



Post-quake damage in Chautara in Sindhupalchok District, Nepal © IOM 2015

NEWS FROM THE WORKING GROUP: US AGENCY CONSULTATION

By *Ann Touneh Dandridge*, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, United States Department of State

No country is immune to crisis: In the United States Hurricanes Sandy in 2012 and Katrina in 2005 caused catastrophic damage, impacting citizens and migrants, communities, and businesses. In addition to experience gained in responding to these and other emergencies at home, the United States must be ready to respond when our citizens are impacted by natural disasters or conflict in other countries. Up to 6 million U.S. citizens live outside of the United States, in addition to a large number of citizens who travel regularly for business or as tourists, who may also be caught in crisis.

As a co-chair of the MICIC Initiative, we wanted to capture the experience and lessons learned of U.S. government agencies responsible for planning for and responding to these crises. In January, we convened a consultation with key agencies in charge of emergency preparedness and response, immigration, border control, security, health for minority populations, anti-human trafficking, and consular affairs. This intra-governmental consultation was an opportunity to discuss both how we protect and assist U.S. citizens abroad who are caught in natural disasters or conflict, as well as how the United States integrates into our national emergency response plans the needs of migrants, including those who have limited English language skills or varying migration statuses. The consultation was also an opportunity for a frank assessment of the gaps and challenges in our response that we seek to improve upon.

Key practices shared focused on our domestic emergency management systems' collaboration between all levels of government, community and faith based organizations, the private sector, and media. Several agencies shared best practices on how joint information centers, civil

society advocates, and targeted media outlets can assist in getting out effective emergency alerts that mitigate barriers that some populations, including migrants, face due to social isolation, language or cultural background, disability, or separation from family and caregivers. Participants highlighted the need to mitigate migrants' increased vulnerability to fraud, unscrupulous immigration schemes, and human trafficking during a natural disaster or other crisis and during the post-crisis recovery phase. Advanced planning with civil society organizations, which play critical roles of both service providers and advocates for migrants, is important to ensuring government responses effectively reach the most vulnerable people.

We know that other governments have faced similar challenges and gained valuable experience. We have much to learn from each other. We encourage governments to hold similar consultations among their own ministries and key stakeholders and to share their results to help inform the MICIC Initiative.

ABOUT MICIC

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

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

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

PRINCIPLES, GUIDELINES AND PRACTICES

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

We are now half way through the consultation process for the Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative that will inform the its non-binding principles, guidelines and practices. The guidelines will articulate the key elements of crisis preparedness, response and recovery that are necessary to protect migrants caught in crisis. In the [previous newsletters](#) we highlighted several core themes and ideas that have emerged from the consultations so far. While each consultation brings new ideas, there are some key points that consultation participants consistently raise, among them:

- Consular services need to be well prepared to act as first responders in the event of a crisis. This includes effective systems and ensuring staff are well trained. In locations where States do not have any or sufficient resources, consular protection agreements with other countries can ensure effective crisis response. These agreements, pre-arranged prior to a crisis, can cover evacuations; the use of assets; information exchange; procedures when a request for assistance is made; financial matters; and logistical issues like accommodation and transportation, among others
- When a crisis hits, those providing assistance should look at a variety of means to communicate with migrants. Participants in the consultation have consistently identified as a challenge reaching migrants (particularly migrants with irregular status) to inform them of available assistance. Social media and text messages can be innovative ways to reach migrants and their families. Using pictograms and simple messages will help counter language barriers. Diaspora, migrant groups and civil society organizations working locally are well placed to communicate with migrants, including those in remote or isolated working or living conditions.
- After a crisis, migrants who return to their countries of origin need diverse and multiple reintegration support. Migrants who return often have lost their livelihoods, and are no longer able to support their families through remittances. In the immediate term, the effects on migrants and their families can be ameliorated through livelihood support or compensation through funds or insurance. In the medium to long term, engaging local actors in communities of origin to assist in the integration or reintegration of migrants is key, for example through community economic development programs.



