**Submission to request for input from the Special Rapporteur on IDPs**

Professor Megan Bradley, McGill University

Professor Jennifer Welsh, McGill University

We are encouraged to see these promising themes outlined by the new SR and are pleased to provide input on a number of the set questions, based on previous research as well as our proposed joint project (running from 2023-2027) on “Protecting the Internally Displaced: Sovereignty, Agency and the Localization of International Norms”. This project seeks to develop a landmark comparative study of the localization of international norms on IDP protection, centering the roles of IDPs themselves and focusing on responses to three critical challenges: acute risks to IDPs’ physical security, the pursuit of durable solutions to displacement, and the inclusion of IDPs in broader peace and peacebuilding processes. The project will engage in original empirical and normative analyses to assess how international norms on the protection of IDPs been localized since the adoption of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement; the consequences and limitations of these localization efforts; and the ways in which IDPs have figured as agents in localization processes. The project will also draw out insights from the analysis for improved policy and practice on IDP protection, and we hope to work directly with the SR and her team, including the IDP Protection Expert Group (of which Prof. Welsh is a member).

In terms of the SR’s specific questions for input, we share the following reactions and ideas:

**1.Climate change and internal displacement.** The SR could explore in more detail *protracted displacement in disaster contexts, including in relation to climate change.* We offer three specific suggestions:

* The SR might wish to work directly with foresight analysts to understand and model the ways in which, and locations in which, climate-induced displaced could occur and what its implications could be for local societies, regions, and the broader international community. Institutes and centres focused on our contemporary ‘polycrisis’ (in which multiple global trends are interacting to produce destabilizing effects) are employing innovative systems thinking to outline potential scenarios resulting from climate change. We would be pleased to assist the SR in forging a connection to the Cascade Institute in Canada, which could offer suggestions for how to model the potential effects of climate change on displacement patterns and how to channel such models into preventive policy
* Disaster-induced displacement situations are typically assumed to ‘resolve’ faster than internal displacement situations linked to conflict and violence, with most IDPs returning to their communities of origin in relatively short order. Yet in some cases, disaster-induced displacement becomes protracted, and this phenomenon may intensify over the coming years. Given the research on this topic is still quite limited, the SR could engage in or sponsor analysis of when/under what conditions displacement associated with disasters and the effects of climate change become protracted, and how can this be prevented; and whether there are groups that are particularly prone to experiencing protracted displacement in disaster contexts. The knowledge generated could assist in developing prevention and mitigation strategies for protracted displacement, in line with efforts to foster climate change resilience in marginalized communities.
* Finally, as the SR develops her work on climate change and internal displacement, it would be helpful for the mandate to more extensively and strategically engage the IOM, particularly in light of IOM's role as the head of CCCM in disaster situations, and its extensive role on migration and climate change. IDPs are IOM's largest ‘beneficiary’ group by far, and yet traditionally there has been comparatively modest levels of engagement between the IDP mandate and IOM. Given IOM's expanded frameworks for addressing IDPs, and the SR could play an important role in working with IOM to strengthen protection-oriented approaches to IDPs.

**2. IDPs and peace processes/peacebuilding**. Given the focus of our current research project, we believe it would be helpful for the SR to devote attention to the *role of IDP-led organizations* in building peace and resolving displacement. We have two specific suggestions/ideas here:

* A variety of intergovernmental organizations and civil society actors have articulated strategies for sustainable peace, which place heavy emphasis on self-determination and meaningful inclusion as a key ingredient. The SR may wish to consult the recent “Principles for Peace” project of InterPeace, which articulated a vision of inclusion that moves beyond the notion of national ownership to broader engagement of local actors (Prof. Welsh served on the Research Committee for this project). Here there is also an opportunity to connect to the Women Peace and Security agenda, which emphasises ‘participation’ as one of its key themes and has sponsored and consolidated research on the involvement of women in peace processes. Prof. Welsh’s Research Network on WPS could offer connections to researchers on this topic.
* While in recent years increased attention has been directed (including by UNHCR) to the important roles played by refugee-led organizations (RLOs), the important and diverse contributions of IDP-led organizations have not received as much attention. The SR could play a lead role in encouraging organizations working with refugees to expand their strategies to better engage IDP-led organizations, and in helping a variety of stakeholders – including those in regional organizations and the broader UN system – to better understand the significance and contributions of these local actors. We attach for your consideration the Introduction to a book co-edited by Prof. Bradley, entitled "Beyond Beneficiaries: Refugees' Roles in Resolving Displacement and Building Peace," which argued that we need to look beyond formal processes led by states and international organizations to understand the concrete ways in which displaced persons craft and implement their own peacebuilding and durable solutions strategies. We can send the full book manuscript if this is of interest.

**3. Re: durable solutions**. As part of this important focus for the SR, a potential theme could be analysis of the *relationship between efforts to secure durable solutions for refugees and IDPs, and the risk of internal displacement faced by returning refugees*. Durable solutions for refugees and IDPs are too often discussed and supported in isolation from one another. The SR could pursue research and deliberation on how strategies to support durable solutions for those displaced within and across borders could be pursued in more integrated and holistic ways, bearing in mind the familial, ethnic, and socio-economic ties that often link refugee and IDP populations.

**4.** **Race and internal displacement**. In the call for input, the SR has sent an important signal on intersectionality. The SR could consider a report that focuses particularly on race, ethnicity, and internal displacement. This is an important theme in relation to durable solutions, but it also merits focused attention as a cross-cutting issue, considering how responses to internal displacement are racialized (and the connections between racialization and gendered and classed inequalities). In pursuing this analysis there is a significant opportunity for the SR to work more closely with the community of researchers and policy advocates working on atrocity crime prevention and response, given that inter-communal/ethnic conflict and tension is a key driver of these crimes, which can in some cases give rise to forced displacement. Those in the atrocity crime community have not given as much attention to responses to forced displacement of particular identity groups, and hence there are possibilities for synergies in their work and the interests of the SR. Prof. Welsh, who has long worked in this field, would be pleased to offer guidance on these connections.