

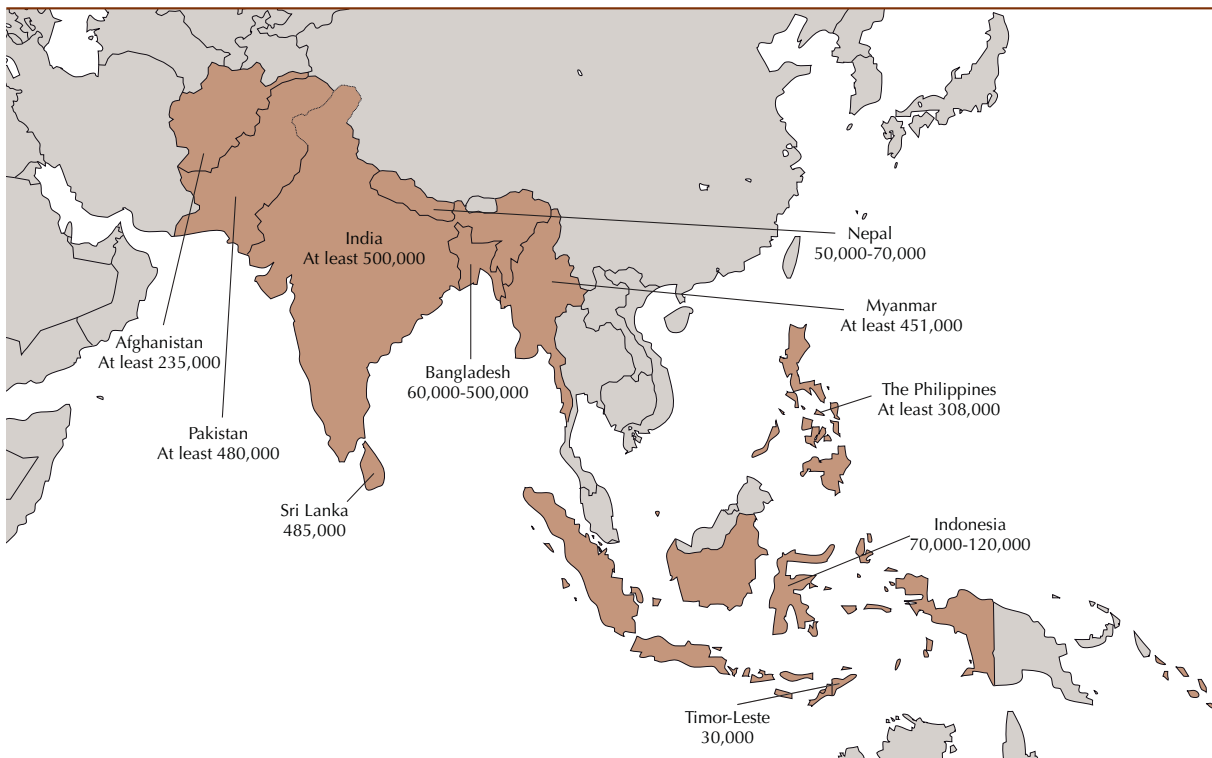


An elderly woman in front of her home in an IDP camp in Kabul, Afghanistan
(Photo: Manoocher Deghati, IRIN, June 2008).

Internal displacement in South and South-East Asia

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Internal displacement in South and South-East Asia



Some 3.5 million people in South and South-East Asia were estimated to be internally displaced by violence or human rights abuses at the end of 2008, and the majority of them were trapped in situations of protracted displacement. This represented an increase of around 400,000 since the end of 2007. In addition to the ten countries monitored by IDMC, displacement was also reported in other countries of the region such as Thailand and Laos, although little or no information was available.

Nearly 1.5 million people were newly displaced in South and South-East Asia during the year, mainly as a result of existing conflicts that escalated. Displacement was particularly significant in the Philippines where over 600,000 people fled an upsurge in fighting between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation front (MILF) and in Pakistan where perhaps 310,000 people were forced from their homes due to fighting between the government and pro-Taliban forces. In Sri Lanka, an estimated 230,000 people were displaced as a result of the intensification of the conflict between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Tens of thousands of people were also estimated to be displaced in Afghanistan and in Myanmar where the conflicts showed no signs of ending. In addition, new conflicts in India's Assam state between the Bodo tribal people and Muslim settlers, and in Orissa state between the majority Hindu population and Christian min-

orities, led to the displacement of at least 220,000 people during the year.

Conflict-induced displacement in South and South-East Asia was mainly caused by fighting between government forces and rebel groups striving for autonomy or control of the state, or trying to resist assimilation or migration policies resulting in their political and economic marginalisation. Competition for land and other natural resources, and the exclusion of ethnic or religious minorities from the economic development process, lay at the heart of many of the conflicts of the region. In addition to national armies and rebel groups, agents of displacement often included militias or vigilante groups but also communities mobilised along religious or ethnic lines competing for power and access to scarce resources or fighting for recognition of their rights.

Millions of people are also displaced each year in the region due to development projects linked to infrastructure projects, the production of energy or the extraction of natural resources, often in resource-rich areas inhabited by ethnic minorities and indigenous groups. Forced to abandon their land by authorities who did not recognise their ownership rights, many of these groups end up impoverished and further marginalised. This has at times led to increased tension with other communities, in particular migrant groups, and sometimes resulted in further conflict and displacement.

IDPs in a number of countries in 2008 faced risks to their safety due to fighting, counter-insurgency campaigns or persecution by armed actors, including governments who were themselves the perpetrators of human rights violations. While more efforts were reportedly made by coalition forces in Afghanistan to differentiate between civilians and combatants during airstrikes, the sharp increase in munitions dropped by air in southern provinces did result in significant civilian casualties, property damage and displacement. In the Philippines, civilians in conflict areas, including IDPs, were at risk of attacks by rebels of the MILF and retaliation by the army, which sometimes considered as legitimate targets civilians suspected of associating with rebels. Civilians, including IDPs, were also sometimes used as human shields by insurgents looking to protect themselves from military attacks. In Sri Lanka, the LTTE prevented an estimated 150,000 IDPs from leaving the Vanni where they remained trapped.

