



A Bedouin woman by the remains of her home in Abdallah al-Atrash in the Negev region of southern Israel, where she and her family lived for close to 20 years; however the Israeli government did not recognise the settlement and it was demolished by the police in 2008 (Photo: Jessie Boylan, December 2008).

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Internal displacement in the Middle East

IDMC monitors six displacement situations in the Middle East: Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), Syria and Yemen. In the region there were around 3.9 million IDPs at the end of 2008, the highest number since IDMC started to monitor internal displacement in 1998; however the majority of this population had by 2008 been displaced for many years. Most of them had acute humanitarian and protection concerns, in particular the 470,000 or so displaced during 2008, principally by armed conflict in Iraq and Yemen.

Human rights violations, generalised violence, internal and international armed conflicts along political, religious and ethnic lines, as well as competition for land and other natural resources, are among the causes of internal displacement in the region.

Despite a security and humanitarian situation in Iraq that appeared to be stabilising, the numbers of displaced inside Iraq continued to increase to a total of 2,840,000 in 2008. Iraq remained one of the most unsafe countries in the world, despite a decrease in the number of recorded violent incidents.

The armed conflict in northern Yemen caused the displacement of over 100,000 people in 2008. The situation remained one of the year's neglected crises despite the increase in the number of people displaced and the corresponding humanitarian needs. In OPT, the government of Israel continued to implement its policy of house demolitions in the West Bank, while in Tripoli, Lebanon, factional violence led to the temporary displacement of several thousand Lebanese.

Internally displaced people in the Middle East have experienced violations of a number of their rights laid out in international humanitarian law and human rights law, related to their physical security, freedom of movement, family unity, and access to basic services, housing land and property and legal recognition.

In Iraq, OPT and in Yemen, freedom of movement remained arbitrarily restricted: in the West Bank alone over 600 checkpoints, road blocks and other impediments restricted the freedom of movement of Palestinians displaced and non-displaced alike. In Iraq, conflict and security measures including checkpoints, curfews, permission requirements, and security barriers continued to restrict movement throughout the country.

IDPs' access to basic assistance during displacement (including food, water and adequate shelter, medical services and sanitation) varied across the region. In Iraq, Yemen, much of the West Bank and all of Gaza, restrictions on movement and ongoing insecurity limited the access of IDPs to essential supplies. Elsewhere, displaced communities were simply neglected: Bedouin communities in villages in southern Israel which the government refused to recognise had only irregular access to clean water.

In Iraq, displaced children were still at risk of recruitment and labour exploitation, while in Yemen, children were



reportedly recruited by various factions to the conflict. Trauma associated to displacement and conflict was reported among children in OPT, Yemen, Iraq, and Lebanon. In the region the prevalence of gender discrimination continued to restrict the access of displaced women to basic rights and put their children at risk of future displacement: for example, Palestinian women in Jerusalem cannot pass their residency status on to their children.

Throughout the region minority groups faced a greater risk of being displaced on the basis of their cultural, religious and ethnic identity: although violence declined in Iraq in 2008, sectarian and ethnic tensions fuelled by internal border disputes continued to cause displacement. In October 2008, some 2,000 Christian families fled Mosul following sectarian violence and intimidation. In the Negev region of southern Israel, Bedouin communities remained at risk of displacement as the government maintained its policy of destroying villages it deemed illegal. These communities faced widespread protection concerns.

IDPs' attempts to find durable solutions have come up against longstanding barriers including insecurity, disputed sovereignty and occupation of their home areas, lack of compensation for lost or destroyed property and difficulties

in asserting property ownership. In Iraq and Yemen there were some return movements, but the number of people newly displaced outnumbered the returns in both countries. Under six per cent of the IDP population returned in Iraq, despite heralded improvement in security. An undetermined number of people were able to return home in Lebanon despite the slow pace of reconstruction, the prevalence of remnants of war and the lack of livelihoods in return areas, but there were no recorded returns in Israel, OPT or Syria, due to continuing occupation or the policies of the government of Israel.

In general, there was little information about IDPs achieving other durable solutions, such as integration in the place of displacement or resettlement elsewhere. For many across the region, they still depended on political processes to establish security, stability and reconciliation.

The national and international response to internal displacement in the Middle East remained uneven in 2008. While coordination mechanisms were largely in place in the conflict-affected countries in the region, factors undermining an effective response included a lack of political will and resources to assist and protect IDPs, and also the challenge of clearly distinguishing humanitarian and political agendas. International humanitarian agencies in Iraq, OPT, and Yemen continued to face obstacles and limits to access due to administrative res-

trictions and attacks on staff. In Israel and OPT, the situation of IDPs was worsened by the government of Israel's failure to recognise their status.

