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## Press Release

### **New guide aims to benefit millions displaced in Africa's Great Lakes region**

GENEVA, 19 September 2008: Following the entry into force in June 2008 of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in Africa's Great Lakes region (the Great Lakes Pact), the Norwegian Refugee Council's Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) and the International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI) today release *The Great Lakes Pact and the Rights of Displaced People: A Guide for Civil Society*. The Guide aims to help organisations use the Great Lakes Pact to promote the rights of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) in the region.

The Great Lakes Pact represents a commitment by the eleven member states of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) to work to end the conflicts which have plagued their region, and to cooperate on security, governance, development, humanitarian and social issues. The Pact has been ratified by Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, The Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. Angola, Sudan and Zambia have yet to finalise the ratification process.

The Pact contains a number of instruments which stand to benefit the millions of displaced people in the region, most notably the Protocol on the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons, and the Protocol on the Property Rights of Returning Populations. "The adoption of these two protocols was a significant recognition by the ICGLR member states of the crucial link between protecting the rights of forcibly displaced people and achieving peace, security and development in the region," said IRRI Co-Director Dismas Nkunda.

"Member states must act without delay on their obligations under the Pact," said Head of IDMC Kate Half. "We encourage all member states to incorporate the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement into their national laws, as required by the Pact's IDP Protocol. We hope that the Guide will help advocates encourage decision-makers to shape policies which really benefit the displaced."

#### **Notes for editors:**

*The Great Lakes Pact and the Rights of Displaced People: A Guide for Civil Society* can be downloaded at [www.internal-displacement.org/greatlakes](http://www.internal-displacement.org/greatlakes) or [www.refugee-rights.org/publications.htm](http://www.refugee-rights.org/publications.htm)

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