

# LEAVING PLACE, RESTORING HOME

## ENHANCING THE EVIDENCE BASE ON PLANNED RELOCATION CASES IN THE CONTEXT OF HAZARDS, DISASTERS, AND CLIMATE CHANGE



PLATFORM  
ON DISASTER  
DISPLACEMENT

FOLLOW-UP TO THE NANSEN INITIATIVE



UNSW  
SYDNEY



Kaldor Centre for  
International  
Refugee Law



IOM  
UN MIGRATION



Deutsche Gesellschaft  
für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

The Leaving Place, Restoring Home studies have identified over 400 cases of planned relocation across the globe. What are the characteristics of planned relocation, and the opportunities and challenges associated with it? In what ways can it support durable solutions for people vulnerable to disasters and climate change? What can the Leaving Place, Restoring Home studies add to our understanding of planned relocation?

### DEFINING PLANNED RELOCATION

When people are vulnerable to the impacts of disasters, planned relocation can be used to move them out of harm's way and reduce the likelihood of displacement. Planned relocation is recognized in policy and practice as a tool for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. It is also considered one possible durable solution to displacement, in situations where return is not feasible. However, the process can undermine socio-economic prosperity and cultural practices, with implications for human rights and human security. Planned relocation is therefore generally considered as a measure of last resort.

The process of identifying planned relocation cases is challenging because the term is not defined under international law, views on its key elements differ, and there are diverse manifestations of planned relocation in practice. This results in knowledge and data gaps on effective planned relocation practices.

The Leaving Place, Restoring Home studies conceptualize planned relocation through six interrelated characteristics: the planned, permanent movement of a group of people from identifiable origin(s) to identifiable destination(s), predominantly in association with one or more hydrometeorological, geophysical/geological, or environmental hazard(s).

THE 2015 NANSSEN INITIATIVE Agenda for the protection of cross-border displaced persons in the context of disasters and climate change views planned relocation as a “planned process in which persons or groups of persons move or are assisted to move away from their homes or places of temporary residence, are settled in a new location, and provided with the conditions for rebuilding their lives. Planned relocation can be voluntary or involuntary, and usually takes place within the country, but may, in very exceptional cases, also occur across State borders”.

For more definitions, consult the 2015 Guidance on Protecting People from Disasters and Environmental Change through Planned Relocation by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Brookings Institute, and Georgetown University; and Resolution 6/2018 from the 78th Conference of the International Law Association.

## FINDINGS FROM THE STUDIES “LEAVING PLACE, RESTORING HOME”

- 1 Planned relocation is a global phenomenon.** Identified cases occur in over 78 countries and territories, with a large proportion found in Asia.
- 2 Many planned relocation cases occur in multi-hazard contexts.** It is often the combined harms or risks of multiple hazards across time that contribute to a relocation decision.
- 3 Many planned relocation cases are ongoing, years after they have begun.** This underscores the complex nature of such processes, and the long duration of time required in some cases.
- 4 Most planned relocation cases involve a single origin to a single destination site.** However, other cases involve diverse spatial patterns, comprising single or multiple origin and destination sites.
- 5 Iterative and concerted efforts are necessary to monitor and synthesize data** on planned relocation cases and their characteristics to enhance and update the available evidence.
- 6 Maintaining a robust and up-to-date database of planned relocation cases,** their characteristics, and scale, will allow policymakers and practitioners to improve understanding of the phenomena, and assess the circumstances of diverse cases.
- 7 Determining which characteristics of planned relocation cases** are associated with more positive outcomes for relocated persons, and generating further refined understandings of effective practice and lessons learned, is necessary to enable policymakers and practitioners to minimize harms to affected people and promote and protect their human rights and dignity.

## THE RESEARCH IN CONTEXT

Attention to planned relocation in normative and policy instruments has increased since it was included alongside displacement and migration in the 2010 Cancun Adaptation Framework. The Platform on Disaster Displacement, the Andrew & Renata Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law at the University of New South Wales, the International Organization for Migration and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH have commissioned a complementary set of studies aiming at enhancing the evidence base on planned relocation in order to support more informed research, policy and practice.

This set of studies also supports the implementation of the 2019-2021 Plan of Action of the Task Force on Displacement under the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

*Leaving Place, Restoring Home I & II* is a compilation of planned relocation cases identified from English, French, Spanish and Portuguese peer-reviewed scholarly articles and grey literature, and provides:

- A unique, open-access, [global dataset](#) comprising over 400 cases of planned relocation.
- An in-depth examination in [Leaving Place, Restoring Home I](#), drawing from English-language literature, of 34 cases across different continents to analyze context and design characteristics of planned relocation.
- Further evidence in [Leaving Place, Restoring Home II](#), drawing from French-, Spanish- and Portuguese-language literature, of planned relocation practices including a detailed examination of 7 cases in West Africa.
- A foundation for future efforts to augment knowledge and data on planned relocation, and to promote approaches to policy and practice that mitigate risk and protect people from harm.

