counter to local perspectives and practices. Given the special characteristics of this environment, can you tell me what gender equality would look like in this context?

8. If you are comfortable, I would like to speak about the government and their role in protecting women and girls in this context. What would you say are the main priorities of the state or other actors that assume governance in this area? How do they relate to the priorities of civil society/organizations such as yours that work in women's rights?

9. If you are comfortable speaking about the state, how would you say the State can improve its practices in engaging IDP women and girls?

10. What can international actors such as UNHCR do in your context to positively influence the lives of IDP women and girls and increase their participation?

11. Thank you again for taking the time to speak with me today. Is there anything else you would like to share with me on this subject?

Questionnaire 6: IDP Women Community Leaders

Date of Interview	
Location of Interview	
Respondent ID	

1. *Thank you for taking the time to speak with me. As I mentioned, I am a researcher who has been commissioned by UNHCR to speak with displaced people in this community about their experiences, so that I can share this information with UNHCR and other organizations that are here to protect and empower displaced people to help them provide better services.*

   I would like to ask you about the experiences of women and girls over the past year or two. The past several years have seen a lot of changes in this country/community/city/etc. What events have had the most influence on the way that people in your own community live their lives in the last one to two years?

2. In most communities, men and women often have different advantages and challenges. In what ways are women and girls powerful in this community? In what ways are women not powerful in this community?

3. In what ways are men and boys powerful in this community? In which ways are men and boys not powerful?

4. In your role as a leader to this community, what do you see as the role of displaced women in making decisions in the household?

5. How do you see the role of displaced women in making decisions at the level of the camp/community?

6. How do you see the role of displaced women and girls in making decisions about the future of this country? *(For example, in participating in peace negotiations? Occupying spaces in the government?)*

7. What do you think UNHCR and other organizations should do to make the experience of IDP women and girls better in this context?

8. Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your experiences. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me today?

Questionnaire 7: FGDs with IDP Women and Girls

Date of Interview	
Location of Interview	
Respondent ID	

1. *Thank you for taking the time to speak with me. As I said, I am a researcher and I have been asked by UNHCR to conduct this study so that we can understand the experiences of women and girls like you who have experienced displacement, and to understand how they want to be happier and safer in their community.*

   I would like to ask you about the experiences of women and girls over the past year or two. The past several years have seen a lot of changes in this context/country/area. What events have had the most influence on the way that people in your own community live their lives in the last one to two years?

2. Sometimes major events or changes affect men and women in different ways. What events or factors have had the most impact on women and girls like you in your community in the last year/ the last several years? What events or factors have had the most impact on men and boys?

3. What kind of difficulties do displaced women and girls like you face in their day to day lives? How have women and girls like you adapted to these challenges that they face?

4. In most communities, men and women often have different advantages and challenges. In what ways are women and girls like you powerful in this community? In what ways are women and girls like you not powerful in this community?

5. In what ways are men powerful in this community? In which ways are men not powerful?

6. In this community, who makes important decisions within the household? Who makes decisions within the camp/community? Are women and girls able to influence these decisions?

7. If something bad were to happen to a displaced woman/girl that you know, where might she go to obtain help? *(For example, if a woman was divorced by her husband and he wanted to take away her children, if a woman was denied food assistance, etc)?*

8. I am going to describe a scenario about a girl. I want you to think about the scenario and then respond to the questions.

   NB: These are possible scenarios that need to be adapted to the specific context of the FGD.

   Scenario 1: "Sara is a 25-year-old woman who came to this camp/community six months ago with her husband, two children, and her brother-in-law Amadou and his family. Her husband left to go back to their home village several months ago to secure their home, and she has not heard from him since then. Her brother-in-law Amadou says that because her husband is gone, Amadou is now in charge of Sara and he has the right to take her possessions (including her goats and chickens) and to make decisions about her children's futures."

   - What do you think are Sara's rights in this situation? Does she have to obey Amadou? Why or why not?
   - What do you think Sara can do in this situation to keep her possessions?
   - In this community, who could Sara speak to in order to obtain advice and help in this situation?

   Scenario 2: "Mariam is a 14-year-old girl who came to this camp one year ago with her mother, her father, her father's other wife, and her five brothers and sisters. Mariam had to leave school and since has been helping her mother with cooking and caring for the children and waiting in line for food, soap, and other essential things. While collecting water at a water point, Mariam met another girl named Saratu who told her about a program for adolescent girls out of school in the camp. Mariam wants to participate, but when she mentioned this to her father, he said that her priority was to stay at home and help her mother take care of the family."

