

Eritrea



Quick facts

Number of IDPs	About 10,000
Percentage of total population	About 0.2%
Start of current displacement situation	1998
Peak number of IDPs (Year)	1,300,000 (2000)
New displacement	0
Causes of displacement	Armed conflict
Human development index	–

In 1993, in a referendum supported by Ethiopia, Eritreans voted almost unanimously for independence from Ethiopia. However, in 1998, disputes over the status of the border town of Badme erupted into open hostilities between the two countries. This conflict ended with a peace deal in June 2000, but not before both sides had lost hundreds of lives and over a million Eritreans had been internally displaced.

Immediately after the cessation of hostilities, the government of Eritrea embarked on a programme to return or resettle IDPs. According to UN agencies, there were no IDP camps remaining in 2010 and all IDPs had either returned or resettled. However, other sources reported that a small number of

people remained displaced in cities such as Asmara and Massawa. There was little information on the welfare of the many people who had returned or resettled.

Eritrea had not by 2010 signed the Kampala Convention, the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol, or the 1969 African Union Convention Governing the Specific Aspect of the Refugee Problem in Africa. Partly as a re-

sult, humanitarian assistance and monitoring were extremely restricted, and the government did not permit the distribution of food aid. In 2010, UNHCR maintained an office but did not have any protection programmes in the country. There were no independent national human rights groups, and only four international humanitarian NGOs carried out operations, which were severely restricted.

Nonetheless, human rights organisations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, as well as the Eritrean diaspora community, accused the Eritrean state of serious violations of human rights. Meanwhile, the continuing impasse over the demarcation of the border and the status of Badme presented an ongoing risk of renewed instability in the Horn of Africa.

