



Briefing Note

Forced Displacement

Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

Anja Bohnsack

**Research & Development Manager
Depaul International**

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1. Introduction

The coverage of the plight of those who were forced to leave their homes behind to escape a war; of those who lost everything in a natural disaster; or those who fled their countries in the light of human rights violations accompany us almost daily. However, the actual scale of affected lives is truly harrowing and difficult to comprehend. By the end of 2016, 65.6 million people were considered to be forcibly displaced by conflict or violence – a number that excludes the 24.2 million people that have been forced to flee their homes in 2016 as a result of natural disasters.

The causes of forced displacement along with its effects on a person's life, a region, or the wider international community are manifold, complex and inter-connected - resulting in a global challenge that has yet to be solved.

This briefing paper sets out to provide a snapshot of forced displacement, its impact and current approaches to finding durable solutions for those who had little choice but to leave their homes behind. Whilst this paper tries to illustrate the complexity of the issue by covering a wide range of aspects surrounding forced displacement – it can only hope to offer a starting point for considerations and discussions.

2. Definitions

Forced displacement refers to situations in which people are forced to “leave their homes and seek refuge from conflicts, violence, human rights violations, persecutions and natural disasters”¹. Within this definition, two main groups can be distinguished: internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees².

The above categorisation will be used within this briefing paper. However, it should be noted that there is no universal consensus about the groups that should be included within the overarching term of Forced Displacement. Some sources either exclude groups such as those displaced by disasters and/or include others such as the stateless.

2.1. Refugees

Refugees are recognised under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol as persons who “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside his country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.”³ To date, 148 countries have signed the Convention, its Protocol or both – hence accepting the definition of the term “refugee” set out within⁴.

¹ ECHO (2017), p.2

² Christensen A. and Harild N. (2009)

³ 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol (2010), p.14

⁴ States Parties (2015), p.1

Some regions have expanded this definition to account for their local environment. For example, the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, included people who were compelled to flee due to “external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing the public order”⁵. The 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees in Latin America followed this example and included any events that seriously disturb the public order as well as massive violations of human rights and internal conflicts⁶.

The 1951 Convention, its 1967 Protocol along with the legal instruments adapted to meet regional characteristics are considered to be the cornerstones of the modern refugee protection efforts.

2.2. Internally Displaced Persons

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, developed in 1998 under encouragement of the Commission on Human Rights, define IDPs as “persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border”⁷.

Rather than constituting a strict definition, the above classification is a “descriptive identification of the category of persons whose needs are the concern of the Guiding Principles”⁸ – further highlighted by the use of “in particular” which allows for an expansion of the list of reasons leading to internal displacement.

2.3. Stateless Persons

According to Article 1 of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, a stateless person is described as someone “who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law”⁹. In 2014, there were 83 states party to the 1954 Convention.

Whilst stateless persons are not the subject of this paper, a mention appears essential as their displacement experiences often share characteristics with those of refugees and IDPs. The one example to be named here is that of the Rohingya - a largely stateless ethno-religious Muslim minority in western Myanmar which is considered to be amongst the most vulnerable communities in the world. Since the 1960s they have been arbitrarily stripped of their nationality and subjected to an erosion of their ethnic identity. The majority of the Rohingya is considered to be stateless and they face restrictions on their right to travel freely, to marry and to reproduce – limitations imposed by the Myanmar government. Many Rohingya are internally displaced and live in camps but even those who make the dangerous journey across international borders in search of safety often find themselves living in “a precarious state of limbo in countries where they seek refuge.”¹⁰ In Bangladesh, for instance, the Rohingya are considered to be refugee status but that grants them little more than life in a refugee camp. They are denied freedom of movement, the right to work and

⁵ OAU 1969 Convention, p.3

⁶ 1984 Cartagena (1984)

⁷ Guiding Principles (1998)

⁸ Kaelin, G. (2000)

⁹ 1954 Convention (2014), p.6

¹⁰ APRRN (2015)

the right to education. They thus have no chance to be self-reliant and rebuild their lives¹¹. The Bangladeshi government does not assume responsibility for the futures of the Rohingya on their territory and requests Myanmar to find solutions. In 2017, this was further illustrated by a government official stating that the Rohingya refugees were an “unbearable burden” to Bangladesh saying that any solutions lie with Myanmar “because the problem was created by the Myanmar government. We want them to take back their citizens to their own homeland.”¹² Unless the legal status of the Rohingya and their statelessness are resolved, this scenario is unlikely to happen.

3. Legal Framework/Protection

Refugees and IDPs have the same need for safety, dignity, a secure home and livelihood, but whilst the causes that led to their displacement are similar, if not the same, their legal status and protection differ substantially.

3.1. Refugees

The 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol clarify the rights and obligations of states signing these instruments along with the rights and responsibilities of refugees in their host communities. One of its foundations is the principle of non-refoulement contained in Article 33. It states that “No Contracting State shall expel or return (*refouler*) a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion”¹³. This principle does not only prohibit a refugee’s expulsion to their home country, but also to any third country in which they might face persecution¹⁴.