Many years of insecurity and violence have left Iraqi society marked by sectarianism, under-development and humanitarian crisis. Although national and international organisations have made significant efforts to respond to humanitarian needs throughout Iraq, and often delivered assistance to IDPs at considerable risk to staff, international efforts have failed to meet the immense need.

The scale of the Iraqi crisis was recognised in Security Council Resolution 1770 of 2007. In February 2008, the launch of a Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) underlined the UN's recognition of the need for a comprehensive response. The CAP was designed to enable the UN to extend its operations through local partners, and it also represented an attempt to address the needs of all Iraqis based on their vulnerability. In 2008, the government also took steps to address the needs of returnees and IDPs, while advocating for the return of IDPs and refugees and calling for UN agencies and NGOs to assume a more proactive role.

Country	Number of IDPs (rounded)	Government figures	UN figures	Other figures	Comments
Iraq	2,840,000		2,840,000 (UN, July 2008)	2,170,000 (Iraqi Red Crescent Organisation, June 2008)	Over 1 million displaced over 20 years up to 2003 (invasion of Iraq), and an estimated 190,000 from 2003 to February 2006 (al-Askari Mosque bombing). From February 2006, 1,630,000 Iraqis were displaced, mainly as a result of sectarian violence.
Israel	200,000			150,000 (Cohen, July 2001); 420,000 (BADIL, May 2006)	BADIL figure includes displaced Bedouin, with their numbers estimated on the basis of an average annual growth rate of 4.2 per cent in 1950–2001, and 3 per cent since.
Lebanon	90,000–390,000	40,000 since July 2006 (February, 2008); 16,750 civil war (July 2006); 33,000 Nahr al Bared (September 2007)	70,000 since July 2006 (UNHCR, February 2008) in addition to 28,000 displaced from Nahr al Bared (UNRWA, September 2008)	50,000–300,000 prior to July 2006 (USCRI, 2005); 600,000 prior to July 2006 (USDOS, 2006)	Different populations displaced by the 2007 siege of Nahr El Bared camp for Palestinian refugees, the July–August 2006 Israel–Hezbollah conflict, and the 1975–1990 civil war and Israeli invasions. In September 2008, an estimated 700 families had returned to Nahr al Bared out of 32,000 persons displaced. In mid 2008, an estimated 660 families were temporarily displaced by factional fighting in Tripoli.
Occupied Palestinian Territory	116,000		24,547 (OCHA, October 2004)	115,000 (BADIL, October 2007), 612 (B'tselem, January 2008)	Lower OCHA estimate only includes IDPs evicted by house demolitions in Gaza between September 2000 and October 2004; the higher figure is cumulative since 1967. B'tselem figure indicates the number of displaced reported in 2008 only as a result of house demolitions.
Syria	433,000	433,000 (November 2007)			Includes children of people originally displaced from Golan.
Yemen	20,000–23,000	22,000 (September 2008)	20,000 (UNHCR, November 2008) 130,000 (UN OCHA, July 2008)	100,000 (ICRC, May 2008)	An estimated 100,000–130,000 people were displaced or affected at peak of conflict. Following July 2008 ceasefire, the government reported that 90,000 had returned. Limited access has made it difficult to verify figures, and recent estimates are based on the number of returnees in areas accessed.

Iraq

Quick facts

Number of IDPs	2,840,000
Percentage of total population	9.6%
Start of displacement situation	1986 (former government); 2003 (invasion); 2006 (sectarian violence)
New displacement in 2008	360,000
Returns in 2008	167,000
Causes of displacement	International and internal armed conflict, generalised violence, human right violations
Human development index	126 (2000)



Over 2.8 million people were internally displaced in Iraq by June 2008. These IDPs were distributed throughout the country with over 1.1 million in central provinces and over 800,000 in both the northern and southern regions. Most were dispersed in rented accommodation in towns and cities where they were relying on the support of host communities as well as national and international humanitarian agencies and non-governmental bodies, including some with political affiliation.

This IDP population – equivalent to one in ten Iraqis – was displaced in three phases. Around 1.6 million had since February 2006 fled sectarian and generalised violence including military operations by multinational, Iraqi and also Turkish and Iranian forces in northern Iraq. Approximately 190,000 were displaced by military operations and generalised violence from 2003 to 2005, and an estimated 1.2 million by the policies of the former government of Saddam Hussein, including the “arabisation” of Kurdish areas, destruction of marshlands in southern Iraq, and repression of political opposition.

