

# SYRIA

## Figure Analysis – Displacement Related to Conflict and Violence

### CONTEXT

Government advances on areas of Syria controlled by non-state armed groups caused significant numbers of new displacements in the first half of 2018. However, the total number of new displacements in the year (1,649,000) was lower than that recorded in 2017 (2,911,000), because the intensity and number of armed clashes both decreased during the second half of the year.

The government’s offensive in the border areas of Hama, Aleppo and Idlib governorates led to the highest number of new displacements, with more than 400,000 people displaced in the first six weeks of the year. The Syrian Army’s advance through Dara’a and Quneitra at the end of June and early July reportedly led to more than 285,000 new displacements.

In eastern Ghouta, an enclave of about 400,000 people which had been under siege since 2013, an escalation in government offensives forced more than 158,000 people to flee between mid-February and mid-April. About half of those displaced chose to be evacuated to opposition-held areas in Aleppo and Idlib, while the other half went to camps in Rural Damascus.

An offensive on Idlib in the last quarter of the year did not ultimately take place, but the expectation of it nevertheless forced tens of thousands more people to flee their homes pre-emptively between September and December.

New displacements	Total number of IDPs	Partial or unverified solutions	
		Number of IDPs who have made partial progress towards a durable solution	Number of IDPs whose progress towards durable solutions cannot be verified
1,649,000	6,119,000 (Year figure was last updated: 2018)	715,000 (1 January – 31 December 2018)	No data available

*This corresponds to new instances of internal displacement having occurred in 2018.*

*This corresponds to the total number of individuals living in internal displacement as of 31 December 2018.*

*This corresponds to the number of IDPs whom our data providers have identified as having returned, resettled or locally integrated in 2018 and for whom the evidence obtained by IDMC suggests that progress toward durable solutions is only partial given their living conditions. In a few instances this number may refer to movements rather than people.*

*This corresponds to the number of IDPs whom our data providers have identified as having returned, resettled or locally integrated in 2018 but for whom there is no available evidence to corroborate progress toward durable solutions. In a few instances this number may refer to movements rather than people.*

## NEW DISPLACEMENTS

*This corresponds to new instances of internal displacement having occurred in 2018.*

### **Sources and methodologies**

IDMC used Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme (HNAP) reports to estimate the number of new displacements in Syria. These assessments are based on direct observations in the field and interviews with local key informants (KIs) at the community level.

IDMC also used Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) cluster data, which is collected via KI interviews carried out by representatives from local councils. The dataset includes triangulated information from 38 humanitarian actors.

Another we source used is the IDP Task Force's dataset. This compiles data received from OCHA Syria, CCCM Turkey, OCHA Jordan, UNHCR Jordan and HNAP, which share data verified by clusters in their respective countries, with the IDP Task Force.

### **Main caveats and monitoring challenges**

Our figure is an underestimate for several reasons, namely the limited access to some parts of the country to collect data in the first months of the year, and because of a lack of information on short-term displacements, which means these displacement flows are not recorded.

This is particularly relevant to displacement in Aleppo, Idlib and Hama in January and displacement in Dara'a and Quneitra in June and July. The humanitarian situation in these areas evolved rapidly, and consequently, verifying displacement numbers was particularly challenging. As a result, IDMC decided not to use unverified humanitarian situation reports, which had more information on short-term displacements, and instead used more conservative figures, primarily from HNAP and the IDP Task Force. However, these are likely to be underestimates because the IDP Task Force only includes people who have been displaced for longer than 30 days, and who have left their communities, while the HNAP was only able to cover the majority of Syria for surveying between May and December 2018.

It is also important to note that estimates from both publishers are derived from data provided by key informants (KIs), who can only offer estimates of numbers of people displaced, meaning that population figures are subject to an undefined margin of error.

### **IDMC figure and rationale**

For new displacements between January and April 2018, the figures are based solely on information compiled by the IDP Task Force, which consolidated all available data on Syria in this period. The IDP Task Force's coverage was geographically limited to only half of the country because HNAP was not allowed to carry out monitoring. This therefore resulted in a significant gap in the data-collection process.

For May to December 2018, we combined data from the IDP Task Force, HNAP and CCCM. During this period, the geographical coverage was more complete and the figures are therefore more comprehensive.

In cases where the IDP Task Force used HNAP data, we added the number of people affected by shelter damage in the same location because, as mentioned above, the IDP Task Force only counts people who have left their communities and reported by HNAP as 'displaced' and refers to those displaced within their communities as 'affected by shelter damage'.