Countries hosting refugees are required to grant them specific rights, some of which are the right to work (Articles 17 to 19), the right to housing (Article 21), the right to education (Article 22), the right to public relief and assistance (Article 23), the right to be issued identity and travel documents (Articles 27 and 28) and the right not to be punished for illegal entry into the territory of a contracting state (Article 31).¹⁵

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to seek international protection and permanent solutions for refugees and has the responsibility to supervise the implementation of the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol.

An issue raised in regards to these instruments along with their associated institutions, policies and practices is their Eurocentric character¹⁶. For example, Asian countries have raised concerns about the “applicability of the key instruments to refugee populations in Asia and the financial costs of complying with the Protocol for developing countries”¹⁷. These concerns remain unaddressed. Additionally, the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol are, to a degree, perceived as a Cold War instrument that is tilted in favour of political refugees over other people in need of assistance and that gives the United Nations and other international agencies undue authorisation to interfere in

¹¹ Prytz Phiri, P. (2008)

¹² Arora, M. and Westcott, B. (2017)

¹³ 1951 Convention and 1967 (2010)

¹⁴ UNESCO

¹⁵ 1954 Convention (2014)

¹⁶ Lynn-Ee Ho, E., Madokoro, L. and Peterson, G. (2015), p.4

¹⁷ Lynn-Ee Ho, E., Madokoro, L. and Peterson, G. (2015), p.5

local affairs whilst shifting the burden to developing countries without consistently binding developed countries¹⁸.

The majority of states in Asia have signed neither of these instruments, however, many have signed up to the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC) which instituted the 1966 Bangkok Principles on the Status and Treatment of Refugees. The 1966 Principles recognise the existence of refugees and non-refoulement, but it remains within the authority of the state to decide whether to apply them to displaced people within their jurisdiction¹⁹.

Members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have signed both the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol, but further adopted provisions in 1979 that opened up opportunities for solutions to refugees from any one member state residing in another by clarifying that the Community citizens have the legal right to enter, reside, and establish in the territory of member states²⁰. Refugees within the territories of ECOWAS enjoy rights short of naturalization, offering them the protection and rights needed to move on with their lives.

In comparison, whilst the rights of refugees to work and housing are clearly stated within the 1951 Convention, their implementation shows challenges. In Europe, for instance, people seeking asylum have to pass through a lengthy process before receiving a decision as to whether or not they are granted refugee status. Throughout that process, they are subjected to any restrictions the member state has put in place for asylum seekers. A few examples within the EU include that they:

- may not be allowed to be self-employed
- may be restricted to shortage list occupations or certain sectors
- can only be employed subject to a labour market test or survey²¹

Consequently, many asylum seekers have reduced chances of employment even once being granted the right to work after 9 months in their host country. In some countries - amongst them the UK - employment is not allowed even after this time period if a delay in processing an asylum application is attributed to the asylum seeker²².

3.2. Internally Displaced People

In most countries, the legal status of refugees is defined in some shape or form. For IDPs, a different picture is prevalent. Whilst the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement²³ are based upon international human rights and humanitarian law and offer a descriptive definition along with standards guiding governments and international agencies in their efforts to support IDPs, it must be noted that they are not binding.

The primary responsibility for the protection and assistance of IDPs is considered to lie with their home countries. The international community takes a subsidiary role - assisting a government in its efforts to help IDPs or substitute efforts if, for instance, local authorities are unwilling to fulfil their

¹⁸ Abrar C. R. (2010)

¹⁹ 1966 Bangkok Principles (2001)

²⁰ Boulton, A. (2009)

²¹ Council of Europe (2012)

²² Council of Europe (2012)

²³ Guiding Principles (1998)

part, or are unable to help due to a lack of resources or because the state authority has collapsed in a region affected by conflict²⁴.

The world's first continental instrument that legally binds governments to take measures to protect the rights and wellbeing of IDPs was adopted in 2012 by the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa. This instrument, known as the Kampala Convention, provides IDPs with legal protection by reinforcing the state's responsibility to protect them and by facilitating the adoption of national legislation on IDPs assistance and of policies that aim to address displacement issues²⁵.

Other countries are yet to follow their example.

3.3. Others

People who cross an international border for reasons other than conflict, violence or persecution do currently not fit the legal definition of a refugee or asylum seeker and hence do not exist as a legal category. The lack of status makes it unlikely for them to receive assistance through humanitarian aid. They are also unlikely to be systematically recorded or identified in official data and statistics resulting in a lack of information on, for instance, movement patterns, length of displacement and the specific needs of this group of people²⁶.

4. Causes and Development of Forced Displacement

The root causes of forced displacement are multi-faceted and context-specific²⁷. The Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN) in 2015 analysed their regional context and identified a large variety of causes for displacement that are multi-dimensional and interconnected. Amongst them were the "different historical and geographic conditions, different stages of economic development and different levels of government stability"²⁸. In addition to causes such as conflict, violence, discrimination, natural hazards and the effects of climate change, they also mentioned existing "racial, ethnic, religious and cultural divisions [that] have been exacerbated by poverty, low developments levels, poor governance, the lack of rule of law, corruption, impunity, natural disasters and other factors"²⁹. Any analysis of underlying causes of displacement hence needs to include considerations of these factors on a local, regional and global level along with colonial legacies, the historical process of state formation and globalisation to name but a few.

