

## 15,000 people displaced every day inside African countries, according to new IDMC report

IDMC's director calls on the development sector to join humanitarians in preventing and reducing internal displacement and finding long-term solutions for the millions of people affected

*Press release*

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As the world focuses its attention on preventing irregular migration and protecting refugees coming out of Africa, the displacement that happens behind its own borders persists at an alarming rate.

A new [report](#) by the [Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre](#) (IDMC) and the [Norwegian Refugee Council](#) (NRC) reveals that since the beginning of 2017, 2.7 million people have been displaced by conflict, violence or disasters, and have not crossed an international border. In the first half of the year, 997,000 new internal displacements due to conflict were reported in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), more than in the whole of 2016, and 206,000 in the Central African Republic, four times the figure for the previous year.

Behind the numbers lie the blighted lives of people forced to leave their homes, often at a moment's notice and in the most traumatic of circumstances, and receiving little protection and assistance from their governments. In countries with low coping capacity and weak governance, the majority of people internally displaced live in conditions of extreme vulnerability, and are often at risk of further upheaval and long-term impoverishment. This is the case for many of the 12.6 million Africans living in displacement as of the end of 2016.

"This dire and clearly worsening situation demands a new approach that goes beyond humanitarian action to address the causes and long-term implications of internal displacement. Every case is much more than a personal tragedy; displacement threatens to undermine the achievement of Africa's broader development objectives," said IDMC's director, Alexandra Bilak.

"National actors and development agencies need to ensure that emergency responses are complemented by prevention and longer-term support. In countries with high numbers of people living in protracted displacement, focusing on helping them rebuild their lives will allow progress toward many of the global Sustainable Development Goals."

Conflict caused 75 per cent of Africa's new displacement in the first half of 2017, and 70 per cent in 2016. DRC, Nigeria and South Sudan are regularly among the five countries worst affected. East Africa, where displacement is often driven by protracted and cyclical conflicts such as those in Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan, bears the brunt of the crisis in regional terms.

"To reverse this trend, we must focus on preventing and reducing the risk of new displacement, and this can only happen by taking early action on conflict prevention and peace-building, and overall economic and political development," Bilak said.

The situation is similar for displacement associated with disasters. Effective risk reduction measures help to reduce the impact of disasters, the number of people they displace and the length of time it takes them to re-build their lives. Such measures can also lessen people's vulnerability to repeated displacement, particularly during slow-onset crises such as drought, which are set to become more frequent in the future as a result of climate change.

The figures presented in this report are undoubtedly alarming, but they still underestimate the full scale of internal displacement. Displacement caused by slow-onset disasters and development projects is not recorded, and the number of people who remain displaced for months and years following sudden-onset disasters such as storms and floods is unknown.

Five years ago, Member States of the African Union came together and displayed great leadership when they signed the Kampala Convention on Internal Displacement, the only existing legally binding framework to address internal displacement. We need a renewal of this political will today and real investment across Africa to address the continent's displacement crises comprehensively.

**FOR INTERVIEWS, PLEASE CONTACT:**

Sian Bowen, head of communications

Email: [sian.bowen@idmc.ch](mailto:sian.bowen@idmc.ch)

Office Tel: 00 41 22 552 3612

Mobile: 00 41 (0) 78 630 16 78

Francesca Da Ros, communications coordinator

Email : [francesca.da.ros@idmc.ch](mailto:francesca.da.ros@idmc.ch)

Office Tel: + 41 22 552 3645

**The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)** (<http://www.internal-displacement.org>) was established by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in 1998. It monitors internal displacement caused by conflict, violence, human rights violations and disasters globally, and is widely respected as the world's leading source of information and analysis on the phenomenon.

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