### **Significant changes from last year**

The number of new displacements in 2018 is only half those we reported for 2017. There were three significant government offensives in January, March and June on areas outside of government control

and these displaced nearly half of all the people reported as displaced in 2018. As the government's control over the country extended throughout 2018, the amount of displacement decreased significantly.

## TOTAL NUMBER OF IDPS

*This corresponds to the total number of individuals living in internal displacement as of 31 December 2018.*

### **Sources and methodologies**

IDMC used Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme (HNAP) reports to calculate the total number of IDPs in Syria. These assessments are based on direct observations in the field and interviews with local KIs at the community level.

### **Main caveats and monitoring challenges**

As previously noted, it is possible that HNAP's population figures are subject to an undefined margin of error since they are based on the best estimates of the KIs they interview.

### **IDMC figure and rationale**

IDMC used the total number of IDPs as reported by HNAP and added the number of people affected by shelter damage, because the latter are also people displaced within their own community but are not included in HNAP's total IDP figure. We also added the number of failed returns in 2018 to the reported figure. Failed returns correspond to people who attempted to return but ended up in collective shelters, camps, or host families.

### **Significant changes from last year**

The total number of IDPs we reported on in 2018 is very similar to our figure from 2017. This similarity is due to the fact that most of the reported 'new' displacements were instances of IDPs being displaced again.

## NUMBER OF IDPS WHO HAVE MADE PARTIAL PROGRESS TOWARDS A DURABLE SOLUTION

*This corresponds to the number of IDPs whom our data providers have identified as having returned, resettled or locally integrated in 2018 and for whom the evidence obtained by IDMC suggests that progress toward durable solutions is only partial given their living conditions. In a few instances this number may refer to movements rather than people.*

### **Sources and methodologies**

IDMC used Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme (HNAP) reports to calculate the total number of IDPs in Syria. These assessments are based on direct observations in the field and interviews with local KIs at the community level.

### **Main caveats and monitoring challenges**

The IDP Task Force also reports on returns, but there are some caveats attached. First, its figures are almost twice as high as HNAP's. This is in part because OCHA relies on several sources which use different definitions of returnees. As a result, if some people who return for a visit, or to check on properties, register for assistance they may be listed as returnees. In addition, some returning IDPs might be counted multiple times. Furthermore, IDP Task Force's data only covers the period from August to December 2018.

As a result of those issues, we used the HNAP data, which we consider to be more reliable and conservative. Even so, there are some caveats which must also be highlighted here. Most

important among them is that HNAP does not include people who are displaced for a shorter period than 30 days in its IDP data. We must also note that HNAP's data covers only the period from May to December 2018. As a result, our figures are since they do not include people who reportedly returned in the first part of the year.

Consequently, and as previously mentioned, we believe that HNAP's population figures are subject to an undefined margin of error since they are based on the best estimates provided by key informants.

#### **IDMC figure and rationale**

IDMC used information on returns from the datasets covering May to December 2018 and calculated the number of returnees disaggregated by type of shelter in which they live.

IDMC included returnees who reportedly went back to their own house in the partial solutions category because even if they return to a habitable place of residence, they still face displacement-related vulnerabilities, not least due to ongoing insecurity.

#### **Significant changes from last year**

The figure remained very similar to that of last year.

## CONFIDENCE ASSESSMENT

The Confidence Assessment provides an at-a-glance overview of the comprehensiveness of the data available regarding displacement associated with conflict for each country. It describes the methodologies used, frequency of reporting, data disaggregation and geographical coverage. Here two key metrics are analysed: the new displacements and the total number of IDPs.

Displacement metric	New displacements	Total number of IDPs
Reporting units	People	People
	Households	Households
Methodology	Key informants	Key informants
	Other	Registration
		Other
Geographical disaggregation	Admin 2 or more	Admin 2 or more
Geographical coverage	Partial coverage	Partial coverage
Frequency of reporting	Upon request	Upon request
Disaggregation on sex	Partial	Partial
Disaggregation on age	Partial	Partial
Data triangulation	Some local triangulation	Some local triangulation
Data on settlement elsewhere	No	No
Data on returns	Partial	Yes
Data on local integration	No	No
Data on cross border movements	Partial	No
Data on deaths	No	No
Data on births	No	No

For any additional questions please email: [data@idmc.ch](mailto:data@idmc.ch)

For the full country profile on Syria please visit:  
<http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/syria>