

# FROM EVIDENCE TO IMPACT

Mapping the next  
10 years at IDMC



At the start of 2020, there were over 50 million people internally displaced worldwide. Internal displacement can affect anyone.



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Man living in an IDP camp in Puntland, Somalia.  
©NRC/Mukhtar Nuur, April 2020



# IDMC today

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) is a global centre of expertise established in 1998 to monitor and report on the situation of people who become displaced within their own countries. We curate and analyse data from a wide range of sources, provide insight into the risk, scale, causes and impacts of the phenomenon and support partners around the world in identifying and implementing solutions to it.

## Our Vision

is of a world in which fewer people become internally displaced and those who do achieve rapid and lasting solutions.

## Our Mission

is to generate evidence, strengthen capacity and galvanise action to drive positive change. We do this by:

- | Monitoring and researching the phenomenon
- | Documenting solutions and best practice
- | Advising governments and providing tools and services to partners
- | Promoting the issue through partnership, dialogue and communication

## Our Team

brings together multi-disciplinary experts with backgrounds ranging from data science, statistical analysis and digital communications, to international humanitarian law, political science, journalism, sociology, economics and geography. We have evolved and expanded in recent years to encompass professional profiles that enable us to tackle the cross-cutting and increasingly multi-faceted nature of displacement.

*The Philippines is a country that faces displacement by both natural hazards and conflict and violence.*  
© Frederik Kok, the Philippines, 2014



## The progress we've made

# A changing landscape

The scope of our work has increased significantly since our establishment in 1998. From an almost exclusive focus on internal displacement attributed to armed conflict, we now monitor and report on that associated with conflict and generalised violence, sudden and slow-onset disasters and development projects in more than 250 countries and territories. We curate and analyse data from an ever-growing number of sources and expand the volume and breadth of information we publish every year. Our annual estimates have become a global reference point and a baseline that informs humanitarian and development priorities across the world.

Our research and insight have also helped to shift the discourse on internal displacement. What was once seen as a purely humanitarian issue is now understood as being connected to many other global risks, from state fragility and income inequality to urbanisation, disasters and climate change. We have documented

these connections and shown their impacts on people including indigenous communities in Central America, pastoralists in the Horn of Africa and fishing villages in the Pacific. We have done this by publishing not only global data and research, but also stories, photos and testimonies of some of the people behind the figures.

Our growing evidence on the overlapping drivers and impacts of displacement has provided vital insight into the investments needed to better prevent, prepare for and find solutions to the phenomenon. Our evidence has benefited partners working on the humanitarian-development-peace-building nexus, whom we continue to support in identifying and strengthening links between policy debates, technical sectors and financing mechanisms. Our expertise has also supported the development of countries' prevention efforts, risk reduction measures and durable solutions strategies.

# The challenges we face

With more people than ever displaced around the world, there is an unprecedented focus on human mobility in global public discourse. The plight of internally displaced people (IDPs), however, is still largely neglected. This despite the fact that they vastly outnumber refugees, and that the links between internal displacement and cross-border movements have been clearly established.

Their neglect is symptomatic of a political and diplomatic environment that invokes sovereignty as immunity rather than responsibility. Aggravated by difficulties in accessing many IDPs, it leads to differing interpretations of the causes and impacts of internal displacement and inconsistencies in the way it is

framed in political agendas. This has the potential to undermine international standards and norms that guide IDPs' protection and assistance.

A growing number of countries have recently shown laudable interest in and leadership on internal displacement, but it is clear that political will alone is not enough. Many lack the technical expertise, tools and funding to measure, report on and respond to the phenomenon effectively. Unilateralism, socioeconomic inequality and financial insecurity are also on the rise around the world, trends that the Covid-19 pandemic has only served to aggravate. The need for more focused, efficient and pragmatic approaches is more urgent than ever.

