

## ***The situation of Internally Displaced Persons***

Currently there are 90 000 IDP families (approximately 270 000 individual IDPs) residing in Georgia and the policy of the Ministry is to continue to build a constructive environment for co-operation between the authorities and IDPs as well as to set up strategic planning work for addressing their housing and other needs. The budget of the Ministry has been doubled by the government and its major part – jointly with internationally received funds – will be used for construction and renovation of buildings. This activity is conducted in co-operation with the Ministry of Economy (provision of buildings for rehabilitation) and Ministry of Defence (allocation of land for construction).

The major novelty concerns the capital Tbilisi where construction/rehabilitation will also take place<sup>1</sup>. The housing allocation will be conducted in accordance with the document – “Guiding Principles, Criteria, and Procedures Governing the Process of Durable Housing Allocation”. The document has been approved by the MRA Steering Committee and after piloting it in the Imereti region (West Georgia), relevant changes will be made to it based on the lessons learned and will be officially adopted in the form of the Minister’s Decree. The document ensures the transparent process of housing allocation; it determines criteria, which during the Durable Housing Solution process define the priority of IDP family needs. The criteria are expressed in certain points, which will be summed up while assessing the needs of IDP families and the IDP family with the most points will be given priority.

Due to the fact that currently there is no reliable statistics about the number of IDPs (IDPs in compact settlements and those in informal settlement places),

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<sup>1</sup> Approximately 100 000 IDPs (30 000 families of which 20 000 are said to be “in need”) are reported to be residing in Tbilisi.

preparatory work has been carried out by the Ministry – with the support of the EU - for the preparation of a census of all IDPs and an assessment of their needs in the framework of the general census of the Georgian population. This is in line with the Ministry's declared aim to apply an equal approach to the IDPs in collective centres and the private (informal tenure) sector. As for the latter, interlocutors underlined that information on privately accommodated IDPs remains limited and the census would be beneficial for the assessment of their situation and needs in terms of their housing as well as other types of needs. In parallel with the census, the needs assessment of the IDPs will be conducted, the results of which will be used in planning further support measures.

The Ministry has established working groups, which addressed issues of criticism by the previous Public Defender of Georgia and international NGOs active on the subject (also mentioned in the fifth and sixth consolidated reports). In particular, one of the working groups developed criteria for the selection of IDPs for housing solutions. Housing allocation based on these criteria began in March 2013. Another working group is in the process of elaborating a new version of the draft law on IDPs. The new law includes the provisions which ensure the legal security of tenure and prevention from arbitrary eviction (Article 14 of the draft law).

Those IDPs that were accommodated in the rehabilitated or newly constructed premises will be given the property into the private ownership. So far, more than 14 000 IDP families were granted the property title and the privatization process is still on-going.