- What do you think Mariam should do in this situation?
- Is it Mariam's right to participate in this program? Why or why not?
- Where could she go to obtain more information about this program?

9. How are women and girls like you consulted in the distribution of aid in this community?

10. Do women and girls like you have an ability to influence decisions taken by the community? If they do, how?

11. If you are comfortable, I would like us to talk a little about the role of the government/authorities and how they treat women and girls like you. How does the government affect your lives? In your opinion, do women and girls like you have any ability to influence the decisions the government makes? If you had your choice to say anything to the government, what might you say?

12. *[Question for women and girls who have participated in UNHCR processes before]* Have any of you participated in consultations held by a humanitarian actor (such as UNHCR)? Or by a local or government agency? If yes, can you please tell me about your experience participating in this process? What was positive? What was not positive? What things would you like to be different if you take part in an initiative like this in the future?

13. Thank you all so much for your time and for sharing your experiences and thoughts. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me today?

Questionnaire 8: Male IDP Community Leaders

Date of Interview	
Location of Interview	
Respondent ID	

1. *Thank you for taking the time to speak with me. As I mentioned, I am a researcher who has been commissioned by UNHCR to speak with displaced people in this community about their experiences, so that I can share this information with UNHCR and other organizations that are here to protect and empower displaced people to help them provide better services. I would like to ask you some questions first about the general experience of IDPs in this community.*

   Can you tell me about the challenges that IDPs in this community face? What are their lives like?

2. We recognize that all IDPs have important needs in this community; at the moment we are especially interested in the experiences of displaced women and girls since they have the important responsibility of taking care of children and other family members. Can you tell me what the main challenges that IDP women and girls face? How is this different from the challenges faced by IDP men and boys?

3. In your role as a leader to this community, what do you see as the role of displaced women in making decisions in the household/in the family?

4. How do you see the role of displaced women in making decisions at the level of the camp/community?

5. How do you see the role of displaced women and girls in making decisions in negotiations about the future of the country?

6. What do you think UNHCR and other organizations should do to make the experience of IDP women and girls better in this context?

7. Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your experiences. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me today?

Questionnaire 9: Military Stakeholders (Optional)

Date of Interview	
Location of Interview	
Respondent ID	

1. *Thank you for taking the time to speak with me. As I mentioned, I am a researcher who has been commissioned by UNHCR to speak with displaced people in this community about their experiences, so that I can share this information with UNHCR and other organizations that are here to protect and empower displaced people to help them provide better services. Since military actors have such an important role in providing protection to the areas where civilians (including IDPs) live, I wanted the opportunity to speak with you as well.*

   According to your experience, what are the most important protection risks faced by civilians in this area?

2. How would you say the risks that IDPs face are different from those faced by refugees? Are these different from other groups that you have noticed in this particular area?

3. What policies do you have to ensure the protection of civilians while you carry out your operations? Do you have different policies/strategies for the protection of male civilians versus female civilians?

4. How do you consult with civilians in planning your activities? *How do you consult with civilian men as opposed to women?*

5. Do you have a specific strategy for consulting IDPs in your activities? *(For example, asking them about protection risks? Warning them about potential attacks or risks?)*

6. Is there anything else you wish to share with me on this subject?

ENDNOTES

[1] "UNHCR's Role in Support of an Enhanced Humanitarian Response to Situations of Internal Displacement: Policy Framework and Implementation Strategy," Standing Committee 39th Meeting, Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, page 5.

[2] Of these 30.6 million new displacements, 11.8 million were displaced by armed conflict and 18.8 million by disasters. See Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Global Report on Internal Displacement 2018, http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2018/.

[3] While exact global figures are not known, women and children compose a large majority of those internally displaced in many countries. For example, 75 percent of IDPs in Yemen in 2017 were women and children. See the Global Report on Internal Displacement 2018, page 27.

[4] By "aid regimes," we refer to a collection of standards and practices in humanitarian aid that are generally followed by international aid actors such as the UN and INGOs, and by national and local actors such as national NGOs and governments.

[5] The full methodology can be found in Annex 1.

[6] For more on the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, see: http://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/ocha-guiding-principles-on-internal-displacement/.

