



Training on the Guiding Principles in Aceh

by Christophe Beau

The Global IDP Project recently took the exceptional decision to extend its training support – usually for people displaced by conflict and violence – to actors involved in the post-tsunami recovery process in Aceh, Indonesia, where some 500,000 people are reported still to be living in temporary settlements or with host families.

Three main reasons were behind the Project's decision to hold the two workshops on the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement which took place in Banda Aceh and Meulaboh in September 2005.

First, the sudden and large-scale international operation in response to the tsunami in Aceh created a unique opportunity to disseminate international human rights and humanitarian standards in an area that, plagued by violent conflict between the Indonesian army and the separatist GAM rebel group, had been largely closed to international organisations. The opportunity had to be seized without delay, as it was feared that the authorities would drastically limit international presence in the area. The police decision initially not to authorise the workshops in March 2005 [see FMR tsunami issue, p28] showed how fragile access for protection-oriented activities was.

In order to ensure longer-term impact of the training workshops, participants were primarily from among those permanently based in Aceh with protection mandate and capacity, including civilian authorities, inter-governmental agencies and international and local NGOs. The 65 participants demonstrated strong interest in protection of IDPs and the Guiding Principles and many left the workshop with plans to continue the promotion of the Guiding Principles in their area of activity.

Second, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, on which the

Project's training is based, also apply to the protection of people displaced by natural disasters. Indeed, the discussion of the Guiding Principles during the workshop highlighted numerous protection problems facing communities displaced by the tsunami. Leaders of displaced communities called for a more rapid response to their deteriorating housing conditions with the rainy season approaching. Many continue to live in tents or makeshift huts while uncertainty prevails concerning the recovery of lost properties. Access to sources of income and support for self-reliance were also articulated as pressing needs among displaced communities. The discussion also revealed other, often more hidden, concerns, such as the lack of security in camps, the limitations to the freedom of movement and the lack of access to public services. Displaced communities are rarely kept informed about follow-up to the numerous assessments visits to their settlements. The particular vulnerability of displaced women was also stressed with regard to information and participation, security and livelihood.

The third motivation for an extension of the Project's training to the tsunami crisis was its overlap with the displacement crisis caused by the conflict. Numerous IDPs have been displaced first by the conflict, which forced them to move down from the mountainous areas to the coast, and then by the tsunami, which forced them to relocate again away from the sea. In addition, many IDP settlements are located in conflict zones, or in communities already hosting people displaced by the conflict. At the local level, it is the same actors, in particular local NGOs, who work for the protection of both groups. In these circumstances, it was considered that training on the Guiding Principles would, even indirectly, contribute to the protection of the

population displaced by conflict in the province.

Participants highlighted the fact that tsunami IDPs in conflict areas were neglected and have little access to humanitarian and rehabilitation programmes. Many of the security problems in IDP settlements were also considered to be linked to the large presence of military forces in the province, including in the vicinity of IDP settlements. The lack of attention to the needs of those displaced by the conflict was also highlighted, a concern which took on particular significance as a peace agreement signed in August 2005 entered into force on 15 September. Support for the rehabilitation of conflict areas will be critical to the consolidation of the peace process and the international community should work actively to extend its operations beyond the tsunami disaster.

For the workshops' report, including the final recommendations adopted by the participants (in English and Bahasa), see www.idp-project.org/training/reports/2005/Aceh_report_Sept05.pdf

For more information on Global IDP Project training, please contact Christophe Beau at christophe.beau@nrc.ch

The Global IDP Project is part of the Norwegian Refugee Council and is an international non-profit organisation that monitors internal displacement caused by conflicts. The IDP Database provides public information about internal displacement in 50 countries.

www.idpproject.org

The Global IDP Project
7-9, Chemin de Balaxert
1219 Chatelaine, Geneva.
Switzerland

Tel: +41 22 799 0700

Fax: +41 22 799 0701

Email: idpproject@nrc.ch