GRID
2019

GLOBAL REPORT ON
INTERNAL
DISPLACEMENT

NOTE

This is an excerpt from IDMC's 2019
Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID).

NAIROBI

Development and displacement

Nairobi is one of the fastest growing cities in the world.[372] Natural population increase, international migrants and refugees, IDPs and internal economic migrants have all contributed to shaping the urban landscape and demography.

Ethnic, political and economic disputes over land and property have also played a part in the Kenyan capital's development for decades. Powerful groups have carved the city up to their benefit through land acquisition and evictions.[373]
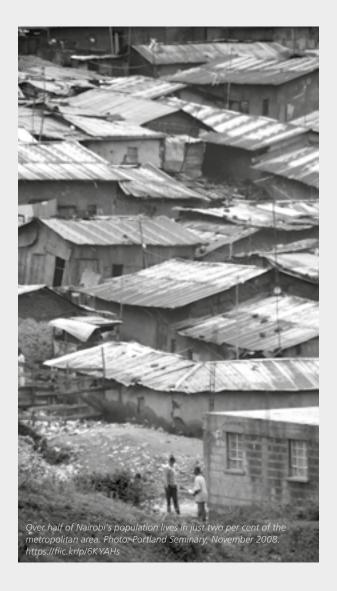
These dynamics have created a city divided by income and ethnicity, in which half of the population is concentrated in just two per cent of the metropolitan area.[374] Electoral violence and disasters have triggered urban displacement, and the city's social and spatial divergence aggravate the risk of new and secondary movements.[375]

More than 30,000 people were evicted from an informal settlement in July 2018 to make way for a road. The project and its consequences were justified as being in the public interest. The Kenya Urban Roads Authority, the National Land Commission and the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights reached an agreement before the evictions took place meaning that, on paper at least, the process was legal.

Kenya's 2012 law on internal displacement states that when no feasible alternatives exist, the government is obliged to seek the free and informed consent of the people to be displaced by a development project, and is responsible for providing those affected with a durable solution.[376]

In reality, however, people were evicted without adequate notice, and homes and schools were bulldozed. The situation was condemned by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, who said "the destruction of houses, schools and a place of worship in one of the poorest communities of Kenya

flies in the face of commitments made by the government to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals".[377] Nairobi illustrates the problems that many cities in low and middle-income countries will face in the coming decades if the risk and drivers of urban displacement are not addressed. The quality of infrastructure and the way it is built will play an important role in determining the risks and impacts of displacement, as will the types of governance and accountability mechanisms in place to oversee and manage urban development.[378]

Over half of Nairobi's population lives in just two per cent of the metropolitan area. Photo: Portland Seminary, November 2008. https://flic.kr/p/6KYAHs

| Notes

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374. Lines, Makau, "Taking the long view: 20 years of Muungano wa Wanavijiji, the Kenyan Federation of Slum Dwellers", August 3, 2018.

375. Mwaniki et al., "Urbanisation, Informality and Housing Challenge in Nairobi: A Case of Urban Governance Failure?", 2015; Njiru, "Outsiders in their own nation: Electoral violence and politics of 'internal' displacement in Kenya", October 31, 2017; ReliefWeb, "Kenya: Floods - Mar 2018", available at, https://reliefweb.int/disaster/ff-2018-000030-ken.

376. Republic of Kenya, "Prevention, Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons and Affected Communities Act. No.56", 2012.

377. OHCHR, "Kenya: Stop forced evictions from Nairobi's Kibera settlement, say UN rights experts", July 26, 2018.

378. Arup, "Urban Africa Risk Knowledge, Risk beyond the red line. Urban risk and large scale infrastructure projects in Kenya", 2018.