

Evacuation of IDPs in Port-au-Prince: Protection – Key Issues and Options

Seven sites in Port-au-Prince with an estimated total population of 250,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been identified, where some or all of the inhabitants face an imminent physical risk when the rainy season commences in late April/May. According to the latest planning figures, it is envisaged to evacuate 37,000 IDPs from these sites in the next weeks, with more people being relocated at a later point in time. It is planned to conclude the evacuation process by 15 April, which assumes a timely engagement by all actors, including the Government, which has to assume the primary responsibility for the process.

From a protection perspective, several issues are worth highlighting:

1. **Limitations of an emergency evacuation.** The timeframe allows for compliance with the minimum requirements of an emergency evacuation, but not those of a more permanent relocation. The operation should therefore be limited to strictly necessary emergency evacuations, targeting those sites (or sections thereof) where the gravity, probability and imminence of the risk is highest.

In the destination sites, applicable SPHERE and CCCM toolkit standards may only be progressively reached. All efforts have to be made so that IDPs can enjoy living conditions and livelihood opportunities that are at least equal to the site of origin, including by ensuring that IDPs can take all their remaining movable property along.

Providing information to the IDPs and the resident population living around the evacuation sites is crucial. “Go and see” visits are strongly recommended: A scenario, where IDPs are asked to move to a peri-urban location not seen in advance by community representatives may result in planning deficiencies and communities resisting evacuation.

2. **Durable solutions perspective.** Most of the people evacuated will not be able to find durable solutions without sustained support. Experience from previous disasters in Haiti shows that protracted displacement and long-term aid dependency in evacuation sites is a risk. The Government and its partners should assume clear commitments to fully integrate evacuated IDPs in reconstruction and reintegration programmes. To the extent possible, sites should be selected and designed so that they can be gradually upgraded and can eventually provide a basis for durable solution through local integration at the site.
3. **Voluntariness of evacuations.** The Government must issue a decree ordering the evacuation and lead the campaign sensitize the habitants about the risks. Given the

limited time to prepare evacuation sites and convince affected communities of the necessity to move, part of the population may still refuse to evacuate. International law permits forced evacuations, if they are based on law (i.e. a Government decree), are carried out without discrimination and are absolutely necessary to protect life, physical integrity and health. MINUSTAH may be confronted with a Government request to provide operational support to the Haitian National Police in restoring and maintaining public safety in line with the Mission's mandate.

Non-use of force should be agreed in advance between the Government and United Nations. As an alternative to the use of physical force, non-life saving assistance could be systematically relocated from high risk areas to safe areas, while measures are taken to systematically deconstruct shelter left behind and prevent people from moving into the risk site.

The Government and MINUSTAH also have to jointly plan for the contingency of violent unrest aimed at disrupting the evacuation process.

4. **Security during and after the move.** Existing social problems, including sexual and other gender-based violence, abuse and exploitation of children and general criminal activity, will migrate with the evacuated communities. Protection-conscious transport arrangements and site planning to ensure family unity and protect vulnerable groups can mitigate these problems. A permanent co-location of the Haitian National Police and UNPOL at destination sites is recommended. Communities who lived together before the earthquake should be grouped together to maintain social protection mechanisms and limit displacement trauma. Destination sites should be evaluated for physical and social risk factors by joint teams composed of Government, military, humanitarian and protection actors.
5. **Monitoring, analysis and reporting.** An evacuation operation of the scale envisaged calls for systematic protection monitoring at the sites of origin and destination to identify concerns. Mechanisms for real-time analysis should be set up to make necessary adjustments as the operation proceeds.

Furthermore, a process to track the evacuated population and monitor their progress towards durable solutions (based on agreed interim benchmarks with timelines) should be agreed in advance between the Government and partners.

Without being exhaustive, the attached table provides a list of protection measures that should be adopted prior to, during and after the evacuation. MINUSTAH Human Rights would be pleased to work with the Government, which has the primary responsibility to protect and assist IDPs, and other lead actors in the Coordination Support Committee (CSC) to integrate these measures into operational plans.

