**Conceptualising “Relocation” across Diverse Displacement Contexts**

David James Cantor

*Professor and Director, Refugee Law Initiative, University of London*

**Abstract**

Planned relocations often take place in displacement contexts. They are implemented not only in settings of disasters and climate change, but also during armed conflicts and in development projects. But what is ‘relocation’? Is it the same thing across these diverse contexts? And what is its relationship to displacement? Conceptual clarity on these points is needed if humanitarians are to engage with the critical question of how international law regulates such relocation processes.

This article reviews scholarly, policy and legal sources on relocations across these varied contexts in order to (i) propose a universal concept of relocation and (ii) reflect on its relationship to concepts of displacement. Then, by considering the issue in relation to internal displacement frameworks, the article explains how international law governs relocations, regardless of the specific setting in which they occur. This has important implications in a world of diverse, and often entwined, displacement contexts.

The full text of this article is published (forthcoming 2023) in the peer-reviewed [*Journal of International Humanitarian Legal Studies*](https://brill.com/view/journals/ihls/ihls-overview.xml).