In 2008, despite a relative improvement in security, the country remained volatile. The rate of new displacement declined, but people continued to flee due to military operations as in Sadr City in Baghdad, in Basra and Mosul, and near the border with Turkey, and sectarian violence such as that targeting the Christian community in Mosul. Returns were reported, principally to Baghdad, but the rate of return remained low, at around six per cent of total displacement by late 2008.

IDPs continue to face a wide range of protection concerns. Though the vulnerability of IDPs is likely to be greater, these concerns are often shared by non-displaced groups, including communities remaining in unsafe areas. Iraq’s many minority groups have faced particular threats, including Christian Assyrians, Faeeli Kurds, Yazidis, Palestinian refugees and also Sunni and Shia where they are in the minority. Children and women have faced recruitment by armed groups, sexual and gender-based violence, and labour exploitation.

Despite the decline in violence, the UN and the humanitarian community have continued to report human rights abuses and violations against civilians by militias, criminal gangs, and security and military forces; perpetrators of human rights abuses continue to enjoy impunity.

The standard of living of most Iraqis has declined despite attempts at reconstruction and rehabilitation. For the majority of IDPs, shelter, food and employment remain urgent priorities. Access to adequate shelter and basic services remain high priorities for all Iraqis, but unemployment particularly affects IDPs, who have left behind their sources of income and moved to areas where their skills might not be marketable.

The freedom of movement of displaced communities has remained restricted. Alongside dilapidated infrastructure, security measures in 2008 including checkpoints, curfews, permission requirements for IDP registration, and security fences or walls continue to restrict movement throughout the country.

The prospects of durable solutions are limited for most IDPs. The insecurity and new sectarian make-up of areas of origin, the lack of basic services and humanitarian access, and the destruction or secondary occupation of private and public properties, are all serious obstacles to their return.

Though plagued by limited capacity and partisan politics, the Iraqi government took steps in 2008 to respond to forced displacement. In July, the Ministry of Migration and Displacement launched a National Policy on Displacement outlining the basic rights of displaced and returnee populations and the obligations of the Iraqi government and the humanitarian community to provide services and durable solutions. The government also enacted laws in September to address returns and property issues facing returnees in Baghdad, but these proved controversial with critics cautioning against premature and unsustainable returns.

Humanitarian space has been shaped by the activities of multi-national forces and non-state armed groups. The access of UN agencies, IOM and international NGOs has continued to be limited. Though coordination mechanisms have been revised, critics have noted continuing duplication and parallel coordination mechanisms, and the relationship between the UN and international forces have undermined the international humanitarian response.



Occupied Palestinian Territory

Quick facts

Number of IDPs	116,000
Percentage of total population	3%
Start of current displacement situation	1967
New displacement in 2008	612
Returns in 2008	–
Causes of displacement	International armed conflict (occupation), human rights violations
Human development index	106

Since 1967, internal displacement in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) has directly and indirectly followed policies and actions of the government of Israel, including house demolitions and the expropriation of land for settlement expansion, construction of the Separation Wall, revocation of residency rights, and military incursions and clearing operations. People have also been displaced where the regime of closures and limitations on freedom of movement have made the situation of residents of OPT's enclaves untenable.

Since the 1993 Oslo Accords most displacement has been reported in the West Bank's "Area C" (under Israeli control and administration) and East Jerusalem, as a consequence of the Separation Wall, the settlement programme and settler violence, revocation of residency rights in East Jerusalem and the military appropriation of land. In 2008, house demolitions continued in the West Bank (though a moratorium on demolitions was observed for several months in Area C). In Gaza the majority of displacement resulted from military incursions along "buffer zones" and border areas such as Rafah. In February 2008, an incursion into Gaza temporarily displaced several hundred people. At the very end of the year, the Israeli government launched a military operation in Gaza, which subsequently led to a large wave of displacement.

IDPs are thought to be dispersed among host communities in various areas. In the West Bank, many people have been forced to relocate away from Israeli settlements and related infrastructure; military zones and security strips; and areas affected by the Wall and its associated regime of restrictions in movement and access to land and other resources. People temporarily displaced due to incursions have sought shelter with relatives, or in public buildings or schools until the violence ends or longer-term accommodation becomes possible.

