Cover Photo: This elderly woman and her son recently arrived at a site for displaced people in Somalia. They said mortars killed all but one of their animals. Photo by Refugees International.
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There is some good news to report from Somalia. The government, at both federal and municipal levels, has made great strides in developing policies and frameworks that aim to protect the rights of internally displaced people (IDPs) and promote lasting, durable solutions for them, including through local integration in urban areas. The key now is to implement those policies in an effective way.

Approximately 2.6 million Somalis currently are displaced within their own country. The largest concentration, around half a million, are in the Somali capital, Mogadishu. Some were displaced nearly 30 years ago, whereas others continue to arrive in the city on a daily basis due to conflict and climate factors. In October 2019, a team from Refugees International traveled to Mogadishu to assess the current situation and analyze opportunities for progress on durable solutions.

According to international standards, “durable solutions are achieved when IDPs no longer have specific assistance and protection needs linked to their displacement.” Toward this end, Mogadishu’s local administration developed an IDP policy earlier in 2019 and established a Durable Solutions Unit in the mayor’s office. More recently, the federal government created a Durable Solutions Secretariat (DSS) that includes all ministries and federal institutions, and adopted a national IDP policy, accompanied by National Evictions Guidelines designed to ensure that any evictions are carried out in a planned and legal way that protects the rights of displaced people, including by providing alternative land and housing options.

Also, just last month, in November 2019, the Somali government ratified the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance for IDPs in Africa (otherwise known as the Kampala Convention)—a legally binding instrument that affirms the rights of IDPs in Africa. Thus, key policy frameworks are now in place.

Unfortunately, the progress on policy has yet to translate into tangible benefits for Mogadishu’s IDPs. In the immediate term, the emergency needs in Mogadishu are immense, and support for the humanitarian response must be sustained and improved when feasible. For example, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the lead protection agency, should increase support for IDPs to make it more commensurate with the assistance provided to other and smaller populations it serves, including refugees and returnees.

Most IDPs in Mogadishu live in cramped settlements under unsanitary conditions and without sufficient access to basic services. The malnutrition rate is persistently high, and the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance is regularly disrupted because of three key factors. First, most IDPs live on private land and face a continuing threat of forced evictions if the owner seeks to reclaim the land. More than 100,000 IDPs have been evicted in 2019 alone. Usually,

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they receive no prior notice, their shelters are destroyed, and they are left on their own to find a new place in the city to live. Second, settlement “gatekeepers” who control access to IDP sites and are usually connected to the landowners, continue to take a portion of aid as rent from IDPs and have done so for years. Third, high insecurity restricts the movement of humanitarian actors throughout the city to deliver services and monitor programs.

Going forward, the government, with support from international donors, must implement its new policies in a practical way to provide concrete improvements in the lives of IDPs and facilitate opportunities for local integration. Particular attention should be paid to preventing forced evictions, offering land tenure, and empowering government officials to facilitate effective support for IDP communities while weakening the stranglehold of gatekeepers. The government should consider using development funding to purchase land plots that can be made available for IDPs. Indeed, implementing long-term durable solutions for IDPs will also serve to improve the environment for responding more effectively to emergency needs in urban areas more generally.

Development institutions are stepping forward with increased financing to support this effort. The World Bank, for example, is supporting infrastructure projects in urban areas that aim to benefit IDPs and their host communities alike. UNHCR leads the Protection Cluster—the key humanitarian body for analysis and coordination on protection issues. As these projects advance, regular engagement with such humanitarian protection monitors and actors as UNHCR are essential to help prevent rights violations such as evictions that occur because of an increase in land values.

International creditors are poised to relieve the country’s external debt of US$4.7 billion, a burden that dates to the Siad Barre regime from decades ago. Once the debt is forgiven, development funding is expected to increase, and the need for regular engagement between development and protection actors will become even more important. Ultimately, however, given this increased support and capacity, it will be up to the Somali government to prove that it can deliver for its people.

Unfortunately, the country will continue to face major humanitarian crises in the years to come that will require a significant international response. At present, the deadly combination of conflict and climate events, such as drought and flooding, has left more than 5 million Somalis in need of humanitarian assistance around the country, and donors have stepped up to provide hundreds of millions of dollars for the response.

