PART 3

# URBAN INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT: RISK, IMPACTS AND SOLUTIONS

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*Damage and destruction in Damascus, Syria. Photo: IOM/Muse Mohammed, November 2015*

Bogota has a long history of displacement. Today, more than 386,000 internally displaced persons are estimated to be living in the city, around five per cent of its population.[306] City authorities have made different forms of support available and have established assistance centres for victims of conflict.[307] Over the years, some IDPs may have found a way to settle into their new urban environment, but others live in poverty and deprivation without adequate housing or basic services.

Bogota has also felt the effects of the political and economic crisis in Venezuela in recent years. More than 238,000 refugees and migrants have arrived in the city in search of jobs and livelihood opportunities, representing almost 20 per cent of the Venezuelan population in Colombia.[308] With support from the national government and international humanitarian organisations, the city's authorities have had to adapt quickly to cater to the new arrivals' needs.[309]

Despite the sophisticated systems Colombia has to monitor and respond to internal and cross-border displacement, the complexities and rapidly changing dynamics of displacement to, from and within Bogota make it difficult to paint a clear picture of the phenomenon in the city. Assessing and comparing the living conditions of its IDPs, refugees and migrants and how long they have been displaced is equally challenging. Even for those registered upon arrival in the city, there is only limited information about whether they stayed, moved to other locations or were displaced again by disasters, insecurity or urban development projects.

Bogota is just one of many towns and cities across the world that are affected, and are being shaped by forced displacement. From Damascus and Sana'a, ravaged by conflict, to Jakarta and Tokyo, struck by disasters, the drivers and triggers of urban displacement vary considerably, as do the capacities of national and local governments to respond.

When large numbers of displaced people seek refuge in a city, the repercussions may be felt by whole communities and urban systems. Competition for work may increase, as does the demand for housing, healthcare, education and other services. In this sense, urban displacement constitutes a local and national development challenge, and reducing it is a prerequisite for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[310]

Displaced people make their way to urban areas because they are seen to offer opportunities. IDPs are often highly vulnerable and lack protection, but the social networks, jobs and services in towns and cities have the potential to help them achieve durable solutions. Ever better connectivity and new technologies, greater social mobility and planning aligned with this century's urban agenda hold the promise of positively shaping entire communities and driving national-level growth and development. In principle, urbanisation and human mobility present great opportunities for individual and social wellbeing.

Not that urban areas are spared challenges. Many cities have high levels of poverty and inequality, and large numbers of residents who live in inadequate housing with few if any basic services. This is the reality for many, if not the majority of IDPs, and the differentiated living conditions in cities influence the ways in which displacement is experienced and the way urban centres are able to support displaced people.[311]

How cities cope with these challenges affects the extent to which they are able to welcome and support those displaced.[312] If IDPs are offered the means to integrate, urban centres benefit from their productive social and economic contributions. Rapid and badly managed urban growth and the forced movement of people to and within cities stretches urban systems and the capacity of authorities and host communities to deal with displacement. Urban crises may also trigger new and secondary displacement, creating a downward spiral of vulnerability and risk. How displacement and urban change are managed therefore makes the difference between systemic resilience or risk of collapse.

This calls for a better understanding of how urban displacement comes about, so that it can be effectively addressed and reduced. Knowing how displacement drivers, risks and impacts play out in urban settings will be vital in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly given the central role cities will continue to play in shaping 21st century societies and economies.[313] Left unaddressed, urban displacement will impede achievement of SDG 11 on making cities safe, resilient and sustainable, with knock-on effects for the achievement of other goals.

# DEFINING "URBAN" AND "DISPLACEMENT"

Given the lack of a common definition of what constitutes an urban area, for the purposes of this report it is defined as "a spatial concentration of people and wealth that is usually reliant on a cash-based economy, with relationships between the two shaped and regulated by a set of political, social, legal and economic institutions".[314] In this sense, both towns and cities are considered urban areas (see Glossary p.105).

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement define IDPs as "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized border".[315] Urban displacement encompasses forced movements from rural to urban areas; between urban areas, referred to as inter-urban; and within urban areas, referred to as intra-urban (see Figure 19).

Towns and cities are common destinations for people fleeing conflict, violence, disasters and development projects, but also dispossession and loss of income in rural areas. In this urban century, a growing proportion of displacement can also be expected to start and end within the same city. Urban centres' capacity to deal with the phenomenon varies significantly according to their size and wealth and whether they are main or secondary cities.

Urban displacement is a complex topic that touches on a wide range of issues. The following does not try to capture it in its entirety but will focus on the specific ways in which displacement risk accumulates in urban areas and its impacts, and the main aspects of urban life that influence the extent to which IDPs are able to adapt. These include employment and livelihoods, housing and tenure security, basic services and infrastructure. It will also propose ways forward in addressing the challenges of internal displacement in towns and cities across the world.

FIGURE 19: Urban displacement flows



Urban and peri-urban areas

Towns

Rural areas

Displacement flows
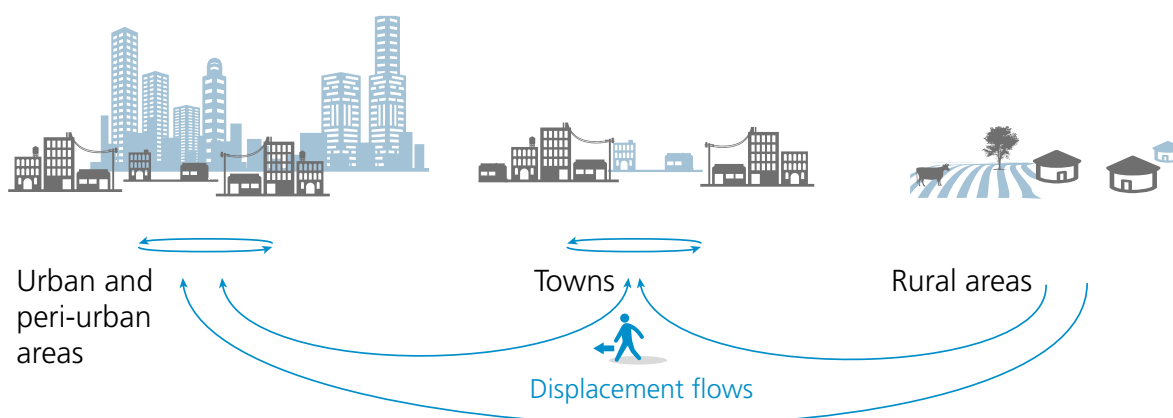
# URBAN DISPLACEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF CONFLICT, DISASTERS AND DEVELOPMENT

Conflict and insecurity, climate shocks and changes in the rural economy erode livelihoods and drive displacement toward cities in many countries. As such, urban systems and growth are strongly connected to what happens in peri-urban and rural areas. That said, displacement increasingly takes place within cities, whether the result of urban conflict, disasters or infrastructure and urban renewal projects.

Unpacking the push and pull factors and the relationships and overlaps between them is key to understanding when and why displaced people may choose to move to cities, stay there or return to their places of origin. Investments in connecting rural and urban areas and improving socioeconomic and security conditions in areas of origin have been shown to go some way in increasing people's choices and reducing urban displacement.[320]

## THE IMPORTANCE OF RURAL CONDITIONS

Disasters, conflict, a lack of livelihoods, land grabs, the eviction of indigenous and poor communities, and loss of land, productivity and opportunity in rural areas all push people toward cities.[316] Extended drought in the Horn of Africa, for example, has severely disrupted the ability of pastoralists and farmers to make a living in recent years. Options to diversify their income have become increasingly limited over time, forcing them to move to urban areas in search of alternative livelihoods.[317]

People from rural areas are also drawn to cities by the prospect, real or perceived, of better income and livelihood opportunities, access to education, healthcare and markets, and greater individual liberty and social mobility.

Acknowledging that many IDPs who make for cities do not want to go back to rural areas is also important. Young people and the more educated are particularly averse to returning. The majority of young IDPs in Butembo, DRC, for example, decided to stay in the city because it offered them better socioeconomic conditions and opportunities than their rural places of origin.[318] A study conducted in Khartoum, Sudan, showed that IDPs with better education, higher levels of economic integration and job security were more intent on staying to establish urban lives.[319]

## URBAN CONFLICT, VIOLENCE AND DISPLACEMENT

Conflict and violence in cities may trigger mass displacement both within and from them, and the damage and destruction wrought may create long-term barriers to return and other durable solutions.[321] Many of the world's most recent conflicts have taken place in densely populated urban areas, as evidenced in Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen. Other types of violence that do not reach the threshold of armed conflict may also trigger significant displacement, as seen in Latin American cities affected by criminal and gang violence.

