



Statement of Principles

The Women's Regional Network Summit on Forced Displacement and Gender in South Asia (the Summit) brought together the voices and experiences of women and men from South Asia and across the globe to address human rights and humanitarian issues and the urgent need for durable solutions.

The majority of the world's refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are women and girls. They are displaced due to conflict, militarization, predatory development and natural disasters. Primarily, there must be concerted efforts to prevent forced displacement, maintain peace and justice, and effectively address the causes of forced displacement. Forced displacement must not be used as part of a strategy to drive conflict further.

There must be a shared humanitarian and political response to the forced displacement crisis, based on their fundamental human and legal rights. International treaties, legal frameworks and guidelines¹ exist to address the rights of displaced persons and must be fully implemented. Governments, national and international, corporates and civil society are accountable to prevent and resolve forced displacement crisis. The right not to be displaced must be recognized.

Situations of forced displacement exacerbate the existing gender inequality vulnerabilities, including sexual and gender based violence across the entire displacement cycle.

Governments, global organizations, and civil society must do substantially more to ensure that women refugees and IDPs fully participate in decisions that impact their lives and rights. The lived experience of displaced women/ girls brings an informed analysis to the challenges facing their families and communities. Their wisdom and knowledge must shape law and policy formulation and implementation.

At the close of the Kuala Lumpur Summit, we issue this statement of principles:

1. There must be a commitment to conflict prevention, peaceful conflict resolution and to not use forced displacement as a strategy to drive conflict.
2. Women's participation must be ensured in every stage of the displacement cycle; they must be visible and heard in every forum and participate equally in all decisions that affect their lives.
3. A gender analysis of existing legal frameworks, policies, program interventions, and investments is critical to ensure justice for women and girls, as well as the integration of a gender perspective into the formulation of policies and programs.
4. Strong legal frameworks, addressing the issues faced by women and girls, and gender-equal implementation of those frameworks, are foundational. Legal frameworks must be increasingly adaptable to meet the complex economic, social, and political dynamics that drive displacement.
5. Accountability and addressing impunity at every stage of the displacement process, in particular for the ongoing epidemic of rape and other forms of and sexual and GBV, must be a priority.

¹These include, but are not limited to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); the Geneva Convention (1949) and related protocols; the Conventions and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951 and 1967); the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966); the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966); the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (1980); UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998); UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and its progeny; the Pinheiro Principles (2005); and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (2018).