Protection measures in the context of IDP evacuation

In the context of natural disasters, States and the humanitarian actors assisting them should first and foremost seek to **protect on site**, but individuals and communities facing a serious risk for the life, physical integrity or health. However, where **such measures would be in persons** should be allowed and assisted to leave the danger zone and, to the extent that they cannot do so on their own, **endangered persons in danger zone by using all available means**. *IASC Operational Guidelines on Human Rights and Natural Disasters ("IASC Guidelines")*

Preparedness

Steps	Main principle	Practical implications Possible options
Basis for the evacuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Everyone enjoys freedom of movement and residence. - Evacuations must be based on law as a measure of last resort to protect the life, physical integrity or health of populations at risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert risk assessments also for sites of destination, inc. social, non-physical risks. • Government of Haiti has to issue a decree ordering the evacuation of defined sites in accordance with national law • Disaster risk reduction measures to avoid evacuation for as many as possible. • Minimize evacuation to peri-urban areas; offer attractive alternatives in line with the order of priority defined by the CCCM cluster (assisted return and evacuation to proximity sites, host family arrangements). • Start campaigns to sensitize IDPs about risks • Decentralize provision of aid towards return areas • Use of infrastructure essential for upholding social and economic rights (e.g. schools designated as hurricane shelters) for longer-term evacuation should be avoided.
Voluntariness	<p>The move should be voluntary</p> <p>Those evacuated have the right to make an informed (see information and consultation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement GVT and UN that no force will be used • Assistance that is not life-saving could be relocated to safe areas and population informed accordingly

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and voluntary choice for one of the planned evacuation options offered or opt to go elsewhere using their own means

Prioritization of sites and population Evacuations have to be based on protection consideration. The gravity, probability and imminence of the risk determine

Evacuations must be conducted without discrimination, but taking into account vulnerability.

Unity of families and communities Families (as understood in the local cultural context) must not be separated.

For protection purposes, communities should stay together. Community Unity

Registration of vulnerable groups

- Measures to prevent people from moving back into evacuated site (cordonning of, warning signs, deconstruction of shelter)
- Contingency planning: need to plan for non-violent crowd control measures in case of unrest!
- Protection-based order of priority: IDPs in sites with the greatest physical risk should be evacuated first.
- Within larger sites, populations in sections facing particular risks have to be evacuated first.
- Consider starting with smaller sites.
- Prioritize receiving sites that are closest to departure sites
- Within a site priority should be given to, families with vulnerable members, including pregnant women, families with babies, persons with disabilities, people who are seriously ill or injured, unaccompanied minors, female-headed households
- Registration by family
- Planning of transport arrangement to avoid family separation (see below)
- Map where and how family separations are most likely to occur and plan to post NGO partners there to carry out preventive work
- Encourage parents to bring all their children back from child care institutions, surrounding streets, temporary care situations, and hospitals (if they are ready for discharge) and support them in doing so.
- Support parents of children who remain in medical care in preserving contact with them during and following relocation.
- Prepare Emergency Registration Forms and database for separated children
- Registration of IDPs to include community of origin
- Space allocation at the destination site by community of origin
- Registration to include break down by age, gender and vulnerabilities such as disabilities, chronic illness, etc.

**Information and
consultation and
voluntary
character of
process**

Evacuees need to be informed and, to the extent that time permits, consulted on the evacuation process and available options.

- Information campaign, visibly led by GoH on key issues, including:
- reason for evacuation / risk sensitization
- timeline
- different evacuation alternatives available, including option to evacuate this site and find alternative on their own
- what and how long assistance will be available
- services and security arrangements at destination
- transport modalities, including for belongings
- ways to promote security, and prevent sexual violence, unnecessary trauma, children's loss of identity and risk of separation
- respective responsibilities of Government and UN actors
- Information in Kreyol through hotlines, public broadcast, announcements at assistance distributions etc.
- Involvement of local authorities, community leaders
- Informational "go and see" visits for IDPs (inclusive delegations: men, women, persons with special needs) led by GVT with participation of UN, local authorities and resident population in/around destination sites
- Repeat basic information (departure time, arrangements, things to bring for the move like water) on the day before the move

Movement and Reception at Destination Site

Property

IDPs should be able to take their property.

- IDPs should be able to take all movable property along, including shelter materials, domestic animals and commercial belongings.

Transport

Security of movement of people and their belongings has to be ensured

- Early start to allow for reception and installation before dark
- Staging spaces for people to gather before boarding vehicles
- Manifests to be checked against registration and at arrival
- Tagging of property not with owner
- Train logistics personnel in ways to ensure that boarding trucks for resettlement does not become

violent, rushed, or disorderly, and to ask families if they have all their children with them.