Tajikis returning from Yemen.
2015 © IOM Tajikistan

TIMELINE OF CONSULTATIONS

IGC PLUS CONSULTATION
Geneva, 2-3 February 2015

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

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

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

PRIVATE SECTOR CONSULTATION
Geneva, 2-3 December 2015

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

CIVIL SOCIETY CONSULTATION
Geneva, 28 - 29 January 2016

**REGIONAL CONSULTATION FOR
CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA**
San José, 17-19 February 2016

**REGIONAL CONSULTATION FOR
NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST**
La Valletta, 14-15 March 2016

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

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

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

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

CONSULTATION HIGHLIGHTS: RESULTS OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR CONSULTATION

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

The MICIC Initiative includes three consultations dedicated to a particular set of actors playing an important role in the protection of migrants caught in crisis: the private sector, civil society organizations, and inter-governmental organizations. The first of these consultations – with the private sector – took place 2-3 December 2015 in Geneva.

Over 40 individuals took part, representing major multinationals and other employers and recruiters of migrants, and those who provide services relevant for crisis response (i.e. financial services, insurance, evacuations, and medical assistance).

Some companies have well-tested and innovative systems to respond to crisis, but even so, the participants identified ways they could improve. Guidelines to emerge included :

- Follow ethical recruitment processes to hire migrants and expand the duty of care to include them (i.e. inscribing the duty of care in contracts for internationally and locally hired migrant employees.)
- Know who migrant employees are, including information about their accompanying family members, emergency contact information and essential health information.
- Plan with migrant workers in mind and test contingency plans, ensuring they are flexible, simple and translated into local languages or those common among migrant employees. Plans should seek to relocate to safety first, and evacuate as a last resort.

- Prepare migrants to help themselves and eliminate barriers to their doing so. Pre-departure and on-arrival training should include information on contingency plans, alert systems, insurance and evacuation procedures. Migrants need to have access to valid travel documents, which should never be confiscated or held by employers.
- Collaborate with others to pre-arrange assistance and share resources and intelligence. This includes agreements with service providers for transportation, accommodation, health care, communication, financial services, and translation. Joint contingency plans with other employers operating locally could also be helpful. Locally-gathered intelligence was seen as crucial to understanding how to predict crises, particularly conflict.
- For service providers, adapt services to support migrants caught in crisis. This may mean offering fee waivers or discounts during emergencies, or customizing or creating smaller-scale services.



CSO PARALLEL CONSULTATIONS: WHAT WE ARE LEARNING SO FAR

By *Colin Rajah, Global Coalition on Migration (GCM)*

Global civil society has long prioritized improving policy and practice for migrants caught in crisis situations. In 2012, under the leadership of members of the [Global Coalition on Migration \(GCM\)](#), civil society groups at the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) in Mauritius and the World Social Forum on Migration (WSFM) in Manila committed to a landmark [“5 Year, 8-point Plan of Action for Collaboration with Governments”](#).

Presented to the United Nations High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (HLD) in 2013, point 3 of the Action Agenda specifically calls for “...reliable, multi-actor mechanisms to address the assistance and protection needs of **migrants stranded in distress**, beginning with those trapped in **situations of war, conflict or disaster...**”

It was with that commitment that civil society welcomed the launch of the MICIC Initiative, and its identification of civil society – especially migrants and diaspora – as stakeholders with crucial roles to play. The GCM, working in collaboration with the [MADE \(Migration and Development\) Network](#), and with support from the [MacArthur Foundation](#), responded further by co-organizing a series of [regional civil society consultations](#), in conjunction with, and to complement the states’ regional consultations.

The objectives of the civil society regional consultations have been to: (i) provide a thorough briefing to civil society leaders about MICIC; (ii) collect and consolidate civil society input and recommendations from each region; and (iii) develop a civil society engagement and advocacy strategy for MICIC.

In 2015, three regional civil society consultations were held, in Manila, Brussels, and Dakar. A consolidated mid-term report on these consultations will be presented at the upcoming civil society stakeholder consultation in Geneva on 28-29 January 2016, featuring emerging trends in the recommendations while also highlighting specific nuances in the regions covered so far. The next three consultations are tentatively planned to take place between February and April 2016, culminating in a final civil society report and recommendations for the MICIC principles, guidelines and practices.

Through 2016 and beyond, and as part of its Action Agenda commitment, civil society expects to continue to engage actively with MICIC as critical stakeholders, and as active partners to states, working vigorously together to increase the protection and decrease the vulnerabilities of migrants caught in crisis situations.