[7] The IASC Handbook for the Protection of IDPs goes on to say that "the IDP definition is a **descriptive definition** rather than a legal definition. It simply describes the factual situation of a person being uprooted within his/her country of habitual residence. It does not confer a special legal status or rights in the same way that recognition as a refugee does. This is not necessary for IDPs because, unlike refugees who require a special legal status as a result of being outside their country and without protection, IDPs remain entitled to all the rights and guarantees as citizens and other habitual residents of a particular State." IASC Handbook for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons, https://www.unhcr.org/4c2355229.pdf, page 8.

[8] A comprehensive definition of an IDP can be found at "Internally Displaced People," UNHCR, http://www.unhcr.org/internally-displaced-people.html.

[9] UNHCR Policy on Age, Gender, and Diversity, 8 March 2018, pages 15–16.

[10] Ibid., page 9.

[11] The AGD document additionally lays out UNHCR's five Updated Commitments to Women and Girls, which emphasize, *inter alia*, the centrality of women and girls' equal and meaningful participation in "all decision-making, community management and leadership structures, and committees of persons of concern." Ibid., page 19.

[12] IASC Framework on Solutions for IDPs, Interagency Standing Committee, page iii.

[13] Ibid., page 5.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Sherry Arnstein, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," Journal of the American Planning Association, 1969, page 216.

[16] "Moving Beyond Rhetoric: Consultation and participation with Populations Displaced by Conflict or Natural Disasters," The Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, 2008, page 4; Sherry Arnstein, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," Journal of the American Planning Association, 1969.

[17] The full text of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement is available at this link: http://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/ocha-guiding-principles-on-internal-displacement/.

[18] Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, Principle 3 states that "1. National authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons within their jurisdiction. 2. Internally displaced persons have the right to request and to receive protection and humanitarian assistance from these authorities. They shall not be persecuted or punished for making such a request," http://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/199808-training-OCHA-guiding-principles-Eng2.pdf, page 8.

[19] Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, Global Report on Internal Displacement 2018, http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2018/. For an analysis of displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa, see http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2018/downloads/report/2018-GRID-region-sub-saharan-africa.pdf.

[20] UNHCR and the International Committee of the Red Cross are explicitly mentioned in the preamble due to their protection expertise. Overseas Development Institute (ODI) notes that "Until the 1990s, protection in humanitarian action was the nearly exclusive remit of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees." In the last three decades the responsibility of protection has been extended to all humanitarian actors. See Ashley Jackson, "Protecting civilians, the gap between norms and practice," Humanitarian Policy Group Policy Brief, 56.

[21] "UNHCR's Role in Support of an Enhanced Humanitarian Response to Situations of Internal Displacement: Policy Framework and Implementation Strategy," page 2.

[22] The Protection of IDPs and the Role of UNHCR," number 26, page 7.

[23] Walter Kalin, "Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement: Annotations," The American Society of International Law and The Brookings Institution-University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement, Studies in Transnational Legal Policy, No. 38, references on pages 83, 89, and 168.

24 For an overview of the obligations that the Kampala Convention delegates to states to ensure the protection of IDP women and girls, see Chaloka Beyani, "Improving the Protection of Internally Displaced Women: Assessment of Progress and Challenges," The Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement, October 2014, page 10.

25 UNHCR Policy on Age, Gender, and Diversity, Approved on 8 March 2018, https://www.unhcr.org/protection/women/5aa13c0c7/policy-age-gender-diversity-accountability-2018.html. The explanation of the Core Actions can be found on pages 5–11.

26 Available at https://www.refworld.org/docid/479f3b2a2.html.

27 Chaloka Beyani presents a concise overview of the challenges facing IDP women in his report during the period he served as Special Rapporteur on the human rights of IDPs. "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Chaloka Beyani," Human Rights Council, Twenty-third Session, Agenda item 3.

28 A global study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 points out that gender inequality has impact on the basic survival of women and girls in humanitarian settings, in which women and girls are more prone to food insecurity than boys and men, are obliged to take on new roles as providers for the family and are often impeded from safe and formal income-generating activities outside of the home. Radhika Coomaraswamy, "Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325," UN Women, 2015, http://wps.unwomen.org/pdf/en/GlobalStudy_EN_Web.pdf. Page 85 http://wps.unwomen.org/pdf/en/GlobalStudy_EN_Web.pdf.

29 A protection of civilians site (PoC) is a UN peacekeeping base aimed at providing safe accommodation to civilians who have fled violence, operated by the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). PoCs are intended to be temporary sites to keep civilians secure until such a time that it is safe for them to seek a solution for their displacement. The majority of affected populations in South Sudan reside outside of PoCs. For an analysis of PoCs and their implications for humanitarian response and civilian protection in South Sudan, see Caelin Briggs, "Protection of Civilians (POC) sites and their impact on the broader protection environment in South Sudan," Overseas Development Institute, January 2017, https://odihpn.org/magazine/protection-civilians-poc-sites-impact-broader/.