- Adequate presence of PNH and UNPOL at site of origin and destination site, including standby force to deal with contingencies
- No gender imbalances on vehicles. If possible, women only busses for women and girls travelling alone
- Ensure that single women/girls travelling alone are in female-only trucks/buses or with secure families.
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- Families should travel at the same time and, if possible, on the same vehicle
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- Verify that everyone who boards a truck does so with their all their children/members of their household
- Measures to avoid separation of children:
- Identification tags for babies and small children
- children memorize their name, name of parents/ caregiver & no of caregiver
- Special transport arrangements for pregnant women (+6months), persons with disabilities or serious injuries
- Move should start early in the morning 5-6am to allow for reception and set-up in daylight
- Reception area in the shade
- Check manifest against registration list
- Refer separated children to agencies/child protection teams working with separated children;
- Look out for potential separations and identify and immediately register newly separated children.
 - Ensure that pre-printed registration forms are available and that staff are trained in filling them thoroughly
 - Ensure that girls and women have immediate access to emergency medical services, and dignity kits containing lights and whistles upon arrival.
 - Distribute referral cards for GBV or other cases of violent crime to all adults.
 - Government officials/local authorities (other than PNH) should be present and assume responsibility for resolution of conflicts; PNH and UNPOL also has to be present
 - Water, medical facilities available

Families to stay together

Protection of women and persons with special needs

Reception

Property and possessions

IDPs must be able to take all their remaining movable property with them

- Means of communication (megaphones) available
- Register of IDPs would like to take bulky property (incl. shelter materials) or domestic animals along
- Transport planners to allocate sufficient space for property and tagging system to match property with owner upon arrival
- Allocate space to keep families and, to the extent possible, communities together
- Provide variety of tents to accommodate families of different sizes; one family per tent
- Arrange shelters and designate plots to ensure that single women and women/child-headed households are secure in their surroundings, either through increased security and dedicated “neighborhoods” for vulnerable groups or through community protection mechanisms
- Formally register statement on what land was occupied by affected persons at the time of the earthquake

Allocation of space

Immovable Property and possessions should be protected against destruction and arbitrary and illegal appropriation, occupation or use

Beyond arrival

Security

IDPs and host communities must be protected against all forms of violence and exploitation. Disaster risk reduction measures

- Permanent co-location of PNH and UNPOL at new sites
- Protection-conscious site planning (medical and sanitation facilities, child friendly spaces, community meeting space etc. – placed in well-lit and secure areas)
- Ensure that all latrines and bathing areas are gender-segregated and have proper lighting, adequate privacy, and full-time security personnel.
- Non-discrimination between IDPs and resident population. Include host population in planned assistance programmes and public services
- Identify or provide hurricane proof safe havens in destination sites
- Referral and protection system for GBV cases, incl. medical and psychosocial care, space for physical protection

	<p>Use of existing social protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures to prevent moves into site of origin (deconstruction of site; warning signs, police presence, etc.) • Initiate democratic, transparent process to create self-governance structures (“committees”) in new sites. Ensure gender equity in the committees • Allocate space based on pre-existing community structures • Involve community leaders and local authorities to address perceived insecurity, including superstitions. • Plan sites to allow for upgrades and gradual introduction of additional services. • Prioritize “cash for work” in new sites, in particular to improve site standards, until sustainable livelihood opportunities emerge • Identify or build hurricane proof safe havens in evacuation sites. • Periodic reporting on whether agreed benchmarks have been achieved within timelines • tents for early childhood development, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers, •
<p>Minimum standards</p>	<p>Minimum humanitarian standards as defined by the SPHERE and the CCCM toolkit should be progressively ensured.</p>	
<p>Relationship with resident population around destination sites (Host communities)</p>	<p>Access to essential medical care</p> <p>Information and consultation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish links between existing service providers in affected IDP camps and those who will be providing new service to ensure that medical and psychosocial treatments are not interrupted • Govt should inform local communities and authorities about reasons for evacuation, numbers and origin of persons, services to be provided to IDPs and residents • Hold discussions with representatives of the host community and individuals of different ages, sex and backgrounds to ascertain whether the host community accepts the settlement of the evacuees. • Organize regular meetings between representatives IDPs, residents and local authorities, also as a space for dispute resolution

IDPs have a right to a durable solution and
Durable Solutions can choose whether to return, locally
integrate or settle elsewhere in the country

- The move will have to be part of a wider plan to provide durable solutions for evacuees. This planning, based on the PDNA, should start now, although it does not need to go at the same rhythm nor with the same priority.. Full Government buy-in is necessary.
- The benchmarks established by the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the IASC Framework for Durable Solutions for IDPs will need to be applied and respected. Mere reconstruction of destroyed houses is not enough to achieve a durable solution.
- Formal acknowledgement by all actors that evacuations are a temporary measures and a durable solutions still necessary.
- Long-term tracking, monitoring and public reporting mechanisms until durable solutions are achieved.
- Give priority to evacuation sites where the elements of durable solutions (including livelihood opportunities) can be achieved through local integration for those who choose to stay in the area.