A distinction between drivers and triggers is a useful starting point when analysing causes of forced displacement. Drivers are "distant underlying structural factors that combine to enable a crisis to erupt"³⁰ and generally refer to less visible factors that pre-date triggers. Over time, they link up, overlap and accumulate to a point where human rights abuses occur or a crisis erupts. Examples include:

- Environmental drivers: including desertification and damming of tributaries.

²⁴ Global Protection Cluster (GPC) (2010), p.1-9

²⁵ NRC and IDMC (2014)

²⁶ IDMC and NRC (2017)

²⁷ DRC (2015)

²⁸ APRRN (2015)

²⁹ APRRN (2015)

³⁰ NRC and IDMC (2015)

- Social drivers: such as limited education opportunities; inter-communal tensions.
- Political drivers: for example, poor urban planning and corruption.
- Economic drivers: including poverty and lack of access to markets.

Triggers are proximate, precipitating events that leave people with little choice but to leave their homes. They are generally more visible and whilst they threaten a person's safety, they may or may not lead to displacement³¹.

Three situations can be distinguished in which people are likely to experience forced displacement³²:

Emergency situations

These situations occur when people are forced to flee their homes within short periods of time. For authorities and the international community the challenge is to deliver life-saving humanitarian assistance such as shelter, food, water, sanitation and medical services.

Initial displacement

Initial displacement might occur in response to emergency situations and in many cases lasts for an extended period of time. The situation of those displaced can vary substantially - some may find shelter in a camp or on a special site, others might have the resources to secure individual solutions (e.g. staying with relatives). Refugees are frequently housed in collective sites or camps whilst most IDPs stay within host communities. As the latter group is difficult to identify, they often do not benefit from assistance that might have been made available by governments or the international community.

Protracted situations

UNHCR defines protracted situations as those in which "25,000 or more refugees from the same nationality have been in exile for five consecutive years or more in a given asylum country"³³. Protracted situations often share two key characteristics:

- i. The process of finding durable solutions have stalled
- ii. The displaced are marginalized as a consequence of violation or lack of protection of human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights

Protracted refugee situations are often accompanied by an increase in poverty levels amongst those who have been displaced. Due to the lack of durable solutions the most vulnerable become increasingly marginalised which poses a risk to self-sufficiency³⁴.

There is widespread consensus that displacement is a complex process that often involves more than just one episode – especially in protracted situations. For instance, some conflicts in some regions across Africa force people to first escape to other areas within their country until the situation becomes so unsafe that they have to flee across an international border. Depending on the

³¹ NRC and IDMC (2015)

³² Christensen and Harild (2009), p.9-10

³³ UNHCR (2016)

³⁴ Christensen and Harild (2009), p. 9-10

ebb and flow of violence, they can then be seen travelling back and forth across borders – resulting in a cross-circular pattern of cross-border displacement³⁵.

In some regions refugees are also at risk of being pushed back into their home countries due to the eruption of violence in their host countries. They often become internally displaced upon return as the local situation remains too dangerous for them to return home³⁶.

Comprehensive data of these movement patterns of forcibly displaced people is lacking due to unclear or varying definitions and recording challenges on the ground. However, the analysis of drivers and triggers along with the little existing data on forced migration movements means that refugee and IDP flows can, to an extent, be forecasted. The World Bank Group states that, on average, the “outflows of forcibly displaced persons peak 4.1 years after they start”³⁷ as many people try to stay at home and manage risks for as long as possible before making the decision to leave their livelihoods behind.

5. Displacement in 2016

Data on forced displacement exists but at times appears to be little more than an educated guess. This is due to different definitions, inconsistencies in recordings (e.g. recordings of births but not of deaths), aggregated data, challenges in data recording on the ground (e.g. reluctance to register as IDP due to fear of stigmatisation) and many more³⁸.

For the purpose of consistency, this section only refers to data of the UNHCR report on Global Trends of Forced Displacement in 2016³⁹ as well as the Global Report on Internal Displacement 2016⁴⁰ by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. A distinction will be made between forced displacement due to conflict and violence and forced displacement due to disasters.

5.1. Conflict and Violence

By the end of 2016, UNHCR had recorded a record number of forcibly displaced people in the world. A total of 65.6 million individuals were considered to have left their homes as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations. This included:

- 22.5 million refugees of which 17.2 million were under UNHCR’s mandate and 5.3 million Palestinian refugees were registered by UNRWA
- 40.3 million internally displaced people
- 2.8 million asylum-seekers

10.3 million people were considered to be newly displaced throughout the year (6.9 million IDPs and 3.4 million refugees and asylum seekers). As in recent years, about half the refugee population was made up by children below the age of 18 (51%).

