Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)

EL SALVADOR

Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID 2018)

Conflict displacement
Figures analysis
The Chapultepec Peace Accords brought peace to El Salvador in 1992 after 12 years of civil war. Guerrilla forces were demobilised two years later and reconstituted as a political party, significant demilitarisation of society and the state had taken place and “founding” elections were held. Both sides respected the peace accords and the political structure of the country was transformed.

Today, however, El Salvador is a part of a transnational route for drug-trafficking and other criminal activities. Assassinations, extrajudicial killings, disappearances, rapes, kidnappings, threats, the forced recruitment of children, intimidation, extortion and femicide have forced many to flee across or within El Salvador’s borders. A rise in the number of asylum seekers can be clearly observed, but the scale of internal displacement is unknown and the phenomenon is all but invisible. Partially because of this gap in understanding, the authorities have been reluctant to acknowledge and tackle it.

The constitutional chamber of the Supreme Court accepted petitions filed in November referring to internal displacement associated with criminal violence. The move came after the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights granted precautionary measures in favour of one of the cases and following an amendment of the Criminal Code in 2016 that included the crime of restricting freedom of movement because of threat, intimidation or violence. The country's justice and security minister has also officially recognised displacement associated with gang violence, and the government has published a first profiling study carried out with the support of JIPS and UNHCR.

These improvements are offset however, by the US government's announcement in January 2018 that it will revoke temporary protective status for nearly 200,000 Salvadorans who had been living legally in the country since two earthquakes struck in 2001. In the absence of clear and effective protocols for reintegrating returnees, it is feared that deportations on such a scale could overwhelm El Salvador's political and economic capacity to receive them and add to the country's displacement crisis.
EL SALVADOR - Major displacement events in 2017

As many as 300,000 new displacements due to threats to personal security.
Location: Countrywide
Source: IUDOP

Sources: Displacement data (IDMC); map (OCHA, Reliefweb) created in Sep 2013. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations and IDMC.
EL SALVADOR - Stock: N/A

This corresponds to the total number of individuals in a situation of internal displacement at the end of 2017

We did not identify or obtain any data for this category.
**EL SALVADOR - New displacements: 296,000**

This corresponds to the estimated number of internal displacement movements to have taken place during the year

**Sources and methodologies**
We considered information registered by the police and by the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman, and the profiling exercise published by the government with support from JIPS, UNHCR, and the Latin American Faculty for Social Sciences (FLACSO) in March 2018. Given that it was the most comprehensive assessment and provided the best estimate for 2017, we based our estimate on two questions about internal displacement in a representative survey conducted in November 2017 by the Institute of Public Opinion (IUDOP) at the Central American University José Simeón Cañas.

**Main caveats and monitoring challenges**
The survey was voluntary, so there may be a bias related to the characteristics of people who agreed to take it. Besides, the question asked in the survey regards displacements as a result of threats. That means that it excludes those associated with other kinds of violence, such as homicides, theft, extortion and recruitment. It is also important to note that the survey estimate refers to new displacement rather than IDPs, implying that one person’s multiple movements during the year are all taken into account.

**IDMC figure, methodology and rationale**
We extrapolated the results of the IUDOP survey to the country’s total adult population based on a projection of the 2007 census. In doing so, the number of times a person migrated during the year are all taken into account.

**Significant methodological and contextual changes from last year**
IUDOP changed the question on internal displacements in their survey for 2017 to cover only threats, rather than threats and acts of violence as in the previous two years. We also only counted newly displaced people in 2016 rather than incidents of new displacement, which accounts for most of the increase in our figure.
EL SALVADOR- Returns: N/A

This corresponds to the number of individuals for which sufficient evidence exists to indicate a return to the habitual place of residence.

We did not identify or obtain any data for this category.
EL SALVADOR - Provisional solutions: N/A

This corresponds to cases of individuals who IDMC considers to not have achieved a durable solution.

We did not identify or obtain any data for this category.