Urban conflict triggers displacement in a number of ways. Warring parties use cities as military bases and as places to hide, and booby traps and sniper fire can turn residents' everyday routines into potentially life-threatening activities. The use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas causes significant civilian casualties and displacement.[322] The death toll from conflict in urban areas of Iraq and Syria has been eight times higher than in other areas, and airstrikes and mortar fire have displaced hundreds of thousands of people in the last two years in cities such as Hodeida in Yemen and Raqqa in Syria. The disruption of basic services and the destruction of housing and infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, electricity plants and water mains also have direct, indirect and cumulative impacts.[323]

Displacement patterns specific to urban conflict and violence have been identified. Some people move to safer neighbourhoods within the same city, as was seen during the battle for the Iraqi city of Mosul. Others may flee further afield and across borders.[324] Parties to a conflict may also seek to exert territorial control in cities by expelling certain political, ethnic or religious groups. This took place in cities such Baghdad and Aleppo, where residents were segregated and their previously peaceful coexistence shattered.[325]

Such politics of exclusion may persist long after a conflict ends.[326] Sieges have also been used in recent Middle East conflicts, denying people access to food and healthcare and preventing them from fleeing high-risk areas, a serious violation of international humanitarian law.[327]

Destruction, segregation and the presence of booby traps, unexploded ordnance and other explosive hazards are among the main obstacles to return and other durable solutions. Returning refugees and IDPs may unwittingly go back to damaged or destroyed homes or neighbourhoods that are still highly insecure, which may effectively mean they continue to live a life of internal displacement.[328] If the destruction is such that service delivery and urban systems collapse, conflict may also lead to "de-urbanisation", as seen in towns such as Bentiu and Rubkona in South Sudan's Unity state in 2013, when an almost complete lack of facilities and services makes it difficult to consider these as urban centres.[329]

Reconstruction costs tend to be extremely high, as the case of Marawi city in the Philippines shows (see Philippines spotlight, p.32). The challenges associated with reconstruction can be overcome, however. A UN planning framework for the reconstruction of Mosul published in January 2019 envisages rebuilding not only homes but also public and social spaces, with particular emphasis on markets. It aims to encourage investment and stimulate the urban economy to create livelihood opportunities for returnees. The restoration of basic services and transport infrastructure is also a priority.[330]

Criminal violence can also have effects comparable with those of a war zone, displacing thousands of people within and from urban centres. Central American cities such as San Pedro Sula in Honduras and San Salvador in El Salvador have some of the highest homicide rates in the world as a result of widespread criminal and gang

activity. In other cities, such as Medellin in Colombia, gang violence continues to trigger displacement despite development gains (see Medellin and San Salvador spotlight, p.81).[331]

# MEDELLIN AND SAN SALVADOR

## Urban displacement and criminal violence

Medellin is Colombia's second city with a population of around 2.5 million people. Once considered the most violent in the world, it has successfully reduced poverty and violence over the last decade. Criminal gangs still operate in many peripheral neighbourhoods, however, where they continue to force individuals and families to flee. Estimates put the number of people displaced at between 5,000 and 15,000 a year.

Displacement patterns associated with criminal violence in Medellin are mainly intra-urban, as people move from one neighbourhood to another in search of safety. Where they move to is influenced by a number of factors, including family ties, economic opportunities and the nature of the threats they face. A fifth of respondents in a recent study said they had fled violence more than once.[332] Returns only tend to take place once a new gang has taken control of the area, the reason for flight, such as an unpaid debt, has been resolved or generalised violence has abated. The activities of street gangs appear to trigger most of the displacement.

The same study identified two different types of trigger for displacement: targeted gang violence, including gender-based violence, forced recruitment, extortion and threats against community leaders based on their rights activism; and generalised violence fuelled by shootouts between gangs or clashes between gangs and police that may lead whole neighbourhood blocks to flee.

Medellin's IDPs tend to share socioeconomic conditions and characteristics. They are usually younger, have more children and are more likely to have been active in their community than their non-displaced peers. They are also likely to incur significant financial and social losses as result of their displacement. Many lack tenure documents for their homes, and for property owners, violence tends to drive down prices. Many IDPs also struggle to find work and afford three meals a day, and children's education is disrupted even if only temporarily.

Similar patterns emerge in El Salvador's capital of San Salvador, where insecurity and criminal violence also push people to leave their homes. For those who have been victims of crime or targeted persecution, it is often the only reason they flee. For others, it may be one of several considerations, including economic conditions and family reunification. Other factors are also emerging, such as violence perpetrated by the security forces, drought and food shortages.[333]

Much of the urban displacement that takes place in El Salvador is effectively invisible, because many of those affected prefer to remain anonymous for fear of reprisals. Most, however, is known to take place from informal settlements in peri-urban areas of large towns and cities. IDPs tend to move to safer neighbourhoods in the same city in an effort to minimise disruption to their work, education and family and social networks. If they are unable to find a viable local option, however, or if the threats or violence they face are severe, people will flee further afield, whether it be to another city, department or country. In fact, what was previously a largely intra-urban phenomenon appears to be becoming less so. Some urban-to-rural displacement has been observed and it is thought to be increasing, but many more people choose to leave the country instead.

Several similar patterns emerge in the displacement occurring in Medellin and San Salvador. Much of it takes place in marginal neighbourhoods and many people flee within the same city, to minimise the disruption to their lives, but others flee beyond the city and even country borders. As increasing numbers of case studies shed light on the drivers, triggers and impacts of displacement associated with criminal violence in Latin American cities, the issue can no longer be ignored.[334]

# URBAN DISASTERS AND DISPLACEMENT

The close relationship between rapid and badly managed urbanisation and heightened disaster risk is well recognised. When hazards hit urban areas, the concentration of people and assets and the vulnerability of residents and the built environment can lead to catastrophic outcomes.[335] Displacement associated with disasters has only recently been acknowledged in national policies and international frameworks. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction is important in this sense, because it mentions disaster displacement and its risks among the main global challenges to address in ensuring communities and countries are resilient.[336] The New Urban Agenda reinforces this need as it applies to towns and cities.[337]

Given the rapid urbanisation the world is undergoing, people's exposure and vulnerability to disasters and the displacement they trigger is likely to continue to rise. Many major and expanding urban areas are located in hazard-prone areas such as seismic zones, coasts,

deltas and estuaries, and climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of weather-related hazards. Depending on their location, cities may also be exposed to climate change impacts such as sea level rise, coastal erosion, salinisation, extreme temperatures and water scarcity.[338]

Beyond hazard intensity, urban disaster displacement risk is largely determined by the way cities are planned, developed and built. Kathmandu, which has undergone rapid and largely unplanned and informal urban growth in recent decades, is a case in point. Most of the 2.6 million people estimated to have been displaced by the devastating earthquake that struck Nepal in 2015 were living in the country's capital.[339]

The city's authorities were already aware about the link between disaster risk and urban development. They had devised a risk-sensitive land use plan for 2010 to 2020, intended to guide urban development that reduced seismic risk and improved disaster resilience.[340] The earthquake severely disrupted Kathmandu's urban system, but it also became an opportunity to accelerate implementation of the plan, acting as a reminder that



*Marginalized communities in the neighbourhood of Iztapalapa, in Mexico City, were still living in displacement a year after the 2017 earthquake, at risk of flooding and diseases. Photo: IDMC/Vicente Anzellini, August 2018*

robust urban planning, land use regulation, zoning and building standards are vital in reducing urban disaster and displacement risk. The same applies in other cities and for other hazards, particularly floods that displace large numbers of people every year (see Flood displacement risk spotlight, p.84).[341]

Stark differences exist within cities in how risk is distributed. Disaster impacts are often highly localised and affect only a small proportion of the urban population. There is, in effect, an urban segregation of disaster and displacement risk.[342] Not all areas of Rio de Janeiro, for example, are exposed to flooding and landslides and not all homes are vulnerable to destruction. Those that are often lack water and sanitation infrastructure, a common feature of low-income neighbourhoods and informal settlements.[343]

Urban poverty and inequality play a significant role in the dynamics of urban disasters and the distribution of displacement risk. In cities such as in Mumbai and Kolkata in India, high levels of exposure to hazards such as floods combine with high levels of vulnerability, poor education and limited access to critical infrastructure and livelihood opportunities.[344] This not only increases displacement risk and impacts. Recovery also takes longer if people do not have the financial resources to rebuild or move elsewhere and impoverishment contributes to making displacement protracted.

Unplanned and poorly managed urban growth combine with poverty to aggravate the impacts of disaster displacement. Urban expansion has grown in parallel to Nigeria's economic boom, but the percentage of the population living in extreme poverty continues to rise.[345] Lagos, Nigeria's economic hub, is growing rapidly and is soon expected to become one of the world's 20 most populated cities.[346] The city has attracted investment in recent years and more roads and other infrastructure have been built, reducing its water run-off capacity, and poor drainage systems are unable to cope with the rainy season. The result is urban flooding.[347] The poor, who make up most of the city's residents, are disproportionately affected and many are displaced, as happened most notably in 2012 and again last year.

Corruption is also a pervasive underlying driver of urban disaster displacement risk. Mexico City, for example, has stringent construction standards, but corruption continues to compromise compliance. This can have serious consequences as witnessed in the 2017 earthquake when many buildings that were not compliant with the building code collapsed.[348] The recovery process was also blighted by a lack of transparency.[349] Civil society organisations have developed promising approaches to challenging and tackling corruption before, during and after disasters, but a better understanding is needed of how it continues to impact risk levels and people affected, including IDPs.[350]

Most future displacement associated with disasters is expected to take place in urban settings. Disasters also have the potential to cause the collapse of urban systems, markets and supply chains, with short and long-term implications for cities' residents and economies. As such, displacement should become part of a broader conversation about the reduction and management of urban disaster risk that also covers planning, governance and poverty reduction.

# FLOOD DISPLACEMENT RISK

## An urban perspective

Floods are the most common hazard to affect towns and cities around the world, which means that mitigating the risk of urban flooding would considerably reduce future disaster displacement. IDMC improved its global disaster displacement risk model for floods, and results show that around 80 per cent of the people at risk of displacement associated with riverine flooding live in urban and peri-urban areas.

By using more granular exposure data for its modelling and disaggregating the results by urban and rural locations, IDMC was able to calculate that on average 17.8 million people worldwide are at risk of being displaced by floods every year, far more than previously thought.

Eighty per cent, or 14.2 million, live in urban and peri-urban areas (see Figure 20). Flood displacement risk is highest in South Asia and East Asia and Pacific, and also high in Sub-Saharan Africa (see Figure 21).

