

12,000 PEOPLE A DAY INTERNALLY DISPLACED BY CONFLICT ACROSS THE MIDDLE EAST IN 2017

New displacement associated with conflict doubled, largely due to Syria's ongoing civil war

16 May 2018, London - Almost 4.5 million people fled within their own countries to escape conflict and violence in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in 2017, according to a new report from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

Key findings from the Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID 2018) show that the region accounted for 38 per cent of the global total of 11.8 million, with new displacements concentrated in Syria, 2.9 million; Iraq, 1.4 million and Yemen, 160,000. The figures for Yemen are not as high as expected for one of the world's largest and most severe humanitarian crisis, but insufficient data means that the numbers do not paint a full picture.

"The scale of this displacement is dishearteningly familiar," said Alexandra Bilak, Director of IDMC. "This report shows why we need a new approach to address the huge costs of internal displacement, not only to individuals, but also to the economy, stability and security of affected countries."

The fight against Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) caused much of the new displacement in Iraq. The battle to retake the city of Mosul alone forced more than 730,000 people to flee their homes.

Operations in Yemen by pro-government forces backed a Saudi-led coalition and airpower also led to new displacement. The country hovers on the brink of famine, and 22.2 million people, or 81 per cent of the population, are in need of some form of humanitarian assistance or protection. Lack of access to such a complex humanitarian emergency meant that numbers were hard to come by and do not illustrate the depth of the crisis.

"Syria's brutal war and the flight of refugees may have made headlines in 2017, but the sharp increase in internally displaced was inexcusably overlooked," said Jan Egeland, NRC's Secretary General. "The conflict has lasted two years longer than the second world war. It has become a marathon of pain."

Disasters displaced about 232,000 people across MENA; the vast majority - 225,000 - of them in Iran. A series of earthquakes in the country caused displacement throughout the year, and storms and flooding also displaced as many as 14,000 people.

Despite the relatively low figure for the region, the risk of disaster displacement should not be overlooked. Rapidly growing and increasingly dense urban populations, poor urban planning and low construction standards heighten people's exposure and vulnerability to hazards.

"Internal displacement often heralds the start of broader crises. While we have seen some useful policy progress since the adoption of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement 20 years ago, it is nowhere near enough to cope with, much less reduce, the scale of the problem," said Bilak.

Bilak added, "without renewed action, we risk failing millions of internally displaced people worldwide, and holding back the development of the countries which host them. It's time for an honest conversation on the most effective ways to turn the tide on this global crisis. This conversation must be led by affected countries and receive full support from the international community."

NOTES TO EDITORS:

About IDMC:

[IDMC](#) is the leading source of information and analysis on internal displacement globally. We are part of the [Norwegian Refugee Council](#), an independent, non-governmental humanitarian organisation.

IDMC was set up in 1998 at the request of the international community to fill an important knowledge gap on the global scale and patterns of internal displacement. Since then, tens of millions of people become internally displaced each year as a result of conflict, violence and disasters. While the numbers are rising and the needs of millions go unaddressed, internal displacement continues to receive insufficient political attention and commitment.

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Visit <http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2018/> to access GRID 2018 and a media pack, containing all global and regional press releases, translations in French, Spanish and Arabic, a highlights document with facts and figures, and b-roll.

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