# The opportunities ahead

We see a number of opportunities for progress over the next decade. An unprecedented political window has opened up as ever more countries seek dialogue, support and advice on internal displacement. Those already hosting large numbers of IDPs and those that realise they may do so in the future recognise that the issue needs to be urgently addressed as part of their national priorities and development agendas.

Our own experience of establishing dialogue with Geneva-based ambassadors, and the momentum created by global initiatives such as the UN secretary general's high-level panel on internal displacement, the GP20 Plan of Action and the Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics (EGRIS), show that governments are open to sharing their experiences and finding new ways of addressing the phenomenon. We can and should build on this momentum.

Media coverage of internal displacement has also improved in its scope and accuracy, and the number of data providers on the ground has increased exponentially since the 1990s. We are no longer alone in the displacement data space. We have been joined by dozens of new partners on whom we rely to collect, analyse and share information. The multiplication of data sources has increased our workload and at times

created confusion, but it has also enabled us to paint a more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon and to reaffirm our role as a global aggregator that connects data and analysis to wider political agendas and priorities.

We are recognised as the go-to source for analysis and expertise on internal displacement. Governments, UN agencies and civil society increasingly call on us to provide advice and support, whether it be in clarifying concepts, devising better data and monitoring systems, developing more integrated policies and strategies or convening new debates.

We can use our global knowledge to help identify solutions. By working more closely with governments, we can generate greater political interest, responsibility and accountability. By building bridges between our partners, we can encourage new and effective approaches.

We enter this new decade with a renewed sense of purpose and energy. Supported by a highly skilled team, a dedicated group of donors and a strong network of partners across the globe, we believe the next phase of our work will bring about real and lasting change by reducing internal displacement and its adverse effects on millions of people worldwide.



*The exit-entrance checkpoint «Stanytsia Luhanska»: To receive social benefits, inhabitants living in non-government-controlled areas must take on a long and costly journey to the government-controlled areas every month.  
©NRC/Ingebjørg Kårstad, Ukraine, 2018*



# Over the next 10 years

## we will ...

continue to improve understanding of internal displacement and demonstrate why it should remain a global humanitarian, development and peacebuilding priority

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cater to the growing demand for our support and advice by strengthening capacities and supporting countries in learning from one another

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advance nationally owned solutions grounded in international standards and good practice

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align our objectives with the 2030 development agenda and mobilise political and financial commitment commensurate with this vision.

One of the main avenues of Bentiu Protection of Civilian site.  
© IOM/Rikka Tupaz, Unity State, South Sudan, 2018



# 3 Setting the course

## Our theory of change

Our vision of a world in which fewer people become displaced and those who do find rapid and lasting solutions will require systemic change. To help drive this transformation, we will focus our work over the next 10 years on three pillars: generating evidence, strengthening capacity and galvanising action.

We will continue to play a leading role in the monitoring and reporting on the scale of internal displacement globally, while documenting and reporting on the solutions, sharing lessons and promoting good practices. We will provide tailored tools and advice to actors in country, and convene dialogue, develop strategic partnerships and raise global awareness.

Our investments in these areas will generate the data, analysis, tools and political engagement needed to improve decision making and action. By 2030, we will have helped countries become

more systematic in their accounting, reporting on and monitoring of progress, and informed more effective policies and interventions at the local, national and global level. By improving the evidence base, strengthening capacities and increasing visibility and recognition of the issue, we hope to have created much-needed political incentives for change.

To achieve our vision we will need adequate funding, enabling political environments, demand for our evidence and expertise, robust internal systems and the ability to attract and retain highly qualified staff.

We will not lead this process alone, but in partnership with local stakeholders and national and international organisations. We will ensure that our partners own the outcomes of our work, resulting in action that endures far into the future.