In most countries, the lack of monitoring of return or re-settlement movements made it difficult to estimate how many were able to return or find durable solutions during the year. The majority of those who were reported to return did so after a relatively short period of displacement, as in the Philippines where 250,000 returned after a few weeks or months. In Sri Lanka an estimated 126,000 people displaced since 2006 managed to return to areas no longer affected by conflict. Only in Timor-Leste was return linked to a near resolution of the displacement situation. Out of the 16,000 families that registered in early 2008 to take part in the government return programme, by the end of the year 11,700 had received the cash compensation package and left the camps set up in the capital Dili to return home.

Return and other durable solutions were limited in many countries by insecurity (as in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Myanmar and the Philippines), limited freedom of movement (in Sri Lanka and India), unresolved land and property issues

(in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Indonesia) and the lack of political will and assistance by governments (India, Nepal). The majority of the displaced in the region had been living in displacement for years with few prospects for return or rehabilitation. Many were living in camps or relocation sites with limited access to basic services, land or livelihood opportunities.

Among those experiencing the most critical lack of access to basic necessities were IDPs hiding in jungles, as in Myanmar, Indonesia's Papua province and India's Orissa state, and those trapped in a conflict zone, as in the Vanni in Sri Lanka. These IDPs had acute need of food, shelter, water and health care.

Female IDPs faced particular vulnerabilities such as in eastern Myanmar where access to maternal health care was extremely limited and poor nutrition, anaemia and malaria prevalent.

IDP children faced various obstacles to education, including school buildings destroyed by the conflict or turned into relief or military camps as in the Philippines. In Afghanistan, however, displacement led to an increase in the number of female students as IDP families from rural areas congregated in provincial capitals to escape the insurgency, and girls had more opportunities to access schools.

The response provided by most governments of the region remained insufficient to meet the needs and protect the rights of the displaced. Insecurity and restrictions imposed by governments in countries such as Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Myanmar prevented aid agencies from accessing displaced people caught in the midst of combat. While ongoing efforts were reported in some countries to draft IDP laws (as in Sri Lanka and the Philippines), in countries such as Afghanistan and Nepal where national IDP strategies and policies already existed, their effectiveness was limited by poor coordination, insufficient resources or the absence of any implementation guidelines.

Countries	Number of IDPs (rounded)	Government figures	UN figures	Other figures	Comments
Afghanistan	At least 235,000		At least 235,000 (information from 2008 UNHCR profiling under auspices of National IDP Task Force and Afghan Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation)		The figure largely reflects a protracted caseload, and does not cover most of those displaced since around 2004, including by the conflict between the Afghan army and international coalition forces and the armed opposition groups, due to severe limits on access to conflict areas. It also does not reflect "invisible" IDPs in large cities.
Bangladesh	60,000–500,000	500,000 (Government Task Force, 2000)		60,000 (Amnesty International, 2000)	In 2000 the government reported 128,364 displaced families, or 500,000-550,000 IDPs, in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, though Amnesty International and others reported an IDP figure as low as 60,000. No more recent information is available.
India	At least 500,000			At least 500,000 (IDMC, December 2008)	Compiled from various available figures.

Indonesia	70,000–120,000			70,000–120,000 (IDMC, March 2009)	Compiled from various available figures.
Myanmar	At least 451,000			451,000 (Thailand Burma Border Consortium, October 2008)	Estimate relates to rural areas of eastern Myanmar and does not include IDPs in the rest of the country. The estimated number of IDPs in the country is likely to be over one million.
Nepal	50,000–70,000		50,000–70,000 (OCHA, January 2009)		
Pakistan	At least 480,000		232,700 IDPs registered with UN agencies in North West Frontier Province (December 2008), and an estimated 200,000 in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (September 2008).	50,000–60,000 in Balochistan (The Economist, April 2008)	UN figure for NWFP does not reflect the entire population of IDPs living outside camps in NWFP; many IDPs in FATA were not accessible to UN agencies.
Philippines	At least 308,000	308,000 (National Disaster Coordinating Council, December 2008)			Only includes people displaced as a result of the August 2008 upsurge in fighting between the MILF and government forces in Mindanao. It does not include people displaced in previous years and who have not been able to fund durable solutions, nor people displaced by clashes between government forces and communist NPA rebels in Mindanao and elsewhere.
Sri Lanka	485,000			485,400 (figure provided by humanitarian agencies operational in Sri Lanka)	This figure is as of October 2008 and includes 277,300 people newly displaced or remaining in displacement during and after 2006. The rest of the IDP population (208,100 people) was displaced prior to 2002.
Timor-Leste	30,000	30,000 (Ministry of Social Services, December 2008)			In the absence of any registration or profiling exercise, the number of remaining IDPs at the end of 2008 was unknown. What is available is that 16,000 households registered to take part in the return programme and 11,700 of them had received the recovery package by the end of 2008. This leaves 4,300 households or approximately 30,000 people still waiting.



Afghanistan

Quick facts

Number of IDPs	At least 235,000
Percentage of total population	At least 0.8%
Start of current displacement situation	2002
Peak number of IDPs (and year)	1,200,000 (2002)
New displacement in 2008	Over 42,000
Returns in 2008	Undetermined
Causes of displacement	International armed conflict, generalised violence
Human development index	–

Over 235,000 people remained displaced in Afghanistan in 2008. The number of IDPs was as high as 1.2 million in 2002 when the Taliban government fell, and since then most people have returned spontaneously to areas of origin. However during 2008 new internal displacement continued, due to both continuing conflict and the secondary displacement of refugees returning from Pakistan and Iran.

IDPs in 2008 were spread across the country, either gathered in camps, or dispersed in squatter settlements or in cramped conditions with relatives in the fast-growing cities. An estimated 185,000 people displaced prior to and just after the fall of the Taliban were living in camp-like settlements in the south, west and south-east.

It has been impossible to accurately determine the number of people displaced by the conflict between international coalition forces and armed opposition groups since 2006, as there is little access to conflict zones. Since 2006, the conflict has spread and intensified and insurgent groups have sometimes deployed in villages to shield themselves from counter-attack; “rapid-response” air strikes have sometimes destroyed property or forced civilians to flee their homes.

An unknown number of people have also been displaced due to conflict between different tribal or ethnic groups or within a single tribe, over disputed resources or over disagreements which have spread across communities. At least 33,000 people were in 2008 living in secondary displacement after returning from Pakistan and Iran, as they were unable to return to insecure and impoverished areas of origin.

The protection concerns of IDPs should be seen against a context of widespread poverty and insecurity; nonetheless many face particular threats without the support links that other communities have developed and increasingly outside the reach of humanitarian agencies.