Palestinians, displaced or not, face a deepening protection crisis. Intermittent cycles of violence, pervasive restrictions on their movement, and discriminatory policies and regulations have increased the vulnerability of the community as a whole, while the humanitarian situation has worsened in Gaza as result of its near-total isolation since June 2007, following the takeover by Hamas. However, those displaced or at risk of displacement face specific protection concerns. Displace-

ment has entailed loss of family unity, social welfare and livelihoods, and has also had wide-ranging physical and psychological impacts including trauma and anxiety for children. Communities in areas under threat of expulsion or eviction have faced heightened protection risks, including harassment and intimidation. They include between 50,000 and 90,000 at risk of displacement due to the construction of the Wall, several thousand families in Area C and East Jerusalem affected by demolition orders, and the Jafeleen Bedouin community, whose traditional land rights are not recognised by Israel.

Internal displacement is generally not recognised by the government of Israel. The Israeli state remains the primary perpetrator of forced displacement and does not provide assistance or protection to IDPs. The Palestinian national authorities, despite attempts to address displacement, have been impaired by the ongoing policies of occupation, their limited jurisdiction under the Oslo accords, political turmoil and poor governance.

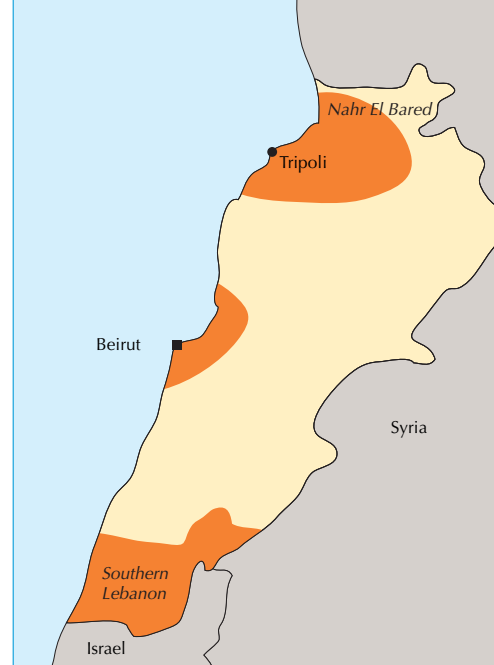
Though several UN agencies respond to concerns of victims of displacement within their respective mandates, there is no international agency in OPT with an explicit IDP protection mandate. Palestinian, Israeli and international NGOs have researched and publicised the impact of house demolitions and the Wall on Palestinian populations, and helped grassroots communities to prevent or seek to reverse processes of displacement, on occasion providing legal and other assistance to victims of eviction orders or demolitions.

For the vast majority of internally displaced people in OPT, durable solutions remain tied to the reversal of policies of occupation, and an eventual final resolution to the conflict. NGOs and experts have warned that the failure of the international community to address the underlying sources of forced displacement is increasingly rendering any notion of a two-state solution defunct. Prioritisation of the rights of those affected is ever more pressing, in light of the demographic changes that displacement entails and the continuing consequences that these changes will have for contested areas.

Lebanon

Quick facts

Number of IDPs	90,000–390,000
Percentage of total population	2%–9%
Start of current displacement situation	1975 (civil war); 2006 (Israel-Lebanon war); 2007 (Nahr el Bared); 2008 (intra-Lebanese conflict)
Peak number of IDPs (and year)	1,000,000 (2006)
New displacement in 2008	3,600
Returns in 2008	Undetermined
Causes of displacement	International and internal armed conflict, generalised violence, human rights violations
Human development index	78



The number of IDPs in Lebanon in 2008 was uncertain; in addition to the recorded figures, hundreds of thousands of people were still waiting for compensation for property lost, the full reconstruction of their destroyed homes and the rehabilitation of areas still affected by explosive remnants of war, and reconciliation between the warring parties.

Of the hundreds of thousands displaced by civil war and Israeli invasions up to 2000, the government reported 16,750 still displaced in 2006, while according to government and UN estimates, between 40,000 and 70,000 people were still displaced in February 2008 by the 2006 war between Israeli forces and Hezbollah. Around 24,000 Palestinian refugees were in May 2008 still displaced in northern Lebanon by the 2007 siege and destruction of Nahr el Bared refugee camp and the accompanying fighting between the Lebanese army and militants of Fatah al Islam. Finally, around 660 families, or an estimated 3,600 individuals, were temporarily displaced in mid-2008 by fighting between Lebanese factions in the city of Tripoli, but a peace plan signed by all the parties enabled their return during the year.

