Voluntary Repatriation
One of three Durable Solutions

- Voluntary repatriation
- Local integration
- Resettlement
Voluntary Repatriation is a Right

“Everyone has the right to leave and to return to his Country of Origin”

Article 13, 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Voluntary Repatriation is a choice: The principle of *non-refoulement*:

States shall not expel or return a refugee to the frontiers of territories where he or she would be exposed to persecution.
The Principles

• Voluntariness
• Safety
• Dignity
Voluntariness

A decision made

- Freely
- Based on accurate and objective information
- Expressly and individually
Safety

- **Physical** (no violence, no intimidation, mines or UXOs)
- **Legal** (effective access to citizenship, a functioning judiciary, amnesty, house and land property restitution mechanisms)
- **Material** (equal access to means of survival and basic services)
Dignity

- No Universal definition
- Culture specific
Repatriation can be:

• Discouraged
• Facilitated
• Promoted
Conditions conducive to return?

- The right to life, liberty, and physical integrity
- The right to non-discrimination
- Economic, social, and cultural rights
Cessation of refugee status?

- When change of circumstances are profound and enduring
- Compelling reasons may, for certain individuals, support the continuation of refugee status
Best Practices with respect to Durable Solutions

• Integrate Protection and Solutions
• Use the three Durable Solutions in a mutually reinforcing manner
• Adopt a regional approach
Best practices with respect to Repatriation

• Direct and unhindered access to return areas
• Early planning and co-ordination of implementation with all parties
• Dialogue: tripartite commissions and agreements
Best Practices with respect to Repatriation

• Mass information on situation in Country of Origin
• Returnee Monitoring from the outset
Lessons learnt with respect to Repatriation

• The pace of repatriation should reflect the absorptive capacity of the country of origin
• Support solutions shaped by refugees
Lessons learnt on reintegration

• Reintegration is a component of the reconciliation and peace-building process

• Partnership with key development agencies is essential to sustainability (4 Rs: Repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation, reconstruction)

• Community and area-based approaches work best