30 "The Kampala Convention: Make it work for women," Norwegian Refugee Council, Displaced Women's Rights to Housing, Land and Property, 10 December 2015, https://www.nrc.no/resources/reports/the-kampala-convention---make-it-work-for-women/; Davies et al., "How women's silence secures the peace: analyzing sexual and gender-based violence in a low-intensity conflict," Gender & Development, 24:3, 459–473.

31 UNHCR, "GP20 Consultations with IDPs, host communities, and affected populations," 2018 (draft report), page 12.

32 United Nations General Assembly, "In-depth study on all forms of violence against women: Report of the Secretary-General," 6 July 2006. Page 49.

33 See, for example, "Women, War and Displacement: A review of the impact of conflict and displacement on gender-based violence," The Irish Consortium on Gender-Based Violence, November 2016, http://www.gbv.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GBV-Report_FINAL_LOW.pdf. UNSCR 1325 is underpinned by the reality that women and girls are disproportionately affected by armed conflict.

34 For example, a study of SGBV prevalence in South Sudan led by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) found that women and girls who had experienced displacement during their lifetime were at a greater risk of SGBV (in the form of intimate partner violence, or IPV) than those who had never experienced displacement. See "No Safe Place: A Lifetime of Violence for Conflict-Affected Women and Girls in South Sudan," What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls in Conflict and Humanitarian Crises, Main Results Report 2017, International Rescue Committee, CARE, UKAID, and the Global Women's Institute at The George Washington University, https://www.rescue.org/report/no-safe-place, page 63. In Diffa, Niger, UNHCR's researcher was informed that IDP women and girls make up the majority of SGBV cases listed in the GBVIMS, although this may also be due to the fact that IDPs are the largest population of concern in the area and therefore may be disproportionately represented in the GBVIMS. It is also important to mention that SGBV cases are underreported and thus the GBVIMS does not represent the full extent of SGBV prevalence in any area.

35 The 2017 GBVIMS annual report for South Sudan notes that the majority of cases reported to GBVIMS partners were cases of physical abuse, which is usually related to incidents of intimate partner violence mostly affecting women and girls. GBVIMS Annual Report (Jan–Dec 2017), Prepared by UNFPA on behalf of the GBVIMS Data Gathering Organization in South Sudan.

36 IRC presents a succinct analysis of how women and girls in humanitarian settings experience domestic violence. See "Private Violence, Public Concern: Intimate Partner Violence in Humanitarian Settings," International Rescue Committee Practice Brief, January 2015, https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/564/ircpvpcfinalen.pdf.

37 For information on the state, non-state, and international military actors in Niger, see "The Niger-Mali Border: Subordinating Military Action to Political Strategy," International Crisis Group, Report number 261, 12 June 2018, https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/mali/261-frontiere-niger-mali-mettre-loutil-militaire-au-service-dune-approche-politique. For an overview of actors in South Sudan, see Stefanie Glinski, "A who's who in South Sudan's splintering civil war," IRIN, 12 April 2018, https://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2018/04/12/who-s-who-south-sudan-s-splintering-civil-war.

38 Roberta Cohen, "New Challenges for Refugee Policy: Internally Displaced Persons," The Brookings Institution, 1 April 1999, https://www.brookings.edu/on-the-record/new-challenges-for-refugee-policy-internally-displaced-persons/.

39 It is crucial here to note that these are contexts in which IDPs are often the most prominent populations of concern and face the greatest protection risks. Antonio Donini and Daniel Maxwell, "From face-to-face to face-to-screen: remote management, effectiveness and accountability of humanitarian action in insecure environments," International Review of the Red Cross, 95 (890), 383–413.

40 IOM/WRC, page 5.

41 See, for example, "Boko Haram crisis: Amnesty accuses Nigeria troops of rape," BBC News, 24 May 2018, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-44236428; Sarah Martin, "Must Boys Be Boys: Ending Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in UN Peacekeeping Missions," 2005, http://www.pseataskforce.org/uploads/tools/mustboysbeboysending seainunpeacekeepingmissions_refugeesinternational_english.pdf.

42 "I'm Here: Adolescent Girls in Emergencies," Women's Refugee Commission, October 2014, https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/resources/document/1078-i-m-here-report-final-pdf.