³⁵ IDMC (2017), p. 56

³⁶ IDMC (2017), p. 56

³⁷ World Bank Group (2017), p.6

³⁸ World Bank Group (2017) and IDMC (2017)

³⁹ UNHCR (2016)

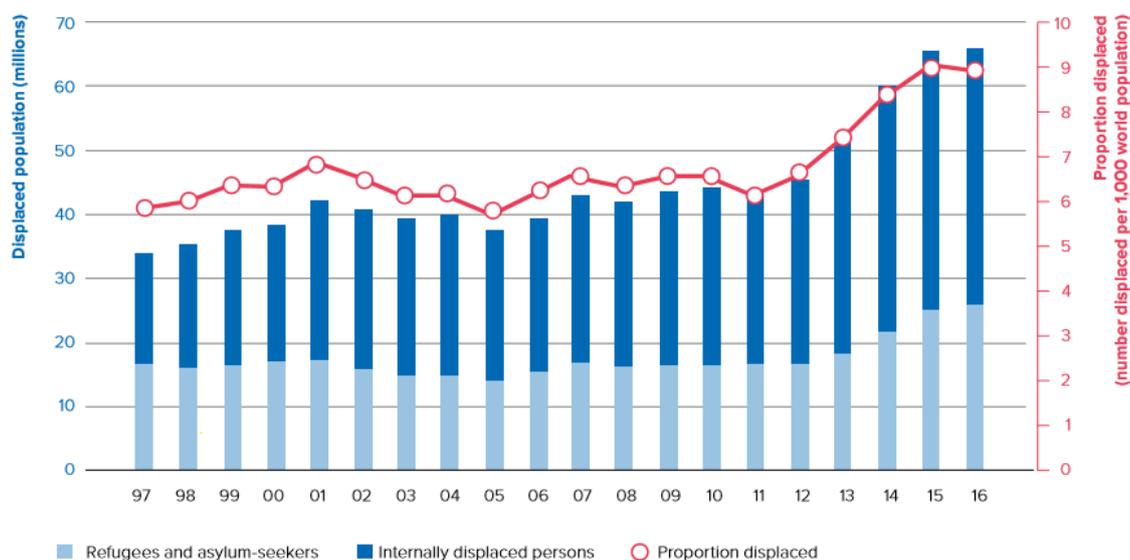
⁴⁰ UNHCR (2016)

Of the 17.2 million refugees under UNHCR’s mandate, 84% were hosted by developing regions and 55% of all refugees globally, came from only three countries:

- 5.5 million: Syrian Arab Republic
- 2.5 million: Afghanistan
- 1.4 million: South Sudan

Over the past two decades, the number of people who have been forcibly displaced by violence and conflict has grown from 33.9 million in 1997 to 65.6 million in 2016 (Figure 1). The increase has been driven by the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic but also by conflicts in Iraq and Yemen as well as countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

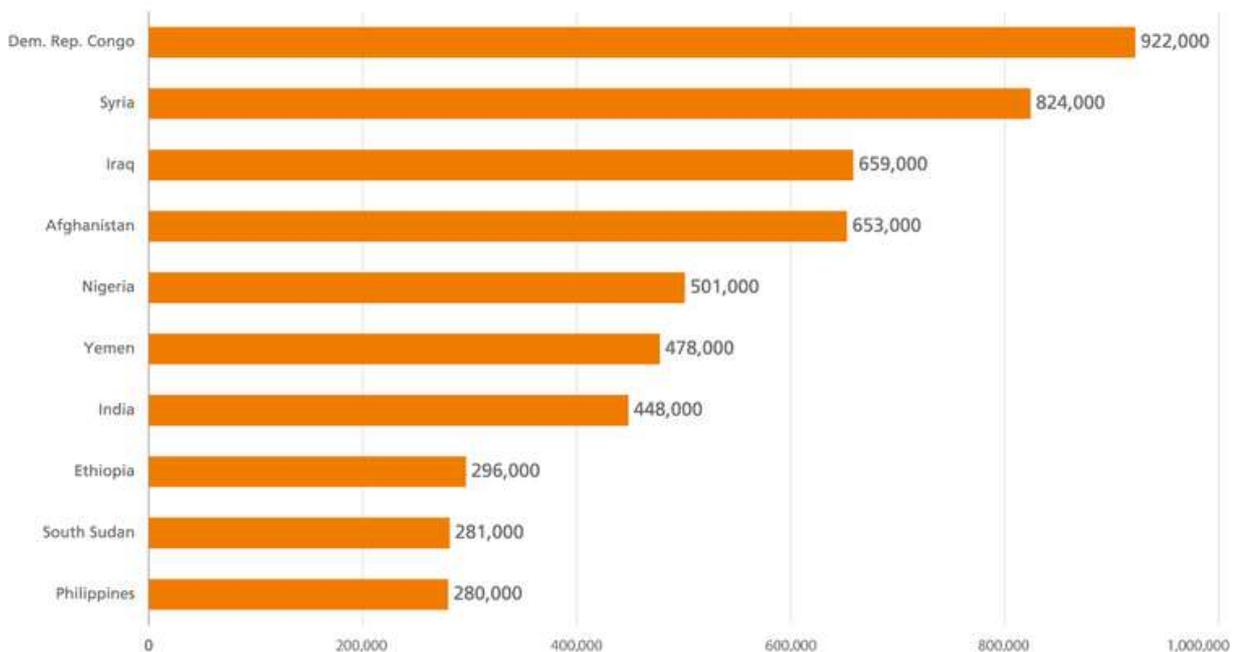
Figure 1: Trend of global displacement & proportion displaced | 1997-2016



Of the 40.3 million people that were internally displaced by conflict and violence by the end of 2016, 6.9 million people were newly displaced with more than 95 percent in high-risk contexts (Figure 2). There is widespread knowledge about the plight of internally displaced persons and the fact that they now constitute the majority of those who have been affected by conflict. However, IDPs continue to be regarded as the most forgotten amongst those who have been forcibly displaced⁴¹.

