



India



Quick facts

Number of IDPs	At least 650,000
Percentage of total population	Undetermined
Start of current displacement situation	1947
Peak number of IDPs (Year)	Undetermined
New displacement	106,500
Causes of displacement	Armed conflict, deliberate policy or practice of arbitrary displacement, generalised violence, human rights violations
Human development index	119

In 2010, there were several unrelated situations of internal displacement caused by armed conflict and ethnic or communal violence in India. Based on known numbers of IDPs living in camps and registered there, a conservative estimate of the total number of people displaced due to conflict and violence would be at least 650,000. However, the real number, including people dispersed in India's cities and others living in displacement outside camps, is likely to be significantly higher. There is no central government agency responsible for monitoring the number of people displaced or returning, and humanitarian and human rights agencies have limited access to them.

Included in the 650,000 are people displaced since 1990 by separatist violence targeting the Hindu minority in Jammu and Kashmir; those displaced in the north-east of the country since 1947 by conflicts between government forces and armed non-state groups as well as by violence between ethnic groups; people displaced in central India by armed conflict over land and mineral resources pitting government forces and government-allied militia against Maoist insurgents; and victims of communal violence between the majority Hindu populations in Gujarat and Orissa states and the states' respective Muslim and Christian minorities.

In 2010, people were newly displaced in several central and north-eastern states. In central India, more than 100,000 people were displaced by the Naxalite conflict between mid-2009 and mid-2010, with the conflict and displacement continuing at the end of 2010. In April, ethnic violence displaced several hundred Nagas, mostly women and children, from Manipur state to Nagaland state. That same month and also in Manipur state, at least 1,500 villagers were forced to leave their homes because of a military operation against armed insurgents. In May, several thousand Nepali-speakers were displaced due to communal violence in the Assam-Meghalaya border region.

Many of India's IDPs had insufficient access to basic necessities of life such as food, clean water, shelter and health care in 2010. Those in protracted situations still struggled to access education, housing and livelihoods. Tribal IDPs in camps in Chhattisgarh faced the risk of attacks by government forces and government-allied militia on the one hand and Naxalite

insurgents on the other.

There is no national policy, legislation or other mechanism to respond to the needs of people displaced by these conflicts, and the national government has generally left their protection to state governments and district authorities, who are often unaware of IDPs' rights or reluctant to offer support, particularly in cases where they played a role in causing the displacement. As a result, IDPs have struggled to assert their rights.

Their attempts to integrate in the place of displacement or settle elsewhere in India have generally not been supported. At the same time, a number of displaced groups have faced barriers to their return home. While Muslim IDPs in Gujarat continue to endure very poor living conditions, their hopes of return are dim since they are increasingly at risk of losing their original homes and land, which have been taken over by Hindu extremist groups. Christian IDPs in Orissa have been discouraged from returning, as some returnees have been forced to convert to Hinduism.

Where return of IDPs has been possible, not much is known about its sustainability. In the case of more than 30,000 Bru people displaced from Mizoram state to Tripura state in 1997 and 2009, the return process begun in May 2010, but stalled in November because the groups representing the IDPs disagreed over whether to accept the conditions for return proposed by the Mizoram state government. Some groups were concerned about their security after return.

As of 2010, no ministry was mandated with IDP protection, but some national agencies and human rights bodies advocated on behalf of people internally displaced by conflict and violence. For example, in February 2010, a delegation of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights visited people from Chhattisgarh who had been displaced to Andhra Pradesh due to the Naxalite conflict, and made recommendations to the Andhra Pradesh state government about the assistance and protection that should be given to these IDPs.

Despite the efforts of these advocates, a national legislative framework is needed to enable the protection of conflict- and violence-induced IDPs in India.

At the same time, only a few international agencies such as Médecins sans Frontières and the ICRC have been allowed to provide protection and assistance to some IDPs.