The MICIC website now contains a section featuring Migrant Stories — real life stories of migrants caught in countries in crisis. This is the story of one migrant caught in crisis; others are available [here](#).

Abdi, Somali living in South Sudan

By *IOM South Sudan*

Abdi (name has been changed), a 29-year old Somali national, was in South Sudan for only two months before civil war broke out in 2013 and put his life on hold.

He moved to South Sudan in October 2013 to join a relative running a small business in Bor, the capital of Jonglei State, at the time a thriving market town. Abdi planned to work in Bor for two years to save money and then pursue a university degree.

Unfortunately, fighting broke out in Juba, the capital of South Sudan, on 15 December 2013. The war has killed more than 50,000 people, according to a 2014 estimate from the International Crisis Group. Within days, the conflict spread to Bor. When the fighting began, Abdi was forced to abandon his shop. He went to the nearby UN Mission in the South Sudan peacekeeping base, along with thousands of other, to seek protection. “On 18 December, [armed groups] started shooting at us and I had to run from the bullets. I couldn’t take anything with me, and, within minutes, our shop was destroyed and looted,” Abdi remembers.

After several weeks, the UN relocated Abdi and other foreign nationals to a protection of civilians (PoC) site in Juba. For 18 months, Abdi lived in the Juba PoC site, relying on assistance from the humanitarian community for food, shelter, and access to clean water. “Life in the PoC sites was very difficult. Imagine, one day you are running a business and then in a matter of minutes, you have zero.”

In the chaos of the fighting, Abdi and many other foreign nationals lost passports and other legal documentation as they fled. With IOM’s support, Abdi obtained a temporary stay permit and a passport to allow him to stay legally in South Sudan.

In August 2015, the UN facilitated the departure of foreign nationals from the PoC site in Juba. Abdi received a cash stipend of USD 300; he pooled his funds with those of three other foreign nationals, and they now live in a one-room apartment in Juba. “I have good friends, and we are surviving together.”

They have all tried unsuccessfully to find employment in Juba, where the economy is failing and criminal activity is on the rise. Abdi is frustrated after more than four months of looking for work, but recognizes that he is young and healthy and still has hope for his future. Most of all, he wishes to continue his education and study medicine. “I am still young, myself, and I need education and safety. I wish one day I will survive this life.”



IOM helps foreign nationals in the Protection of Civilian site with applications for a South Sudan Temporary Stay Permit © IOM South Sudan 2015

The MICIC consultation with the private sector revealed that many employers use innovative tools to protect their employees when countries experience natural disasters or conflict. What follows is one example, with a particular focus on the technology Microsoft used in 2011 to among other things, communicate with people needing to make decisions during crisis, locate Microsoft travelers, and provide security and support to employees.

Microsoft protects its employees from Civil Unrest in the Middle East through Incident Management Processes

By **Michael Foynes**, Senior Director of Security Operations, Microsoft Corp.

In 2011, turmoil in the form of civil unrest spread through parts of the Middle East, particularly Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. Protesters took to the streets and clashed with government forces and militias. Based in or near these increasingly violent locations were 304 Microsoft employees and several visitors travelling in the region. The UK-based Global Security Operations Center (GSOC), which covered the region, implemented designated local and enterprise Incident Management Teams (IMTs) to manage local effects and limit the overall impact on Microsoft, mitigate risk to assets and help personnel on the ground remain safe and informed.

During this event, IMTs **managed communications** and provided background information, daily situation briefings, and security advisories. The teams used several tools to collaborate with key decision makers and staff, regardless of their location or network access. Visual Command Centers were created using software from partner IDV Solutions. These command centers allowed teams to create, analyze, interact and share data gathered from internal security systems as well as external data feeds. Microsoft Lync (now Skype) connected IMT members in live meetings, sharing voice, video and documents without being affected by landline disruptions. AtHoc, another partner messaging tool, utilized Short Message Service (SMS) to quickly alert IMT members

and senior leadership of upcoming meetings, situational changes and advisories. Microsoft InfoPath 2010 was used to help teams quickly gather information in a consistent and efficient manner via a centrally accessible portal.