The physical security of IDPs and others caught in the continuing combat is at risk, and people may face multiple cycles of displacement. Attacks by all the combatants in violation of international humanitarian law have repeatedly resulted in the killing and injury of civilians and the destruction of their property, and forced people to become displaced and prevented their return. In addition, people displaced by the conflict have reported being targeted by insurgents as collaborators. Many IDPs have struggled to access food,

clean water, essential medicines and basic shelter against the unforgiving climate.

Livelihood opportunities remain out of reach for many of the returnees in secondary displacement in remote areas where they have no transport or family connections; there may be better opportunities in cities where they could integrate to some extent. Those who have returned since 2006 in particular have had low levels of education, skills and assets. Meanwhile, land and property disputes arising from the illegal occupation of houses or land, or their reallocation to other families, have continued to prevent the return of refugees and IDPs.

The prospects of improved situations for IDPs in Afghanistan are still distant, as the conflict must abate before humanitarian and development agencies can help to tackle the problems facing all Afghans. Conditions for those living in protracted or secondary displacement are unlikely to change unless major economic and resources issues are addressed. The government adopted an IDP strategy in 2003 but the effective management of returnee and IDP affairs remained a challenge. Nonetheless, their prospects improved in 2008, as the government adopted a policy to allow protracted IDPs to integrate locally, and a national task force co-chaired by the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation commissioned a profiling and analysis of the displacement situation and needs of IDPs.

The UN in 2008 implemented the cluster coordination system. UNHCR helped the national IDP task force carry out the profiling exercise and develop durable solutions for the protracted caseload. Following the profiling the government may develop a new and comprehensive IDP policy, but its success depends on institutional capacity and the resourcing to support all IDPs including those dispersed in cities or elsewhere; so far the government and its UN partners have avoided setting up new camps so as not to encourage people to leave their homes in search of aid.

All UN and many humanitarian agencies aiding IDPs have worked under UNAMA, a primarily political mission. In 2008, OCHA announced a decision to take up the central coordination role. But despite progress in coordinating the response, access to IDPs has remained very difficult, not only because the government does not control the entire territory, but also because humanitarian workers have been targeted by insurgents.

Bangladesh

Quick facts

Number of IDPs	60,000–500,000
Percentage of total population	Up to 0.3%
Start of current displacement situation	1997
New displacement in 2008	A few hundred
Returns in 2008	Undetermined
Causes of displacement	Internal armed conflict, human rights violations
Human development index	147



In 1976, armed conflict broke out in Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) as the government rejected indigenous Jumma tribal people's demands for greater recognition and constitutional safeguards. As the conflict escalated, the government began relocating poor and landless Bengalis from the plains to the CHT, including over 400,000 between 1979 and 1983. Forced evictions, atrocities related to the conflict, confiscation of land for military camps, and clashes with the new settlers displaced tens of thousands of tribal people within the country and another 65,000 into neighbouring India.

A peace accord in 1997 enabled the refugees to be repatriated but thousands of IDPs and returned refugees remain displaced due to unresolved issues relating to land and property restitution. Their number is still unknown, and virtually all parties contested the finding of a government task force that 500,000 people were displaced as of 2000; Amnesty International reported in the same year that 60,000 people were internally displaced.

Members of the Hindu minority were also displaced after the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and its coalition partners including two Islamic parties came to power in the 2001 elections; and since then a new wave of threats and violence against the Islamic Ahmadiyya sect may have caused displacement. However there is no current information on these situations.

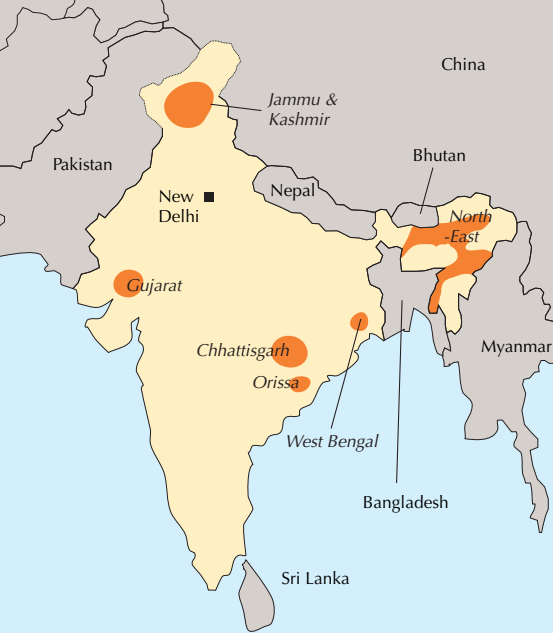
In the CHT, the 1997 peace accord committed the government to close temporary military camps, but as of 2004 only 31 of an estimated 520 had been closed down and land-grabbing continued to force indigenous people to flee their homes. After the army's declaration of emergency rule in January 2007, settlers seized an estimated 4,500 acres of land from Jumma individuals and communities in 16 villages in Kagrachari district. It was reported that army personnel were directly involved in all these cases, inciting settlers and creating a climate of fear among Jumma villagers. By 2006, more than 40 former Jumma villages were occupied by settlers. In April 2008, settlers and soldiers burnt down seven villages after the army began a new settlement programme in the Sajek area.

During the years of the armed conflict, the Jumma were gathered by the army into cluster villages or went into hiding in forest areas. The forests, where many IDPs continue to live, are reserve forests, and the army has threatened to burn down IDPs' houses if they fail to return to their areas of origin.

Meanwhile, the army has reportedly made plans to move more Bengali settlers into the forest reserves. The IDPs in forest areas are believed to have endured a very high level of food insecurity, and little access to any health care; following eviction threats many have moved into more remote locations. They have no secure livelihoods because agriculture, use of forest products, and even the collection of firewood is illegal. The IDPs have established schools for their children in the reserve forests, but these are also deemed illegal.

IDPs have rejected a government rehabilitation package as it does not make guarantees for property restitution, and the 1997 accord has remained stalled due to disagreement over whether Bengali settlers should be considered as IDPs. Settlers have continued to move to tribal land despite the end of the armed conflict, and the government has continued to discourage the involvement of international agencies and donor states. UNDP has targeted IDPs and other vulnerable groups in its attempts to encourage development in the Hill Tracts; however the political and humanitarian situations are unlikely to change without a more extensive international presence.

The new civilian government of Bangladesh, which swept to power in December 2008, has committed itself to honouring the 1997 peace accord with the Jumma tribal people. It remains to be seen if this commitment results in the end of new displacements and durable solutions for those displaced during the years of the armed conflict.



