



ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI

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**REGULATORY TREATMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTALLY-DISPLACED PERSONS**

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ABSTRACT

By now, natural disasters and other environmental degradations are displacing millions of people every year. Additionally, the impacts of climate change are already exacerbating – and will continue to do so in the future – the phenomenon of environmental displacement. Although most migration flows occur within the country and those who are internally displaced are covered by the protection system of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, increased transboundary movements are also expected. In fact, those individuals who are forced to leave their habitual place of residence and cross an international State border are currently not covered by any international or regional instrument and, consequently, are in need of protection. The reason thereof can be found in a lack of both a generally accepted definition of what constitutes environmentally-displaced persons and their recognition as a vulnerable group in need of international protection. Hence, after providing a tentative definition, this research paper aims at analysing the existing legal instruments of general forced migration laws as well as specific provisions and principles with a view to whether they might provide protection to cross-border environmental displacees. Finally, it will offer ways in which the identified gaps in law might be filled in order to meet the urgent protection need of environmentally-displaced persons.

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ACRONYMS

CAT	Convention on Torture and Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
EDPs	Environmentally-Displaced Persons
EU	European Union
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDPs	Internally-Displaced Persons
INA	Immigration and Nationality Act
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IRPA	Immigration and Refugee Protection Act
OAS	Organization of American States
OUA	Organization of African Unity
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
TPS	Temporary Protected Status
UK	United Kingdom
UKHL	United Kingdom House of Lords
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
US/ USA	United States of America
USC	United States Code

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