

# Internally Displaced Populations, New Challenges and Opportunities

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## Abstract:

Prestilio *et al.* (1) in his recent research from Sicily, Italy, recently stated that there are now twice as many internally displaced people (IDPs) as refugees worldwide. Internal displacement associated with conflict and violence has been rising since 2003. There were 8.6 million new cases during 2015. Some 4.8 million people were newly displaced in the Middle East alone, significantly more than in the rest of the world. Combined Yemen, Syria and Iraq accounted for over half

of the total. Elsewhere, Ukraine, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Afghanistan, Colombia, Central African Republic and South Sudan had the highest numbers. In terms of total headcount, there were 40.8 million IDPs worldwide as a result of conflict and violence at the end of 2015 – an increase from 2.8 million in 2014, the highest figure ever. Just ten countries accounted for over two-thirds of the total, around 30 million people: Colombia, DRC, Iraq, Sudan and South Sudan have featured in the list of the ten largest internally displaced populations every year since 2003.

### **Conflict of interest:**

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Disasters displaced around 19.2 million people across 113 countries in 2015, more than twice the number who fled conflict and violence. Over the past eight years, a total of 203.4 million, or an average of 25.4 million displacements have been recorded every year. As in previous years, South and East Asia dominated in terms of absolute figures, but no region of the world was unaffected. India, China and Nepal had the highest numbers, with 3.7 million, 3.6 million and 2.6 million respectively. The vast majority of displacement took place in developing countries, and the worst effects of catastrophes were experienced by populations of small island countries.

Continuing of large crises (such as the one in Syria) should lead to a new and more complex approach to displacement. Moreover, less mentioned but significant forms of displacement also deserve our attention. Three of most frequent of these causes are criminal violence, drought and development projects. Estimation of their effects is difficult due to the uncertain counts and monitoring.

A comprehensive approach should address either political factors (so people do not have to flee from homes) and when displacement becomes inevitable, addressing immediate needs is required, but in cooperation with the development sector if sustainable solutions are to be achieved, as there is a clear trend of displacement becoming more protracted. Actually, we can say that the distinction between internal and cross-border displacement is unhelpful in a globalized world. Displacement is a multi-dimensional challenge that must involve humanitarian aid, sustainable development, peace-building, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation work. More comprehensive monitoring of displacement is needed to ensure that all IDPs, and people vulnerable to displacement, are included in efforts to respond to their needs and address long-term development objectives.

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