**Pillar 1**  
**Generate Evidence**

we will do this by ...

monitoring and analysing global internal displacement, assessing displacement risk, and documenting solutions

which will produce ...

actionable and publicly accessible data, policy-relevant analyses, annual assessments of progress and a global repository of solutions

resulting in ...

improved understanding of the risk, drivers, patterns, impacts and solutions to internal displacement across different countries

and leading to ...

a global evidence base that supports national and global decision-making, public policies and programmes

**Pillar 2**  
**Strengthen Capacity**

sharing best practices and advising in-country actors on how to monitor, report on, prepare for and respond to internal displacement

nationally owned data systems and methods for measurement, accounting and reporting, as well as tools to support planning and decision-making

strengthened capacity of in-country actors to generate and use evidence on internal displacement for reporting, planning and decision-making

countries systematically accounting for IDPs and reporting on progress toward durable solutions

**Pillar 3**  
**Galvanise Action**

convening dialogues, raising global awareness and amplifying the voices of IDPs

new spaces for discussion and debate

greater political engagement and public interest in the issue

a global movement to advance solutions for the world's IDPs



*A family from the Carteret Islands, Papua New Guinea. Many Pacific island communities are facing threats to their homes and livelihoods, threatening future displacement, as climate change results in slow onset environmental change and impacts.*  
© IOM/Muse Mohammed, 2016



Objectives	Improved understanding of the risk, causes, patterns and impacts of internal displacement
	New insight into solutions and best practice
Approaches	Global monitoring and reporting
	Displacement risk assessments
	Regional and thematic research
	Compilation of best practice
Target audience	Governments, donors, UN agencies, civil society, media, private sector, academia
Partners	Governments, UN agencies (including IOM/DTM, UNHCR, OCHA), civil society, media, private sector, academia
Outputs	Global database (GIDD) with triangulated and peer-reviewed data by country
	Data on the risk, causes, patterns and impacts of internal displacement
	Annual Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID)
	Global mid-year update and regional reports
	Policy-relevant analyses
	Annual global internal displacement index (IDI)
	Global Repository of solutions and best practices

We will consolidate our role as a curator and publisher of data and information on internal displacement and will continue to rely on data collected by a broad network of partners around the world. We will continue to centralise, triangulate and analyse all the information we gather, and publish validated metadata, analysis and insight.

We will also continue to set standards, and to improve understanding of the relationship between internal displacement and poverty, inequality, governance indicators, urbanisation, disaster risk and climate change. We will also use our expertise in data science to connect to wider debates on IDPs' protection, data ethics and responsibility.

## 1 | Internal displacement data

We will improve the breadth and reliability of our reporting by triangulating data from more sources and with more types of data, and we will increase our coverage of small-scale and less visible displacement situations that disproportionately affect poor, marginalised and vulnerable communities most at risk of being left behind. We will also prioritise the publication of metrics that paint a comprehensive picture of displacement from the moment people are forced to leave their homes and throughout their plight, including any progress they make toward durable solutions.

This will include:

- | Triangulated data by country on all new displacements triggered by conflict, violence and sudden and slow-onset disasters; and the total number of people living in displacement as a result of conflict and disaster.
- | Triangulated data on IDPs who return, integrate locally or settle elsewhere, by country and by displacement trigger.
- | Analysis of spatial and temporal trends, including data on IDPs' place of origin and destination, rural-urban dynamics and measurements of the duration and severity of displacement
- | Estimates and comparisons of future displacement risk, including under a range of climate change and development scenarios
- | Confidence assessments and meta-analyses of data collection methods and practices

We will continue to make all our data available on our global internal displacement database (GIDD) and through the annual publication of our flagship Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID), mid-year updates and regional reports.

## 2 | Policy-relevant analyses

We will continue to conduct research on thematic priorities to inform humanitarian and development policy agendas at the regional and global level. By combining global reporting with quantitative and qualitative research, we will increase understanding of the political and social environments that shape displacement risk and its impacts, individual and collective decision-making leading up to and during displacement, opportunities for solutions and obstacles to them.

