

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 22 MAY 2017 0:01 EDT

# More than 31 million people displaced within their own country in 2016

*Monday, 22 May 2017 (Geneva/New York)*

Conflict, violence and disasters caused 31.1 million new internal displacements in 2016, according to a new report released today by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

"In 2016, one person every second was forced to flee their home inside their own country. Internally displaced people now outnumber refugees by two to one. It is urgent to put internal displacement back on the global agenda," said Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the NRC.

Of the 6.9 million new internal displacements caused by conflict in 2016, 2.6 million took place in Sub-Saharan Africa, according to the [Global Report on Internal Displacement](#). The Democratic Republic of the Congo was the country worst affected, with a spike of 922,000 new displacements during the year alone. Next were Syria (824,000), Iraq (659,000), Afghanistan (653,000), Nigeria (501,000) and Yemen (478,000). As of the end of 2016, a total of 40.3 million people were displaced within their own country as a result of conflict and violence, some of whom having been displaced for decades.

"Certain countries drop off the international agenda only to re-emerge a few years later with significant numbers of new displacements," said Alexandra Bilak, Director of IDMC. "This was the case for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which highlights how the failure to address the underlying causes of conflict and crisis results in cyclical patterns of displacement."

Disasters displaced three times more people than conflicts. Most of the 24 million new disaster displacements recorded in 2016 were linked to sudden-onset weather hazards such as floods, storms, wildfires and severe winter conditions. Disaster displacement occurs mostly in low and lower-middle income countries, and is expected to increase in the future with the impacts of climate change and more extreme weather.

"Despite internal displacement being the starting point of many onward journeys, it has been overshadowed by the current global focus on refugees and migrants. We need to acknowledge that, without the right kind of support and protection, a person internally displaced today may become a refugee, an asylum seeker or an international migrant tomorrow," said Bilak.

Yet more aid was spent last year on refugee resettlement within donor countries than in the countries where displacement crises originate.

The Global Report on Internal Displacement shows that displacement will continue unless we direct funding and political attention to the underlying drivers of poverty, state fragility and global environmental change.

"To the extent that the Global Report on Internal Displacement holds up a mirror, the reflection it projects is one of international indifference, lack of accountability and states' failure to protect their own people," said Bilak.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

From 22 May 2017, the Global Report on Internal Displacement can be found at:  
<http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2017>

Media registered with the [UN Correspondents Association](#) in New York are welcome to attend the launch of the IDMC 2017 Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID 2017) on 22 May 2017 at 11AM EDT.

Media based in Geneva are also invited to attend a second launch event on 30 May at the CCV in Geneva (for more information please contact [info@idmc.ch](mailto:info@idmc.ch))

### What is the difference between an IDP and a refugee?

The main difference between IDPs and refugees is that internally displaced people remain within the borders of their own country. Refugees have crossed an international border in search of refuge, and this gives them legal refugee status which entitles them to certain rights and international protection. However an IDP is not a legal status because IDPs are still under the jurisdiction of their own government and may not claim any rights additional to those shared by their fellow citizens.

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## About us

[IDMC](#) was established by the [Norwegian Refugee Council](#) in 1998. Monitoring internal displacement caused by conflict, violence, human rights violations and natural disasters worldwide, IDMC is widely respected as the leading source of information and analysis on internal displacement throughout the world.

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