



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on Internal Displacement and Evacuees

Hold the US Accountable: Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Human Rights Campaign

September 2008 Update: Hurricane Gustav

What is difference between an “evacuee and an Internally Displaced Person?”

An evacuee is a civilian removed from their place of residence by government direction or decree for reasons of personal security or the requirements of a declared emergency or military situation. While an internally displaced person (IDP) is someone who has been forced to leave their home for reasons such as religious or political persecution, war or natural disaster, but has not crossed an international border.

What is the relationship between an “evacuee” and an “internally displaced person?”

An evacuee from a from civil conflict or a natural disaster becomes a displaced person (either IDP or refugee), when they are prevented from returning to their home due to the continuance of a conflict or the lack of adequate provisions by the government to secure their return.

What rights do the “evacuees” from the Gulf Coast have?

Consistent with international standards, evacuees have all the basic rights and protections of internally displaced persons to be returned to their homes and communities in a timely and equitable manner by the government in question following the resolution of any conflict or the end any potential threat from a likely natural disaster.

What are the “Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement?”

“The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement,” adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1998, are the normative international framework for delineating the rights of internally displaced persons and the responsibilities and obligations of national governments to protect them.

Why are internally displaced persons (IDPs) considered one of “the world’s largest groups of vulnerable people?”

Internally Displaced Persons are considerably more vulnerable than the general population for a number of reasons including psychological, emotional and physical

trauma, dislocation from social networks, homes and communities and sources of income, are generally more susceptible to violence and suffer higher mortality rates; IDP women are more likely to be victims of gender-based violence. Eighty percent of IDPs and refugees are women. Internally displaced persons have no special status under international law and there is no international agency mandated to provide them with protection and assistance.

How many people have been displaced as a result of natural disaster?

Persons forcibly displaced as a consequence of massive earthquakes, floods, mudslides and hurricanes, yet who remain within the territorial confines of their countries are considered internally displaced persons. They constitute at least 25 million of the world's IDP population.

<http://www.ushrnetwork.org/projects/katrina>