Our priorities for the coming decade include:

- | Understanding and differentiating the social and economic impacts of internal displacement
- | Identifying solutions to displacement in urban areas
- | Addressing internal displacement associated with slow-onset disasters and climate change
- | Improving understanding of the relationship between internal and cross-border displacement

*A woman displaced by drought in Somalia carries wood, fabric, and cords to build her temporary tent.*  
©NRC/Adrienne Surprenant, Somalia, 2017



## 3 | Monitoring of progress and good practice

The next decade has the potential to be an important chapter in global efforts to reduce internal displacement. Advances at the political, policy and operational levels show that progress can be made, and there are many lessons to be learned from existing practice. To date, however, there has been no global framework to assess and document the factors that drive progress.

We will invest in monitoring national and global efforts to reduce the risk, scale and impacts of the phenomenon, and we will be guided as always by international protection standards and normative frameworks for IDPs.

We will launch two unique products that will allow countries to share lessons learned and enable more effective protection, planning and action. We will:

- | Publish a global internal displacement index (IDI) as an annual assessment of countries' investments in policies and operational strategies and their effectiveness in reducing risk and achieving solutions
- | Document successful initiatives and interventions in a global platform of solutions and best practice.

To compile the solutions platform, we will establish a global partnership to collect, evaluate and share practices and experiences in preventing and responding to displacement associated with conflict, disasters and other triggers. The platform will include a range of operational and policy practices, from data collection and planning to reporting, coordination and collaboration.

*Destroyed and abandoned houses are everywhere to be seen here in Mankon village. The violent unrest in the English-speaking North West province, together with the South West province, has led to the displacement of 700,000 people.*  
©NRC/Ingebjørg Kårstad, Cameroon, 2019



**Objectives** | Greater country capacity to measure, report on and predict internal displacement

| Greater country capacity to prevent and respond via policies and interventions

| Higher visibility of internal displacement in countries' national agendas

**Approaches** | Direct and remote support through consulting and advice

| Sharing and dissemination of good practice

| Connecting and partnering with national and international agencies

**Target audience** | Government ministries and technical bodies, UN Resident Coordinator Offices, civil society, private sector

**Partners** | UNCHR, IOM, UN Resident Coordinator Offices, Joint IDP Profiling Service, UNCHR-World Bank Joint Data Centre - as well as other UN, civil society, academia and private sector partners

**Outputs** | Nationally owned data systems and methods for measurement, accounting and reporting

| Tools for planning and decision-making

We will use our expertise on displacement data methods and standards, risk assessment and policy and progress monitoring to advise countries on the development of integrated systems to measure, report on and address the phenomenon. Our support and accompaniment will be targeted and time-bound. It will involve presenting options grounded in current standards and practice, connecting countries to relevant expertise and partnering with agencies specialised in data methods, policy and planning.

We will focus on supporting existing processes and initiatives rather than launching new ones. We will work in close collaboration with our UN, civil society and private sector partners and through our membership in international platforms such as the Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics (EGRIS).

## 1 | National accounting and reporting

A number of countries have begun to recognise the potential that lies in systematically accounting for the number of IDPs, assessing the impact of preventive measures and assistance, and reporting on progress toward durable solutions. Those with a national data strategy, regular reporting and a dedicated budget aligned with a legal framework are able to communicate their efforts and intentions in ways that are more likely to attract internal and external support.

We will support and advise countries on how to improve the ways they account for and report on displacement. This will involve curating and compiling best practice on data methods and systems, policies and strategies, and offering these in response to countries' needs. We will also adapt and expand our suite of tools to meet the needs of governments and other partners who intend to establish more effective data collection, monitoring and reporting systems. This will include advising them on:

| How to establish country-level data systems to account for displacement, building on what already exists: agreeing definitions, concepts and metrics for national and local data collection and analysis, and setting and framing the parameters for reporting.

| How to promote government ownership of displacement data by helping to identify appropriate systems and dedicated agencies or focal points. This will always be done in collaboration with a range of national and international partners, particularly civil society organisations and UN agencies, working together in national working groups and other platforms.

| How to build nationally adapted and integrated systems and databases which are compatible with those that already exist. These will produce interoperable data that can be used to report against policy targets ranging from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

| Monitoring national progress in reducing risk and impacts more systematically. We will achieve this through the development of country-specific frameworks and indicators, and tools to account for investments made and report on achievements.