43 An ODI review of evidence on women's voice and leadership notes that "Women's capabilities and interests are shaped by their life experiences—and these must be understood as embedded in wider socio-political, economic and cultural histories. The combination of economic capital (e.g., women's ownership of productive assets and control over income) with other types of resources associated with social and cultural capital (e.g., education, skills training, awareness raising with men, and logistical support to engage in collective action) increases the likelihood of women gaining more power at the household level, and the potential for change at the community and national level." When IDP women lack these different forms of capital and struggle to obtain them, they are less able to participate in individual or collective participation. See Pilar Domingo, Rebecca Holmes, Tam O'Neil, Nicola Jones, Kate Bird, Anna Larson, Elizabeth Presler-Marchal, and Craig Valters, "Women's voice and leadership in decision-making: Assessing the evidence," Overseas Development Institute, April 2015, https://www.odi.org/publications/9514-women-s-voice-and-leadership-assessing-evidence, page 3.

44 For a broad overview of how aid agencies can improve participation of populations, see "Consulting IDPs: Moving beyond Rhetoric," Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, https://www.brookings.edu/research/consulting-idps-moving-beyond-rhetoric/; the IOM/WRC project on women's participation presents an evolved and honest portrayal of the effectiveness of strategies to increase women's participation and agency within camp settings in multiple humanitarian contexts. "Women's Participation Pilot Project Learning Report," International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Women's Refugee Commission (WRC), December 2017.

45 In a document on the consultations carried out under the GP20 activities to develop legislation around IDPs in South Sudan, UNHCR notes that "listening directly to the concerns of IDPs upholds their right to participate in decisions that affect their lives and provides a better understanding of the protection problems they face, enabling a more effective response. The process facilitates meaningful participation through separate discussions with girls, boys, women and men of concern of different ages and backgrounds. It helps mobilize communities to take collective action to enhance their own protection and forms the basis for the draft of the national IDP legislation using a rights and community-based approach." UNHCR, "South Sudan GP 20 Consultations with IDPs, host communities, and affected populations 2018" draft report, page 8.

46 A Brookings-Bern paper on consultations with populations in humanitarian contexts terms this "over-participation," that is, "when the same IDPS are repeatedly asked similar questions. Consultation can also inadvertently reinforce hierarchical structures and further marginalize vulnerable groups. Consultations may give rise to unrealistic expectations. The process can also be manipulated by the implementing agency or participants, leading to distrust." See "Moving Beyond Rhetoric: Consultation and Participation with Populations Displaced by Conflict or Natural Disasters," Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, October 2008, page ii.

47 See, for example, "A Safe Place to Shine: Creating Opportunities and Raising Voices of Adolescent Girls in Humanitarian Settings," International Rescue Committee, UK Aid, CPC Learning Network, and Columbia University, October 2017, https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/2248/irccompassglobalreport.pdf; "Women and Girls Safe Spaces: A guidance note based on lessons learned from the Syrian crisis," United Nations Population Fund, 2015, https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/UNFPA%20UNFPA%20Women%20and%20Girls%20Safe%20Spaces%20Guidance%20%5B1%5D.pdf; "Restoring Dignity and Building Resilience: Monitoring Report on UN Women's Programming in Za'atari Refugee Camp," UN Women, 2016, http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2016/un%20women%20jordan_restoring%20dignity_cash%20for%20work_web.pdf?la=en&vs=2833.

48 Ann Young Lee, "A Double-edged Sword: Livelihoods in Emergencies; Guidance and Tools for Improved Programming," Women's Refugee Commission, August 2014.

49 The Touareg IDP woman who shared this with UNHCR explained that now having livestock would make them a target for violent criminals that are in the bush where the cattle are grazed, and the women did not want to incur danger by having cattle.

50 See, for example, Chaloka Beyani, "Under the Radar: Internally Displaced Persons in Non-Camp Settings," The Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement, 30 October 2013, https://www.brookings.edu/research/under-the-radar-internally-displaced-persons-in-non-camp-settings/.

51 For an analysis of the ethical dilemmas of local/national partnership in the context of remote management, see Kimberly Howe, Elizabeth Stites, and Danya Chudacoff, "Breaking the Hourglass: Partnerships in Remote Management Settings-The Cases of Syria and Iraqi Kurdistan," February 2015, http://fic.tufts.edu/publication-item/organization-partnerships-remote-settings/.