India

Quick facts

Number of IDPs	At least 500,000
Start of current displacement situation	1947 (North-East states); 1990 (Jammu and Kashmir); 2002 (Gujarat); 2005 (Chhattisgarh); 2007 (West Bengal); 2008 (Orissa)
New displacement in 2008	Over 220,000 reported in Assam and Orissa, otherwise undetermined
Returns in 2008	Undetermined
Causes of displacement	Internal and international armed conflict, generalised violence, human rights violations
Human development index	132

Situations of displacement were ongoing in 2008 in a number of India's regions, with each situation having different causes and outcomes for those affected. There are no comprehensive sources of figures across the country; based on the number of IDPs in gathered settings and those believed to have returned but not to have found durable solutions, there are at least 500,000 conflict-induced IDPs in India. In addition an unknown number have fled to urban areas or to other states where they are no longer traceable.

This figure includes people displaced since 1990 by separatist violence targeting the Hindu minority in Jammu and Kashmir and by shelling between Indian and Pakistani forces along Kashmir's Line of Control; those displaced in states of the North-East by conflicts ongoing since 1947 between state and ethnic or secessionist groups and inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic violence; victims of the conflict between Naxalite insurgents and government security forces and armed vigilantes in Chhattisgarh state, and of communal violence in Gujarat and Orissa states between the majority Hindu populations and Muslim and Christian minorities; and people displaced in West Bengal by violence related to a proposed development project.

India's IDPs share urgent protection concerns, particularly relating to access to basic necessities of life such as food, clean water, shelter and health care. Physical security remains a concern for some of the newly displaced groups, while access to education, property, livelihoods and work are major concerns among those in protracted situations.

The various groups also face unique challenges. Tribal IDPs in camps in Chhattisgarh face the risk of attacks by both government forces and Naxalite insurgents. Muslim IDPs in Gujarat continue to endure very poor living conditions and they are increasingly at risk of losing their original homes and land, which have been taken over by Hindu extremist groups. Christian IDPs in Orissa risk being forced to convert to Hinduism if they return to their homes. Displaced women in Assam and Manipur have increasingly been forced into prostitution in order to support their families in the absence of husbands who have left in search of work.

Conflict-induced IDPs enjoy no recognition under India's national laws. The responsibility to protect them is generally left to state authorities who are often unaware of their rights or reluctant to offer support, particularly in cases where they

played a role in causing the displacement. Where their status is not recognised IDPs can struggle to assert their civil and political rights; for example, after living in displacement for more than 15 years, displaced Kashmiri Pandit families risk losing their cultural identity and their status is unrecognised by the government, which refers to them as "migrants".

Prospects for durable solutions for the various displaced groups have been limited by barriers to their return home. In the absence of a national IDP policy, local integration or resettlement in a third area have not been supported, with governments of states generally unwilling to have IDPs resettle there permanently. For example, officials in Andhra Pradesh have forced IDPs to return to Chhattisgarh state, and the Tripura state government continues to promote the return of Bru IDPs from Mizoram, although the Mizoram state government is opposed.

As of 2008 there were no ministries mandated with IDP protection, but the advocacy of some national agencies and human rights bodies on conflict-induced displacement had some impact during the year. In Tripura, a visit by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights led to an investigation into why 7,000 Bru children in camps had not been included in the issuing of ration cards. The Supreme Court of India ordered the National Human Rights Commission to investigate the vigilante force that had displaced people in Chhattisgarh state, and urged the Orissa government to step down if it remains unable to protect Christians fleeing their homes.

Nonetheless a national legislative framework is needed to enable the recognition and protection of conflict-induced IDPs in India, and a national agency must be created to oversee the response and ensure that it is consistent across the country.

The international response has been limited, with only a few agencies such as Médecins Sans Frontières and the ICRC providing protection and assistance to some IDPs; there is no overall international agency coordinating the response. To enable a fuller response, the government would have to allow more international NGOs to work with IDPs, and explore ways of engaging UN agencies mandated with IDP protection.

Indonesia



Quick facts

Number of IDPs	70,000–120,000
Percentage of total population	Up to 0.1%
Start of current displacement situation	1998 (Central Sulawesi and West Kalimantan); 1999 (Aceh, Maluku, West Timor); 2001 (Papua, Central Kalimantan)
Peak number of IDPs (and year)	1,300,000 (2002)
New displacement in 2008	0
Returns in 2008	Undetermined
Causes of displacement	Internal armed conflicts, generalised violence, human rights violations
Human development index	109

The number of IDPs in Indonesia continued to decline in 2008 as people displaced since the late 1990s in different provinces became integrated in their place of displacement or returned to their areas of origin. The principal concerns for remaining IDPs continued to revolve around accessing the basic necessities of life and rebuilding sustainable livelihoods. Resolution of property disputes, access to farming land and compensation for property lost were also recurring issues. Efforts were needed to relocate those in camps to decent settlements where they could acquire land to work and property titles, or else grant them the land the camps are situated on and significantly improve the living conditions there.

The largest remaining IDP population was in Maluku Province, where in 2008 an estimated 50,000 people were still in relocation sites waiting to receive a government assistance package, with a further 4,000 or so in North Maluku still in need of assistance. Fighting between Christian and Muslim communities displaced nearly one million in both provinces between 1999 and 2002. In both provinces, areas previously religiously mixed have remained segregated.

In Central Sulawesi, displacement was also caused by violence between Christian and Muslim communities between 1998 and 2002. In 2008 around 5,000 people were still displaced on borrowed land or in resettlement camps in Poso Regency, because assistance funds had never reached them due to corruption or because continuing tensions were preventing their return to areas of origin where they had been in a minority. Elsewhere in the province thousands of people, many of them displaced, were still waiting for housing assistance.

In other provinces such as West Timor, West and Central Kalimantan, thousands of people displaced by communal violence had still not returned, either because they were unwilling to face hostile neighbours or because they had nothing to return to. Many were living in camps or relocation sites without access to basic services, where they were struggling to recover in the absence of sufficient support.

Conflicts between insurgent and government forces have also caused displacement. In Aceh Province, large-scale displacement

followed the intensification in 1999 of conflict between the rebels of the Free Aceh Movement and the security forces. After the 2005 peace agreement, IDPs started returning home, and by 2008 only a few thousand people were still displaced, dispersed across rural districts of Central Aceh and in need of targeted assistance. Nonetheless, a decade of war and displacement had left many people in Aceh vulnerable. Trauma was widespread, and destruction and looting of property had pushed a large proportion of the population, and in particular IDPs, into extreme poverty.