## 2 | Planning and decision making

We will develop models and tailored tools that enable policymakers to understand displacement risk and impacts and simulate the effectiveness of measures to advance the pursuit of durable solutions. We will accompany in-country partners in making full use of these tools, and gradually transfer ownership so they can be updated and adapted to local situations. This will include:

- | Further refining our global disaster displacement risk model and offering it as a tool to support policymaking, early warning systems and operational responses. This will involve using the model to develop country-specific displacement risk profiles and helping countries to identify areas where additional investment and capacity are needed.
- | Offering tools to assess the socio-economic impacts of displacement, with technical support to adapt and apply them in specific situations. This will involve an innovative methodology for estimating financial costs both by displacement event and at the national level, and a unique survey tool to assess the economic impacts on IDPs and host communities.
- | Using our thematic and country research findings to inform national and regional policies and operational strategies, not only on displacement and durable solutions but also disaster risk reduction, development and humanitarian responses.



*School children attend a child education programme in Aleppo, Syria.  
©NRC/Tareq Mhadili, August 2018*

Objectives	Greater political recognition and promotion of internal displacement
	Greater public interest in and global visibility of the issue
Approaches	Convening dialogues
	Creating new spaces for discussion
	Storytelling
Target audience	Governments, inter-governmental regional organisations, UN agencies, global media
Partners	Governments, permanent missions, regional organisations, UN agencies and inter-agency platforms, office of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs, and global media
Outputs	Inter-governmental dialogue
	Regional and global events, conferences and discussions
	News, IDP stories and other multimedia products

We realise that governments' commitment and ownership are as essential to achieve impact on displacement as on any issue. This can be encouraged through more frequent dialogue and sharing, and by mobilising public audiences in more creative and engaging ways. We will serve as a catalyst and conduit. We will establish more structured partnerships with governments and create opportunities to share experiences and connect initiatives. We will also harness the power of media and communications to generate more public interest.

## 1 | Inter-governmental dialogues

We provide a safe and established space for dialogue among countries affected by displacement. Twenty-five have already participated in the six dialogues we have convened in Geneva since 2018, sharing their challenges, lessons and achievements. Their exchanges have covered issues including the integration of displacement into national development planning, financing, addressing security impacts and preparing for and preventing future displacement.

We will encourage and facilitate more such exchanges and will listen to countries' perspectives, enabling learning, advancing dialogue and promoting the development of common positions. We will work in partnership with inter-governmental platforms and regional organisations to promote peer-to-peer dialogue and state learning on this issue, and will position and promote it within South-South cooperation initiatives.



*Khalil Hajji Hussein Fandi is a Yazidi from the Sinjar district of Iraq. He and his family currently live in the Shekhan camp in Duhok. "When ISIL attacked our town, we thought we would be displaced for two or three days, we never thought it would last three to four years. How do I start again?" ©IOM/Olivia Headon, Iraq, July 2018*

## 2 | Regional and global events

We will engage in and convene national, regional and global events to increase political attention on displacement and advance our collective understanding of challenges and solutions. The annual launch of the GRID and the media work and events that accompany it already generate high visibility the world over. They also enable us to shine a spotlight on a new thematic area each year, and convene experts in forward-thinking dialogue on it.

The second fixed date in our global calendar will be our Annual Conference on Internal Displacement, which brings together government representatives, policymakers, planners, humanitarian and development practitioners, academics and other experts.