However, these challenges should not detract from the progress that has been made on durable solutions policies and the need to move forward with implementation. These crises will only bring more people into cities like Mogadishu, and they will benefit most from programs that support lasting solutions, not short-term band-aids that must be applied over and over again.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The Somalia federal government should do the following:

• Improve collaboration with local governments, such as the Mogadishu municipal government, on durable solutions initiatives. The DSS at the federal level must develop an institutional link with the Durable Solutions Unit in the Mogadishu mayor’s office so the two bodies can coordinate and support each other.

The Mogadishu municipal government should do the following:

• Prevent unlawful evictions of IDPs from private land. Municipal officials must engage private landowners directly to prevent forced evictions and develop alternative land options for IDPs when land is reclaimed. The government should consider issuing official occupancy permits agreed upon between landlord and IDPs.

• Assert government responsibility for supporting displaced people and minimize the role of IDP settlement gatekeepers. City- and district-level officials should be empowered to facilitate engagement between the humanitarian aid community and IDPs so the latter are not at the mercy of gatekeepers, who are known to exploit vulnerable communities and divert aid as a form of rent.

• Use development funding to purchase additional public land. Most of the land in Mogadishu is privately owned, which limits the government’s opportunity to provide land with secure tenure to IDPs. If the city gains access to additional development financing, it should purchase land for this purpose.

Humanitarian agencies should do the following:

• The UN Refugee Agency must increase funding for IDPs. Last year, UNHCR spent less than 20 percent of its funds for Somalia on supporting IDPs. Given the enormous need, combined with the new UNHCR policy on internal displacement, UNHCR headquarters, with support from donor governments, should provide additional funding for IDPs to the Somalia country office.

• The Protection Cluster should invite key development actors for regular briefings and information sharing. As development organizations increase support for durable solutions programs, regular engagement with protection actors, particularly on issues related to evictions, is essential.

Donor governments and international financial institutions should do the following:

- **Maintain strong humanitarian funding.** Durable solutions initiatives for IDPs involve a long-term process. Meanwhile, humanitarian needs are acute. Fortunately, donor governments have stepped forward to contribute more than 75 percent of the UN’s $1.1 billion appeal for this year. Donors must sustain this support.

- **Development institutions should increase collaboration with protection agencies to help guide work on durable solutions.** This collaboration could be done by regularly engaging the Protection Cluster, as recommended above, or through the establishment of a special forum for humanitarian and development actors hosted by the UN’s Human Rights and Protection Group, with support from the UN’s Durable Solutions Unit.
BACKGROUND

Since the fall of the Siad Barre regime in 1991 and the ensuing civil war, the deadly combination of conflict and cyclical climate events has forced many Somalis from their homes. Although new flights occur every day, the majority of internally displaced people (IDPs) in Somalia are caught in a protracted situation, living in a state of crisis for years.

This is a crucial moment for making progress, however. The government recently established and adopted a series of important IDP policies, and development actors are stepping forward with support for implementing them. Carrying key elements forward effectively could serve both to advance durable solutions for those in protracted displacement and improve the ability of aid organizations to deliver lifesaving assistance in complex urban environments.

The UN estimates that there are 2.6 million internally displaced people in Somalia. Most are living in urban areas ostensibly under the control of the government and African Union peacekeepers (African Union Mission in Somalia, or AMISOM). They arrived in search of relative safety and to seek humanitarian assistance.

The largest concentration of IDPs—around half a million—are located in Mogadishu, Somalia’s capital. Displaced Somalis continue to arrive in Mogadishu daily, most of them fleeing conflict between AMISOM and the Al-Shabaab extremist group in the Lower Shabelle region. There have been nearly 100,000 new arrivals in 2019 alone. There were two previous major waves of movement into the city over the past decade—first during the 2011–2012 famine and again following successive periods of drought in 2016–2017. Others arrived during the famine of 1992.

Refugees International has conducted regular missions to Somalia and reported on the significant challenges that its IDPs face, particularly in Mogadishu, including exploitation and abuse by camp “gatekeepers,” extremely overcrowded and unsanitary conditions, poor shelter, limited access to basic services, increased risk of gender-based violence, frequent unlawful evictions, and significant tension with the host community.

Although these serious challenges remain, there is progress. The government, at both the federal and local levels, has embarked on a concerted effort to establish durable solutions policies for IDPs that involve supporting local integration from an urban planning perspective.

Good policies alone, however, are not enough to create tangible improvements in people’s lives. Development actors, such as the World Bank, are planning to inject increased funds to support the government’s effort to implement its new policies. Also, key donors, such as the European Union and the United Kingdom, are funding durable solutions consortia that establish programmatic links between the Somalia government, UN agencies, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). These initiatives, however, are in their

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RESEARCH OVERVIEW

In October 2019, a team from Refugees International traveled to Mogadishu, Somalia, to assess the current situation and analyze opportunities for progress on durable solutions. Team members conducted interviews with displaced people, as well with representatives of the local and federal government, UN aid agencies, development institutions, foreign embassies, and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Early stages, and specific durable solutions projects have generally been small-scale pilot initiatives. For example, UN-Habitat and the Norwegian Refugee Council are piloting a rental subsidy and livelihood project for 80 IDP households in Mogadishu. Also, the EU is supporting housing accompanied by security of land tenure for 300 households on property allocated by the municipality of Mogadishu.

These endeavors are worthwhile, but the reality is that most IDPs in Mogadishu—whether new or protracted—continue to live in dire conditions with high rates of malnutrition and limited access to basic services.

At the same time, the overall humanitarian situation throughout Somalia is deteriorating. Currently, more than 5 million Somalis (around one-third of the country’s population) are in need of humanitarian assistance, and protracted drought has resulted in the worst national cereal harvest since 2011.12 In mid-2019, the humanitarian and donor communities scaled up an emergency drought response plan, which included strong support from the U.S. government. In FY2019, the United States provided $498 million for emergency aid.13 Fortunately, a worst-case scenario was averted. More recently, however, major flooding in the Hiran region in west-central Somalia has forced more than 370,000 people from their homes.14 Without additional and sustained resources, the number of food insecure Somalis is expected to rise to 6.2 million by the end of the year.15

Due to natural hazards influenced by climate change, as well as ongoing conflict and insecurity, Somalis will continue to face serious, acute emergencies in the years to come. Further, Al-Shabaab is unlikely to relinquish its sway over much of the countryside any time soon, which significantly limits the geographic authority of the government. Nonetheless, in locations like Mogadishu, where the government does have a modicum of control, there is an opportunity to pursue long-term

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12. “Somalia,” OCHA.
solutions for IDPs in protracted displacement while improving the enabling environment for effective humanitarian aid and development.

POSITIVE POLICY SHIFT ON INTERNAL DISplacement

The Somali government’s approach to IDPs has undergone a major shift over the past several years—from essentially calling for all IDPs to “go home” to establishing durable solutions policies and incorporating the needs of displaced people in its National Development Plan.

Viewing IDPs as a blight on progress in Somalia following Al-Shabaab’s withdrawal from Mogadishu in 2011, senior Somali officials put forward a policy in mid-2013 that all IDPs should leave and return home within six months. Although no organized returns occurred, many IDPs were forcefully kicked off the land where they had been sheltering, sometimes at the behest of government officials and with no alternative offered to them, until the government issued a moratorium. Many re-displaced IDPs then sought refuge in the outskirts of Mogadishu—areas very dangerous and difficult for aid workers to reach consistently.

Following consistent engagement and consultation between humanitarian and development actors and the government—including through the launch of the Somalia Durable Solutions Initiative in 2016, initiated by the UN and led by the government, the appointment of a Special Advisor on Internal Displacement, Walter Kaelin, and the work of the NGO-led Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat—both federal and local officials

began to shift toward support for policies that facilitate local integration. It was an acknowledgement that while displaced people who want to return home certainly should be assisted to do so, it is simply not an option or desire for many of them.

In 2017, Somalia’s new National Development Plan paid significant attention to the rights of IDPs and promoted a strategy for supporting local integration of the displaced in urban areas. In January 2019, the Benadir regional administration, led by the mayor of Mogadishu (who also serves as the governor of Benadir because it covers the same geographic area as the city), launched a durable solutions policy for IDPs and established a Durable Solutions Unit within his office. At the time, he said, “Our vision is to ensure that all displaced people have access to secure housing and land tenure, employment, and critical infrastructure such as schools and hospitals where they live.”

At the federal level, the government has moved to improve coordination among ministries by establishing a Durable Solutions Secretariat (DSS) chaired by the Ministry of Planning. The DSS was launched in October 2019; its membership spans 14 government institutions, including the Office of the Prime Minister and the National Commission for Refugees and IDPs.

Two weeks later, in mid-November, the federal cabinet officially adopted a National Policy on Refugee Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons. Importantly, the policy promotes the government’s responsibility for facilitating durable solutions for IDPs and emphasizes the need to prevent forced evictions.

In fact, as a show of commitment to this end, the Cabinet adopted National Evictions Guidelines along with the new IDP policy. These guidelines lay out the conditions, safeguards, and process for legal evictions, all in line with international standards. Indeed, it is entirely appropriate for landowners to reclaim or repurpose their land; it is the forced and unplanned nature of the vast majority of evictions that has caused so much harm.

Both the IDP policy and the National Evictions Guidelines are underpinned by key international treaties and conventions, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the African Charter of Human and People’s Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

Significantly, at the end of November 2019, the Somali government ratified the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance for IDPs in Africa (known as the Kampala Convention). The president signed this convention following a near unanimous vote by the Somali parliament in support of ratification. It is a legally binding instrument that affirms the rights of IDPs in Africa. States

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18. Benadir is the name for the administrative region in southeastern Somalia that covers the same areas as the city of Mogadishu.
20. For more details, see the National Durable Solutions Secretariat’s Twitter page, @DSS_Somalia, https://twitter.com/DSS_Somalia.
This woman has been making scarves for 30 years to make a living in Mogadishu. She sells them in the local market and makes $1.50 for 30 scarves. Photo Credit: Refugees International.
that are parties to the Kampala Convention are required to adopt or amend legislation in line with its provisions.\(^4\)

This ratification is a remarkable shift from 2013, and Somalia is now being hailed as a positive example for the promotion of the rights of IDPs and their inclusion in national and local development efforts. UN leadership in Ethiopia has initiated plans for replicating the Somali experience to engage with the Ethiopian government on its approach to IDPs. There is a long way to go, however. As a senior government official stated at the DSS launch event, “This is just a first step of a thousand steps.”

**THE REALITY ON THE GROUND**

“What are the tangible improvements for IDPs? We don’t really see that.” – Donor representative

“Somalia is in an upward trajectory, but that hasn’t touched the average Somali. It’s all policy and politics.” – UN official

The Somali government and international actors supporting its efforts deserve praise for advancing durable solutions policies for IDPs. However, displaced people in Mogadishu—home to approximately half a million IDPs, the largest concentration of displaced people in Somalia and about 20 percent of all IDPs in the country—have not yet experienced concrete benefits.

As displaced people arrive in Mogadishu, they settle on available plots of private land throughout the city. Some sites house only a few households located on empty housing lots in the inner city. Other sites, especially on the outskirts of the city, are home to thousands of families. A recent assessment identified more than 700 IDP settlements throughout the city, but the exact number is constantly in flux.\(^5\)

Most settlements are controlled by “gatekeepers” who act as intermediaries between the IDPs and the international aid community. Individual gatekeepers can be connected to landowners, local officials, clan militias, or businessmen who seek to benefit from the aid industry in Mogadishu. Sometimes landowners themselves act as gatekeepers.

Such gatekeepers control access to displacement sites and demand rent from IDPs, often as a portion of whatever aid they receive. In return, some provide a modicum of security and protection, and facilitate aid delivery. Others are far more nefarious. As Refugees International has reported in the past, some gatekeepers treat IDPs as commodities for personal gain and even prevent some of them from returning home if their rent is in arrears.\(^6\) They are also known to sell and trade groups of displaced people among themselves to attract assistance or repurpose land, treating IDPs literally as commodities.\(^7\)

As land on which displaced people reside increases in value, landowners, through gatekeepers, have carried out many forced evictions, often violently—destroying shelters and requiring IDPs to seek refuge at new

26. “Gatekeepers and Evictions.”
sites or existing ones that have space. Most displaced people in Mogadishu now live on the outskirts of the city in very insecure areas that are difficult for aid workers to access consistently. Some are new arrivals, whereas others move to these areas because of evictions.

When a Refugees International team traveled to Mogadishu in October 2019, a number of displaced people told them that eviction was their greatest concern—even those residing on public land. According to a group of women who arrived in the early 1990s after fleeing drought and conflict in the Bay region of central Somalia, west of Mogadishu, “The problem we are fearing most is that the government will come and take our land.” Even though they had arrived many years ago, they said they still considered themselves to be “displaced” and not residents of Mogadishu. Indeed, they recounted that several months earlier, a group of unidentified soldiers showed up, beat up some of the residents, and threatened them with eviction.

So far in 2019, about 108,000 IDPs in Mogadishu were evicted from their land and shelters. This number is down from more than 200,000 in 2018, when evictions spiked, but demonstrates that much of the problem remains. In 2017, about 150,000 IDPs were evicted.

Others told Refugees International that their greatest need was having enough food each day. “I’m worried about how to get food,” said a woman who fled fighting in Lower Shabelle about eight months ago. She said she can make a small amount of money washing clothes. Others knit scarves to sell in local markets. However, most said that whatever income they could generate was insufficient.

As one woman said, “This morning, the children ate some leftovers from last night’s dinner. They have nothing for lunch and are hungry.”

According to the Famine Early Warning System Network, the Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate among displaced people in Mogadishu is at 16 percent—above the emergency threshold. The GAM rate is a measurement of nutritional status among children, used as an indicator to assess the severity of a humanitarian crisis. When the rate is above 15 percent, the situation is deemed critical. In Mogadishu, it has been critical for years. Although a lack of food is one contributing cause, experts told Refugees International that this consistently high rate is also partially the result of extremely poor and congested living conditions, as well as poor hygiene and sanitation. These factors promote disease and illness that can contribute to malnutrition. Also, many people are malnourished even before they arrive in Mogadishu. Further, when IDPs face forceable evictions and must relocate to a new site with no notice or planning, those being targeted by nutrition programs can become “lost” to aid agencies and disconnected from consistent support. Of course, theft of aid by gatekeepers, as well as the disruption of aid distribution and monitoring due to insecurity, are also significant factors.

The litany of needs for displaced people in Mogadishu goes on and on: limited access to basic health services; a rate of less than 30 percent of IDP children in school; poor shelters made of sticks and cloth that cannot withstand the rainy season; and a high risk of violence and abuse, including gender-based violence.

**THE WAY FORWARD**

**Improve the Immediate Response**

Providing aid in Mogadishu is an extremely dangerous and complex endeavor. There should be no illusions about the risks aid workers face. In 2018, the International Committee of the Red Cross, an organization adept at working in the world’s most difficult environments, dramatically reduced its operations in Mogadishu after a staff member was killed by a roadside bomb and another staff member was kidnapped. Just this month, in November 2019, Almaas Elman, a well-known aid worker and peace activist, was shot and killed near the airport in Mogadishu. Since 2013, UN humanitarian agencies have mostly based their offices in a compound at the airport secured by both AMISOM and UN troops, after their offices in the city were attacked.

Yet despite the challenges, the work continues. Although it will take time for the government’s durable solutions policies on land tenure and evictions (including slowly wresting control from harmful gatekeepers) to take effect, additional efforts must be made, where feasible, to improve the...
immediate humanitarian response for IDPs in Mogadishu.

As a first step, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), with support from donors, must dedicate increased resources for its IDP response efforts. Although many organizations assist IDPs, UNHCR is the key protection agency through its leadership of the Protection Cluster, a coordination body for humanitarian agencies. Two months ago, UNHCR headquarters launched a new policy for engaging in situations of internal displacement. The policy calls for country operations to become more “predictable and decisive” in IDP situations, and for a mobilization of appropriate resources to do so.33 Within Somalia, UNHCR is assisting 16,000 refugees and about 90,000 returned refugees, but there are 2.6 million IDPs in Somalia. Last year, however, the agency dedicated around $10 million of its $65 million expenditure to supporting those who have been internally displaced.34

Additional funds for IDPs would allow for the provision of more core relief items, such as tents and emergency shelters, pre-treated mosquito nets, and non-food item kits, especially for new arrivals or those whose shelters have been destroyed during evictions. It could also allow for hiring additional staff to monitor and report on protection violations while bolstering the work of the Protection Cluster, which UNHCR leads.

To this end, donors must maintain strong financial support for the overall humanitarian response. Although the government is asking donors to contribute to longer-term durable solutions initiatives, this effort should not be at the expense of funding ongoing emergency needs. For now, donors have heeded this call by providing 76 percent of the nearly $1.1 billion required for 2019—one of the best funded appeals in the world.35 This success is in large part thanks to the United States, which has provided more than half of the total amount. The U.S. Congress deserves praise for consistently appropriating significant amounts of humanitarian funding. Donors must sustain this support. The challenges are complex and difficult, but aid organizations need the appropriate funding to navigate those challenges—including paying for the necessary security measures.

Ultimately, however, a short-term humanitarian response does not and will not provide solutions for displaced people. Fortunately, the government and its international partners are moving in the right direction. The key is to build on this positive momentum and move toward robust implementation of durable solutions efforts—particularly those that support local integration for IDPs in protracted displacement.

Further, in moving forward to implement its new IDP policies and support long-term solutions, the government can also create a context in Mogadishu that enables a more effective emergency response by preventing evictions outside of the new guidelines and reducing the role of exploitative gatekeepers. As the relatively nascent government seeks to exert its governing authority and legitimacy, demonstrating that it can improve the situation for some of its most vulnerable citizens is a crucial step toward that end.

Implement the New Policies

The municipality of Mogadishu launched its IDP policy in January 2019. It was championed by then-Mayor Adbirahman

34. “Somalia” UNHCR Global Focus.
Omar Osman, who established a Durable Solutions Unit within his office. The policy provides guidance for addressing the IDP challenge in Mogadishu in a way that prioritizes the rights of displaced people and focuses on durable solutions through local integration.

Tragically, Mayor Osman was killed by a suicide bomber in August 2019. In the wake of this tragedy, his staff in the Durable Solutions Unit, under the leadership of a new mayor, are pressing ahead to promote the IDP policy and move forward with its implementation.

As discussed previously, one of the greatest challenges facing IDPs in Mogadishu is the risk of unlawful forced evictions. Further, the uncertainty of land tenure is a key obstacle to achieving longer-term solutions. The Mogadishu IDP policy acknowledges that landowners have a right to reclaim their property, but that “this should be carried out in a humane manner and adhere to the rule of law and should be guided by human rights principles.”

Thus far, the vast majority of evictions have been conducted with almost no warning, using force, and with no alternative locations for the displaced.

To its credit, the municipality of Mogadishu, supported by international partners, recently carried out an eviction risk assessment. It identified that only 6 percent of IDPs currently reside on public land. Therefore, engagement between local authorities and private landowners, as well as full and meaningful consultation with displaced people themselves, is essential to intervene and prevent unlawful evictions.

Further, with the likely advent of new development funding, there will be an opportunity for the government to purchase land that

37. “Mogadishu Eviction Risk Assessment.”
38. For extensive analysis on options going forward and the need for synergies between key stakeholders, see Walter...
then can be provided, with tenure, to IDPs. A paper by Dyfed Aubrey and Luciano Cardoso of UN-Habitat promotes the idea of land swaps; if the municipality acquires new plots of land, it can offer to trade them for private plots where IDPs currently reside and thus eliminate the need for displaced families to move.\(^{39}\)

This idea should be part of an effort to weaken the control and influence of settlement gatekeepers. Gatekeepers and their networks have flourished because local government has been absent on this issue. If the government engages with landowners directly, especially at the district commissioner level, and steps in as a true intermediary between humanitarian organizations and IDPs, it can slowly minimize the stranglehold of gatekeepers on the system.

To this end, local and federal authorities must work together more closely and support each other. Although there is a Durable Solutions Unit within the Mogadishu mayor’s office and a Durable Solutions Secretariat at the federal level, they appear to work more in parallel than in close collaboration. The secretariat provides a platform to coordinate the work of federal ministries, but more can be done to establish a clear coordination system between the federal and local levels. Such a system will help ensure that available development funding is used most effectively.

Fortunately, development actors are stepping forward with such support. For example, in early 2020, the World Bank is set to provide the government with $112 million in grants over the next five years for financing to improve urban infrastructure, aimed at

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benefitting both displaced people and the communities that host them in four urban centers, including Mogadishu. This effort is an expansion of a $9 million, two-city project that began in 2018. The project involves technical assistance and capacity building for local governments, such as the municipality of Mogadishu, to carry forward efforts to prevent forced evictions and improve land tenure security. One option is to issue occupancy permits agreed upon by a landowner and a displaced person, authorized by the city government. This option could also help limit extortion by gatekeepers.

**Development and Protection**

As development organizations increase their support to the government for durable solutions initiatives, they must sustain regular engagement with humanitarian protection actors to help ensure that the basic rights of displaced people are protected throughout the course of project implementation and beyond.

Regarding infrastructure support, the World Bank appears clear eyed about the need to mitigate forced evictions that “can be triggered by [development] investments and subsequent land price appreciation.” Globally, the World Bank’s efforts in this regard are guided by its Environmental and Social Framework, an extensive set of safeguards to protect against and respond to forced displacement resulting from project investments.

At the municipal level, the World Bank is establishing a project implementation unit within the local administration to help prevent evictions in the project area. This effort is laudable; nonetheless, given the prevalence of forced evictions and grave protection violations carried out against displaced people in Mogadishu, the World Bank and other development agencies should do more to collaborate with humanitarian protection actors to help guide their support for durable solutions.

One opportunity for this collaboration is through the Protection Cluster. The Protection Cluster, led by UNHCR, is the key body for coordinating analysis and response among humanitarian protection actors, including UN agencies and NGOs. Given this overlap of objectives, UNHCR should invite officials from development organizations, such as the World Bank, to Protection Cluster meetings on a periodic basis to share updates and analysis as projects move forward. Humanitarian actors may have information about potential evictions to which development actors are not privy, and vice versa.

Another option would be for the UN’s Human Rights and Protection Group, led by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, to convene a special forum that brings together humanitarian and development agencies to engage on protection issues. This initiative could be spearheaded by the UN’s Durable Solutions Unit, which is at the forefront in promoting collaboration between humanitarian and development actors. Ultimately, development institutions should es-

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44. “Solutions Analysis Update 2019.”
Establish and assert clear protection principles and context-specific safeguards to guide their work in IDP contexts.

Establishing solid protection guidance now is critical because support from development institutions is expected to increase in the years ahead. International creditors, through an International Monetary Fund (IMF)-led process, are poised to relieve the country’s $4.7 billion in external debt, possibly in early 2020. Most of the debt is the result of loans from donor governments such as the United States and United Kingdom, as well as from the IMF itself, made to the former regime of Siad Barre.

As long as it is saddled with this debt, the current government has limited resources to pursue development objectives, and international financial institutions and donor governments have placed restrictions on new financing. To become eligible for debt relief, the government has taken steps to increase its revenues, establish more transparent financial systems, and mitigate corruption. Once debt is relieved, international financial institutions are expected to provide larger and more predictable grants to the Somali government.

Ultimately, it is up to the Somali government, at both local and federal levels, to demonstrate that it can move forward to implement its policies and support its vulnerable citizens. With concrete progress, its policies aimed at preventing forced evictions and weakening the role of aid-diverting gatekeepers will not only promote durable solutions but also will create a more enabling environment for the effective delivery of assistance to those in immediate need. This moment is key for the government to demonstrate that it can make improvements for its people while garnering the legitimacy it seeks.

CONCLUSION

Usually the news from Somalia is persistently negative: famine, flooding, terrorism, pirates, and a never-ending civil war. Fortunately, there is some good news to report. Although 2.6 million Somalis—close to one-fifth of the population—are displaced internally, the government has made significant progress in establishing and adopting policies that promote durable solutions. The key now is to move from policy to practice in a way that leads to tangible improvements in people’s lives. Thus far, the people most affected have not seen these improvements. The government’s writ and capacity are weak, but development institutions, such as the World Bank, are increasing their support of the government’s capabilities to implement its new policies. Further, Somalia is expected to have access to more development financing once international creditors relieve the country’s external debt early in 2020. Somalis will continue to face acute emergencies in the years to come, but this moment presents an opportunity to draw down the humanitarian caseload by supporting solutions for those who have been displaced. The country’s new national policy on IDPs states that, “Somalia has a permanent system of government that takes responsibility for seeking and facilitating durable solutions for … IDPs in the country.” Now it is time to prove it.

47. “National Policy on Refugee Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons.”
ABOUT

THE

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ABOUT

REFUGEES

INTERNATIONAL

Refugees International advocates for lifesaving assistance and protection for displaced people and promotes solutions to displacement crises around the world. We do not accept any government or UN funding, ensuring the independence and credibility of our work.