

International Dialogue on Migration
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A view from the field on implementing the new Migrants in Countries in Crisis guidelines

The double-imperative as risks to migrants are also risks to development

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Excellencies, partners: As other speakers have indicated, MICIC was actually born out of the experience of the Libyan uprising in 2011, which prompted a **complex mixed population movement including asylum seekers, refugees and migrants** from an unprecedented number of countries of origin (more than 706,000 migrants from 120 nationalities fled Libya during the crisis). Some had important potential refugee claims (Horn of Africa, Iraq) and some had other specific claims to protection.

In response to the crisis, UNHCR and IOM launched a joint humanitarian operation with evacuation and voluntary repatriation for migrants and resettlement as durable solutions for people with a refugee status. From Tunisia, 115,300 persons were repatriated (48 nationalities) and 3,170 refugees resettled.

I was there, posted and working in Shousha camp at the outset of the crisis as an ICMC/ UNHCR deployee, when 7,000 persons a day were fleeing Libya and crossing the Tunisian border. **My job there was to conduct identification, rapid assessment and referral** of those with refugee and protection claims.

In that experience, I saw the **practical value of so many things that are now in these MICIC guidelines**. Like:

- Setting a clear protection and durable solution strategy at the earliest in order to deliver a clear message and avoid tensions between migrant and refugee communities.
- Putting in place an effective system of counseling to advise populations; inform them about the different services, options and procedures available and manage their expectations.
- Developing an early multi-dimensional protection intervention targeting the most vulnerable groups (unaccompanied minors, women at risks, persons in risk of trafficking, etc) regardless of their status.
- Organizing effective referral mechanisms to improve coordination on the ground. Implementing partners and civil society organizations should have a clear understanding of UNHCR and IOM mandates, the scope of refugee status and protection, and be an integral part of the referral system, including identification and rapid assessment

For the way forward, it is crucial to:

- Capitalize on the different emergency response and post-crisis action (lessons learned, good practices and capacities).
- Keep in mind that guidelines provide key orientations and recommendations but need to be translated in a practical way in the field, adjusted/tailor-made on specific contexts and ad-hoc standard operating procedures (SOPs).
- Introduce the guidelines and SOPs to all the different actors in the field: local authorities, UNHCR, IOM and other agencies, international NGOs and civil society organization, hosting communities, etc.

Finally, concrete action on achieving the SDGs—in particular those that refer explicitly to migrants and migration—can reinforce the acceptance and implementation of the MICIC guidelines, especially in terms of crisis preparedness and post-crisis action. From our experience on the ground, we appreciate the big step forward that MICIC is taking to reduce risks to migrants of all kinds trapped in crisis.

Thank you.

Acronyms:

IOM = International Organization for Migration;

MICIC = Migrants in Countries in Crisis;

NGO = non-governmental organization;

SDG = sustainable development goal under the global *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*;

SOPs = standard operating procedures;

UNHCR = United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.