The model also allows the assessment of displacement risk at the subnational level to reveal hotspots, which unsurprisingly are urban areas. Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh and home to more than nine million people, is traversed by six rivers that have been vital to trade, transport and livelihoods for centuries. In recent years, however, rapid urbanisation and badly managed embankment and drainage schemes have increased the risk of flooding and waterlogging.[351]

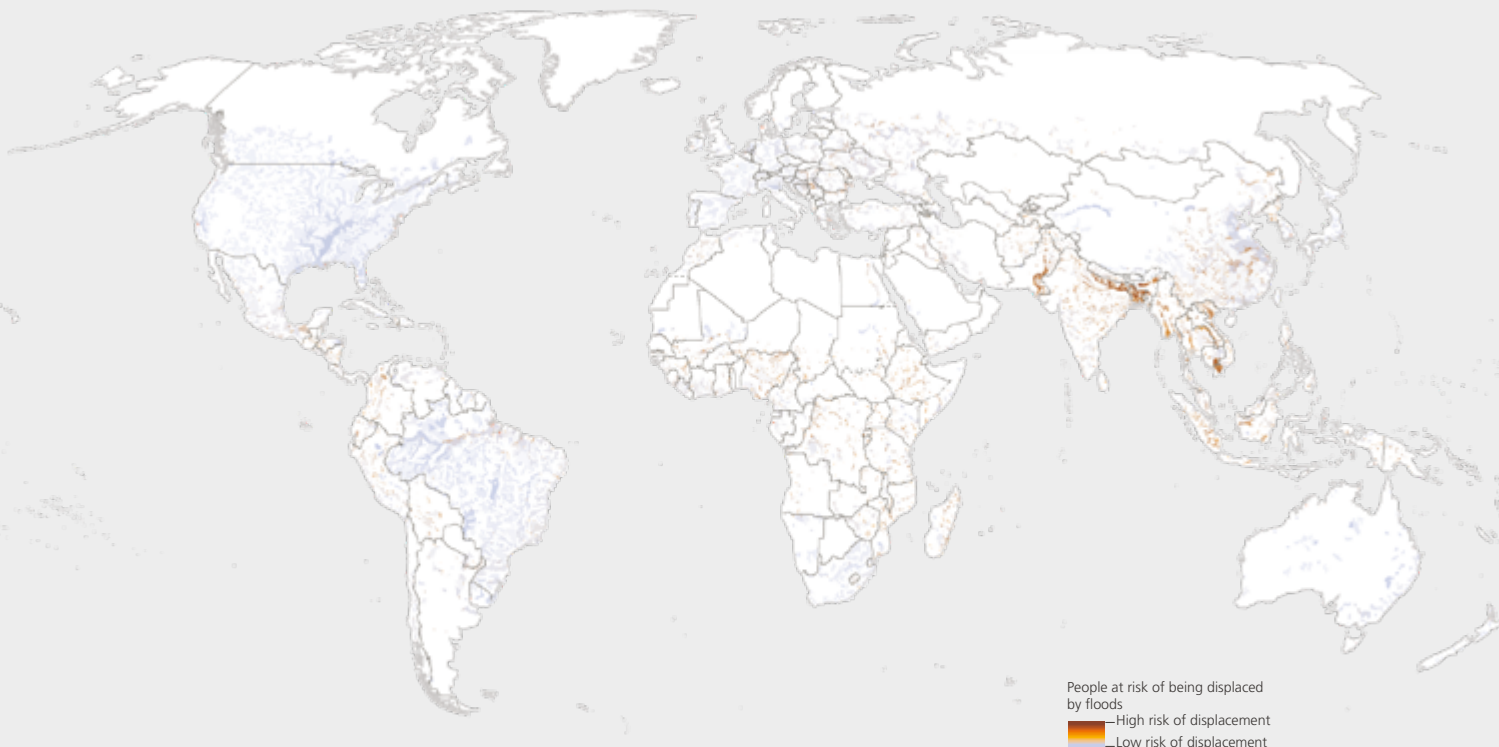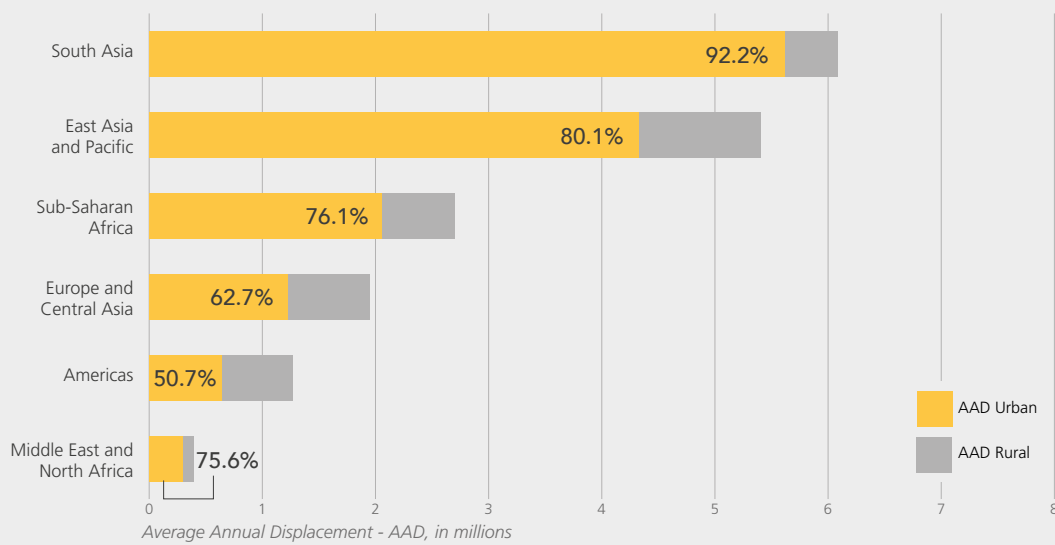**FIGURE 20:** Global flood displacement risk



People at risk of being displaced by floods

High risk of displacement

Low risk of displacement

FIGURE 21: Flood displacement risk, by region



*Average Annual Displacement - AAD, in millions*

As the city continues to expand, this risk will grow with city's population unless adequate measures to reduce it are put in place. By revealing where in Dhaka flood displacement risk is concentrated, the results identify areas where interventions are most needed (see Figure 22). Such metrics are useful to decision-makers at the local, national and global level to inform planning and investments in disaster risk reduction. This in turn will help to prevent displacement and reduce its impacts.

Given that no climate change scenarios were applied to the model and that it uses current levels of exposure, future climate variations and urban growth have the potential to increase the displacement risk revealed significantly.

FIGURE 22: Flood displacement risk in Dhaka, Bangladesh
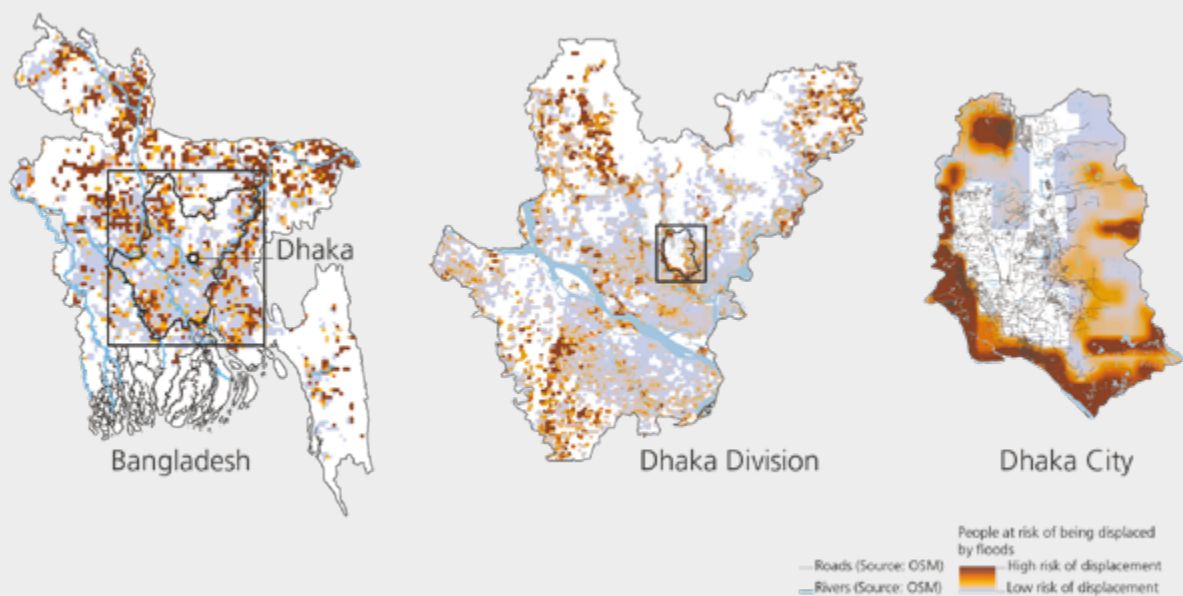
# URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND DISPLACEMENT

From large-scale infrastructure projects to local gentrification initiatives, urban development can trigger displacement. The construction of infrastructure, the upgrading of neighbourhoods and gradual changes in housing markets can force people to move with little or no respect for their rights, including to relocation and compensation. The scale, severity and visibility of this type of displacement vary depending on the project or change taking place, and there are also significant differences in the phenomenon between countries and regions.

Data is sparse and difficult to obtain, and greater efforts are needed to fill this significant information gap. There is currently no global estimate of the scale of displacement associated with development projects, but the first attempts to compile one reveal significant risk in urban areas (see Box 7).

