

# African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of IDPs in Africa :

## The Role of Civil Society in Implementation

Stakeholders Roundtable on the  
AU Convention for Protection and Assistance of IDPs

Co-sponsored by the African Union and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

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# Implementation of AU Convention on IDPs: Civil Society's Role and Scope of Activities

1. Civil society has a **critical role** to play
2. **Scope** of possible activities is wide-ranging

AU Convention on IDPs\* recognizes and reinforces this...

\*citations adjusted to reflect final  
text adopted 23 October 2009

# 1. Objectives of the Convention

*include*

to “provide for the respective obligations, responsibilities and roles of”:

- States
- armed groups, non-state actors and
- other relevant actors, including **civil society organizations**

“...with respect to the prevention of internal displacement and protection of, and assistance to, internally displaced persons.” (Art. 2)

## 2. States to cooperate with civil society:

- via **national IDP institutional focal point** to be designated by each State (Art. 3.2.b)
- in **all phases of displacement**:
  - protection from internal displacement:  
States "*may seek the cooperation of [...] civil society organizations*" (Art. 4.2)
  - protection and assistance during displacement:  
States "*shall discharge these obligations, where appropriate, with assistance from [...] civil society organizations*" (Art. 9.3.)
  - solutions:  
States "*shall cooperate, where appropriate, with [...] civil society organizations, in providing protection and assistance in the course of finding and implementing solutions for sustainable return, local integration or relocation and long-term reconstruction*" (Art. 11.3)

### 3. States to **facilitate** civil society's efforts to protect and assist IDPs:

- Civil society organizations “may **offer their services to all those in need**” (Art. 5.6)
- States:
  - “shall **enable and facilitate** the role of local and international organizations and humanitarian agencies, civil society organizations [...] **to provide protection and assistance**” (Art. 5.7.)
  - “shall **allow rapid and unimpeded passage of all relief** relief consignments, equipment and personnel” (Art. 5.7, see also Art. 3.j.)
  - shall “**guarantee security**” of relief action (Art. 5.7)

## 4. Armed groups shall be prohibited from:

- **Hampering the provision of protection and assistance to IDPs (Art. 7.5.b.)**
- **Impeding humanitarian assistance** and the passage of all relief consignments, equipment and personnel to IDPs (Art. 7.5.g.)
- **Attacking or otherwise harming humanitarian personnel** and resources or other materials deployed for the assistance of IDPs and shall not destroy, confiscate or divert such materials (Art. 7.5.h.)

## 5. African Union to:

- “**Collaborate** with [...] civil society organizations [...] to support measures taken by State Parties to protect and assist IDPs” (Art. 8.3.c.)
- “**Cooperate** directly with [...] civil society organizations [...] with respect to appropriate measures to be taken in relation to protection and assistance to internally displaced persons” (Art.8.3.d.)

# Scope of activities virtually unlimited for civil society organizations

- All causes of displacement:

- Conflict
- Human rights
- Disasters
- Development

(Art. 1.k., Art. 4, Art. 10)

- All phases:
  - Prevention of arbitrary displacement (Art. 4)
  - Protection & assistance during displacement (Arts.5, 9)
  - Solutions - sustainable return, local integration or relocation (Art. 11)

- All rights & related activities

- Civil and political rights
- Economic, social and cultural rights
- All activities towards ensuring respect for rights:
  - Humanitarian assistance
  - Human rights monitoring and reporting
  - Advocacy
  - Legal aid
  - Reconciliation initiatives
  - etc.

- All actors and stakeholders:
  - Broad range of civil society organizations
  - IDP associations
  - Humanitarian and human rights NGOs in general + NGOs focused on rights of specific groups (e.g. of children, women and girls, persons living with HIV/AIDS, indigenous persons, etc.)
  - Partnerships

*“One struggle...many fronts”*

(Pan African Movement)