⁴¹ Seshadri K.R. (2008)

Figure 2: Countries with most new displacements by conflict and violence in 2016



5.2. Disasters

The IDMC reported that in 2016, 24.2 million people newly displaced due to “sudden-onset natural hazards in 118 countries and territories”⁴². These numbers exclude people that have been displaced as a result of slow-onset disasters such as droughts or environmental degradation. This year saw no mega-scale events that would have triggered the displacement of more than 3 million people. The ten largest natural disaster displacements in 2016 along with the number of people displaced are highlighted in Figure 3.

The majority of forced displacement due to disasters takes place internally but thus far there is no data that consistently captures the needs, demographics and resulting movements – both internally and across borders – of the people that are affected.⁴³

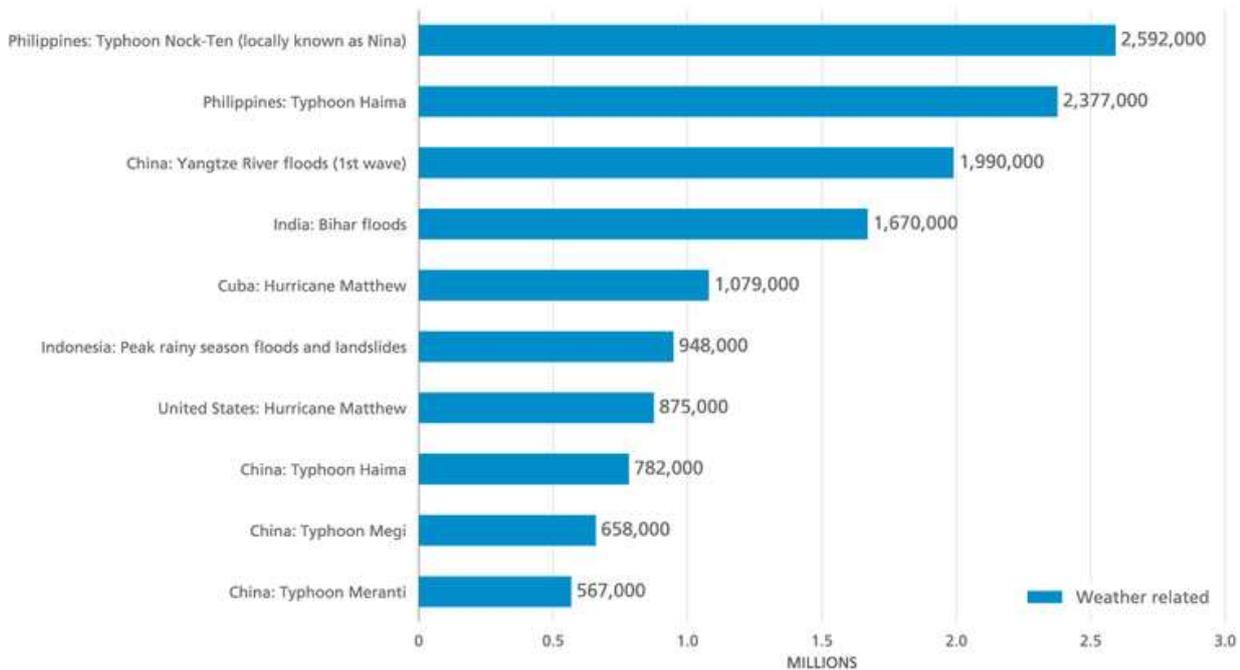
A positive exception to this widespread absence of comprehensive data is provided by the Philippines. The country’s extensive laws and policies on disaster risk reduction and management allow better data collection and sharing on disasters as well as the resulting displacements. Situation reports are published for several days after each event along with twice-daily reports during the first 9 to 10 days after large-scale natural disasters. These reports do not only include the number of people who have been evacuated to official sites and elsewhere, but also keeps count of the total number of people a disaster has displaced over time⁴⁴.

⁴² IDMC (2016), p.31

⁴³ IDMC (2016), Part 3

⁴⁴ IDMC (2016), p.82

Figure 3: The ten largest disaster displacement events of 2016



6. The Human Cost of Forced Displacement

The impact of forced displacement on the economic, social and individual situation of those who flee is well documented. This paper can only attempt to give a snapshot of its complexity.

“Forced displacement affects demographic and social groups differently”⁴⁵; however, research from across the globe suggests that experiences of refugees and IDPs share similarities, no matter their location. Effectively, displacement means for most persons that they experience a major setback in their life with many people losing their assets, properties, social networks and security⁴⁶.