52 See, for example, "Women's Participation Pilot Project Learning Report," International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Women's Refugee Commission (WRC), December 2017; Kristine Anderson, "Now Is the Time: Research on Gender Justice, Conflict and Fragility in the Middle East and North Africa," The Foreign Commonwealth Office, Oxfam, International Alert, June 2017, https://www.international-alert.org/publications/now-is-the-time.

53 These women, being in the PoC, have the benefit of an office, in contrast to the women living outside the PoC in Bentiu town.

54 The activities were "premised on evidence that scaling up women's agency in the public and private sphere is critical to social transformation and preventing violence against women and girls in all settings." "Women's Participation Pilot Project Learning Report," International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Women's Refugee Commission (WRC), December 2017, page 2.

55 See, for example, Ashley Jackson, "Protecting civilians: the gap between norms and practice," Humanitarian Policy Group, Policy Brief 56, https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8914.pdf.

56 Alice J. Kang offers an extensive analysis of the reasons behind the adoption and rejection of laws related to gender equality in Niger. Much of the policy analysis in this section on gender equality is informed by this book. See Alice J. Kang, Bargaining for Women's Rights: Activism in an Aspiring Muslim Democracy, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015.

57 "Le Niger est le premier pays d'Afrique à adopter une loi nationale sur la protection et l'assistance des déplacés internes," UN Human Rights Council and UNHCR, 7 December 2018, https://reliefweb.int/report/niger/le-niger-est-le-premier-pays-d-afrique-adopter-une-loi-nationale-sur-la-protection-et-l.

58 The report is available here: https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/619/38/PDF/N0561938.pdf?OpenElement.

59 "Niger's gender quota law requires that no less than 10 percent of elected offices and no less than 25 percent of cabinet appointments and promotions in public administration be filled by either sex. The quota has since been enforced for the most highly coveted positions in politics: between 1970 and 2011, the presence of women in parliament increased from 0 percent to more than 13 percent, and the presence of women in the cabinet increased from 0 percent to more than 25 percent." Kang, Chapter 3.

60 "List of issues in relation to the second periodic report of the Niger; Addendum: Replies of the Niger to the list of issues," Human Rights Committee, 125th Session, Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant, received 1 December 2018.

61 The announcement of the creation of this law and the composition of the committee is elaborated in this document: Arrêté No.0001 MAGC/SG portant création, attributions et composition du Comité Directeur Chargé de l'élaboration du projet de loi sur les personnes déplacées interne au Niger, National Authorities of Niger, 2 February 2018, https://www.refworld.org/docid/5b3f82f84.html.

62 The full text of the law is available at https://www.refworld.org/docid/5c0e8cd64.html.

63 "Child marriage in Niger,"Save the Children, https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/content/dam/global/reports/advocacy/child-marriage-niger.pdf.

64 For a comprehensive overview on the legal framework around SGBV in South Sudan, see "Legal Provisions Relating to Gender Equality and Sexual and Gender-based Violence in South Sudan," United Nations Development Program and Human Rights Initiative, August 2017.

65 The full draft of the 1325 National Action Plan is available at http://www.undp.org/content/dam/southsudan/library/Reports/southsudanother documents/SS%20NAP%201325.pdf.

66 The full framework is available at https://www.mhadm.org/single-post/2018/07/21/Re-posting-Framework-for-Return-Reintegration-and-Relocation-of-Displaced-Persons.

67 Information on South Sudan's GP20 activities can be found at this link: http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/news-and-events/gp20-activities-and-initiatives/south-sudan-gp20-concept-note/.

68 UNDP, page 6.

69 For example, the Ministry of Humanitarian Action and Disaster Management has a female gender advisor, and the Committee for the Domestication of the Kampala Convention is headed by a woman from the Diffa region. It is noteworthy that, as one protection specialist pointed out, the Government of Niger is not a direct party to the regional conflict that has occasioned the displacement crisis in Niger and its neighbors. In IDP contexts where the government is party to the conflict and even a cause of displacement, violence, or persecution against IDPs, working with the government is decidedly more complicated. The case of Syria illustrates this well, where violence by government actors caused significant displacement and its efforts to address displacement outside of its areas of control fell short. See, for example, United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, "Statement by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Mr. Chaloka Beyani, upon conclusion of his official visit to the Syrian Arab Republic, 16 to 19 May 2015," https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16008.

70 Illustrating the absence of the state, IDP women and girls in Niger were posed a scenario in which a fictitious widowed IDP woman's property was taken unfairly by her brother-in-law, the women inevitably advised that the best solution would be to speak to the community leaders who may or may not side with the woman. The women did not consider going to the government authorities, nor did they consider that the government or police may play a positive role in resolving such a problem.