In Papua, displacement has been ongoing since 2001 due to the security forces' campaigns against insurgents of the Free Papua Movement (OPM), which have often been accompanied by human rights violations. No displacement was reported in 2008, although military operations against OPM rebels are known to have continued.

A national IDP policy, which was adopted in 2001 and ran until 2004, laid out the framework for assistance. The government has provided comprehensive humanitarian assistance but has often struggled to ensure durable solution for the displaced or the returnees. It has distributed "empowerment" packages, built houses, provided building materials to IDPs and set up relocation centres, but delivery of funds has been beset by unreliable data on the displaced, poor coordination and corruption in almost all provinces.

During 2008 only a limited number of international agencies continued to provide direct support to IDPs or returnees in need of assistance. Absence of attention and lack of funding has forced many to close down operations over the past years. The UN no longer assists conflict-induced IDPs as a separate vulnerable group, preferring to address their needs within wider reintegration and development programmes targeting entire communities. A number of international NGOs have maintained programmes in Maluku, Central Sulawesi, Central Kalimantan and West Timor, while local NGOs and church groups have supported IDPs across the country and in particular in Papua, where the government has not opened conflict-affected areas to neutral observers or humanitarian agencies.



Myanmar

Quick facts

Number of IDPs	At least 451,000
Percentage of total population	At least 0.9%
Start of current displacement situation	1960s
New displacement in 2008	At least 66,000
Returns in 2008	Undetermined
Causes of displacement	Internal armed conflict, human rights violations
Human development index	135

In October 2008, there were an estimated 451,000 people internally displaced by conflict in rural areas of eastern Myanmar. There were also unknown but significant numbers of IDPs in other parts of the country including in urban areas.

The displacement in eastern Myanmar has primarily been caused by government forces, and to a lesser extent by the insurgent ethnic armed groups fighting them. Since 1996, over 3,000 villages have been destroyed, forcibly relocated or otherwise emptied, leading to the forced migration of their occupants. However the displacement has been ongoing since the conflict began five decades ago, and became systematic from the mid-1960s with the introduction of the “Four Cuts” policy that targeted civilians and caused their displacement with the objective of separating ethnic armies from their civilian support bases. In areas where ceasefire agreements between ethnic leaders and the government have brought conflicts to an end, displacement has often continued due to human rights violations by government forces.

IDPs in eastern Myanmar were in 2008 either gathered in government-run relocation sites, dispersed in hiding areas in the jungle, or in ceasefire areas administered by groups that have agreements with the government. The IDPs in relocation sites may have been supporting themselves through daily labour, while a little aid from community-based groups and religious organisations may have reached them, but those in hiding were largely without formal support or livelihoods. In 2008 the estimated number of IDPs in ceasefire areas fell, but the number in hiding areas and relocation sites increased as over 140 villages were destroyed or relocated.

In comparison with Myanmar’s non-displaced population, IDPs especially in hiding and in relocation sites face greater physical insecurity due to their forcible displacement and relocation; less access to basic necessities; and a higher risk of exploitation. However, virtually all of the IDPs in eastern Myanmar are from ethnic minorities and so share certain risks with non-displaced members of minorities.

Government troops in many cases burn villages and farms of IDPs, so they have nothing to return to, and soldiers may also attack IDPs in hiding sites. The government prevents all humanitarian agencies from specifically targeting people displaced by conflict, and in the absence of formal aid programmes, some IDPs and particularly displaced women have had

to forage for food and water in areas with large numbers of government troops, putting them at risk of further violence. Displaced children have been at high risk of forced labour and recruitment.

IDPs in hiding in eastern Myanmar have experienced severe food shortages, as their farms and crops have been burned by the army. Some IDPs in relocation sites in Myanmar also face chronic malnutrition due to limited access to land; in cases where IDPs are able to grow crops, the army may be imposing taxes which leave many with no means of securing even their minimum subsistence needs. Water and sanitation facilities in relocation sites may be inadequate and residents are prone to a number of diseases. Mortality rates of displaced children in conflict areas are three times Myanmar’s average, at levels comparable to those among displaced children in Somalia.

IDP children in hiding areas have few learning resources, and open-air classes have often been disrupted by fighting. A large percentage of children in areas of conflict have to leave school after primary level, and in areas under government control they have been prevented from studying their own languages, having instead to study in Burmese.

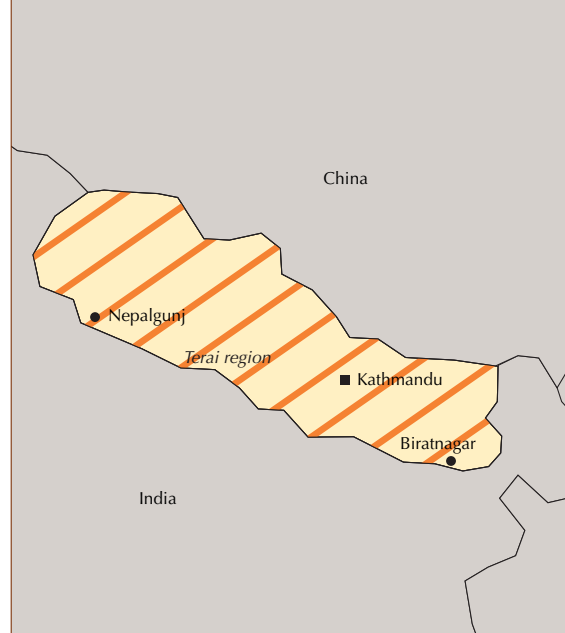
The prospects are best for those IDPs in ceasefire areas (there were around 224,000 in 2008) where integration may be feasible to a certain extent. It is, however, unlikely that they will achieve equal enjoyment of their human rights. For the people in hiding in jungles, safe return will not be possible until the threat of army attacks and destruction of villages recedes. At some relocation sites, restrictions on IDPs may decrease and they may be then considered to have locally integrated to a certain extent.

For lasting change, the armed conflict and human rights violations would have to give way to genuine reconciliation between the majority and minority ethnic populations; the government would also have to recognise the existence of conflict-induced displacement in the country and give access to agencies seeking to assist IDPs.

