
Press Release

Internally displaced people in Europe still marginalised

GENEVA, 14 May 2009 – Around two and a half million internally displaced people in Europe are still unable to lead normal lives, according to a report released today by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). The report *Protracted Internal Displacement in Europe: Current Trends and Ways Forward* describes the issues facing people internally displaced by conflict and violence in the region and provides recommendations to improve their situation.

Some 2.5 million people remain displaced within their countries in Europe. Most fled their homes as a result of violence and conflict in the 1990s, and while the fighting has largely ended, peace agreements have yet to be concluded in several countries.

“More than 15 years after being displaced, IDPs in Europe continue to have problems related to their displacement. These concern housing, jobs, documents, property and education,” said NRC Secretary General Elisabeth Rasmusson. “Some IDPs are particularly vulnerable to poverty and discrimination – their access to services and benefits must be ensured. This includes people who are disabled and chronically ill, members of minorities such as Roma, female heads of households, children and the elderly.”

Governments in the region with internal displacement situations have overwhelmingly supported the return of IDPs to their homes over other solutions. However, only about 25 per cent of IDPs have returned to their places of origin.

“IDPs who do not want to return, or cannot do so, receive little or no support to help them integrate locally or settle elsewhere in the country. In order to bring displacement in Europe to an end, governments in the region must support local integration and the settlement of IDPs in another area of the country in addition to return. They must also find peaceful solutions to outstanding conflicts,” Rasmusson urged.

For the peace to last, the report advocates that the views of IDPs are included in discussions that affect them, the achievement of durable solutions are monitored and that reconciliation between communities involved in and affected by the conflict is facilitated. Donors should consider funding programmes with these objectives.

Note for Editors:

The report can be accessed at <http://www.internal-displacement.org/europe/protracted>.

People are internally displaced in the Balkans (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia), in the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Russian Federation), in Cyprus and in Turkey.

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