Some of the most immediate effects on individual lives are asset depletion coming from being forced to abandon property along the resulting risk of slipping into poverty⁴⁷ which in turn have lasting effects and can extend across several generations. Along with these losses, displaced people also battle with the long-term economic consequences and the sudden inability to earn a living and be self-reliant. For instance, in Bosnia and Herzegovina displaced people struggled to adjust to their new realities as finding a job and re-integrate into an environment that already showed extremely high unemployment rates was difficult⁴⁸.

Refugee populations moreover tend to have poorer health outcomes than the communities from which they came. They usually have the “highest risk of mortality immediately after reaching their country of asylum, as they frequently arrive in poor health and are completely dependent on foreign

⁴⁵ The World Bank (2012), p.24

⁴⁶ World Bank Group (2017)

⁴⁷ Pašić, L. (2015) and Carillo, A.C. (2009)

⁴⁸ Pašić, L. (2015)

aid”⁴⁹. The exposure of refugees to risks associated with population movements “- psychosocial disorders, reproductive health problems, higher newborn mortality, drug abuse, nutrition disorders, alcoholism and exposure to violence – also increase their vulnerability to noncommunicable diseases”⁵⁰. The often remote and poorly accessible refugee camp settings pose further barriers to accessing appropriate health care⁵¹.

There is also extensive research on the impact of the displacement experience on a person’s mental health. In an analysis of the humanitarian, economic and social consequences of internal displacement in Columbia, Carillo (2009) describes sadness, crying, depression, nostalgia, nervous tension, fear, despair, regression to childhood and aggressive behaviour as some of the emotional challenges witnessed amongst displaced people. According to a survey conducted in eight Columbian cities, approximately 67% of displaced households reported experiencing psychosocial problems⁵².

The human cost for children is especially high with them being amongst the most vulnerable during forced population movements. They are at greater risk of abuse, neglect, violence, exploitation, trafficking or forced military recruitment⁵³. Additionally, the experience of losing loved ones, homes, educational opportunities, physical capacity and often parental support and protection can lead to “distress, psychological suffering and problems of psychosocial adaptation”⁵⁴.

7. Forced Displacement and Homelessness

The situation of forcibly displaced people shares many characteristics with the situation of homeless people. Both populations face a complex network of barriers and risk factors impacting on their lives.

For instance, in London, the need for affordable housing cannot keep pace with the growth in population, resulting in housing shortages and an increased risk of homelessness⁵⁵. The situation poses not only a major challenge to homeless people but also to refugees. This is due to government support ceasing shortly after an asylum seeker is recognised as refugee and granted the right to stay, resulting in many refugees experiencing high levels of destitution and homelessness. They are forced to rely on the help of charities, friends, families and foodbanks to meet even their most basic needs⁵⁶.

A similar situation was described in Hungary, where people no longer qualified for the social welfare support given at Bicske Pre-Integration Center once they received their status. Access to minimum financial resources was not immediately available which resulted in refugees living in precarious environments. Six out of fifteen interviewees lived in homeless shelters, three slept on the streets

⁴⁹ Uniteforsight.org

⁵⁰ WHO

⁵¹ Uniteforsight.org

⁵² Carillo, A.C. (2009)

⁵³ Multilateral Development Banks (2017) and UNICEF (2017)

⁵⁴ Ajdukovic, M. and Ajdukovic, D. (1998)

⁵⁵ IGH (2017)

⁵⁶ Refugee Council (2017)

and two out of the three people who had managed to find private rented accommodation were at risk of losing their housing⁵⁷.

Urbanization and Rural-Urban Migration is further shared characteristic. Population increases in urban areas are often accompanied by housing deficits and a strain on social services⁵⁸. The urban poor, already struggling with these issues, are often joined by IDPs along with returnees. For instance, in Afghanistan, major cities were not able to keep up with the rapid expansion caused by displacement. This resulted in many of the urban poor and forcibly displaced living in precarious conditions in illegal settlements on land they did not own, or in shared accommodation, exacerbating struggles of the cities to address access to shelter and land, water and sanitation, food and livelihood opportunities⁵⁹. Even those who may have the financial resources to access the private rental market face challenging obstacles. In Toronto, a study found that language/race/ethnicity along with household size, gender and being in receipt of social assistance were major barriers to accessing housing for immigrants and refugees⁶⁰.

Unemployment and underemployment are also widespread amongst both population groups. For displaced people, access to employment is often restricted as - more often than not - refugee camps are placed further away from economic centres, resulting in little access to the local labour market. In Skra, a refugee camp in Georgia, unemployment rates amongst the camp population were found to be at a soaring 80%. With nothing to do, most residents do the same as many refugees in camps around the world: They sit and wait to start their new lives⁶¹.

Employment and housing are two factors that are “directly related, both having a direct impact on well-being of individuals, families, and entire communities”⁶². The IGHs Framework of Homelessness⁶³ (Figure 4) highlights the different living arrangements that are associated with the experience of homelessness. The situation of forcibly displaced people in camps or precarious housing can be firmly placed within it.