Nepal

Quick facts

Number of IDPs	50,000–70,000
Percentage of total population	0.2%
Start of current displacement situation	1996
Peak number of IDPs (and year)	200,000 (2005)
New displacement in 2008	0
Returns in 2008	Undetermined
Causes of displacement	Internal armed conflict, human rights violations, generalised violence
Human development index	145



At the end of 2008 between 50,000 and 70,000 IDPs remained dispersed across Nepal, mainly in the cities, even though the armed conflict and localised inter-ethnic violence which had caused their displacement had ended.

In 1996, Maoist rebels launched a “people’s war” to overthrow the monarchy and establish a socialist republic. Maoists in the mid-western region attacked the police, teachers and government officials, landowners, and political opponents, and forced people associated with the monarchy to flee towards district headquarters. From 2001 the conflict escalated and a state of emergency was declared; there was a breakdown in education, commerce and public services in many areas and food security declined. By then, other poorer groups had fled from the fighting and from extortion and forced recruitment by the Maoists. People started fleeing to district centres, to large cities like Kathmandu, Biratnagar and Nepalgunj, and across the border to India. The conflict ended with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of November 2006. Two years later, in April 2008, Nepal peacefully elected a Constituent Assembly which formed a Maoist-dominated government tasked with completing the transition to a Federal Democratic Republic.

In 2008, people displaced by the conflict continued to return, albeit at a slower pace than during the previous year. Many of those who had not returned home remained unable to do so because of lack of assistance and unresolved land and property issues there, while some who had returned decided to leave again. While the Maoists agreed to allow all displaced people to go back to their homes, they only enabled the restitution of land and property in some areas, where they did not consider that returnees had committed “serious crimes”.

Up to 70,000 people were also displaced by floods during 2008 and an estimated 50,000 of them remained displaced at the end of the year with pressing humanitarian needs.

IDPs faced a range of protection concerns. Those who had returned struggled to secure a livelihood and to access food, healthcare and education in areas affected by a decade of war, while those in towns and cities faced obstacles in finding proper accommodation and, where they had lost documentation, accessing education, social services and voting rights. IDPs from farming communities often lacked the skills to make a

living in urban areas, and most who had found work were in low-paid labour-intensive jobs.

Displaced children often faced particularly difficult conditions in cities. Although some managed to attend school there, others could not enroll because they did not have the proper documentation or because they had to contribute to the family income. Working children were frequently exposed to trafficking or economic and sexual exploitation.

Displaced women, in particular those at the head of households, have faced more difficulties in reclaiming their land and property or getting compensation. With little resources they have been at risk of trafficking and prostitution.

The Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MOPR) has provided assistance to IDPs returning home, but little has been done for those hoping to integrate locally. MOPR has developed a national policy on IDPs but this is still to be fully applied.

Prior to the formalisation of the cluster approach in September 2008, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee country team coordinated assistance to IDPs, with OHCHR, UNHCR and OCHA leading the response. The cluster approach was activated in response to the displacement due to floods, with OHCHR as the agency responsible for IDP protection. The attention is focused on those displaced by the floods and the needs of conflict-induced IDPs are now seldom discussed in the protection cluster. The Norwegian Refugee Council has assisted IDPs in Nepal since 2006, and together with OCHA and OHCHR has tried during 2008 to keep the conflict-induced IDPs on the humanitarian agenda.

For most remaining IDPs there will be no durable solution until their registration is completed and lost documentation replaced, assistance provided for their return and reintegration, land and property problems resolved, and vocational training and income-generating projects made available to support their reintegration. More efforts are also needed to monitor returns and assess their sustainability. The IDP policy adopted in 2007 needs to be properly implemented. Implementing directives, indispensable to ensure the proper dissemination of the IDP policy at the local level and guide its implementation, have been ready since the end of 2007 but the government has so far failed to adopt them.



Pakistan

Quick facts

Number of IDPs	At least 480,000
Percentage of total population	0.3%
Start of current displacement situation	2002 (FATA); 2005 (Balochistan); 2007 (NWFP)
Peak number of IDPs (and year)	Over 200,000 in Balochistan (2006); 900,000 in NWFP (2007)
New displacement in 2008	Over 310,000
Returns in 2008	Undetermined
Causes of displacement	Internal and internationalised armed conflict, human rights violations
Human development index	139

More than 400,000 people remained displaced at the end of 2008 by ongoing conflicts in three regions of Pakistan. New displacements had continued through the year, with hundreds of thousands of people forced to escape the fighting, though in some cases only for short periods.

In the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) the operations of the government's armed forces in search of Taleban and Al-Qaeda members have met since 2002 with violent resistance; the UN in September 2008 estimated that 200,000 IDPs in FATA were beyond the reach of UN agencies.

Fighting between the government and militant groups in FATA in summer 2008 led to approximately 20 per cent of the total population (an estimated 850,000 people) to flee from Bajaur Agency to the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). A number of people displaced within Bajaur returned to their homes following the announcement of a ceasefire at the end of August 2008, but thousands remained displaced. In NWFP, armed conflict between government troops and pro-Taleban militants has also led to displacement since 2007. In NWFP's Swat district an estimated 50 per cent of the total 1.8 million population remained severely affected by the conflict and a large number of individuals were displaced within the district.

By late 2008, according to UN estimates, over 232,000 persons displaced by the conflicts in FATA and NWFP had been registered in nine districts of NWFP, including over 50,000 people living in 12 camps established in the safer districts of NWFP, and over 178,000 individuals living outside the camps. The actual IDP figures were estimated to be higher due to registration of displaced people outside camps having taken place in only 70 per cent of the affected districts. The displaced families outside camps were relying on the hospitality of friends, families and tribal networks while those in camps were receiving assistance from international and national aid agencies.

Many displaced families in NWFP were separated, as some members (mostly women and children) had fled to safe areas, while others (mainly men) had stayed behind to safeguard homes and livestock. This created additional risks for the many women and children displaced, with concerns of increased sexual violence and exploitation reported. The capacity of cities to absorb these people has been increasingly

exhausted, leading to ever greater competition for scarce resources and livelihood opportunities. In this context displaced girls, women, boys and people with disabilities have had limited access to support.

In Balochistan, displacement has been caused since 2005 by the government's military response to a long-running, low-level insurgency by tribal militants seeking to wrest political power and control of the region's natural resources from the Punjabi-dominated authorities. Between 50,000 and 60,000 people were estimated to be displaced as of April 2008. They were living without clean drinking water or health care, and displaced children were believed to be facing severe acute malnutrition; dozens of children had died due to malnutrition and diseases such as typhoid and hepatitis, while IDP women had died in childbirth.