Development-based displacement may be a slow process that evolves over months or even years, but it sometimes takes the form of sudden movements when people are evicted. Evictions are not by definition unlawful, but there are concerns that in reality many are because they violate people's rights (see Nairobi spotlight, p.88). Displacement to make way for development projects is often justified as being in the public interest, but it often lacks the prospect of durable solutions for those affected.[352]

The UN's Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacement recognise that forced evictions "share many consequences similar to those resulting from arbitrary displacement" as defined in the Guiding Principles. They also highlight the fact that forced evictions violate the right to housing. The guidelines, together with the right to adequate housing, constitute a strong normative framework to guide policy and practice on urban housing and neighbourhood regeneration that prevent displacement and reduce its impacts.[353]

Adopting a human rights approach to make visible the challenges of displacement, evictions and resettlement

## Box 7. Development and displacement: an urban glimpse of a global issue

IDMC began to explore approaches to estimating the number of people at risk of being displaced by development projects in 2017. One such approach was to review data on projects funded by the World Bank, which represent only a fraction of those that involve displacing or relocating people, but on which documentation was available.[354]

The World Bank has some of the most rigorous environmental and social standards and reporting requirements for infrastructure investments. It is one of the few institutions to publish resettlement plans.[355] An analysis of nearly 600 of its resettlement plans, published between 2014 and 2017, identified more than 130,000 people at risk of displacement in 77 countries. Most of the projects assessed were in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and East Asia and Pacific.

Taking the projects in the dataset that could be geolocated, 70 per cent of the people at risk of displacement were identified as living in urban and peri-urban areas. The project's scale and nature varied from small and highly localised to medium and large-scale initiatives, some of which cut across municipalities, provinces or, in the case of roads and pipelines, even countries. Some also cut across sectors.

Efforts to fully understand and report on this phenomenon are still in their infancy, but new methodologies and technologies such as satellite imagery analysis, economic and built environment growth projections and demographic change analysis offer the prospect of gradually painting a comprehensive picture.

associated with developments projects is useful, but it does not easily translate into practical action. Situating it within national and international sustainable development frameworks would help identifying steps towards reducing displacement risk and impacts by applying more inclusive approaches that respect people's rights and promote sustainable solutions.[356]

Good examples of more inclusive approaches to resettlement do exist. An urban development project led by the Wold Bank in Nouakchott, Mauritania in 2004 involved resettling 2,300 households. Participatory approaches were used and socioeconomic studies that informed the process were conducted to minimise the negative impacts on those forced to move. The Artisan and Fez Medina project in Morocco, included a resettlement programme that focused on maintaining IDPs' jobs, even for those in informal work, during and after the project.[357]

All too often, however, the displacement of poor and marginalised populations happens without any such support, rarely attracting the attention of national or international organisations or the media.[358] The eviction of people from informal settlements has short and long-term effects on those affected, and for many the loss of their homes often means the loss of their livelihoods too.[359] Nor do the urban poor tend to benefit from the projects they are displaced to make way for, whether they be neighbourhood upgrades, shopping malls or high-speed city trains.[360]

State-driven affordable housing schemes in India have been promoted as upgrading slums and reducing poverty. In the cities of Mumbai, Vishakhapatnam and Raipur, however, making the case for "slum free cities" has been used to justify infrastructure megaprojects that have been detrimental to the urban poor and triggered evictions.

Many people were displaced toward urban peripheries without being considered or consulted in decision-making processes.[361] Others said their new homes had not been adapted to their livelihoods and were disconnected from markets and other urban services. Beyond the physical loss and deprivation people suffered, impacts on people's feelings of wellbeing and other mental health issues caused by displacement also came to light.[362]

Many questions about displacement associated with developments projects arise, among them the role of the private sector. States are the ultimate duty bearers when it comes to addressing the impacts of displacement, but this does not absolve other parties of all responsibility.[363] A better understanding is needed of how real-estate and other private sector investments trigger urban displacement, and how they can play a role in reducing displacement risk.

Gentrification has played an increasingly significant role in urban demographic change and displacement.[364] In cities of emerging and high-income economies and neighbourhoods, it often involves large capital investments in urban renewal processes that lead to changes in the built environment and land-use of an unattractive neighbourhood to raise its socioeconomic status. It can also result in evictions and other forms of displacement.[365]

High gentrification rates in San Francisco have made many neighbourhoods increasingly unaffordable to local residents, leading to the displacement of some lower-income families.[366] Large numbers of evictions are recorded in the US every year, but little information is available on how long those affected are displaced for.[367] The relationship between gentrification and displacement generally is complex, and its drivers, patterns and impacts poorly understood.[368]

Homelessness can be also linked to gentrification in some situations.[369] The relationship between displacement and homelessness is hard to define, however, and differentiating between homeless people and IDPs can be difficult, particularly in urban settings.[370] Yet, it is unlikely that most homeless people would be considered IDPs, and many displaced people have shelter and do not consider themselves homeless.[371] The two groups do, however, tend to suffer similar discrimination, marginalisation, impoverishment and human rights violations.

The data and knowledge gaps on urban displacement associated with development projects should not detract from the significance of the phenomenon. In an ever-more urbanised world, people forced to move by development, renewal and expansion in towns and cities should not be left behind.

# 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/6K YAHs

# URBAN DISPLACEMENT IMPACTS AND CONDITIONS

When IDPs arrive in an urban area, they face challenges and opportunities determined by its character, demographic composition, spatial layout, infrastructure, socioeconomic dynamics and governance.[379] Their experience and ability to adapt will also depend on their gender, ethnic and cultural background, economic resources and social networks before and after their displacement. Any thorough analysis of urban displacement also needs to consider how its impacts differ from those observed in rural areas and camps, and how responses may also have to vary in terms of timeframes, stakeholders, approaches and financing.

In the Nigerian city of Maiduguri, for example, pre-existing unemployment and lack of livelihood opportunities affect both IDPs and host communities, and the former face challenges in accessing credit and engaging in economic activities. Displaced women in particular struggle to find work and integrate into urban life. That said, insecurity, freedom of movement restrictions and even more limited livelihood opportunities in rural areas still make Maiduguri a destination for many.[380]

By contrast, many IDPs who were forced to flee to Iraqi cities during of waves of violence in 2014 and 2015 were able to establish lives in their new urban environments. People who moved from one urban area to another found it easier than IDPs from rural areas to get informal and temporary work and make a living. Public sector workers also found it easier than their counterparts in the private sector to re-engage in work and earn an income.[381]

How IDPs navigate and adapt to urban spaces varies from city to city and between different groups and individuals. There is little evidence about the different impacts of urban displacement on IDPs, host communities and marginalised groups, but urban profiling exercises are particularly useful in establishing a better understanding and should be a priority so as to inform tailored responses (see Spotlight, p.90).[382]

That said, urban IDPs also face many similar impacts and challenges across cities, countries and regions (see Figure 23).

FIGURE 23: Urban displacement: main impacts on IDPs[383]



**URBAN INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT**

### LIVELIHOODS

Jobs are more readily available in urban than in rural areas or camps, and cities may support self-reliance in the long run. Urban IDPs' economic conditions, however, tend to be similar to if not worse than those of the urban poor. They often have lower incomes and only limited social networks, making it even harder for them to adapt to their new environment. Farmers and agricultural workers who flee from rural areas tend to find their skills are irrelevant in the city.

### HEALTH

Cities tend to offer better access to health services than rural areas, but the overcrowded conditions in which many IDPs live, with little or no access to safe water and sanitation, increase the risk of diseases for them and their hosts alike. The mental health implications of displacement are also widely acknowledged but tend to be overlooked.

### EDUCATION

Cities offer better education opportunities than rural areas. Urban IDPs tend to prioritise education over other services because it is transferrable human capital that may be key to rebuilding their lives. During urban crises, however, schools may be used as emergency shelters. They may also be damaged or destroyed during conflict or disasters. Ensuring education for displaced children as well as those from host communities should be a priority.

### ENVIRONMENT

Large influxes of IDPs into already overpopulated urban areas may rapidly increase water and soil pollution, and create challenges in terms of solid waste. Cities should be prepared and able to adapt their waste management, sanitation and water infrastructure to cope with mass displacement.

### HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Many urban IDPs live in overcrowded, sub-standard conditions. They often settle in the poorest peripheral neighbourhoods where their informal arrangements make them particularly vulnerable to eviction and abuse from landlords. IDPs regularly cite rent as one of their main expenses. Ensuring they have access to adequate housing with secure tenure should be a priority for urban authorities. Lack of access to adequate infrastructure may drive new and secondary displacement.

### SECURITY

On one level cities provide IDPs anonymity and security, but informal settlements and poorly managed collective centres may also carry risks. Displaced women, children and other vulnerable groups may be subject to abuse, harassment and violence. Young IDPs in some cities may be exposed to criminal violence and forced to join gangs.

### SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

Cities offer more potential than camps for social mobility and local integration, but many urban IDPs find themselves isolated and marginalised because of their backgrounds. Creating ties with host communities is essential to support their integration. Authorities should also take a participatory approach to decision-making by including IDPs and local residents in the process.

# DISPLACEMENT PROFILING

## In urban areas

Effective interventions to address internal displacement depend on robust and trusted evidence of its impacts. The complexity of displacement dynamics in cities, however, makes collecting such data particularly challenging. For a start, urban IDPs tend to be less visible than those in camps because they do not all live in one area, which makes them difficult to reach with assistance and protection measures.

Profiling exercises strengthen the evidence on urban internal displacement by bringing stakeholders together to collaborate in collecting and analysing data. This provides the basis for information to be more relevant and useful in informing the pursuit of durable solutions. The process involves analysing not only IDPs' needs, but also those of the general population living in the same area to better understand how both groups are affected by displacement.

To best capture the diverse experiences of urban displacement, a combination of complementary data collection methods is used. This normally includes enumeration, sample-based household surveys, interviews with key informants, focus group discussions and a review of secondary data. This mixed methods approach has proven the most effective in establishing a shared and in-depth understanding of the challenges that urban IDPs and their hosts face.

A series of profiling exercises in cities in Somalia, Iraq and Syria have yielded a number of important lessons that have helped to refine the methodology and scope of the process and adapt it to other urban displacement situations.

