

Displacement in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change in Asia and the Pacific Regional Launch 2020

Concept Note

1 December 2020, 01.30 pm - 04.00 pm (GMT+7)

Location: Bliston Suwan Park View Hotel & Serviced Residence (Bangkok) and
Online

The Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law's (RWI), in partnership with the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), will host a regional launch of our 10-country study on a rights-based approach to internal displacement in the context of disasters and climate change across Asia and the Pacific.

I. Context:

Disaster represents the sharp end of the accelerating global climate crisis. The frequency and intensity of extreme weather events are expected to increase in many parts of the world due to climate change. One consequence of disasters is that people are forced to move. In 2019, 24,8 million people were forced to move due to disaster, including 'sudden' onset weather events such as flooding and intensified storms.¹ Whether they move to evacuation centres in anticipation of a cyclone, or are forced from their homes in the aftermath of a flood, people who are displaced face a wide-range of threats to the enjoyment of human rights, including rights to life, water, shelter, health, and, critically, the right to non-discrimination and equality. Clearly, disaster displacement is a human rights issue.

Global and national initiatives for disaster risk reduction (DRR) provide significant room for incorporating a human rights based approach, recognising the agency of people at risk of displacement and already displaced due to climate-induced disasters, and empowering them to develop resilient and sustainable DRR strategies that consider interconnected dynamics across time and space.

In 2017, RWI initiated a regional thematic study on internal displacement in

¹ <https://www.internal-displacement.org/database/displacement-data>, accessed 26 October 2020

the context of disaster and climate change across Asia and the Pacific. The study adopted a human rights-based approach grounded in the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. The research focuses on law, policy, and practices in 10 countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, the Philippines, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. Case studies focus on preventing and preparing for displacement, protecting people during displacement and durable solutions to displacement.

Since completing the study, RWI has begun to translate the studies into practical application. RWI is currently partnering with academic institutions/universities across Asia to promote widespread awareness and adoption of a human rights-based approach to address displacement in the context of disaster and climate change. This event aims to disseminate the findings, as well as provide a platform for suggestions and ideas for advancing a rights-based approach to displacement.

II. The specific objectives of this launch are as follows:

- To present the key findings and recommendations from RWI's thematic study on internal displacement in the contexts of disaster and climate change across Asia and the Pacific.
- To enhance regional understanding of and support for a rights-based approach to address displacement in the context of disaster and climate change.
- Provide a platform for suggestions and ideas for advancing a human rights-based approach to displacement in the context of climate change and disaster ahead of climate change and DRR forums (e.g. Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction), and in regional/bilateral development activities for 2021 and beyond.

III. Participants:

The physical launch will bring together:

- Officials from the Thai Government
- International and national CSO and research representatives
- Embassies
- Intergovernmental agencies e.g. ASEAN, UN and the EU
- Regional experts

Stakeholders from other parts of the region will be able to participate remotely, as the event will be livestreamed.

IV. Venue:

This launch will be a hybrid event that combines a physical venue in Bliston Suwan Park View Hotel & Serviced Residence , Bangkok, with an online platform to enable participants from outside Thailand to join remotely.

V. Contact:

For questions or queries about the event, please contact:

- Victor Bernard (victor.bernard@rwi.lu.se)
- Sri Aryani (Ari) (sri.aryani@rwi.lu.se)

VI. Tentative Agenda:

- 1.30 – 1.45 Welcome remarks and introduction to the launch
- Mr. Morten Kjaerum, Director, The Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law
 - Dr. Eren Zink, First Secretary, Senior Research Advisor, The Embassy of Sweden
- 1.45 – 2.15 Presentation: Preparing for climate-induced displacement: A human rights-based approach
- The overarching rights-based approach to internal displacement: Reflections from the 10-country research in Asia & the Pacific – **Dr. Matthew Scott, Senior Researcher, Head of People on the Move Thematic Area, The Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law**
 - Preparing for climate-induced displacement with a rights-based approach: where are we now? – **Dr. Albert Salamanca, Senior Research Fellow, Stockholm Environment Institute**
- 2.15 – 2.35 **Coffee Break**

2.35 – 3.50 Panel Discussion on a rights-based approach to internal displacement in the contexts of climate change and disaster: from words to action.

Moderator:

- Asst. Prof. Dr. Carl Middleton, Director, Center for Social Development Studies, Chulalongkorn University

Discussants:

- Dr. Tasneem Siddiqui, Founding Chair, Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), Bangladesh (Online)
- Ms. Reinna S. Bermudez, Officer-in-Charge, Center for Crisis, Conflict, and Humanitarian Protection - Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines – The Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines (Online) (TBC)
- Dr. Pia Oberoi, Senior Advisor on Migration and Human Rights for the Pacific Region, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- Representative from the Thai Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (TBC)
- Mr. Hans Guttman, Executive Director, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC)
- Q&A

3.50–4.00 Closing remarks.