IDPs and returnees are thus spread across various areas of the country, but particularly in cities including Beirut. During the civil war many rural communities were displaced into cities, while in the 2006 war, over 80 per cent of people living south of the Litani river moved north, with only those unable to leave (such as elderly people) remaining. The majority of those displaced have sought assistance and shelter from their respective communities, while also receiving some support from national and international agencies.

The protection of IDPs in Lebanon should be considered in a context of continuing insecurity and an economy devastated by repeated conflicts. Surveys have highlighted protection problems faced by different displaced populations, though the findings are likely to be valid for other groups. Psychological trauma has been prevalent among the population at large. People affected by short-term displacement have identified inadequate sanitation and malnutrition as problems.

The impact of war continues in areas of displacement and return. South Lebanon, the southern suburbs of Beirut, and the Bekaa valley bore the brunt of the 2006 conflict and have

historically been among the most deprived areas of Lebanon. Two years after the 2006 conflict ended, there were still delays in compensating people whose houses had been totally destroyed, and delays in their reconstruction. Cluster sub-munitions have contaminated vast areas of farmland in the south. Five children were killed and 78 injured by explosive remnants of war between August 2006 and July 2008.

The siege of Nahr el Bared has had severe consequences for Palestinians and Lebanese living in and around the camp; the destruction of their homes and livelihoods and their ongoing displacement has left them in makeshift shelters. The immediate concern of displaced Palestinians remains the reconstruction of Nahr el Bared, which may be completed in mid-2011 subject to adequate funding.

The perpetrators of displacement and associated human rights abuses have so far enjoyed relative impunity. There have been no criminal prosecutions for acts committed during the 1975–1990 civil war, which included killings, enforced disappearances and arbitrary detentions by various militias and Syrian and Israeli government forces. Similarly, those displaced by more recent events have limited hope of seeing the perpetrators prosecuted.

The Lebanese government has established several coordination structures for northern and southern areas and districts of Beirut to help the recovery and reconstruction efforts of IDPs and returnees. Hezbollah and other organisations have provided significant assistance, social services and reconstruction support. The country's political and economic crisis in 2008 has diverted attention from the plight of those forcibly displaced, and limited the effectiveness of the government's response. Nevertheless reconstruction must go on if the return process is to be sustainable, while those still displaced deserve the continuing protection of the international community.



Yemen

Quick facts

Number of IDPs	20,000–23,000
Percentage of total population	0.1%
Start of current displacement situation	2004
Peak number of IDPs (and year)	130,000 (2008)
New displacement in 2008	70,000 to 110,000
Returns in 2008	55,000 to 90,000
Causes of displacement	Internal armed conflict, generalised violence, human rights violations
Human development index	138

Clashes between government forces and Shi'ite followers of the late Sheikh Badr Eddin al-Houth led to displacement in north Yemen at regular intervals from 2004 with a peak in 2008. Fighting flared up in November 2005 following the breakdown of President Ali Abdullah Saleh's amnesty towards members of al-Houth's militia, and in February 2006 several thousand people were displaced in armed clashes and air raids. An escalation in the fighting in 2007 led to further displacement in the northern governorate of Saada, until the July 2008 declaration of a ceasefire. However insecurity has since continued, with clashes reported, restrictions in access remaining, and unexploded ordnance and landmines still present.

In October 2008 severe flooding in eastern Yemen also displaced 10,000 people, and the government declared Hadramout and Al-Mahara governorates disaster areas and accommodated affected people in schools and public buildings.

OCHA estimated that 130,000 people were displaced or affected by the conflict in July 2008. The government reported in September that up to 90,000 had returned since the end of the conflict, but these return figures have not been verified and some reports suggest many people have returned to situations of displacement due to the high level of damage to their home areas.

According to the OCHA report, 60,000 people had found refuge in Saada town by July, of whom 15,000 to 20,000 were receiving limited assistance from national and international aid agencies in seven camps, and around 40,000 were sheltering with hosts. As many as 70,000 were also believed to be displaced in remote rural areas, where limits in access enforced by the government were preventing the delivery of assistance. The government progressively allowed aid agencies into some towns, though this access was still insufficient to reach many people affected.

There was great concern not only for IDPs but also for people forced to remain in the areas of hostilities. Civilians were prevented by both government and opposition checkpoints from travelling to Saada town to seek food and medical assistance. There is little information on particularly vulnerable displaced groups such as women, children or elderly people, but reports have noted a prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence and recruitment of children into tribal and Houthi forces.