71 In both Niger and South Sudan, women are poorly represented among the government and in the police and the national and international military actors, which presents a barrier to women seeking recourse from formal services.

72 Tam O'Neil and Pilar Domingo, "Women and Power: Overcoming barriers to leadership and influence," Overseas Development Institute, February 2016, https://www.odi.org/projects/2773-women-and-power-overcoming-barriers-leadership-and-influence, page 10.

73 For example, the women chosen to represent Yemen at peace talks in Kuwait in 2016 counted as the more well-known activists rather than the less visible women and girls whose lives are placed most at risk in the conflict. Kristine Anderson, "Now Is the Time: Research on Gender Justice, Conflict and Fragility in the Middle East and North Africa," The Foreign Commonwealth Office, Oxfam, International Alert, June 2017, https://www.international-alert.org/publications/now-is-the-time, pages 67–68. This pattern has even repeated itself during the most recent iterations of the Yemen peace talks in 2018, where there is only one woman directly partaking in the negotiations. Mina Aldroubi, "Yemeni women seek greater role in peace talks," The National, 7 December 2018, https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/yemeni-women-seek-greater-role-in-peace-talks-1.800270.

74 For example, Chapter II of the revitalized agreement, which refers to the cessation of hostilities, contains provisions on the halt of violence against IDPs (including refraining from acts of SGBV), and the "protection of the needs of women, girls, and those of other groups with special needs" which notionally take into account the concerns voiced during the consultations. The signed peace agreement in full is available at the following link: https://www.dropbox.com/s/6dn3477q3f5472d/R-ARCSS.2018-i.pdf?dl=0.

75 The Brookings-Bern document on consultations with disaster-affected populations notes that "Major obstacles to 'track one' participation are 1) the high-level and exclusive nature of the process, 2) specific characteristics of the IDP population, such as marginalized social position or education level, and 3) disadvantages derived from the state of displacement, for example a lack of cohesion and difficulty in mobilizing the community. Even where they have been involved in 'track one' and 'two' processes, IDPs still face difficulties participating effectively. IDP participation in track two negotiations has occurred mostly through joining broader coalitions, such as women's associations. While track 'three' or grassroots initiatives are important, it is rare that they impact peace negotiations at the national level."

76 See Paffenholz et al., "Making Women Count – Not Just Counting Women: Assessing Women's Inclusion and Influence on Peace Negotiations," UN Women and Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative, http://www.inclusivepeace.org/content/making-women-count-not-just-counting-women-assessing-womens-inclusion-and-influence-peace; Laurel Stone, "Quantitative Analysis of Women's Participation in Peace Processes," Annex II in "Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes."

77 "Women and Power," page 9.

78 For an overview of the qualities of a substantive intervention in engaging men in accountable practice, see "Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls: Engaging Men Through Accountable Practice Part 1 Introductory Guide," International Rescue Committee, 2013, https://gbvresponders.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/IRC-EMAP-Introductory-Guide-High-Res.pdf.

79 An IRC study conducted in the Ivory Coast found that men's discussion groups over a period of three times a week for four months led to a decline in intimate partner violence and positively influenced men's inclination to use violence against partners. This study notes that the results do not constitute statistical significance. See Mazeda Hossain, Drissa Kone, Cathy Zimmerman, Ligia Kiss, Tammy Maclean, Tanya Abramsky, and Charlotte Watts, "Transforming Gender Biases to Reduce Violence against Women," International Rescue Committee Women's Protection and Empowerment Research Brief, January 2014, https://gbvresponders.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Mens-Engagement-Research-Brief-Jan-2014-Final-2.pdf.

80 Coomaraswamy notes that "…we are still far from genuinely embracing gender equality as an organizing principle of humanitarian work, and this undermines the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance." "Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice," page 69.

81 "She is a humanitarian: Women's participation in humanitarian action drawing on global trends and evidence from Jordan and the Philippines," CARE International, 2016, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/CARE_She-is-a-humanitarian-report_Feb-2017_high-res.pdf. The report also urges to "Give humanitarian action a women's face" by appointing female staff at all levels, undertaking gender audits of their organizational culture, and setting milestones to increase female staff.

82 This is true of the sites where UNHCR's researcher visited, all of which are currently within ready access to the humanitarian community. The presence of female staff, the researcher was informed, is not as prominent in remote sites and is considerably less in other sectors apart from protection.

