

Israel



Quick facts

Number of IDPs	Undetermined
Percentage of total population	–
Start of current displacement situation	1948
Peak number of IDPs (Year)	50,000 (1950)
New displacement	0

Since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, various waves of people have been displaced within the country. Arab villagers were displaced during and after the conflict which accompanied its creation, and their descendants have remained dispersed across the country; meanwhile Bedouin communities were displaced within the southern Negev region. 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 people displaced in the context of the creation of the state of Israel, both in the north and in the south, has been to assert their right to the property they lost. 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. The majority of the land from which they were displaced has been put under state ownership.

In addition, Bedouin communities in the Negev, whether displaced or not, 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 that communities face a continuous risk of displacement. NGOs such as the Regional Council of Unrecognized Arab Bedouin Villages have helped to persuade relevant ministries to halt planned demolitions of villages.

There is no notable effort on the part of the state or international actors to help people recover the property they lost during displacement. Neither the UN nor the government consider that there are any IDPs in Israel.



Syria



Quick facts

Number of IDPs	433,000
Percentage of total population	2.0%
Start of current displacement situation	1967
Peak number of IDPs (Year)	433,000 (2007)
New displacement	0
Causes of displacement	International armed conflict, human rights violations

The situation of hundreds of thousands of Syrians forcibly displaced from the Golan Heights during the Six Day War in 1967 is still unresolved. The Syrian government estimated in 2007 that over 430,000 people remained internally displaced, including the descendants of those originally forced to flee from the Golan. As occupying power in the Golan, Israel has prevented IDPs from returning to their homes and destroyed hundreds of villages. In 1981, Israel formally annexed the area, but this annexation has not been recognised internationally.

The living conditions of displaced Syrians are not well documented. Most displaced families appear to have integrated in Damascus or elsewhere; however many have expressed a wish to return to Golan, and none have achieved the restitution of their property or compensation for property lost or destroyed.

The Syrian government has made some efforts to rebuild in areas bordering occupied territory, but progress has been slow. Meanwhile, Israel has continued to promote settlements in the Golan: as of 2009, more than 17,000 Israeli settlers were in 32 settlements in the Golan, alongside 18,000 to 21,000 Syrians in the remaining five villages of an estimated 164 which had existed prior to the occupation.

Syrians in the Golan reportedly continued to face discrimination and to be separated from family members residing in Syria.