Housing in refugee camps is often overcrowded and of inferior quality⁶⁴. A study of houses in Jalazone, a Palestinian refugee camp by Al-Khatib and Tabakhna (as cited on uniteforsight.org) showed that 61% of the households within the camp housed 3-5 people per room and 16.5% had over 5 people per room. The study furthermore shed a light on the poor housing conditions: dampness was present in 72.5% of the houses, 50.5% had mold and 37% had leaks⁶⁵. The Konik refugee camp, a European refugee camp that has been operating in Montenegro since 1994, still lacks sufficient sanitation or utilities⁶⁶.

The poor housing conditions within refugee camps also take their toll on people’s health. A study researching the housing conditions in Sri Lankan refugee camps found that living in a transitional camp and in poor housing conditions was a significant risk factor for coughs, stomach ailments,

⁵⁷ UNHCR (2010)

⁵⁸ IGH (2017)

⁵⁹ Majidi, N. (2011)

⁶⁰ Murdie, R. A. et al. (1995)

⁶¹ Cullen Dunn, E. (2015)

⁶² Shier, Jones and Graham (2012)

⁶³ IGH (2017)

⁶⁴ Uniteforsight.org

⁶⁵ Uniteforsight.org

⁶⁶ Opendemocracy.net

headaches, and feeling unwell⁶⁷. Inadequate housing conditions are furthermore likely to lead to anxiety, stress and high blood pressure⁶⁸.

Figure 4: The IGH Framework of Homelessness

People without accommodation	People living in temporary or crisis accommodation	People living in severely inadequate and insecure accommodation
<p>1A People sleeping in the streets or in other open spaces (such as parks, railway embankments, under bridges, on pavement, on river banks, in forests, etc.)</p> <p>1B People sleeping in public roofed spaces or buildings not intended for human habitation (such as bus and railway stations, taxi ranks, derelict buildings, public buildings, etc.)</p> <p>1C People sleeping in their cars, rickshaws, open fishing boats and other forms of transport</p> <p>1D 'Pavement dwellers' - individuals or households who live on the street in a regular spot, usually with some form of makeshift cover</p>	<p>2A People staying in night shelters (where occupants have to renegotiate their accommodation nightly)</p> <p>2B People living in homeless hostels and other types of temporary accommodation for homeless people (where occupants have a designated bed or room)</p> <p>2C Women and children living in refuges for those fleeing domestic violence</p> <p>2D People living in camps provided for 'internally displaced people' i.e. those who have fled their homes as a result of armed conflict, natural or human-made disasters, human rights violations, development projects, etc. but have not crossed international borders</p> <p>2E People living in camps or reception centres/temporary accommodation for asylum seekers, refugees and other immigrants</p>	<p>3A People sharing with friends and relatives on a temporary basis</p> <p>3B People living under threat of violence</p> <p>3C People living in cheap hotels, bed and breakfasts and similar</p> <p>3D People squatting in conventional housing</p> <p>3E People living in conventional housing that is unfit for human habitation</p> <p>3F People living in trailers, caravans and tents</p> <p>3G People living in extremely overcrowded conditions</p> <p>3H People living in non-conventional buildings and temporary structures, including those living in slums/informal settlements</p>
IGH FOCUS AREA IN BOLD		

When considering housing within camps, it needs to be recognised that refugee camps are designed for the short term. They lack the amenities and structures required to build a positive community life but as many of the world's conflicts and wars are raging over years, those living in camps are effectively forced to permanently live in temporary housing situations.⁶⁹

8. Towards Durable Solutions

Finding positive solutions for forcibly displaced people is essential when considering the impact of displacement on a person's life. Traditionally, UNHCR has promoted three durable solutions for refugees as part of its core mandate: voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement.

⁶⁷ Turner, A. et al. (2009)

⁶⁸ Uniteforsight.org

⁶⁹ Cullen Dunn, E. (2015)

8.1. Voluntary Repatriation

Millions of refugees dream of going back to their home countries and voluntary repatriation remains the preferred long-term solution for most refugees. UNHCR promotes and facilitates voluntary repatriation and ensures that it is a free, informed choice⁷⁰. Voluntary repatriation is supported by many countries and in Germany for instance, people who have lodged an application for voluntary return are assisted through a variety of programmes by the German government, such as “Starthilfe Plus”.⁷¹ Spontaneous returns of large numbers of displaced people bear testimony to the wish of many to go home. For example, in the first half of 2017, approximately 440,000 Syrians displaced within the country returned to their homes – often to check on their properties and find family members. Additionally, about 31,000 refugees returned from neighbouring countries⁷².

Whilst voluntary repatriation can be considered to be the most favourable solution for displaced people as well as host and home countries, reality illustrates the many challenges this approach has yet to overcome.

Often, repatriation is simply not possible due to continuing conflict situations which would place returnees in danger. This is reflected in the numbers of refugee returns: In an update on key developments in UNHCR’s efforts regarding voluntary repatriation, only 201,000 returns had been recorded in 2015⁷³. Additionally, many displaced persons are reluctant to return to a place associated with trauma and suffering, with unknown social structures and uncertain economic opportunities. Even those deciding to return to their country tend to settle in urban environments where they join large numbers of IDPs from rural areas in rapidly expanding cities. These refugees often face many of the same problems as the urban poor but are even more vulnerable due to the trauma of being uprooted, discrimination, lack of documentation, ruptured support networks and poor employment prospects⁷⁴. Returnees therefore are confronted with the challenge of trying to build new lives rather than re-establishing their former existence.