An exercise conducted in Mogadishu in 2014 and 2015 mapped and enumerated informal settlements, which helped to identify IDPs and differentiate them from their hosts. The analysis highlighted the specific challenges IDPs faced in different areas of the city where little or no

information on their conditions previously existed. The exercise only covered displaced populations in specific settlements and not in the entire city, but its results have been useful to the local authorities in Mogadishu in supporting durable solutions.

With the Mogadishu experience in mind, a second exercise conducted in the Iraqi city of Erbil in 2015 and 2016 adopted an area-based approach. It provided a holistic and comparative analysis not only of IDPs and non-displaced populations, but different areas of the city as well. The results also informed broader local authority plans for issues such as service delivery, which benefit IDPs and their hosts alike. The exercise was not, however, able to analyse the pressure displacement puts on service provision. A main takeaway was the need for more specific urban planning expertise and additional time and resources to generate more detailed results.

These considerations in turn were built into a series of profiling exercises under way in various Syrian cities. They include the identification of gaps between the population's needs and the city's capacity to meet them. Understanding urban systems and their capacity to respond to IDPs' needs is the next important step to incorporate into urban displacement profiling.

The lessons learned from these and other displacement profiling exercises have made a significant contribution to good data collection and analysis practices for urban crises.[384] Forging stronger partnerships and encouraging joint planning among humanitarian and development responders, technical experts, local authorities and others is key to helping urban IDPs overcome the challenges brought on by displacement.

*Source: JIPS[385]*

These impacts are not only barriers to durable solutions and sustainable urban development. They may also function as triggers and drivers of new and secondary displacement. Many IDPs fleeing conflict, disasters and lack of livelihoods in rural areas of Somalia have made for the capital, Mogadishu, in search of safety and opportunity. Once there, however, they face overcrowded housing conditions, insecure tenure and only limited access to basic services and infrastructure. They also have difficulty finding livelihood and income-generating opportunities and are at high risk violence, including gender-based violence. Poverty, marginalisation and extortion, forced evictions and disasters push many into secondary displacement.[386]

Similar challenges in managing displacement in major urban centres occur in other countries and regions. Not only are cities difficult to govern. Large influxes of people put further strain on already fragile systems. The speed and scale of displacement into urban areas tends to significantly outpace regular urbanisation processes. This in turn means that urban systems, including planning processes, services, markets and financing instruments, need to adjust much more quickly to displacement than they otherwise would usually do.[387]

## EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING AND BASIC SERVICES: URBAN GOVERNANCE OF DISPLACEMENT

Internal displacement creates a wide range of challenges for urban systems. If local authorities are unable to cope and respond effectively, its impacts are borne almost entirely by IDPs and their hosts, fuelling further vulnerability and displacement risk. Cities' capacity to support IDPs and create opportunities for them is central to reducing such risk, and local and national authorities have a key role to play in ensuring they are able to achieve durable solutions.[388]

This section covers three areas which will be critical to preventing, avoiding and reducing the impacts of urban displacement: first, the employment opportunities affecting IDPs' self-reliance and local integration; second, the role of adequate housing in reducing the risk of new, secondary and protracted displacement; and finally, the ways in which basic infrastructure and services can help both IDPs and those at risk of displacement to improve their living conditions and wellbeing

Political participation and urban governance cut across all three of these areas. An inclusive city is all the more likely to be able to address and reduce displacement. The consultation and participation of IDPs and their hosts in governance and decision-making would also directly shape their lives and increase the likelihood of their being able to achieve durable solutions.

## Employment and livelihoods

One of the main concerns for displaced people is to ensure a livelihood and regular income. Doing so is vital to improving their self-reliance and preventing their displacement from becoming protracted.[389] It also helps them to integrate socially, reduce their dependence on government and humanitarian aid and contribute to the local economy.[390]

The potential for IDPs to integrate economically and improve their overall situation over time is greatest in urban areas.[391] A distinct advantage of cities can be that the range of opportunities expands, particularly for those who previously lived in rural areas and had less diversified sources of income, provided the right conditions are in place.[392] Higher employment figures do not necessarily mean a higher employment rate, but evidence shows that cities tend to provide more opportunities, and that job prospects tend to be better in larger, more economically diverse cities.[393]

There is relatively little information about the extent to which displaced people are able to take advantage of these opportunities, but research suggests that more than half of the IDPs displaced by conflict for whom location data is available live in urban areas. Given that almost half among them are of the working age, they should in theory at least be in a position to benefit from the better access to employment cities offer.[394] More detailed data would help to enrich these types of analyses.

IDPs' economic activity may also have positive impacts on urban areas, and their skills and enterprise may benefit host communities. Somalian refugees and Ethiopian IDPs in Addis Ababa trade with their areas of origin and bring in goods, contributing to a vibrant local economy in the Ethiopian capital.[395] IDPs and refu-

gees have also helped to diversify the local economy Kitchanga in DRC's North Kivu province, where many young displaced people have found alternative livelihoods. Some have even managed to buy land and settle permanently.[396]

That said, large influxes of displaced people over a short period of time can have adverse local effects on local economies, at least initially, in many cases driving down wages while increasing rents.[397] This in turn makes it more difficult for IDPs to settle temporarily or permanently, particularly if the city concerned already had high unemployment or underemployment before their arrival.

Years of conflict and insecurity in and around the Nigerian city of Maiduguri have decimated the local economy. The regional employment rate was less than 30 per cent in 2017, and many local markets and businesses have had to close.[398] Instead of finding new livelihood opportunities in the city, IDPs only receive humanitarian assistance. This not only has the potential to make them more vulnerable and marginalised, it also puts further strain on a local government already struggling to provide the city's displaced people with food, water and shelter.[399]

When formal employment opportunities are scarce, informal labour and businesses emerge. UN data shows that more than half of the labour force and more than 90 per cent of small and medium enterprises worldwide are involved in the informal economy.[400] This reality presents both challenges and opportunities.

Informal local economies help urban IDPs to foster livelihood opportunities and self-reliance.[401] For many of those in Soacha, on the outskirts of Bogota, informal labour remains their only source of income even after several years of displacement.[402] Many IDPs and refugees in the Ugandan capital of Kampala have also adopted informal livelihood strategies to cope with displacement in an urban environment where jobs are scarce.[403]

The informal sector, however, often involves discrimination and the exploitation of IDPs, and may encourage dangerous or high-risk activities. The average day rate for casual construction work in Goma, the capital of DRC's North Kivu province, is normally $1.80, but IDPs earn as little as $1.20.[404] A profiling exercise in Mogadishu showed that almost half of IDPs were working as day labourers, compared with 36 per cent of economic migrants and 30 per cent of host community members in the same informal settlements.[405]



*Internally displaced Nigerian repairs phones for a living in Old Maiduguri, Nigeria. Photo: NRC*

The hardship of internal displacement may also push children into work. Many displaced Afghan children earn money as street vendors or car washers, which exposes them to the risk of road accidents, abuse and violence.[406] Displaced women too face specific challenges in terms of employment and livelihood opportunities in cities.[407] In 2016, around 68 per cent of unemployed IDPs in Ukraine were women.[408] Many displaced women in Abuja, Nigeria, resorted to self-employment and remained either unemployed or outside of formal labour markets.[409]

Addressing these challenges will require investment in both the formal and informal institutions of labour markets rather than offering one-off income generating initiatives. This may include providing IDPs and host communities with the documentation they need to engage in formal work, offering incentives such as tax breaks or wage subsidies to businesses that employ displaced and other disadvantaged people, and developing and investing in long-term economic growth strategies at the municipal level that consider the implications of population influxes on labour supply and demand.[410]

Accepting that informal labour markets are a reality in many cities may be the first step in ensuring they contribute to solutions for both displaced people and the urban poor. There is increasing evidence from across the globe that the risks associated with informal employment, as with housing and services, are reduced when formal systems accommodate and find provisions for less regulated markets.[411]

Involving IDPs and unemployed urban residents in city development may help to release them from the poverty trap many find themselves in. Instead of evicting vendors who trade in goods from their areas of origin, negotiating their regulated use of market space supports small businesses and self-employment with relatively little investment from local authorities. Many informal settlements are places of small-scale economic activity where people set up home or street-based enterprises that often coalesce to form complex economies.[412]

Understanding and improving the livelihoods and skills that IDPs bring with them and providing vocational training helps to support their local integration. The skills IDPs bring from rural areas can become irrelevant in urban settings, and helping them to develop new capacities benefits both them and their host cities.[413]

Humanitarian approaches such as cash-based assistance have also shown promise in urban displacement situations.[414] Cash is a cost-effective means of support and it gives beneficiaries more choice and flexibility in their spending. It also helps to reinvigorate local markets and trade rather than dampening them as in-kind assistance does can. Importantly, people are not passive recipients of relief but rather play an active role in revitalizing local urban economies.[415] It requires a detailed understanding of market systems, products and services and local-level demand, but it is increasingly seen as a potential way of moving from humanitarian to longer-term development interventions.[416]

More important than targeted programmes, perhaps, are broader changes to institutional arrangements. These include local trade and business incentives, labour market regulations, access to banking and insurance policies that facilitate the generation of employment opportunities.[417]

IDPs and other vulnerable groups in Mosul, for example, were employed by local small businesses involved in city's reconstruction and recovery process. This combined with self-build support for housing facilitated the return of IDPs and refugees and helped to reinvigorate whole neighbourhoods and local urban economies.[418] Other positive examples exist, mainly involving refugees, but they offer valuable lessons applicable to urban IDPs.[419]

## Housing, land and property

Finding shelter is among IDPs' main priorities, and its provision is a core priority for those involved in humanitarian responses to crises. Beyond crises, the provision of housing becomes a matter for urban planners, municipal authorities and community organisations, and lies at the centre of unlocking the challenges associated with urban displacement. Many countries, however, do not do enough to guarantee their IDPs' housing, land and property (HLP) rights, an old and unresolved issue that requires renewed attention.

