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**THE DUTY TO MOVE PEOPLE OUT OF HARM'S  
WAY IN THE CONTEXT OF CLIMATE  
CHANGE AND DISASTERS**

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# The Duty to Move People Out of Harm's Way in the Context of Climate Change and Disasters

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## ABSTRACT

Experience shows that both sudden- and slow-onset disasters can result in displacement. Indeed, disasters now account for the largest number of newly displaced people each year – more than violence or conflict. At times, areas of land may be rendered too unsafe for continued human habitation, requiring evacuations or planned relocations of affected people. In fact, several countries are already in the process of moving, or considering moving, people out of at-risk areas, either as a preventive measure before disaster strikes, or as a reactive response in the aftermath of a disaster triggered by natural hazards.

The present article examines whether human rights norms impose a duty on States to move people out of harm's way through (temporary) evacuations and/or (permanent) planned relocations – as measures to address and mitigate disaster risk and/or adapt to the negative consequences of climate change on human settlement – and what human rights law prescribes regarding the modalities of such measures.

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