

COLOMBIA

Figure Analysis – Displacement Related to Conflict and Violence

CONTEXT

Guerrilla groups, FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) dissidents, post-demobilisation paramilitary groups and other organisations have been fighting over land, drug smuggling routes and to fill the power vacuum created by the demobilisation of the continent’s largest and oldest guerrilla group. This has led to an increase in displacement in 2018. The number of mass displacement events and people affected by them nearly doubled from 65 events and around 18,000 people displaced in 2017, to 111 events and more than 33,000 individuals displaced in 2018.

By far the largest number of displacements occurred in the northern department of Norte de Santander, where 45 mass displacement events affected about 14,000 people, 42 per cent of all people displaced in Colombia during 2018. The main driver has been confrontations between dissidents from the ELN (National Liberation Army) and EPL (Popular Liberation Army) guerrillas, known as *Los Pelusos*, for control of the drug trade. The southern department of Nariño experienced 21 mass displacement events affecting more than 9,000 people, 27 per cent of those displaced in 2018 in Colombia. The western department of Antioquia experienced the third largest amount of mass displacements in the country, 16 events, which affected more than 5,000 people, 15 per cent of the total of mass displacements in 2018 nationwide.¹

According to OCHA, less than 400 people were displaced in mass displacement events in Antioquia in 2017. The increase in 2018 is largely a result of the strategic importance of the subregion of Bajo Cauca, which has led to clashes between armed groups. This subregion hosts *Hidroituango*, the country’s largest hydroelectric project which was due to be completed in 2018. Floods and management errors combined to block the plant’s tunnels and generated an emergency which forced more than 26,000 people to evacuate.

New displacements	Total number of IDPs	Partial or unverified solutions	
		Number of IDPs who have made partial progress towards a durable solution	Number of IDPs whose progress towards durable solutions cannot be verified
145,000	5,761,000 (Year figure was last updated: 2018)	1,902,000 (As of 31 December 2018)	No data available

This corresponds to new instances of internal displacement having occurred in 2018.

This corresponds to the total number of individuals living in internal displacement as of 31 December 2018.

This corresponds to the number of IDPs whom our data providers have identified as having returned, resettled or locally integrated in 2018 and for whom the evidence obtained by IDMC suggests that progress toward durable solutions is only partial given their living conditions. In a few instances this number may refer to movements rather than people.

This corresponds to the number of IDPs whom our data providers have identified as having returned, resettled or locally integrated in 2018 but for whom there is no available evidence to corroborate progress toward durable solutions. In a few instances this number may refer to movements rather than people.

NEW DISPLACEMENTS

This corresponds to new instances of internal displacement having occurred in 2018.

Sources and methodologies

IDMC bases its estimate on data from the Colombian government's Victim's Registry (RUV). The UN's Colombia Information Management and Analysis Unit (UMAIC), led by OCHA, has developed a statistical methodology to project an annual consolidated figure of new displacements. It made the projection using RUV data from 2009 to 2016. It operates a Seasonal Autoregressive Integrated Moving Average Model (SARIMA), which estimates new displacements based on displacements which occurred during the same month of the previous year, displacements during the previous month, the average new displacement per month in the previous 12 months and recorded mass displacement events having occurred in the month being assessed.

Main caveats and monitoring challenges

UMAIC's figure is based on a projection, which uses historical data, and is therefore not entirely precise. The UMAIC figure is a national projection, which does not factor in potential or recorded regional differences in displacement trends.

IDMC figure and rationale

IDMC uses UMAIC's projection as the RUV's data is not yet up to date for 2018. The RUV figure refers to people who declared they were displaced in 2018, which makes it an underestimate for two reasons. The law says that displaced people can declare themselves as such for up to two years after they became displaced. This means that by the end of 2018 the RUV may contain only a partial figure of people who were displaced during that year, and therefore a more comprehensive record of all the people displaced through 2018 will not entirely reflect 2018 new displacement incidents. Equally, even after displacements are reported, the RUV takes time to process requests. Its figure for new displacements which took place in 2018 was 86,929 as of 18 March 2019 and is therefore likely to grow in the next few months.

Significant changes from last year

IDMC reported 139,000 new displacements took place in Colombia in 2017, using UMAIC's projections. There were 6,000 additional new displacements in 2018, when 145,000 new displacements were estimated to have occurred.

TOTAL NUMBER OF IDPS

This corresponds to the total number of individuals living in internal displacement as of 31 December 2018.

Sources and methodologies

IDMC based its estimates on data from the Victims Registry (RUV), which is maintained by the country's Victims' Unit and keeps record of all victims of the civil war. Based on data from other government agencies and from surveys, the RUV evaluates the extent to which a victim has overcome their vulnerabilities (SSV). This assessment considers seven categories of vulnerability: housing, family reunification, identification, nutrition, health, education and income.

Main caveats and monitoring challenges

The total number of IDPs estimate might include victims of forced displacement who have overcome vulnerability, but on whom there isn't sufficient information. It may also include victims of forced displacement who have sought refuge outside Colombia and people who are also reported as missing.

The RUV continuously revises its databases, leading occasionally to revisions of figures used in IDMC's estimates.

IDMC figure and rationale

The RUV's figure includes the total number of people displaced since 1985. IDMC has partnered with them to calculate its estimate of the total number of IDPs by subtracting people who have died and people who have indicated that they have made progress towards a durable solution. To estimate the latter, IDMC takes the results of the RUV's vulnerability assessment into account as explained below.