Urban centres tend to offer more housing stock than rural areas, but that does not necessarily mean that urban IDPs and poor residents find it easy to access adequate and affordable housing. Even if they do, they may struggle to secure tenure over their homes. This issue tends to be overlooked or poorly addressed by national and local authorities, but tenure insecurity is a significant driver of urban displacement risk.

There are many forms of tenure, from freehold and public or private rental agreements to cooperative, customary and even religious systems.[420] Each has its advantages and disadvantages. Which of these arrangements are available to IDPs newly arrived in urban areas and how they provide them and hosts with secure tenure influences the extent to which they are able adapt to their new situations (see Box 8).

Tenure insecurity is often driven by IDPs' and poor urban dwellers' search for affordable places to live. Housing costs in some cases account for up to three-quarters of their monthly income.[421] This leaves many, particularly newly, displaced people with little or no option but to live in informal and unregulated settlements that tend to be overcrowded, insecure and lacking in services. As such, the housing challenges urban IDPs face involve not only unaffordability but also inadequacy and precariousness.

In the DRC city of Goma, for example, both displaced and host communities lack adequate housing and access to sanitation and hygiene, but IDPs have less tenure security and are at greater risk of forced eviction.[422]

Some resort to taking out loans to cover their rent payments in an effort to avoid being evicted, leading to unsustainable debt burdens. Long-term housing policies and urban planning and the implementation of regulations and municipal housing programmes are needed to mitigate and address such issues.[423]

## Box 8. Tenure ambiguity in Afghanistan and Vanuatu

Many Afghan IDPs live in informal settlements in and around Kabul, where ambiguity over land ownership makes it difficult for many to obtain formal deeds or rental agreements. It also facilitates land grabs and the occupation of empty homes and other buildings by returning IDPs and refugees.

The latter phenomenon is aggravated by the fact that many refugees returning to Afghanistan find their own homes have been occupied by other displaced people or local power brokers, effectively meaning they return to a life of internal displacement. Even those who have deeds may struggle to reclaim their property because mechanisms to resolve legal disputes are ineffective.

The lack of clear tenure has led to conflict over land disputes, harassment, unjustified rent increases and evictions without due process, all of which have triggered secondary displacements.[424] The government developed policies on tenure security and the upgrading of informal settlements in 2006 and 2013, but implementation of their provisions has been slow.[425]

In Port Vila, the capital of Vanuatu, customary and newly introduced tenure arrangements exist side-by-side, creating a hybrid legal system that makes it difficult to settle land disputes and is often applied arbitrarily. Powerful public and private elites use the grey areas to justify forced evictions, in some cases of whole communities.

These have altered the cityscape and pushed its boundaries out into peripheral areas of a city that has not planned adequately for such expansion. The new displacement policy that Vanuatu adopted in 2018 is still to address these regulatory and legal issues, to the detriment of Port Vila's IDPs.[426]

*Around 248,000 new displacements were recorded following the earthquake and tsunami that hit the city of Palu in Indonesia. Photo: ERCB/Martin Dody*

## | Reconstruction, resettlement and the right to housing

Transparent HLP rights and processes for settling disputes are vital to the resolution of urban displacement.[427] Therefore, the establishment of tenure security and guarantees of housing rights for displaced and host communities should be included in conflict prevention, disaster risk reduction and durable solutions initiatives. They also need to be part of transitional justice, peace-building and reconciliation processes in the aftermath of conflicts.

The same issues are fundamental in ensuring sustainable returns for IDPs and refugees, and reducing the risk of new and secondary displacement.[428] In this sense land and property disputes in places of origin can be both a cause and consequence of displacement.

There are numerous accounts in Sudan, for example, of the government forcibly evicting the new occupants of abandoned homes to allow IDPs to return, fuelling new tensions and triggering further displacement.[429] Recent reconstruction efforts in Syria also show that in the absence of transparent HLP rights, resettlement schemes contribute to the wilful appropriation of IDPs' property (see Spotlight, p.96).

Many cities have undertaken major gentrification and neighbourhood upgrade projects that involve large-scale resettlement programmes for slum dwellers as well as displaced populations. Such initiatives carry impoverishment risks that need to be addressed particularly when, as if often the case, approaches seem to deal with the symptoms rather than the causes of lack of adequate housing.[430]

# SYRIA

## Reconstruction and challenges around housing, land and property

Eight years of civil war have left around a third of the Syria's urban housing stock in ruins.[431] As the government retakes control of towns and cities across the country, reconstruction is beginning, but evidence suggests that segregation and displacement are being used as part of the process to consolidate the state's authority and reward its supporters. New HLP laws have also been passed that raise questions about how IDPs and other groups will be included in the reconstruction process.[432]

The government adopted a law in April 2018 that speeds up expropriation procedures to support the reconstruction effort and "redesign unauthorised or illegal housing areas". Known as Law No. 10, it is an extension of Decree 66, a measure first implemented in the Damascus area. The new law initially established a deadline of just 30 days for people to prove ownership over property subject to expropriation, but this was extended to a year in November under international pressure.[433]

Once the deadline has passed, people will not be compensated and property rights will revert to the state or local authorities.[434] This has the potential to disproportionately affect Syria's 6.1 million IDPs and more than 5.7 million refugees, many of whom are likely to find it hard to prove ownership, whether because they have lost documentation, are unaware of the new legislation or are unable to travel to deal with the formalities required.[435] Many land registries have also been destroyed during the war.[436]

Nor does Law No. 10 provide for enough compensation and assistance, making it difficult for former residents to re-establish themselves in their areas of origin.[437] This has the potential both to prevent IDPs returning and cause new displacement.

The law applies to informal and unplanned settlements where residents lack building permits or property titles. Even before the conflict, between 30 and 50 per cent of the population lived in such areas, meaning that it has the potential to significantly change the demographic and spatial composition of Syrian cities.[438]

There are concerns that Law No. 10 and other HLP regulations will be used to consolidate the government's authority to the detriment of its opponents, as highlighted by the case of Basateen al-Razi neighbourhood in Damascus. An informal settlement associated with the opposition, its working and lower middle-class residents were evicted to make way for Marota City, an upmarket real estate project.[439] Other legislation imposes strict security clearances for property transactions, ostensibly an anti-terrorism measure, and provides for the confiscation of property owned by people who failed to do military service.[440]

Given that around half of Syria's pre-war population has been displaced during the conflict, resolving HLP issues will have to be a first and central step toward nationwide peace-building and stability. In its current form, however, Law No. 10 appears to benefit only a small fraction of the population, raising serious questions about its role in the post-conflict recovery process.



*High levels of damage and destruction in Eastern Ghouta, Syria. Photo: Karl Schembri/NRC*

The Brazilian government, for example, launched a flagship programme known as *Minha Casa Minha Vida*, or My House My Life, in 2008 to build a million homes across the country in four years. The focus, however, was on quantity over quality, and led to millions of people being resettled into poor-quality houses in peripheral urban areas, far from their jobs and amenities.[441]

Lessons from a similar approach four decades earlier clearly had not been learned. Nearly 30 per cent of Rio's informal settlers were moved to marginal areas of the city in the late 1960s and early 1970s, ultimately creating new *favelas* with high levels of insecurity and poverty, and with it driving new displacement risk.

| New approaches to addressing housing
challenges

Despite attempts to raise global awareness of the importance of housing, not least with the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11, more than a billion urban dwellers across the world are thought not to have decent accommodation or tenure security. Many if not most cities across the world, even those unaffected by displacement, have shortages of affordable and adequate housing.[442]

Target 11.1 of the SDGs aims "to ensure adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums". Given that the previous Millennium Development Goal referred only to improving the lives of slum dwellers, the mention of adequate and affordable housing reflects acknowledgement of a major gap in urban development. Meeting the target would also significantly increase IDPs' prospects of improving their lives and achieving durable solutions, including millions living in protracted displacement.[443]

Affordable housing schemes in many countries do not necessarily meet the needs of the people they intend to help, or in some cases are simply insufficient to cope with ever-growing demand. Urban displacement adds to the challenges, as seen in Colombia (see Box 9).[444]

## Box 9. Matching housing policies to IDPs' specific needs in Colombia

Colombia has one of the highest numbers of people displaced by conflict globally, and new displacements associated with both conflict and disasters take place every year. The government has created robust legislation to address the challenges of internal displacement, but as the national ombudsman's office highlighted in a 2014 report, there was an important law and policy gap on making housing accessible and affordable to IDPs. It said housing legislation failed to reflect IDPs specific vulnerabilities, and called for taking a differentiated approach toward IDPs as a vulnerable group.[445]

The Constitutional Court made a similar point in 2016 when it ruled that the government had made only "medium to low" progress in providing them with housing. It also noted that some urban municipalities had been allocated funds to build homes without having been consulted to ascertain if they had enough land available for their construction. It called on the government to expedite targeted action to fill this and other gaps.[446]

The housing ministry responded by issuing a decree in late 2017 that revised the housing legislation and included a differentiated approach toward IDPs.[447] The decree considers people displaced by both conflict and disasters, and establishes key actions and the lead institutions accountable for them. Social and other housing policies now need to consider IDPs recognising their specific situations.

Such efforts to match national housing policy with IDPs' needs are commendable, but questions remain open, such as how many IDPs will benefit, how resilient the homes provided will be to disasters, how safe and secure their location will be, and which livelihood opportunities will be available. In short, the extent to which the legal reforms will support IDPs in achieving durable solutions beyond the provision of four walls and a roof remains to be seen.

