

# FOREWORD

Much focus has been placed on the hundreds of thousands of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants who have put their lives at risk to reach European shores. Their bravery and despair has drawn much attention to the phenomenon of displacement. In reality though, they represent only the tip of an iceberg. Of those the Syrian conflict has uprooted, around 6.6 million people have been displaced internally. Away from the media glare and out of reach of humanitarian agencies, many struggle to survive in subhuman conditions.

There are now twice as many internally displaced people (IDPs) as refugees worldwide. In some ways, the distinction between internal and cross-border flight is unhelpful in a globalised world. Large crises such as Syria should lead to a new and more holistic thinking about displacement.

A similar shift is needed in analysing the causes and consequences of displacement. We tend to think in terms of single, isolated triggers, but the reality is far more complex. Displacement in Sudan ostensibly caused by conflict has been traced back to root causes such as drought and environmental degradation, and a food crisis that became a famine because of government neglect and changing regional demographics. In Haiti, the establishment of overcrowded informal settlements and authorities' inability to enforce building and safety standards formed the backdrop to the mass displacement caused by the 2010 earthquake.

Such complexity has profound implications when it comes to preventing, responding to and resolving displacement. Failure to conduct a thorough assessment means responses will be fragmented at best and ineffective at worst.

A comprehensive approach must address political factors, and improve resilience to a range of risks so people do not have to flee in the first place. This is development and governance work. When displacement becomes inevitable, humanitarians attend to more immediate needs, but they must work with the development sector if sustainable solutions are to be achieved. There is a clear trend

of displacement becoming more protracted and more of a development challenge.

To take some of these considerations into account, we are presenting our estimates of internal displacement in 2015 in a radically new way, with figures on people displaced by conflict, by violence and by disasters in a single report.

The Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID) aims to provide a more holistic picture of the phenomenon, regardless of cause. In time for the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, it also aims to highlight displacement as a multi-dimensional challenge that must involve humanitarian, sustainable development, peace-building, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation work.

It also discusses types of displacement that receive too little attention, such as that associated with generalised criminal violence, gradually-evolving crises such as drought, and development projects.

This year's GRID is an important body of evidence, but it is not the complete picture. We can only be as good as our data, so it also constitutes an appeal for those who collect it to redouble their efforts to provide comprehensive and up-to-date information on all displaced populations.

Behind our data lie millions of blighted human lives. IDPs often lose everything when they flee, and the trauma and upheaval of displacement leave many with deep psychological and physical scars. Our ultimate aim remains the same, to improve understanding of their plight and ensure that efforts to protect, assist, consult and empower the displaced are better resourced and targeted.



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