A different, yet frequent scenario is that of refugees becoming internally displaced upon return due to, for example, on-going violence. They often end up living in squatter camps or shanty towns, at risk of moving over and over again in an effort to meet their basic needs or escape newly flared up conflicts. They clearly should not be considered as having found a durable solution to their displacement⁷⁵.

Also, the voluntary character of initiatives such as large-scale repatriation programmes needs to be examined. They are usually “undertaken in close partnership with host governments that have an interest in reducing refugee numbers [and it is questionable whether] repatriation undertaken under the threat of forcible removal can be deemed voluntary”⁷⁶.

⁷⁰ Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme (2016) and UNHCR

⁷¹ Gopalakrishnan, M. (2017)

⁷² Aljazeera (2017)

⁷³ Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme (2016)

⁷⁴ IDMC (2016), p. 63

⁷⁵ IDMC (2016), p. 63

⁷⁶ IDMC (2016), p. 63 quoted from Goodwin Gill G, *International Law and the Movement of Persons Between States*, Oxford University Press, 1978, p.201

8.2. Local integration

UNHCR mentions local integration as an alternative where repatriation is not possible. It is considered as a durable solution to a refugee's plight, offering the chance to build a new life⁷⁷. If local integration is to be successful, refugees need to be provided with opportunities. Policies that support their ability to earn a living along with social acceptance and security are key and help displaced people to regain their lives.

ECOWAS is taking an innovative approach in that regard by legally ensuring that refugees coming from any member state have the right to enter, reside and establish in the territory of the member states which effectively allows them to move on with their lives, settle and work⁷⁸. Their lives are not put on hold – as are those of the many people who wait for their opportunity to return or resettle in refugee camps, with little more to do than wait.

Encouraging countries to develop systems and policies that ensure refugees are supported into employment is not only beneficial for the individual - it would also reduce the strain on international resources. Currently, “forcibly displaced persons have to be sustained by the international community at such a high cost in large part because they are prevented from working”⁷⁹.

8.3. Resettlement

Resettlement is the “transfer of refugees from an asylum country to another State that has agreed to admit them and ultimately grant them permanent settlement”⁸⁰. Many of the people that are resettled are selected because their life is at risk, because there is no hope for them of ever returning home or because they have additional needs such as urgent health conditions that cannot be met in their country of asylum.

When considering numbers alone, this approach seems to be extremely challenging to implement. For example, at the end of 2015, there were 16.1 million refugees under the mandate of the UNHCR, however, less than one per cent were resettled that year⁸¹.

Each of these traditional approaches faces shortcomings and they are currently not able to provide the durable solutions needed for forcibly displaced people, their countries of origin or host nations/communities. New ideas are needed to ensure that the millions of individuals currently facing displacement are helped to rebuild their lives, that their home countries receive the assistance needed to resolve the root causes of displacement, and that those countries hosting refugees are supported in their efforts to provide safety.

8.4. New approaches

If forced displacement is to be addressed successfully, a paradigm shift in regards to how development and humanitarian assistance link in with one another needs to be introduced. Traditionally, these two forms of aid have been regarded as separate strands but for the future,

⁷⁷ UNHCR

⁷⁸ Boulton, A. (2009)

⁷⁹ World Bank Group (2017), p.12

⁸⁰ UNHCR

⁸¹ UNHCR

humanitarian and development actors should look at collaborations. Rather than seeing the “needs of refugees and internally displaced persons as a challenge separate from development and meeting them through short-term humanitarian strategies and appeals”⁸², they should focus on ensuring their welfare through joint approaches.

Systems and programmes implemented to address displacement should moreover focus on benefiting both refugee and host populations and further encourage the legal, regulatory, fiscal and organizational policies necessary for displaced people to contribute to the local community. Generally, very little money is distributed to benefit a host countries’ own citizens – a shift is required to ensure the international community does not only support refugees and IDPs but also hosting countries on municipal, state and local government level⁸³. This adjustment in the dissemination of aid is critical as the influx of very large numbers of displaced people essentially results in a demographic shock for the host community that affects pre-existing equilibria on all levels of a society and economy⁸⁴.

A further focus should be placed on including refugee women when considering durable solutions. Forced displacement is often associated with an increase in female or child headed households and addressing gender disparities has proven to be critical in the consolidation of peace and security in fragile environments⁸⁵. Yet, whilst women’s “inclusion in these processes is mandated in international law, there is a lack of support for (and even resistance to) their participation from states, from international organisations and NGOs, and from their own communities”⁸⁶. This issue needs to be managed and women should be represented at a policy and local level and be involved in the planning of programmes for refugees⁸⁷.

⁸² OCHA, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and the World Bank (2015), p.2

⁸³ OCHA, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and the World Bank (2015)

⁸⁴ World Bank Group (2017), p.6

⁸⁵ Multilateral Development Banks (2017)

⁸⁶ APRRN (2015), p.2

⁸⁷ APRRN (2015)

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