A number of promising approaches to tackle IDPs' housing challenges have been developed over the past decades, many of them originally designed to address the general scarcity of urban housing and then adapted to the pursuit of durable solutions. They can broadly be divided into housing approaches and area-based approaches, the former including incremental housing schemes and purchase certificates targeting individuals' needs and the latter broader schemes such as neighbourhood upgrades, incremental tenure, support grants and cooperative development initiatives.[448]

As with informal labour markets, recognising that housing and urban development in many cities are driven by informal processes is an important step toward finding ways to build on existing potential. In Latin America, for example, more housing per square kilometre of city is built and maintained by informal settlers than by governments and developers.[449] Accepting this reality implies adopting new approaches that find ways of turning temporary answers to housing crises into sustainable solutions for all.

Mariupol municipality in Ukraine, for example, recognised a need to provide IDPs with the option of affordable rented accommodation as well as the opportunity of buying property. It developed a "rent to own" initiative, in which a range of stakeholders including an international development bank, the local government, civil society organisations and contractors have come together to create affordable housing options for IDPs. Those eligible received homes with a contract that gives then title deeds to their rented property after 10 years.[450]

Venezuela tested cooperative approaches in Petare, the largest informal settlement of the capital Caracas. The idea was to facilitate the securing of loans for a group of families and close communities against the value of larger properties. To do so, informal settlers were given land rights under collective rather than individual lease agreements. This approach could be applied to urban displacement situations when it becomes clear that IDPs are unable or do not want to return to their areas of origin. It would allow them to invest into their homes and neighbourhoods while reducing the risk of gentrification and secondary displacement in the long-term.[451]

These examples are promising steps in the right direction, but three major challenges remain: the availability of data on numbers of IDPs, their capacities and requirements;

legal obstacles; and the financial sustainability of subsidised housing schemes. In Mariupol, the last two combine resulting in limitations to the support made available. National budget allocations to the local authorities do not account for IDPs and at the same time, IDPs are not locally registered, leaving them unable to exercise their right to vote and with little leverage over local officials.[452]

## Basic services and resilient infrastructure

The provision of services, like housing, lies at the heart of urban planning and development. Access to water, sanitation, healthcare, education, security and transport determine the living conditions of all urban dwellers. They are also central to IDPs' ability to integrate locally, and to addressing and reducing urban displacement more broadly.[453]

The SDGs reflect the global significance of these services and the infrastructure required to deliver them.[454] SDG 3 covers health, SDG 4 education, SDG 6 water and sanitation, and SDG 9 infrastructure, including transport. SDG 11, the urban goal, also calls for better service provision as part of its call for safe and affordable housing. Targets 11.1 and 11.5 emphasise the importance of access to healthcare, drinking water, sanitation and social protection programmes. One of the Sendai framework's seven targets focuses on reducing the disruption of basic services associated with disasters.[455]

Many cities, however, have a serious shortfalls in terms of coverage, quality and affordability. Only 43 per cent of the urban population in low-income countries have access to basic sanitation.[456] Fewer than one in ten settlements for IDPs in Haiti meet minimum standards for water, sanitation and hygiene.[457] Provision is inadequate for most displaced households in Kathmandu.[458] Twenty per cent of IDPs in Libya live in former schools or warehouses without adequate sanitation.[459] Evidence from countries in eastern Europe and Central Asia shows that urban IDPs are more likely to be dissatisfied with the public health services they receive than their non-displaced counterparts, even 10 or 15 years after their displacement.[460]

Shortfalls in urban service provision are often combined with or are the result of infrastructure gaps, which may also contribute to segregation, tensions, conflict and disaster risk.[461] Many urban areas in low and middle-income countries have poor infrastructure, which means

local authorities may also struggle to cope with mass displacement, whether to or within their cities.[462]

| Disruption of basic services

The extent of basic services disruption and infrastructure damage caused by urban conflict may be make some cities all but uninhabitable. It has the potential to cause the collapse of entire city systems and can have cumulative or indirect effects that ripple out into peri-urban and even rural areas.[463] The restoration of services is a vital element in establishing conditions conducive to IDPs' sustainable return.

In western Mosul, were most of the fighting against ISIL in the Iraqi city took place, critical infrastructure including nine out of 13 hospitals was severely damaged. Medical staff also fled, bringing health services to a virtual standstill and obliging people in need of treatment to move to eastern areas of the city. Many IDPs who have returned to Mosul still live in damaged or destroyed homes without access to services.[464]

Disasters also regularly destroy critical infrastructure and disrupt service delivery, and the effects may continue to be felt long after the event. Typhoon Haiyan caused widespread damage in the Philippine city of Tacloban in 2013. Seventeen health facilities, including two public and five private hospitals, were affected, more than 90 per cent of education facilities were severely damaged and most power lines were brought down. Tacloban's recovery has been effective given the extent of the damage, but Haiyan was a powerful reminder of the importance of building disaster-resilient infrastructure.[465]

| Dealing with the infrastructure and service gap

Not only is critical infrastructure indispensable for service provision, it also plays a role in determining future displacement risk, and current practices in many cities may be increasing rather than reducing it.[466] In the US, for example, aging and decaying infrastructure and the way in which urban development has been conceived and implemented in recent decades have been major drivers of flood risk. Not only is the risk of flooding increasing, but its impacts also tend to be concentrated in poorer areas.[467]

Approaches that aim to address infrastructure gaps at the same time as integrating informal neighbourhoods and systems into the broader city have been developed

in recent decades, and many of these, once again, in Latin America. Along with housing, these initiatives have placed significant emphasis on transport infrastructure, to the extent that "the most effective urban policies were transport policies".[468]

Projects such as cable cars and express bus networks that connected low-income neighbourhoods with city centres became known as "urban acupuncture", applying pressure and change to a small part of a city with positive effects for the whole system. Urban acupuncture became a key strategy in cities including Medellin in Colombia and Curitiba in Brazil, and on other continents, with important lessons for efforts to address urban displacement about the significance of infrastructure in fostering inclusion (see Box 10, p.100).[469]

Service provision and infrastructure development before, during and after crises plays a significant role in shaping IDPs' vulnerabilities and the patterns and impacts of urban displacement.[470] If current challenges are to be overcome and global sustainable development goals achieved, planning tools and financing instruments, particularly those of local authorities, will have to consider future demographic changes including displacement risk.

The cost of meeting SDG targets in terms of universal access to drinking water, sanitation and electricity in both urban and rural areas by 2030 has been estimated at $3.5 trillion per year, the equivalent to 0.3 percent of global GDP and significantly more than current investment scenarios envisage.[471] Many countries currently trying to deal with internal displacement are still catching up and trying to plug their existing infrastructure and service gaps, but significantly more inclusive urban investment will be needed to fulfil their commitments under the SDGs.[472]

## Box 10. Connecting the formal and the informal with urban acupuncture

Curitiba's innovative bus rapid transit (BRT) system has been replicated in 170 cities around the world.[473] It was originally conceived in the 1970s to respond to rapid urban growth that was congesting the city, and to connect peripheral areas with its economic centre. The scheme was complemented by a range of other investments in schools, parks and cultural buildings that served to upgrade a number of low-income neighbourhoods while preserving their character and identify.[474]

Medellin has made a series of urban acupuncture investments over recent decades, from the renovation of the city's road network and the improvement of water and sanitation facilities in poor neighbourhoods, to installing street lighting in less secure areas and running art workshops to prevent young people being recruited into gangs.[475] These focused and relatively low-cost investments have been particularly successful in *Comuna 13*, a neighbourhood affected by displacement, and have also helped to city as a whole to transform its image.[476] A similar initiative was successfully applied in Bogota.

There are also lessons to be learned from community-based approaches adopted by people living in informal settlements in sub-Saharan Africa and south and south-east Asia, who used joint negotiating power to secure access as a community to electricity, water and waste management, healthcare and education.[477] The efforts of so-called Slum Dwellers Federations helped to ensure that informal settlements were upgraded rather than demolished, preventing potentially significant urban displacement.

A community-based initiative in Nairobi also successfully relocated residents of Kibera, the city's largest informal settlement. It facilitated new housing near people's previous homes, minimising disruption to their lives and local communities by preserving their networks and employment, livelihood and education opportunities.[478]

Urban planners, architects and engineers in cities across the world have developed innovative solutions to seemingly intractable problems that can be brought to bear to support urban IDPs in integrating locally and achieving durable solutions. In the Peruvian capital of Lima, for example, drones, community mapping and 3D-printing were used to establish neighbourhood-level evidence to influence local and national policy to the benefit of the urban poor.[479]

Through the co-production and visualisation of quantitative and qualitative spatialised data, the communities themselves and the municipal authorities were able for the first time to picture and combine the spatial aspects required for planning with results from community-led household surveys and vulnerability mappings. The exercise made the authorities aware of the "considerable income, time and labour that the urban poor spend on improving collective accessibility and services and ameliorating housing conditions".[480] This shifted perceptions of the city's poor as a problem and brought their resilience and potential productivity to light.

A similar approach could be taken to highlighting and harnessing the huge investment that displaced people make over time to navigate and survive in their host cities. Negotiated upgrade or resettlement schemes led by IDPs and other inhabitants of informal settlements could go a long way toward countering the negative effects of evictions and reducing the risk of secondary displacement.

# TOWARD A DEVELOPMENT APPROACH TO URBAN DISPLACEMENT

This year's GRID reconfirms that internal displacement is clearly a development and a humanitarian concern. The global data highlights the fact that the persistently high numbers of new displacements associated with conflict and disasters are the result of a convergence of risk drivers, most of which are development-related and often concentrated in cities.

There is a need for comprehensive development approaches to urban displacement, along with humanitarian responses. But the institutions, policies and financing instruments needed for an integrated approach are not yet in place. A number of vital steps are required to support displaced people in cities, prevent displacement and reduce the risk of it happening in the future. Despite the highly localised and specific nature of each urban displacement situation, a few general conclusions on the most important of these steps are drawn below.

