

# INTRODUCTION

2016 was a year in which the global focus on refugees and migrants contrasted with little political attention to the millions of people displaced within their countries by conflict, violence and disaster.

As the year progressed, global policy commitments to IDPs gradually lost momentum. The plight and needs of IDPs featured prominently during discussions at the World Humanitarian Summit in May: the UN Secretary-General called for renewed efforts to prevent internal displacement, address its root causes and support safe, dignified and durable solutions for internally displaced people, and suggested to establish a target of halving internal displacement globally by 2030.

Several months later, however, IDPs were out of sight and out of mind once again, and they ended up largely excluded from the outcomes of the UN's Summit for Refugees and Migrants in September. The single reference to IDPs in the New York Declaration pointed to links between internal displacement and large movements of migrants and refugees. However, addressing internal displacement was recognised mostly as a way of mitigating large cross-border movements of vulnerable people.

The current focus on refugees and migrants and the UN General Assembly's collective commitment to sharing responsibility for refugees are important signs in these times of fragile solidarity. There is a real risk, however, that as political efforts are focused on strengthening borders, less attention will be paid to what happens behind them. This has implications not only for refugees and migrants in transit and for those being returned to their countries of origin, but also for those who stay behind.

This year's GRID seeks to redress this imbalance and puts the spotlight onto internal displacement as a key challenge of our times. Part 1 of the report, "On the GRID" presents the figures and trends on the scale and patterns of conflict and disaster-related displacement worldwide during 2016, shining a spotlight on countries of particular concern. Part 2 of the report, "Off the GRID" responds to the overshadowing of IDPs in the 2016 policy landscape described above by examining the evidence on the relationship between internal and cross-border displacement. Part 3 of the report, "Inside the GRID" presents some of the methodological and conceptual

A newly displaced woman walks with two children at a check point in Qayyara, south of Mosul, Iraq. Photo © UNICEF/UN040092/Romenzi, October 2016



challenges faced in trying to paint as complete a global picture as possible, and highlights the importance of reliable data in keeping internal displacement high on the global policy agenda.

The increasing number of people displaced by conflict and violence in low-income countries presents considerable challenges to the achievement of the ambitious goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including those of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

The pledge to “leave no one behind” at the heart of the 2030 Agenda recognises that the continued presence of vulnerable groups, including displaced people, affects the development prospects of the communities that host them and of societies as a whole. Unless more targeted and concerted efforts are directed at addressing internal displacement, the goal of significantly reducing numbers by 2030 is likely to recede further into the distance.

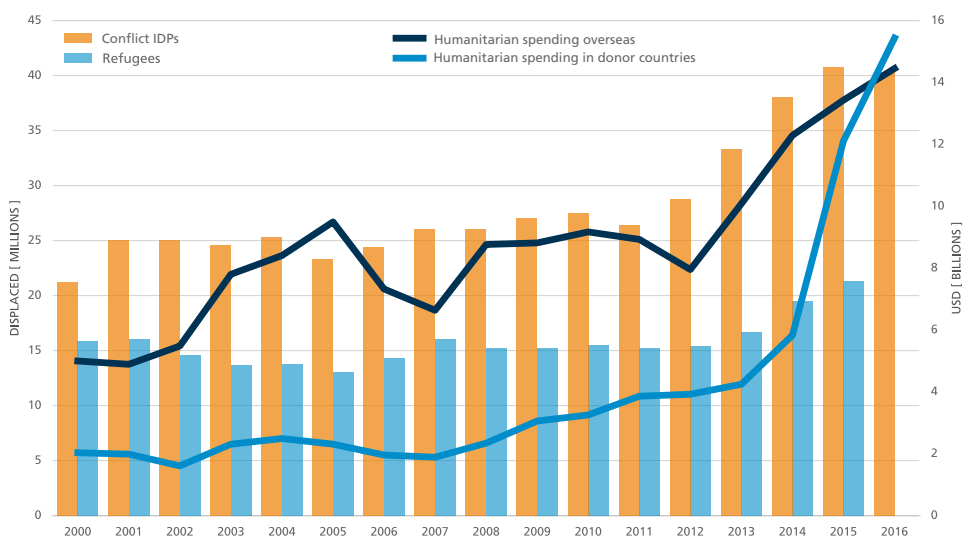
This recognition has prompted new strategies and engagement by development agencies such as the World Bank, which is a significant step forward. That said, investment in addressing the structural drivers of conflict and disasters, and with it displacement risk, are not sufficiently prioritised. The new UN Secretary-General, António Guterres recognised this when he declared that conflict prevention would be the first priority of his tenure. Even for disasters, where there have been advances in international policy and national programmes on risk reduction, the vast majority of funding still goes to managing and responding to their impacts rather than pre-empting them.

The steady rise over the past two decades in the number of IDPs and refugees has been mirrored by increases in humanitarian appeals and spending, but the funding gaps and the growing share of assistance spent within donor countries means that not enough is currently spent on countries with high levels of internal displacement. Spending on refugee resettlement within donor countries surpassed humanitarian financing for other countries for the first time in 2016 (see figure 1).<sup>1</sup> In addition, overall bilateral aid to least-developed countries, including those with the highest levels of new displacement, fell by 3.9 per cent compared with 2015, as some Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members backtracked on a commitment to reverse past declines in flows to the poorest countries.<sup>2</sup>

Significant progress has been made over the past three decades in raising the profile of IDPs, but the grim figures set out in this report highlight that we are still far from meeting their needs in a satisfactory manner. The evidence underscores the need for a long-overdue paradigm shift: from a focus on meeting immediate needs to understanding the interwoven causes and structural drivers of displacement; and from offering solutions driven by institutional mandates to jointly investing in reducing vulnerability and mitigating the longer-term impacts of displacement.

Without this paradigm shift, countries will continue to struggle to reduce the economic and social impacts of internal displacement, and the number of people whose lives are blighted by displacement around the world will only continue to rise.

**Figure 1: Comparison of the number of IDPs and refugees and humanitarian spending in donor countries and overseas, 2000 to 2016**



Sources: IDMC for IDP data; UNHCR and UNRWA for refugee data (2016 figures not yet available); OECD for spending data