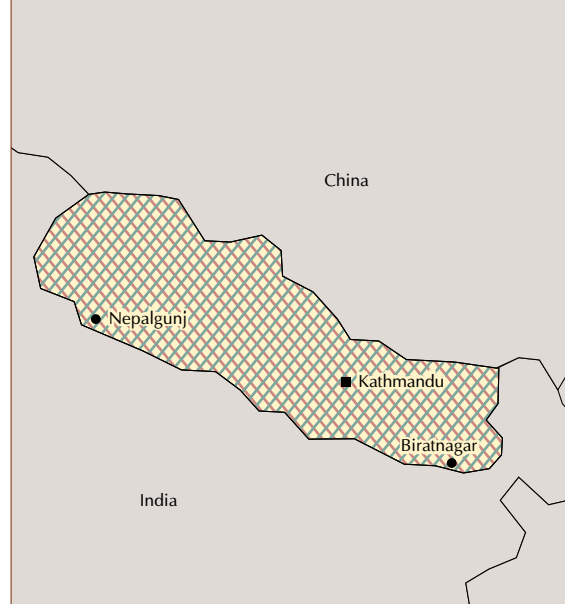


Nepal



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 (Year)	200,000 (2005)
New displacement	5,000



More than three years after the government of Nepal and Maoist rebels ended their ten-year conflict, up to 70,000 people were still displaced by the war and by inter-ethnic violence at the end of 2009, and unable or unwilling to return to their homes.

In 1996, the Maoists launched a “people’s war” to overthrow the monarchy and establish a socialist republic. Maoists in districts of the mid-western region attacked political opponents, members of police forces, teachers, government officials and landowners, and forced people associated with the monarchy to flee towards district headquarters. From 2001, the conflict escalated and a state of emergency was declared; broke down in education, commerce and public service in many areas and food security declined. By then, other poorer groups had fled from the fighting and from the threat of extortion and forced recruitment by the Maoists. People also started fleeing 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. In April 2008, Nepal peacefully elected the Constituent Assembly, which formed a Maoist-dominated government tasked with completing the transition to a federal democratic republic. However, through 2008 and 2009, intense power struggles between the main political parties created an unstable environment which seriously hampered implementation of the peace process. As of the end of 2009, the political stalemate remained unresolved.

Repeated Maoist commitments to return confiscated houses and land were yet to be honoured in several districts, and IDPs from non-Maoist political parties still found it particularly hard to recover property. The government return package was limited to those officially registered, and in many districts, up to half of IDPs had been unable to register for assistance, because they faced bureaucratic hurdles or because they were unaware of the registration process. The post-war economy was depressed and there was still limited access to basic services in rural areas, so many returnees had had to go back to towns and cities again in search of work.

Most IDPs chose to stay in their area of displacement, mainly in urban areas, where some had managed to integrate and to find jobs. Many others, including internally displaced children and women in particular, were struggling to find proper accommodation or access basic services. Children were

exposed to a variety of threats, including trafficking, sexual exploitation and child labour. Displaced women, particularly widows, faced significant discrimination, making them highly vulnerable to further impoverishment and forcing many to resort to prostitution.

The Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR), the government body responsible for coordinating assistance to IDPs, has provided assistance to people returning home, but it has done little for those hoping to integrate locally. Nearly three years after being issued, the national IDP policy has yet to be fully implemented. Dissemination of information about the IDP policy has not been a government priority: procedural directives to ensure its implementation were developed by the MoPR and sent to the Cabinet for approval at the end of 2007, but as of the end of 2009, they had still not been formally adopted.

Since the introduction of the cluster approach in September 2008 following the displacement caused by flooding of the Koshi River, OHCHR has taken the lead of the protection cluster, and attention has focused on those displaced by the floods. At the end of 2009, OCHA, OHCHR, UNHCR and UNICEF requested the deployment of a senior advisor to work with the protection cluster on issues related to people internally displaced by the conflict. This work had, to a large extent, been done by NRC until its departure from Nepal in mid-2009.

Since 2008, priorities have again shifted back to development programmes, and funding for humanitarian operations has decreased. For most remaining IDPs there will be no durable solutions without completion of registration, return and reintegration assistance, land and property restitution, vocational training and income-generating projects to help people reintegrate.