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**A TEST**

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Human security is a human right; it refers to the security of people and communities, as opposed to the security of states. Human security recognises that there are several dimensions related to feeling safe, such as freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom from indignity. **A people-centred approach** to security has implications for how we carry out and understand conflict assessment, programme planning, implementation, and evaluation of peacebuilding initiatives.

Internally displaced persons (IDPs), according to the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, are "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border." This, however, is a descriptive definition, which does not confer a special legal status because IDPs, being inside their country, remain entitled to all the rights and guarantees as citizens and other habitual residents of their country. As such, national authorities have the primary responsibility to prevent forced displacement and to protect IDPs.

IDPs, like other civilians at risk, develop their own strategies to reduce exposure to, and mitigate the effects of, protection risks. Such coping mechanisms are based on local knowledge and build upon existing capacities and resources within the displaced community, as well as the host communities. Experience has shown that for protection efforts to be effective and sustainable, they must be designed to recognize, support and strengthen the protection capacities of individuals and communities themselves. A community-based approach is a way of working that: ensures that women, men, girls and boys of all ages and diverse backgrounds are regarded and engaged as active partners in all aspects of our work; recognizes their resilience, capacities and resources; and mobilizes and builds on the capacities of communities to enhance their own protection. By recognizing that all members of the community are active participants in decision making, a community-based approach reinforces the dignity and self-esteem of people and promotes their empowerment. People are empowered when they are able to become informed and active agents in addressing their own situation. This way of working requires a thorough understanding of the context of displacement, including the socio-economic context, gender roles, and power dynamics within the community as well as the role of other actors, such as armed groups or the host population. It seeks to understand the community’s protection concerns and priorities and to identify its existing capacities to access and enjoy human rights. I

Human security is concerned with two basic human entitlements, namely the freedom from want (developmental security pillar) and the freedom from fear (protective security pillar). These two pillars are framed by the right to live in dignity. In general, it can be said that human security emphasises the protection of individuals qua persons (and not qua citizens) from chronic and sudden threats and the safeguarding of their survival, livelihood, and dignity when faced with these threats. Thus, it is an ideal conceptual framework for analysing which of the seven human security dimensions influence the locational decision-making of refugees (be they “traditional” or internally displaced refugees), exemplified here by internally displaced environmental refugees. This is done by constructing a unique micro-level human security index (HSI) on the basis of the aforementioned security dimensions.

IDPs who flee their homesteads due to marked environmental disruptions often want to return once the state of human security has improved, especially if this is supported by the respective Government. In the case of Cameroon, however, to date returning to the Lake Nyos region is still legally prohibited. This is because of the particular natural hazard, namely the possibility of another suffocating gas emission from Lake Nyos, and in spite of Government efforts to reduce this risk by setting up pipes to extract, in a controlled way, the dissolved carbon dioxide from the lake. Another potential risk is the breaking of the natural dam (about 40 m high, having a width of 45 m at its narrowest point), which was a result of the volcanic eruption and which consists of pyroclastic material. If the dam were to collapse, it could lead to devastating floods that could affect a downstream area as far as Nigeria, 100 km away. Yet, around 20 per cent of the households that were originally displaced by the Lake Nyos natural disaster have in the meantime returned to their homesteads. We examine this phenomenon from a human security perspective.

The term human security was prominently used by US President Franklin Rooseveltduring the Second World War and was rejuvenated in the human development report “New Dimensions of Human Security” by the UNDP in 1994. In this context, human security means safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, or repression. It also encompasses protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life, including homesteads, jobs, and communities. Human security is therefore relevant to people in both poor and rich nations. The UNDPintroduced seven dimension of human security. They include: (1) economic security; (2) food security; (3) health security; (4) environmental security; (5) personal security; (6) community security; and (7) political security.

These seven dimensions can be aligned in two directions: (1) freedom from want (dimensions 1–4), which is also called the developmental human security pillar because it implies safety from chronic threats such as hunger and/or disease; and (2) freedom from fear (dimensions 5–7), which is known as the protective human security pillar because it implies protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – in homes and/or in communities.

Overall, the human security concept is a people-centred concept, focusing on the most critical and pervasive threats below which the survival, livelihood, and dignity of individuals are seriously threatened. It aligns with the UN Declaration on the Right to Development, which states “[…] that the human person is the central subject of the development process and that development policy should therefore make the human being the main participant and beneficiary of development […]”.

As stated by the UNDP, “a clear set of human security indicators, and an early warning system based on them, could help these countries [to] avoid reaching a crisis point”. Despite acknowledging this, the very broad definition of human security has been criticised for lacking precision and encompassing all kinds of threats. Critics, such as Roland Paris along with Mary Martin and Taylor Owen,argue that this leaves too much room for interpretation and does not offer guidance on how to operationalise the concept and to identify priorities. However, UNDP-TR emphasised in 2009 that “human security provides a dynamic framework that […] builds on processes that are based on peoples’ own perceptions of fear and vulnerability”. This flexibility allows for the different attempts to empirically operationalise human security in various contexts – providing for “best fit” rather than “best practice”.