GSOC Europe/Middle East/Africa Region relied heavily on two partner products to make sure that all visitors who were in or traveling to the region received timely updates and relevant security guidance. ConTgo's Mobile Travel Assistant (MTA) helped the GSOC **confirm the location of all Microsoft travelers**. Those en route or already in the area were informed about the situation via an alert message, which required verification from the traveler regarding their well-being. Inca X leveraged the Azure Cloud to provide web-accessible GPS location data downloaded to the mobile phones of deployed Regional Security Advisors. This allowed RSAs to provide on-the-ground support and detailed threat information. Using available satellite coverage Inca X tracked, Advisors' physical locations.

Extranet and Lenel, the access control system used to monitor all Microsoft campuses and buildings, were the main tools used to **provide security advice and support** to affected personnel. The Extranet pages published travel restrictions and office closures, simplifying connectivity to important information.

Microsoft IMTs and the GSOC were successful because the enterprise had planned for, practiced, adjusted, and improved upon response plans before being initiated. The effort used off-the-shelf technology from Microsoft and its partners, allowing users to develop solutions, without excessive customization, leaving more time for strategic planning and execution of actions to ensure the safety of Microsoft employees. IMTs were able to maintain constant communication, provide security guidance and account for all employees and travelers in the region, without any loss of life or assets, by utilizing these technologies. Microsoft offices and employees were fully operational in the affected region within three weeks of the demonstrations coming to an end. To learn more about Microsoft Global Security and the processes it uses, visit us at www.msgsoc.com.



A farmer's family displaced from the Donbas started growing strawberries in Zhytomyr Region, Northern Ukraine. © IOM / Robinson 2015

The MICIC Initiative will publish a series of issue briefs on areas identified through the consultations that require further analysis. The first issue brief on disaster risk reduction strategies was published in October; the second, summarized below, explores trafficking in human beings in context of crisis, and can be accessed on the [MICIC website](#)

Responding to Human Trafficking and Exploitation in Times of Crisis

By Sarah Craggs, Laura Lungarotti, Michela Macchiavello, Agnes Tillinac, IOM

Given migrants' unique needs and circumstances during conflicts and natural disasters, evidence shows that migrants may be particularly vulnerable to trafficking. Counter-trafficking efforts can therefore be seen as immediate and life-saving assistance in crisis situations and as a matter of life and livelihood for victims of human trafficking.

The issue brief recommends among other things, that stakeholders better understand human trafficking of migrants caught in crisis. Other useful

measures include better integrating counter-trafficking in crisis-preparedness, emergency response, and recovery; building the capacity of humanitarian workers to identify and address trafficking victims; and, where a crisis may prevent immediate prosecution, ensuring that all human rights abuses related to human trafficking are correctly documented.

Before crisis, states can establish systems to identify trafficked persons among migrant worker populations, including in detention; create referral mechanisms for victims of trafficking who wish to claim asylum or other forms of international protection; and implement national counter-trafficking laws and policies in accordance with the Palermo Protocol that also address the protection and assistance needs of migrants. During a crisis, states can identify safe places for victims of trafficking, including migrant victims; avoid punishing victims for crimes they are forced to commit as part of their trafficking; and ensure monitoring and reporting of trafficking-related human rights abuses. After a crisis, states should prosecute traffickers, and undertake efforts to better understand the risks of trafficking in post-crisis settings.



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MICIC TERMS AND CONCEPTS

The MICIC Repository of Practices

The MICIC Initiative principles, guidelines and practices will be supplemented by an on-line repository of illustrative existing practices of states, organizations and employers, that can serve as examples of what has and can be done to protect and assist migrants caught in countries in crisis. Practices and related materials will be identified during the MICIC consultations and through research and submissions on the MICIC website: See below for how to share your practice.

ENGAGE IN THE MICIC INITIATIVE

Share your practice

The MICIC Secretariat invites you to share your notable practices and tools for protecting and assisting migrants in countries experiencing a crisis.

The MICIC Initiative will use input to draft its non-binding, voluntary principles, guidelines and practices, and to create an on-line repository of practices for governments, international organizations, civil society, the private sector and migrants themselves.

You can contribute to the Initiative by sharing your practice through our [on-line form](#) on the MICIC [website](#).