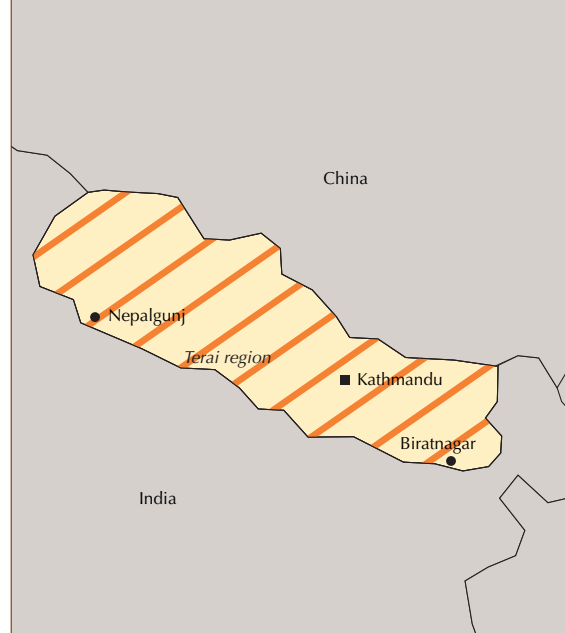


Nepal

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.