

# CONCLUSION

This report's findings illustrate once again that the global phenomenon of internal displacement shows few if any signs of abating. The responses of national governments and the international community to date have all but failed to limit its scope, let alone reverse the upward trend.

Annual figures for new displacement associated with conflict and violence have been on an upward trend since 2003, and as of the end of 2015 there were more such IDPs than at any other point since IDMC began monitoring in 1998. If that were not enough, disasters displaced more than twice as many people as conflict during the year.

For many people, 2015 will not have been the first time they were forced to flee their homes. Others will have been displaced several times during the year. Evidence shows that displacement often persists for years, and sometimes decades. The longer it lasts, the more likely IDPs are to fall off the radar of data collectors, responders and the media.

These latest estimates paint only part of the global picture of displacement. They do not include all of the people displaced by violence perpetrated by gangs and criminal groups, nor do they capture those forced to flee their homes by projects undertaken in the name of development, or by disasters associated with slow processes of environmental change such as drought, sea level rise and desertification.

Progress has been made in conceptualising and defining some of these phenomena, which is a vital first step towards global data collection. Once we begin to monitor them more systematically, the numbers will rise and the picture will likely become more complex. It is also true to say that the figures that are published are almost inevitably under-estimates.

Findings in 2015 corroborate IDMC's previous analyses, which point to a correlation between displacement, political instability and income inequality. The drivers and triggers of displacement,

the factors that lead to it becoming protracted and obstacles to solutions are often political in nature.

As highlighted above in the spotlight on Nepal, there is an increased risk that displacement associated with the April and May 2015 earthquakes will become prolonged because political instability and weak governance mean that IDPs have not been properly protected and assisted.

In countries such as DRC, endemic violence, insecurity and poverty caused repeated displacements in 2015. People become more vulnerable each time they are displaced, setting the scene for further displacement in the future as the resilience of individuals, households and communities is eroded.

Our analysis of the main drivers of displacement associated with disasters shows that economic and political factors play a key role here too. People's exposure and vulnerability is driven by urban, demographic and economic growth, and developing countries bear the brunt of the phenomenon.

Inequality in these countries makes displacement a greater concern for the less well-off and those subject to socio-economic discrimination and marginalisation. Displacement can be a symptom of pre-existing patterns of social exclusion, affecting the poor just as much in low income countries as in their middle and high income counterparts.

Development projects undertaken by governments and private companies can be drivers of displacement that impoverish and marginalise people. As illustrated by the case of people forcibly evicted from their homes to make way for facilities for the Rio Olympics, the protection, restoration and improvement of the lives and livelihoods of those obliged to resettle tend to be inadequate. Through displacing communities, projects can undermine development goals.

Raising awareness of the nature and dynamics of internal displacement in all its forms is key to helping policy-makers and practitioners collect the right kind of data, and target limited resources to where they are most needed. It is particularly important to provide insights into displacement as a multi-dimensional and cross-cutting issue of direct relevance to other global challenges, from humanitarian action and peace-building to disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and sustainable development.

The World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul provides an important opportunity to transform policy and operational approaches to displacement and to recognise the phenomenon as the complex political and development challenge that it is. The pledge to leave no one behind in implementing the 2030 agenda for sustainable development places new obligations on states to ensure that people affected and displaced by conflict and disasters can benefit from, and contribute to sustainable long-term development.

Displacement is more visible than ever as an issue that requires more action, from the commitments under the 2015–2030 Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction to the decisions by parties to the UN framework convention on climate change and national adaptation plans. The risk of displacement created by the exposure and vulnerability of increasing numbers of people in rapidly growing and poorly planned urban areas cuts across these agendas, and is one of the central themes of a new framework that is expected to emerge from the UN conference on housing and sustainable urban development in October 2016.

These policy frameworks provide important entry points for addressing displacement in a more comprehensive and joined-up way. In order to be successful, however, they need to be informed by robust evidence and their implementation measured against accurate and realistic targets and benchmarks. For this to happen, a solid global baseline and frequently updated quantitative and qualitative data are needed to inform the processes every step of the way.

This includes building a better knowledge base on IDPs' movements, the conditions in which they live and the vulnerabilities they may have as a result of their displacement. We know that a large proportion of IDPs live outside of camps, and that they increasingly seek safety in towns and cities, but our knowledge of the needs of

IDPs in urban settings as compared with the rest of the urban poor is limited at best.

The same holds true for our understanding of the impacts of displacement on other vulnerable groups across the world, because much of the data currently available is not disaggregated by location, age, sex, ethnicity or religion.

There is also still only limited understanding of the causal relationships and feedback loops between displacement and its drivers, including political instability, income inequality, urban growth and climate change. Quantifying the economic cost of displacement across different countries and contexts would make a compelling case to governments and policy-makers for incorporating responses into their longer-term development plans.

Identifying the exact tipping points which compel IDPs to cross international borders in search of safety and refuge would also provide vital insights into what needs to be done to protect and assist people at their points of departure, transit and arrival.

As the global monitor of internal displacement, we intend to expand our provision of knowledge relevant to policy-making and operational planning in an effort to advance current and future global commitments to reduce the risk of displacement, and find lasting solutions for the millions of IDPs worldwide. Our ability to do so will depend on the breadth and strength of our partnerships, and on states' continued commitment to support these efforts.