## 3 | Communicating the human side of displacement

Figures alone do not paint a complete picture of displacement. The experiences of displaced people, their hosts and their families and communities are just as important in fully understanding the phenomenon, finding effective solutions, informing audiences, changing perceptions and motivating action. With this in mind, we will focus on telling the human stories behind the data. We will:

- | Build a library of multimedia products including photos, videos and audio that use testimonials and storytelling to convey the day-to-day realities of displacement
- | Invest in interactive data visualisation, graphic design and animation to make our data and evidence more accessible and usable, and to enrich our storytelling
- | Explore the potential of other formats and approaches, including virtual and augmented reality, gamification and mobile apps
- | Conduct market research to ensure we communicate about our products and activities in ways that are aligned with our target audience's knowledge and needs



*A pick-up truck filled with Afghans leaving for neighbouring Iran makes its way through the unforgiving landscape of Nimruz. © NRC/Jim Huylebroek, August 2016*

# 4

## The road to 2030

### Our principles

**Partnerships** will continue to be an integral part of our approach. We will work across sectors and disciplines to develop new collaborations with governments, civil society, UN agencies and IDPs themselves. We will also invest in developing partnerships with regional organisations and global bodies, with a focus on initiatives and forums for South-South cooperation.

**Dialogue** is vital to achieving solutions to displacement, because doing so often means challenging widely held assumptions and beliefs. We will base our outreach on respecting and understanding the points of view of others and capitalising on the shared interest diverse groups have in cultivating common objectives. This will involve putting countries and communities affected by displacement at the centre of the conversation and listening to their perspectives and maintaining an open and respectful dialogue with all stakeholders regardless of their politics.

**Transparency** is one of our core values and an essential component of our mandate and legitimacy. It is not only a matter of intellectual honesty. It is also key to understanding and acting on evidence. It involves providing clear rationales for all of our methods and products, being equally clear about the limitations of our work and knowledge gaps, and openly sharing the lessons we have learnt and the good practices we have identified.

**Learning and innovation** is a continuous part of our work. We are constantly developing and testing new approaches to overcome the challenges inherent in detecting, monitoring and forecasting displacement. We will continue to adapt our tools and methods, and we will not shy from self-criticism or challenging our assumptions. We will continue to shape and reshape how displacement is framed and discussed, and will also monitor the effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of our work more systematically. We will learn from our experiences to adapt and evolve in a constantly changing world.

# Positioning IDMC for the future

Summarised here are our main areas of growth that will accompany and enable the implementation of our 2030 strategy.

*Viento Libre ('free wind') is a neighbourhood in Tumaco with a high risk of child recruitment by armed groups. NRC works with the community to build protective spaces for education and activities to keep children off the streets where they are vulnerable.*  
© NRC/Edgar León, Colombia, 2016

## Present

## Future

Generate evidence for a global audience

Generate and tailor evidence to users' needs, and transfer evidence, tools and expertise to support in-country processes

Conduct short in-country missions for thematic and case-study research

Extend in-country presence and develop long-term partnerships with local organisations

Improve the rigour and scientific basis of our data and analysis

Uphold high standards for our data and analysis, and present our evidence in innovative ways to engage new audiences

Engage with countries mostly through permanent missions in Geneva

Expand our engagements to governments in country

Operate primarily from Geneva

Base more staff in country or regional hubs

Rely on a revenue model almost entirely dependent on public sector grants from the humanitarian sector

Diversify our funding portfolio with more development, philanthropic and private sector investment

Rely mostly on senior management and programme teams to set the organisation's strategic course

Expand decision making to include consultations and peer-review processes with governments, partners and our advisory group

Use data to illustrate displacement

Use the stories of people affected and data that support their narratives to illustrate displacement



# Timeline to 2030



Join us as we work to make real and **lasting change** for internally displaced people in the decade ahead.



Young boy at an IDP camp in the Democratic Republic of Congo. ©OCHA/Alioune Ndiaye, 2020



Every day, people flee conflict and disasters and become displaced inside their own countries. IDMC provides data and analysis and supports partners to identify and implement solutions to internal displacement.

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