Significant changes from last year

The number of IDPs in Colombia has decreased by 748,482 since the end of 2017. This is due to a steep increase in the number of people identified as having overcome displacement-related vulnerabilities and a smaller increase in the number of people newly registered as displaced. The total number of new displacements in the RUV grew by 165,665, from 7,671,124 people in 2017, to 7,836,789 in 2018. In the same period, 1,089,353 people are estimated to have overcome all seven dimensions of displacement-related vulnerability. This is more than twice as many people who had reportedly overcome all seven dimensions of displacement-related vulnerability at the end of 2017. A greater number of people have also been identified as having achieved progress toward solutions – some 812,959 people, or 272,448 more than were reported in 2017. The number of displaced people who died in 2018 was 11,401, which were also removed from the total number of IDPs.

NUMBER OF IDPS WHO HAVE MADE PARTIAL PROGRESS TOWARDS A DURABLE SOLUTION

This corresponds to the number of IDPs whom our data providers have identified as having returned, resettled or locally integrated in 2018 and for whom the evidence obtained by IDMC suggests that progress toward durable solutions is only partial given their living conditions. In a few instances this number may refer to movements rather than people.

Sources and methodologies

As for total number of IDPs and the estimated new displacements, IDMC bases its partial solutions estimate on data obtained from the RUV.

By law, the RUV does not remove victims from its registry unless their inclusion is proven to be fraudulent. The RUV runs programs to support IDPs attempting to return to their habitual place of residence or relocate and it keeps track of the participants in these initiatives. The RUV does not, however, have any information that allows them to concretely evaluate the success of IDPs' attempted returns. The best proxies available are the government's socio-economic indicators. These allow the RUV to carry out a vulnerability assessment considering the seven categories mentioned above: housing, income, family reunification, education, identification, health, and nutrition. Although these categories differ from the IASC indicators on durable solutions, they nevertheless provide a significant amount of information on the situation and vulnerabilities faced by IDPs.

Main caveats and specific monitoring challenges

The estimate does not technically refer only to returnees, because their geographical location of those assessed is unknown. Thus, it may include IDPs who have settled elsewhere or locally integrated. IDMC records this progress as partial solutions because overcoming displacement-related vulnerabilities is the best available proxy to estimate how far people have come achieving a durable solution to their displacement. Some victims of forced displacement may have overcome some vulnerabilities but are not included in this figure because there is not enough information to precisely assess their

vulnerabilities. It is, however, the most accurate and available estimate of the number of people who were displaced, but are closer to achieving a durable solution.

IDMC figure and rationale

IDMC considers the victims of displacement included in the RUV registry for whom there is enough information available to ascertain that they have overcome one or more forms of vulnerability. Those that have overcome all seven indicators (SSV) can be considered in a similar situation to people moving towards achieving or having achieved a durable solution. As a result, IDMC subtracted them from the RUV figure when estimating the total number of IDPs.

IDMC's partial solutions figure also contains a second caseload of 812,959 people who have overcome housing vulnerability but are still vulnerable in one or more of the six other categories included in the SSV assessment. They cannot be considered as returns, relocations, or local integrations, because there is no sufficient information available on their geographical location. However, they are considered to have overcome the vulnerability most characteristic of displacement – housing – and can therefore be considered to be a step closer to achieving a durable solution.

Significant changes from last year

GRID 2018 was the first time this figure was reported. At that point, the number of people estimated to have achieved partial solutions figure was 459,055. This year, IDMC estimated that 1,089,353 people have overcome all seven criteria of vulnerability (SSV) and 812,959 people have overcome their housing vulnerability but not all other indicators. This means that the number of people that have overcome their vulnerabilities according RUV's seven categories has increased by more than double, from 459,055 to 1,089,353. This increase of 630,298 people is also a result of better information on the persons included in the registry and the number of people for which there is information on all seven categories, which has risen from 1,267,016 to 1,928,895.

Along with the increase in the number of people identified as having attempted a return or have overcome their vulnerability, the number of people identified as estimated to have achieved a partial solution in 2018 (812,959) increased by 272,448 compared to the previous year (540,511).

CONFIDENCE ASSESSMENT

The Confidence Assessment provides an at-a-glance overview of the comprehensiveness of the data available regarding displacement associated with conflict for each country. It describes the methodologies used, frequency of reporting, data disaggregation and geographical coverage. Here two key metrics are analysed: the new displacements and the total number of IDPs.

Displacement metric	New displacements	Total number of IDPs
Reporting units	People	People
Methodology	Registration	Registration
Geographical disaggregation	Country/territory - admin 0	Country/territory - admin 0
Geographical coverage	All relevant areas covered	All relevant areas covered
Frequency of reporting	Once a year	Every 6 months
Disaggregation on sex	No	No
Disaggregation on age	No	No
Data triangulation	Good triangulation	No triangulation
Data on settlement elsewhere	No	Partial
Data on returns	No	Partial
Data on local integration	No	Partial
Data on cross border movements	No	No
Data on deaths	No	Yes
Data on births	No	No

For any additional questions please email: data@idmc.ch

For the full country profile on Colombia please visit:
<http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/colombia>

¹ Monitor, [mapa de afectados](#)