83 CARE International notes in a study on women's engagement in humanitarian action that agencies will invoke safety as a reason for why a woman cannot be a manager of a maternal health or nutrition program in the Syria cross-border response, even though women perform the humbler task of door-to-door outreach. See "She is a humanitarian: Women's participation in humanitarian action drawing on global trends and evidence from Jordan and the Philippines," CARE International, 2016, pages 7–8.

84 Mazeda Hossain, Drissa Kone, Cathy Zimmerman, Ligia Kiss, Tammy Maclean, Tanya Abramsky, and Charlotte Watts, "Transforming Gender Biases to Reduce Violence against Women," International Rescue Committee Women's Protection and Empowerment Research Brief, January 2014, https://gbvresponders.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Mens-Engagement-Research-Brief-Jan-2014-Final-2.pdf.

85 Rebecca Horn, Eve S. Puffer, Elisabeth Roesch, and Heidi Lehmann, "Women's perceptions of effects of war on intimate partner violence and gender roles in two post-conflict West African Countries; consequences and unexpected opportunities," Conflict and Health, 8: 12, 2014, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4124472/; Ann Young Lee, "A Double-edged Sword: Livelihoods in Emergencies; Guidance and Tools for Improved Programming," Women's Refugee Commission, August 2014, http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/livelihoods-double-edged-sword-2014-report--wrc

86 "Women's Participation Pilot Project Learning Report," International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Women's Refugee Commission (WRC), December 2017, page 7.

87 Pamela Lilleston, Liliane Winograd, Spogmay Ahmed, Dounia Salamé, Dayana Al Alam, Ilaria Micheilis, and Sunita Palekar Joergensen, "Reaching Refugee Survivors of Gender-based Violence: Evaluation of a Mobile Approach to Service Delivery in Lebanon," International Rescue Committee, Sida, ICRW, and NoVo Foundation, https://gbvresponders.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Full-Evaluation-Report.pdf; "Restoring Dignity and Building Resilience: Monitoring Report on UN Women's Programming in Za'atari Refugee Camp," UN Women, 2016, http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2016/un%20women%20jordan_restoring%20dignity_cash%20for%20work_web.pdf?la=en&vs=2833.

88 The report notes, "The ability to participate is valuable in and of itself. The act of including previously discriminated against groups is valuable at the onset of activities, enabling a showcasing of abilities, skills and experience, and the creation of social connections that can trigger a process of normalization and the 'other' that is crucial to inclusion." "Women's Participation Pilot Project Learning Report," International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Women's Refugee Commission (WRC), December 2017, page 11.

89 Coomaraswamy, "Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice," page 88.

90 See Paffenholz et al., "Making Women Count – Not Just Counting Women: Assessing Women's Inclusion and Influence on Peace Negotiations," UN Women and Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative, http://www.inclusivepeace.org/content/making-women-count-not-just-counting-women-assessing-womens-inclusion-and-influence-peace; Laurel Stone, "Quantitative Analysis of Women's Participation in Peace Processes," Annex II in "Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes."

91 Pilar Domingo, Rebecca Holmes, Tam O'Neil, Nicola Jones, Kate Bird, Anna Larson, Elizabeth Presler-Marchal, and Craig Valters, "Women's voice and leadership in decision-making: Assessing the evidence," Overseas Development Institute, April 2015, https://www.odi.org/publications/9514-women-s-voice-and-leadership-assessing-evidence, page 14.

92 Domingo et al, "Women's Voice and Leadership," page 21. This review of literature notes that "the process of participation and strategic networking helps to nurture political capabilities among women activists—a political apprenticeship of sorts—that can translate into a normalization of political engagement and the development of political skills."

93 UNHCR AGD Policy, 6

94 An evaluation of a mobile approach to reaching Syrian refugees in Lebanon demonstrated positive outcomes in self-esteem, social connectedness, and cohesion with the host community. See Pamela Lilleston, Liliane Winograd, Spogmay Ahmed, Dounia Salamé, Dayana Al Alam, Ilaria Micheilis, and Sunita Palekar Joergensen, "Reaching Refugee Survivors of Gender-based Violence: Evaluation of a Mobile Approach to Service Delivery in Lebanon," International Rescue Committee, Sida, ICRW, and NoVo Foundation, https://gbvresponders.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Full-Evaluation-Report.pdf.

95 WRC, Double-Edged Sword, page 6.

96 An additional two interviews with UNHCR staff were conducted remotely, and one interview with the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS).