

WEBINAR SUMMARY REPORT

Treaty on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters and Disaster Displacement

Thursday 2 July 2026 | 13:30-15:00 CEST | Virtual

1. Overview, Background and Purpose

On 2 July 2026, the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD), the Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law (Kaldor Centre) and the South American Network for Environmental Migrations (RESAMA), in collaboration with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), convened a virtual webinar on the proposed Treaty on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters (PPED Treaty). The event brought together more than 65 participants from the PDD Advisory Committee, United Nations (UN) and international organisations, academia, civil society and a range of other practitioners and stakeholder groups.

In 2024, the UN General Assembly decided to elaborate and conclude a legally binding treaty by the end of 2027, based on the International Law Commission's 2016 Draft Articles on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters ([ILC 2016 Draft Articles](#)). The proposed PPED Treaty aims to strengthen international cooperation, clarify the responsibilities of States and other relevant actors, and enhance the protection of persons affected by disasters.

Since the decision to [elaborate a treaty](#), States and stakeholders have held discussions and submitted written proposals to refine the draft text. States were invited to submit [proposals for amendments](#) by the end of 2025, which were subsequently considered during a session of the dedicated [Working Group of the Sixth Committee](#) in early April 2026. This meeting established a second deadline of 15 May 2026 for additional submissions. While States may continue to submit proposals beyond this second deadline, a consolidated [compilation of submissions](#) received by the end of 2025 is now available. A [second compilation](#), incorporating proposals received by 15 May 2026, is now also available. As of June 2026, 45 submissions had been received, including several joint submissions from groups of States.

The next milestone is a Preparatory Committee meeting, scheduled to take place in New York from 31 August to 4 September 2026. The meeting will establish the modalities and procedures for the Diplomatic Conference expected to occur in early 2027, where the PPED Treaty will be negotiated and, potentially, adopted.

Considering these developments, the webinar was convened as a follow-up to the [Technical Briefing](#) hosted by PDD and the Kaldor Centre in collaboration with IFRC in March 2026. The webinar aimed to provide an overview and update on the status of the PPED Treaty process and anticipated next steps, while exploring the treaty's scope, opportunities and key considerations for international cooperation. Particular attention was given to the treatment of displacement and the protection of displaced persons in the evolving draft text, and the implications of these issues for disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

Ms. Natalia Bolaños Espinosa, Minister Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the UN in Geneva and Chair of the PDD, opened the webinar. The session was co-moderated by **Mr. Atle Solberg** from the PDD Secretariat and **Ms. Sanjula Weerasinghe** from the Kaldor Centre and featured presentations by technical experts followed by a question-and-answer exchange with participants.

2. Key Insights

The webinar:

- provided an overview of State submissions as well as a discussion of the roles of the Core Group of Member States and the Bureau in guiding and facilitating the PPED Treaty process
- underscored the importance of, and strong interest among participants in, staying informed about the scope, status, timeline and latest developments relating to the PPED Treaty process
- explored the reasons for, and opportunities to, explicitly integrate references to displacement, evacuations and planned relocation within the PPED Treaty text, and highlighted State submissions relating to displacement
- explored challenges relating to the participation of, and consultation with, disaster-affected populations, grassroots communities and civil society organisations in intergovernmental processes, emphasising the need for more inclusive and accessible mechanisms for engagement
- emphasised protection gaps and challenges across the disaster management cycle, including the distinct vulnerabilities and protection needs of non-citizens, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other vulnerable and marginalised groups
- identified avenues for continued engagement, information-sharing and advocacy as the PPED Treaty process moves forward

3. Summary of Presentations and Exchange

In her opening remarks, **Ms. Natalia Bolaños Espinosa**, Minister Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the UN in Geneva and the Chair of the PDD, highlighted the growing human and economic impacts of disasters linked to natural hazards, noting that these effects are increasing in the context of global warming. She explained that the number of people affected by disasters has increased significantly over the past decade and drew attention to recent data from the [International Displacement Monitoring Centre \(IDMC\) on disaster displacement](#). Ms. Bolaños Espinosa reaffirmed Costa Rica's welcoming of the decision by the UN General Assembly to elaborate and conclude a legally binding treaty based on the ILC 2016 Draft Articles. She emphasised that strengthening the protection of persons in the event of disasters, including those who are displaced or at risk of displacement, is a central objective and strategic priority of the PDD.

In her presentation, **Ms. Martina Müller**, Programme Manager, Partnerships, UNDRR, New York Liaison Office, provided a comprehensive process update, noting that the discussion around an instrument of international law on the protection of persons in the event of disasters started in the wake of the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami in December 2004. She noted that the ILC 2016 Draft Articles also target issues such as the legal protections for humanitarian personnel and the facilitation of external assistance, including customs requirements and the granting of visas for relief personnel. She emphasized that it is very important that the ILC decided to include provisions on disaster risk reduction alongside response and relief. She noted that the treaty provides a unique opportunity to enshrine disaster risk reduction into international law. She reported that the UN has received 45 submissions from Member States as of June 2026

Dr. Reece da Costa, Disaster Law Senior Officer for Africa, IFRC, presented the perspective of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement on the proposed PPED Treaty. He observed that disaster response frameworks must continue to adapt to the increasing frequency and complexity of disasters and the growing number and diversity of actors involved. Drawing on experiences from Africa, he highlighted the importance of strengthening international cooperation and legal preparedness to facilitate timely, coordinated and effective disaster response, while also supporting the full disaster risk management continuum. Dr. da Costa emphasised that the proposed PPED Treaty provides an opportunity to strengthen both international cooperation and national legal and policy frameworks for disaster risk management by promoting greater legal certainty and clearer institutional responsibilities. Turning to institutional roles, he explained the importance of recognising the auxiliary role of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies within the treaty, reflecting their unique mandate to support public authorities before, during and after disasters. Reflecting on the outcomes of the pre-negotiations held in New York in April 2026, Dr. da Costa noted the broad support among States for progressing the treaty negotiations and highlighted several recurring themes that emerged during the discussions, including the scope of the Treaty, the importance of international cooperation, respect for State sovereignty, and the need for practical implementation arrangements. Looking ahead to implementation and assuming that the PPED Treaty is adopted, he noted that the IFRC has proposed serving as the Treaty's technical advisory body, drawing on its longstanding expertise in disaster law, legislative strengthening and support to States in implementing international disaster-related legal frameworks.

Professor Jane McAdam, Director, Evacuations Research Hub, Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, UNSW Sydney, focused on the treatment of displacement within the proposed PPED Treaty. She noted that disasters are a major trigger of internal displacement, accounting for approximately 46 million or almost 70 per cent of all new internal displacements globally in 2024. Despite this, she noted that displacement is barely mentioned in the PPED Treaty text, appearing only as an element in the definition of a 'disaster' under Article 3. She explained that this limited reference could disappear entirely if States decide to revise the definition during negotiations. Drawing on recommendations from a Kaldor Centre Policy Brief, Resource Brief and remarks at earlier technical briefings, she outlined several proposals for strengthening the recognition of displacement within the PPED Treaty. First, she suggested that displacement be acknowledged explicitly in the preamble, either through the addition of a new recital or by revising an existing provision to refer directly to the displacement of people from their homes. She recommended that Article 5 should more clearly promote a rights-based approach by expressly recognising and foregrounding the needs and rights of displaced people. Turning to international cooperation, Professor McAdam highlighted opportunities to strengthen Article 8 by recognising that assistance between States could include support for evacuations and measures to facilitate cross-border movement during disasters, such as through access to humanitarian or protection visas. Finally, she proposed that Article 9(2) should explicitly recognise evacuations and planned relocations as disaster risk reduction measures. In explaining each of these points, Professor McAdam also shared insights on which States and other actors have supported the approaches proposed.

Dr. Erika Pires Ramos, Founder, South American Network for Environmental Migrations (RESAMA), focused her intervention on civil society participation and access to information within the PPED Treaty process. While noting that the process is frequently described as people-centred, she highlighted a significant gap in the participation of the people directly affected by disasters. She explained that affected populations across urban, rural and indigenous contexts have diverse

experiences, needs and priorities, yet often lack awareness of, or opportunities to engage with, international legal processes of this nature. Dr. Pires Ramos further observed that discussions and proposals advanced by Latin American States have focused heavily on disaster response within the disaster management cycle. While recognising the importance of these efforts, she argued that the PPED Treaty process does not sufficiently reflect the voices, perspectives and meaningful participation of disaster-affected persons. She emphasised the need for more inclusive and accessible mechanisms to ensure that those most directly impacted by disasters can contribute to shaping the PPED Treaty and informing its implementation.

Ms. Amali Tower, Founder and Executive Director, [Climate Refugees](#), stressed the importance of wider civil society participation and the inclusion of people with lived experience in the PPED Treaty process. Noting the global scale of displacement and that most displaced people live in countries highly exposed and vulnerable to disaster and climate risks. She argued that affected people should have a stronger voice in shaping the PPED Treaty. Drawing on an example from the informal urban settlement of Kibera in Nairobi, Kenya, documented in the report “[Climate Change is Controlling Everything, Let Them Compensate Us](#)”, she described how Kibera residents organised their own disaster risk reduction programming, establishing the *Weather Mtaani Leaders* initiative to translate and disseminate weather warnings in locally accessible language, helping to reduce disaster impacts and repeat displacement. She highlighted how the communities’ lived experiences with frequent disasters was the catalyst that identified the gaps in information and disaster preparedness, and urged States and other stakeholders to draw on the expertise of communities in the treaty negotiations and highlighted the willingness of civil society groups such as the Climate Migration and Displacement Platform (CMDP), the Advisory Group on Human Mobility, and RESAMA, to support more inclusive engagement with disaster affected people and communities.

Professor Walter Kaelin, Envoy of the Chair of the PDD, noted that the original ILC 2016 Draft Articles are very general and focus mostly on international cooperation, which is an important precondition but not always enough to provide protection to people. He added that drawing on the knowledge and experience of States, civil society, and affected communities about what it means in practice to protect people in specific disaster situations has been essential to making the provisions more relevant and effective. He identified a gap in the current text regarding the recovery phase of the full disaster cycle. To achieve policy coherence, he advanced the PDD’s toolbox approach, which promotes integration across different tools and policy instruments and across the disaster cycle: helping people to stay by including disaster risk reduction into a legally binding obligation under Article 9; helping people to move out of harm’s way by mentioning evacuations and anticipatory planned relocations in the treaty; and ensuring humanitarian assistance and protection as well as solutions for those who are already displaced (i.e. IDPs).

Following the panel presentations, and during the question-and-answer session, participants raised the following themes:

- Participation and inclusion of persons with lived experience of displacement in the PPED Treaty process
- Accreditation of civil society organisations and other stakeholders at the Diplomatic Conference
- The work and deliberations of the Core Group of Member States and the 10-member Bureau
- The status of written submissions and how late submissions by States will be considered in compilation documents and during the PPED Treaty negotiations
- The scope of the PPED Treaty and whether it covers non-citizens, including migrants

4. Additional Resources

- UN Sixth Committee, Main Repository for Diplomatic Conference Material:
<https://legal.un.org/diplomaticconferences/pped/>
- IFRC, Global Hub for the PPED Treaty Campaign & Interactive Dashboards:
<https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/PPEDTreaty>
- Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, resource portal on the PPED Treaty:
<https://www.unsw.edu.au/kaldor-centre/our-resources/legal-and-policy-resources/commentaries/incorporating-displacement-into-treaty-protection-persons-event-disasters>
- Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, Policy Brief 17: Foregrounding Displacement and Evacuations in the Proposed PPED Treaty (2025):
https://www.unsw.edu.au/content/dam/pdfs/law/kaldor/2025-05-policy-brief-foregrounding-displacement-treaty.pdf?mc_cid=609317b213&mc_eid=UNIQID
- Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, Resource Brief: Incorporating Displacement into PPED Treaty (2026)
<https://www.unsw.edu.au/content/dam/pdfs/law/kaldor/resources/2026-05-incorporating-displacement-into-PPED-treaty.pdf>

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