Displaced and non-displaced civilians faced immediate risks to their physical security when they were caught in the crossfire between the army and insurgent groups. These problems were compounded in the immediate aftermath of their displacement by the lack of access of aid agencies to many areas. The government of Pakistan has prevented aid from reaching those displaced by the conflict in Balochistan, while attacks by insurgent groups on humanitarian workers in many areas have made it very difficult for them to access IDPs.

For IDPs in Pakistan to achieve durable solutions to their situation, the armed conflicts in NWFP and FATA would have to come to an end, and a political settlement prevail in Balochistan. In the meantime, although human rights groups have publicised the actions of armed forces that have led to the displacement of civilians, the government's response to their plight has been limited. There are no national policies or dedicated government offices in place, although ministries with health or children portfolios have responded to displacement in some areas.

In 2008, the government did allow UN and international agencies to become involved in responding to the needs of those displaced in FATA and NWFP; however further improvement would depend on a policy enabling nationwide access. The UN activated the cluster approach in response, but most international agencies have limited access to FATA and NWFP due to the ongoing insurgency, or in Balochistan due to government restrictions.

The Philippines

Quick facts

Number of IDPs	At least 308,000
Percentage of total population	At least 0.4%
Start of current displacement situation	1970s
Peak number of IDPs (and year)	1,000,000 (2000)
New displacement in 2008	600,000
Returns in 2008	250,000
Causes of displacement	Internal armed conflict, human rights violations
Human development index	90



Conflict and displacement have continued for many years in the Philippines. The most recent large-scale emergency broke out in August 2008, when intense fighting in the southern region of Mindanao led to the displacement of an estimated 600,000 people.

Before the last upsurge in fighting, it was estimated that conflict had displaced more than two million people since 2000. Most displacements have taken place in the southern region of Mindanao where the government has fought secessionist Moro (Muslim) rebel groups for the past 40 years. Although hopes of a formal peace agreement were raised in July 2008 as the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) reached a consensus on the issue of autonomous Moro territory, strong opposition to the deal by Christian groups and growing Moro frustration led to intense fighting in August in North Cotabato Province, which spread to several other provinces.

By the end of 2008 only low-level fighting persisted, but it continued to cause displacement and more than 300,000 people remained unable or unwilling to return to their homes.

The common agent of displacement nationwide has been the army, operating across the country against communist New People's Army (NPA) rebels, and in Basilan and Sulu provinces against the Abu Sayyaf group and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), as well as against the MILF throughout Mindanao and particularly in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). Development projects backed by military support and disproportionately affecting indigenous groups have also caused displacement. Two groups have been particularly vulnerable to displacement: Moro people living in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao, and indigenous groups whose territory is rich in natural resources. Counter-insurgency operations against the NPA have often resulted in human rights violations against civilians suspected of supporting the insurgents and caused regular displacement although on a smaller scale.

While most displacement has been short-term and localised, with people returning to their homes as soon as fighting has subsided, some groups have remained displaced for years where insecurity has continued.

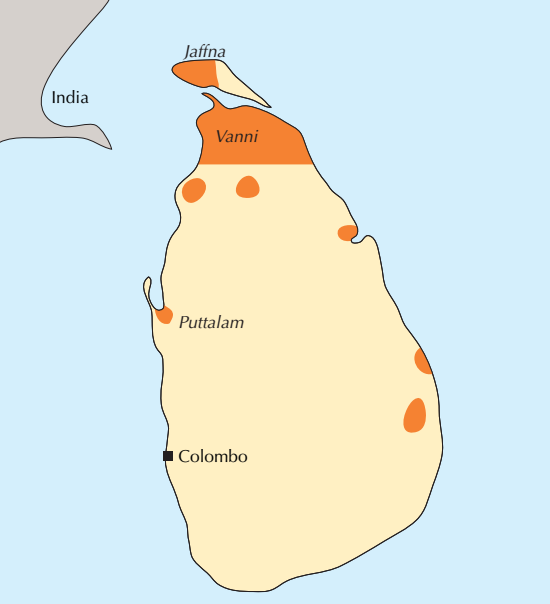
IDPs have faced many threats to their physical security and integrity, while facing barriers to their enjoyment of

the basic necessities of life, education, property, livelihoods and other rights. With no access to their lands, they have been forced to engage in irregular, low-paid jobs to survive. Displaced children, many of whom have had their education interrupted by their displacement, have been vulnerable to trafficking, recruitment into armed groups, malnutrition and health problems due to their prolonged stay in overcrowded emergency centres. Many of those who managed to return still have acute assistance and rehabilitation needs.

The government's response to displacement has been mixed, with frequent discrepancies between policies and their implementation. The quality of assistance has varied according to the centre into which IDPs have been evacuated, due to the inconsistent implementation of guidelines and standards. In October 2008, the government created an IDP Taskforce composed of the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), the Department of Health and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The DSWD has been the main agency delivering assistance to IDPs, either directly or through other national or local government agencies, NGOs and other civil society groups.

Despite genuine government efforts to assist the displaced and improve its response, more remains to be done. The NDCC has responded to the recent IDP situation in Mindanao broadly as it would for displacement caused by a natural disaster, without taking into account the specific protection problems and the risks of protracted displacement there. Coordination and response mechanisms could be further decentralised and the government could be more open about the severity of emergencies, allowing international agencies to better fund assistance programmes.

In past years UNDP led the UN response to internal displacement in the Philippines, with UNICEF focusing on the protection needs of vulnerable groups including IDPs. In October 2008, however, coordination between agencies responding to the Mindanao emergency was minimal, and so the UN informally extended the cluster approach to the conflict there, a year after activating it in response to natural disaster. By the end of the year, however, no agency had been formally designated to lead the protection cluster.



Sri Lanka

Quick facts

Number of IDPs	485,000
Percentage of total population	2.5%
Start of current displacement situation	1983
Peak number of IDPs (and year)	800,000 (2001)
New displacement in 2008	230,000
Returns in 2008	126,000
Causes of displacement	Internal armed conflict, human rights violations
Human development index	104

Hundreds of thousands of people remained displaced in Sri Lanka during 2008. In the north and east, their displacement was caused by intense fighting between government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which began in 2006 after four years of a ceasefire situation described as “no war and no peace”. In 2008, the government formally ended the ceasefire and since then has pursued a military solution. Most of those displaced from 2006 onwards have been from the Tamil and Muslim minority groups. There is also a significant population remaining displaced from the period before 2002.