## Filling data gaps and establishing an evidence base

There are significant data and knowledge gaps on urban displacement, and the lack of clear understanding about its scale, duration, severity and the way it relates to broader urban development challenges impedes the design and implementation of appropriate prevention, risk reduction and response measures. A vital first step to addressing the phenomenon and reducing its risk and impacts effectively would be to establish a solid and shared evidence base to guide policy and practice.

Promising collaborative methods of doing so have been developed and are in use, but more investment and greater efforts to ensure that data is interoperable are needed. The empirical evidence available makes it clear that local planners, sector departments, neighbourhood organisations, local businesses and displaced people themselves will all need to be involved.

## A new narrative and approach to urban displacement

The notion and narrative of urban displacement have to change. When attention is drawn to displaced people's agency, resilience and potential contributions, local responses are more likely to emphasise participation and inclusion rather than assistance and exclusion from the longer-term vision of a city. Focusing on victimhood and vulnerability will only convey a negative picture of urban displacement.[481]

Vulnerabilities undoubtedly exist and may be aggravated over time, but the language and framing of the issue must promote and support IDPs as active agents of their own solutions. Local authorities and urban communities, for their part, should be seen not only as facilitators but also beneficiaries of their resilience.

## Accepting local integration as a displacement solution

A new understanding and acceptance of the nature and duration of urban displacement is also required. There is growing evidence that a significant number of urban IDPs plan to stay. Responses to both acute and protracted urban displacement need to recognise this, and authorities and host communities need to accept that local integration will often be the only feasible option for many.

Common concerns about the impact of displacement on a city's housing, infrastructure, services, labour markets, stability and demographic and cultural composition will need to be addressed with a long-term perspective in mind.

## Building leadership of local communities and municipalities

Inadequate urban infrastructure, housing and services, and limited job prospects and opportunities to access justice and participate in public life are all issues that go beyond the humanitarian sector's remit. When urban displacement crises occur, however, humanitarians often find themselves having to deal with such challenges.

The leadership and continuous engagement of local authorities before, during and after crises is paramount, as is the active participation of displaced people and their hosts in processes that affect their lives. Their involvement in and even management of urban planning and service provision is central to their success. Community-led data collection, needs assessments and risk analyses in informal settlements, at-risk neighbourhoods and other urban areas have proven effective in facilitating sustainable approaches to urban integration and resettlement.

## Supporting local authorities in hosting and integrating IDPs

Instead of focusing on providing humanitarian assistance, national governments and the international community need to devise new ways of supporting local authorities, service providers and businesses in addressing displacement and reducing the risk of it happening.

This includes identifying new ways of providing assistance at the local level through national governments and organisations as well as directly, using existing development funding instruments and developing new ones to support local governments and community-based organisations, and creating incentives for local and national authorities to accept responsibility for their IDPs and facilitate their local integration.

## Integrating formal and informal markets and institutions

In the absence of functioning formal housing and labour markets, and strong governance and institutions to address grievances and deliver justice, informal systems take their place. For many IDPs, and particularly new arrivals, the latter are all that is available. Humanitarian

and development stakeholders need to understand and accept the role that informal local powerbrokers play in facilitating life in the city for IDPs, and allow a combination of formal and informal institutions to support them in their process of local integration. This requires dealing carefully with the benefits and risks of informal arrangements, including transparency and accountability.

## Developing new approaches to housing and tenure

The pivotal role of tenure security for IDPs and the urban poor more broadly is recognised. New approaches have been developed over the past decade that address the ambiguity of tenure that many displaced people experience, and facilitate their entry into more formal housing arrangements and markets over time.

Innovation and adaptation will be vital in regulating IDPs' tenure agreements and supporting them in making the transition from abusive rental markets to more secure tenure and housing. Progressive approaches to housing policies and informal markets also mean investing in new approaches to informal settlements that allow for them to develop in ways that benefit the city as a whole.

## Setting goals and tracking progress at the local level

To understand the progress made in addressing urban displacement and reducing displacement risk globally, steps toward local durable solutions need to be monitored at the city level.[482] SDG 11 contains targets and indicators on planning and urban development financing that will also need to be monitored effectively from the bottom-up. The latter should in principle provide a solid basis not just for reporting but also for planning.

As progress is aggregated, however, and ultimately measured at national level, the metrics will not necessarily reflect urban realities. The disaggregation of data by location, sex, age and mobility status has also been encouraged, but there are few tools and little capacity to systematically collect and analyse data in this way.[483] In this sense, most of the SDGs' metrics will be more effective in tracking the performance of national governments than in informing and shaping action at the local level.[484]

# CONCLUSION
## From global to local solutions

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In 2018, IDMC took stock of the progress made in the 20 years since the adoption of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. This year is the 10th anniversary of the Kampala Convention, and to mark the occasion the African Union has declared 2019 the Year of Refugees, Returnees and IDPs. Activities across the continent will draw attention to internal displacement and the need for durable solutions, but the situation of those displaced has not significantly improved at the regional or global level.

The figures presented in this report show that in many countries affected by conflict, not only is displacement becoming protracted, but new displacements continue to take place, deepening national and regional crises. Certain countries and regions are also consistently affected by disasters year after year. Many IDPs face serious vulnerabilities and protection gaps and are at high risk of being displaced again within urban centres, particularly if they lack secure tenure, employment and social support that ensure their local integration.

Humanitarian responses alone will not resolve the internal displacement crises affecting many countries around the world, nor reduce the risk of future displacement. As our cities grow and the landscape of urban displacement changes, local authorities will be at the forefront of both responding to crises and reducing risk in the long-term. National responsibility and leadership and international accountability now must combine with tangible and significant support to local action. And given that growing numbers of IDPs live in urban centres across the world, this local action will increasingly need to happen in towns and cities.

The provision of basic services for IDPs remains an important humanitarian challenge in active crises and camp settings. It also lies at the heart of development efforts in complex urban and protracted displacement settings.[485] Long-term displacement in already deteriorating socioeconomic conditions makes it difficult for local authorities to provide services to the whole urban population. Decades of conflict and displacement result in municipal structures and services unable to meet the needs of the urban poor. Many IDPs are trapped in poverty, which in turn contributes to making their displacement protracted. In such circumstances, concerted and coherent poverty reduction efforts, including targeted assistance and broader social protection, need to be developed in place of siloed, short-term humanitarian interventions.[486]

Cities are also tasked with applying and localising global and national development frameworks as part of the sustainable development agenda, but often struggle to do so. The way and extent to which authority and resources are decentralised will determine their capacity for effective governance and implementation. Financial capacities to achieve development objectives and address humanitarian crises vary considerably from country to country, and from city to city. Size, economic productivity, social equality and institutional arrangements all determine the ability of a city's government and its communities to prevent and cope with crises, including internal displacement crises.[487]

Affecting city-level change will require progress across at least three main areas. Knowledge and evidence of the drivers, impacts and risks of urban displacement and of appropriate and successful approaches to addressing it are a prerequisite for effective action. The capacity to act on the evidence also needs to be strengthened, particularly in low-income countries and those that face large displacement crises.

Most importantly, however, incentives to increase political will are needed at both the municipal and national level to adapt urban planning, investment, regulation and service delivery to the realities of informality and protracted displacement. Urban opportunities cannot be unlocked without political solutions, and those solutions need to move beyond short-term responses to embrace long-term risk reduction and inclusive development.

In moving ahead in these three areas, a checklist of sorts may be useful to guide prioritisation of local-level actions and encourage more national and international support for relevant sectors and institutions, adapted to each city. Data and insight, and the capacity to present evidence that generates incentives to create the required political will are critical in this regard and suggest a first set of priority areas for action at local level (see Figure 24).

As we look into the coming years, the conclusions from our last global reports remain alarmingly valid. More than 20 years of mass displacement and increasingly protracted situations across the globe leave us today with the highest number of people living in displacement ever. Despite policy progress in several countries, the root causes of internal displacement persist.

This report shows, however, that despite the significant challenges, promising approaches exist. In a rapidly urbanising world, many of the opportunities for solutions to displacement are located in and around cities. For the urban displaced to break out of protracted and cyclical displacement, inclusive legislation, housing provision and service delivery need to become a part of the DNA of urban governance.

The involvement and, over time, leadership of displaced people in urban planning and service provision is central to their success. Where responsible states work hand in hand with local governments and communities, supported by the international community, solutions are found and the future of those displaced today and of global displacement risk becomes less bleak.

FIGURE 24: Toward a checklist for action on urban displacement: start by building an evidence base

## Data and analysis

| Systematically account for urban IDPs. Record their number and the duration and severity of their displacement, disaggregated by sex, age, disability and other relevant criteria
| Monitor movements and conditions of those displaced over time, not just during and immediately after crises
| Undertake profiling exercises that include both displaced and host populations
| Collaborate with humanitarian, development and other stakeholders working to reduce vulnerability and risk to ensure that any data collected is interoperable

## Capacity and participation

| Build on communities' existing capacities, including for the collection of data on their vulnerabilities and needs, but also their existing resources, skills and community services
| Strengthen the capacity of local organisations and government departments for data and statistical analysis
| Work with IDPs and those at risk of displacement to identify priority areas in service delivery and infrastructure development
| Identify urban development approaches that accommodate informality, including through flexible and secure tenure arrangements and adaptive labour market strategies in line with national and international sustainable development initiatives

## Incentives and political will

| Estimate the impacts of displacement on city development and the risks inherent in inaction, including effects on the city's economy, security, stability and social wellbeing
| Use risk assessments to advocate for new and appropriate financing mechanisms to support city action and make displacement risk one of the core considerations in urban planning and development
| Document successful approaches to managing and reducing internal displacement in cities and provide a platform for exchange and learning for municipalities and their partners
| Recognise IDPs as local citizens, even when return is their preferred long-term solution, by allowing voting rights and providing space for public participation, and supporting their access to documentation