Many people were still displaced at the end of the year. Though almost 8,000 families were said to have returned to their places of origin or resettled elsewhere in Saada by November 2008, over 3,000 families were recorded as displaced in areas accessible to UN and humanitarian agencies. Areas of Saada remained inaccessible due to insecurity or movement restrictions imposed by all parties to the conflict.

IDPs assessed in camps in Saada and elsewhere were enduring dire conditions and were particularly in need of food, medication, access to education, non-food items, improvements in access to water, sanitation and shelter. Many were unable to return to their homes due to fear of insecurity and reprisals, destruction of their homes, and lack of livelihoods and basic services there.

The government and NGOs have undertaken assessment missions to determine the damage to property and infrastructure in order to begin the process of reconstruction. In August, the Ministry of Local Administration reported that 6,000 houses had been damaged in Saada, as well as a large number of farms, schools, health facilities and mosques. The government has since established the Saada Compensation Committee for Reconstruction and Rehabilitation to help IDPs return and rebuild their lives.

The Yemeni Red Crescent Society and several other local and international organisations, including WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, ICRC, Islamic Relief, and MSF, have provided assistance to displaced and non-displaced people affected by the conflict. While assistance and protection will continue to be inadequate until the access to affected civilians is better, the international community has a substantial role to play in funding and delivering humanitarian and development assistance to help the Saada region overcome the extensive devastation of the conflict.

Israel

Quick facts

Number of IDPs	200,000 (including children of IDPs)
Percentage of total population	2.9%
Start of current displacement situation	1948
New displacement in 2008	–
Returns in 2008	–
Causes of displacement	International armed conflict, human rights violations
Human development index	23

There were two principal groups of long-term IDPs within Israel in 2008: Arab villagers displaced during and after the conflict which accompanied the creation of Israel in 1948, and their descendants dispersed across the country; and Bedouin communities concentrated in the southern Negev region, who had been displaced in several waves. In addition, residents of towns near the borders with Lebanon and Gaza have in recent years experienced shorter-term displacement due to rocket attacks during periods of conflict with Hezbollah and Hamas.

The main concern of those displaced since 1948 has been to assert their right to the property they lost when they were displaced. Their situation effectively depends on the resolution

Syria

Quick facts

Number of IDPs	433,000 (including children of IDPs)
Percentage of total population	2.1%
Start of current displacement situation	1967
New displacement in 2008	–
Returns in 2008	–
Causes of displacement	International armed conflict (occupation), human rights violations
Human development index	105

In the 1967 war, Israel occupied Syria's western Golan Heights. Between 70,000 (according to Israeli estimates) and 153,000 people (according to the Syrian government) were forced to leave or fled into unoccupied Syria during the war. Following the end of the conflict, Syrians were not allowed to return by the Israeli government, and hundreds of villages were destroyed and razed to the ground. IDPs and their descendants numbered as many as 433,000 by 2007.

The Syrian government has made some efforts to help those displaced from areas bordering the occupied Golan Heights, including by rebuilding the town of Quneitra and neighbouring villages bordering the occupied area, but progress has been slow.

of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; in 2003 the Israeli Supreme Court accepted the government's argument that the current security situation and the persistent assertion by Palestinian refugees of their right of return could not justify allowing the claims of the internally displaced petitioners. Meanwhile, the majority of the land from which they were displaced has been nationalised.

The displaced Bedouin in the Negev, and indeed all the Bedouin communities there, face numerous protection concerns, including very limited access to livelihoods, education and other services. The government's programme to demolish villages it views as illegal means some communities have been recently displaced and others remain at risk of displacement.

The government has not mandated any office to address internal displacement; nor has it enacted or implemented any law or policy to protect IDPs. A number of NGOs including BADIL and ADALAH have advocated for the rights of IDPs, while the Regional Council of Unrecognized Arab Bedouin Villages in the Negev has helped to persuade relevant ministries to halt planned demolitions of villages.



The living conditions of displaced Syrians are not well documented; though most displaced families appear to have integrated, many have expressed a desire to return to Golan. Some reports suggested that IDPs have been given priority for public service jobs and university places. A pressing human rights issue is the separation from their families remaining in the Golan, caused by entry and exit restrictions imposed by the Israeli government.

Grassroots organisations on both sides of the border have called for the situation of the displaced people to be resolved. Observers remark that neither the return of the displaced population nor compensation for property lost can be envisaged without a peace agreement between Israel and Syria.

The international response to the situation has largely been political rather than humanitarian. Apart from ICRC, there are no international humanitarian or development organisations addressing the needs of affected people either in Golan or elsewhere in Syria.