In the west of the island, Muslim IDPs in Puttalam remained in displacement after being forced out of the north and north-west by the LTTE in 1990. Few attempts had been made to find durable solutions for them, and in the meantime they faced poverty and difficult living conditions.

In 2008, the sphere of combat shifted to the north and several thousands of people became newly displaced in the Vanni region which was then under the control of the LTTE. The LTTE was forcing them to remain. Their vulnerability in the face of a mounting offensive increased in September, when the government ordered all humanitarian agencies except the ICRC and Caritas to leave the Vanni.

From September, IDPs in the Vanni were desperately short of food. Convoys up to December were only able to provide 40 per cent of the minimum requirement of the affected population. Tens of thousands of people were living without adequate shelter, health facilities in the Vanni were stretched to the limit and IDPs were facing acute shortages of essential medicines. Sanitation facilities remained very poor, leading to concerns over possible outbreaks of waterborne disease.

People who had managed to flee to government-controlled areas still faced great risks to their life and liberty. As of October 2008, the government continued to hold over 800 people who had fled the LTTE areas in enclosed camps, suspecting some of them to be LTTE collaborators.

IDPs in all parts of Sri Lanka were facing major challenges in recovering the property they had left, as more than 80 per cent of the territory is owned by the state, and private ownership can only be established of land which has been occupied continuously for ten years. The government has also designated areas as High Security Zones, leading many IDPs to lose their farms and fishing areas, and so their livelihoods.

An end to the conflict could lead to new displacements ending and returns being possible. However, durable solutions for returnees depend not only on the security situation improving but also better livelihoods opportunities emerging. Even after the armed conflict ends essential reconstruction would need to precede return or local integration. This would probably depend on investment by the international community. The long-term IDPs may have a better chance of durable local integration than return.

The effectiveness of the government’s response has been limited by organisational difficulties. The Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights is the nominated focal point, but the overlapping mandates and responsibilities of ministries and agencies have led to delays, poor coordination and duplication of activities.

Legislators were drafting a national IDP law at the end of 2008, but greater political will was still needed to uphold the rights of IDPs. The IDP Protection Unit of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka had spoken out to promote IDPs’ rights, for example on forced returns, but the prevailing political environment had limited the impact of this advocacy.

Over the past years, UN agencies have taken the lead in providing protection and assistance, and while they have been successful in maintaining their role in areas outside of the northern conflict zone, they have not been able to promote the access of all other national and international protection agencies. National members of staff of national and international organisations have also faced intimidation. The coordination between agencies has generally been effective, but the response will continue to fall short as long as the government limits access to IDPs and returnees in various parts of the country.

Timor-Leste

Quick facts

Number of IDPs	30,000
Percentage of total population	2.5%
Start of current displacement situation	2006
Peak number of IDPs (and year)	150,000 (2006)
New displacement in 2008	0
Returns in 2008	80,000
Causes of displacement	Generalised violence, human rights violations
Human development index	150



An estimated 150,000 people in Timor-Leste were displaced in 2006 as their homes and property were seized or destroyed during violence between rival groups within the army and police and among the wider population. They sought refuge in the capital Dili, in government buildings, schools or churches and subsequently in makeshift camps, or with families and friends in rural districts.

The causes of the crisis included political rivalries dating back to the independence struggle up to 1999, divisions between “easterners” and “westerners”, but also chronic poverty and a large and disempowered youth population. Land disputes from before and immediately after the 1999 independence vote also continued to rankle.

The government launched a new recovery plan in 2008, distributing compensation to people agreeing to leave the camps while progressively ending food distribution and closing camps. By the end of the year, 11,700 households out of the 16,000 who registered to take part in the return programme had received the compensation, and 45 of the existing 56 camps had been closed. The government planned for all IDPs to return home by February 2009.

With the focus on getting IDPs to agree to leave the camps, less attention has been paid to the conditions in return areas, where access to clean water and sanitation, food, basic services and economic opportunities is insufficient to support the long-term needs of the displaced and non-displaced alike.

Some returnees have faced hostility from former neighbours and resentment due the recovery packages they have received, while little reconstruction has taken place and many IDPs who returned to their homes in 2008 had to pitch a tent on their property as their homes were uninhabitable. Land and property issues have been settled on a case-by-case basis, with squatters often agreeing to leave in exchange for some of the IDPs’ compensation money, but more serious cases involving conflicting ownership claims have not been resolved. Problems are more acute for female-headed IDP households as women traditionally do not inherit land and property in Timor-Leste. Many displaced children have had no access to education, because schools have been unable or unwilling to admit them, because of the cost or because they have had to work to supplement family income.

Since the beginning of 2008 the National Recovery Strategy (NRS) has focused on resolving the displacement crisis and in particular the five “pillars” of shelter and housing, social protection, security and stability, socio-economic development, and confidence building and reconciliation. However, the \$15 million budget for 2008 proved far from sufficient to cover the cost of even the housing component, and reliance on international donors to fill the gap has left the strategy exposed.

The Ministry of Social Solidarity (MSS) is responsible for IDP assistance and coordination while the Office of the Ombudsman for Human Rights and Justice is responsible for monitoring and protecting the rights of the displaced. Like other ministries involved in the NRS, their capacity for co-operation, coordination and planning leaves room for improvement. An “IDP cell” has focused on monitoring IDP rights but its capacity and coverage have also remained limited.

Numerous international agencies are in Timor-Leste, as well as an Australian-led military force. Most issues related to IDP protection are discussed and coordinated through the Humanitarian Coordination Committee and the Protection Working Group led by OHCHR and UNICEF. IOM, UNDP and a number of international NGOs have taken significant roles in responding to internal displacement.

Coordination informally follows the cluster arrangement; there are sectoral working groups with one agency formally responsible. Coordination with the government has followed the NRS pillars, but as of the end of 2008 coordination meetings had only taken place in three of five pillars. The formal implementation of the UN’s cluster approach in early 2009 may lead to a more coordinated and effective response.

A number of outstanding issues must be addressed for durable solutions to become possible. There is a need to address the shortage of housing stock, create new economic opportunities in areas of return for both the returnees and the receiving community, and improve living conditions there. Also, without addressing the causes of the unrest and the displacement, ending widespread impunity for aggressors and setting up a framework to regulate property ownership, the potential for new disputes will remain.