

# Funding for internally displaced persons

## Summary

The number of people living in internal displacement – their lives on hold, unable to reclaim or even sell property, develop livelihoods, access basic services or exercise political and civil rights – is growing rapidly.

While global refugee crises have grabbed media headlines, far greater numbers of people forced to flee remain within their own (mainly low and lower-middle income) countries. The funding mechanisms and targeting of aid must change considerably if we are to meet the acute humanitarian needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs)<sup>1</sup>

while also addressing the root causes to end protracted displacement.

Christian Aid is dedicated to GP20, the global campaign on internal displacement, led by States with UN agencies and NGOs, which calls for the prevention of further forcible displacement, strengthened protections of and durable solutions that support the choice of people internally displaced. To make the GP20 aims a reality, in this paper, Christian Aid is calling for the full scope of the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) commitments on humanitarian

financing to be explicitly applied to IDP responses, in order to:

- a) increase the scale and availability of funding to IDP crises
- b) ensure more appropriate and effective use of funding to IDPs
- c) ensure development funding explicitly responds to the needs of IDPs using a rights-based approach before, during and following displacement.

## Introduction

Twenty years ago, in 1998, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (GPID) were created in recognition of a growing crisis of 'internal refugees.' However, the number of internally displaced has more than doubled since then; and today, IDPs represent more than twice the number of refugees in the world, yet remain for the most part invisible.

The vast majority have been living in limbo for well over a decade. Humanitarian funding is stagnating and, for the most part, aid is failing to enable IDPs to overcome the wide-ranging consequences of their displacement. As states and international actors come together to develop a global compact on refugees, IDPs risk being bypassed altogether. This is despite the WHS commitment to reduce internal displacement by 50% by 2030.

The 2017 global humanitarian appeal saw a shortfall of 40%. And alongside overwhelming scale, targeting challenges and aid mechanisms make it even harder to ensure those most in need are receiving assistance. IDPs are increasingly opting to live outside organised camps or IDP sites, presenting considerable challenges for the international aid system.

Large, often international agencies are not always best placed to identify, assess and understand the broad consequences of forced displacement within such settings, as compared to national or local actors. But, as highlighted at the WHS, funding continues to be channelled primarily through international agencies such as the UN, and large international non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This funding is mostly short-term, meeting only immediate humanitarian needs, despite all the evidence that most IDPs will remain in displacement for well over a decade.

## More people in need, dwindling resources

In 1982, the first estimates of IDP numbers worldwide were of around 1.2 million people.<sup>2</sup> Fifteen years later this had become more than 16 million people, contributing to the creation of the GPID.

Today, over 40 million people are internally displaced due to conflict and violence – more than double the number of registered refugees worldwide. If we include people fleeing hazard-related disasters such as earthquakes and floods (hereinafter 'disasters'), the figure is even higher<sup>3</sup> –

**'More than 40 million people have had to flee their homes and are living displaced within their own countries due to conflict. A further 25 million per year, on average, have been displaced by natural disasters every year for the last eight years'**

**“76% of the world's conflict IDPs are concentrated in just ten countries.” This includes Afghanistan, DRC, Iraq, Nigeria, Syria, South Sudan and Yemen.<sup>7</sup>**

*IDMC 2018 Global Report on Internal Displacement*

the last eight years have seen on average 25 million people displaced by natural disasters every year.<sup>4</sup>

Poverty is increasingly a third cause of displacement. Evidence from across the world suggests more and more people are being forced out of their homes due to large-scale development projects, land grabs, or simply extreme poverty.<sup>5</sup>

Displacement is rarely a one-off event, and protracted displacement has become the norm. The average person living in displacement today has likely been there for at least 15 years. Many, if not most, have been displaced more than once. The same countries keep re-emerging as ‘crises’, yet the reasons people flee remain the same. Over half the people living displaced by conflict within their own borders are living in just four countries.<sup>6</sup>

Most of these countries have been home to the highest number of IDPs for over a decade, with IDP figures effectively a mirror to whirls of conflict on the one hand, and natural hazards on the other. Women are disproportionately affected by displacement, representing more than half of all IDPs. Some 40% are children.<sup>7</sup> While living in displacement, women are frequently subject to higher rates of violence, including sexual abuse,<sup>8</sup> trafficking, increases in child marriage and often have weaker or even no legal property rights compared to men.

Yet despite dramatic increases in numbers, there has been little in the way of political commitment to address internal displacement – the global compact for refugees does not extend to IDPs. Similarly, increased numbers have not translated into increased funding: consolidated humanitarian appeals between 2006 and 2012 were over 70% funded. But steady reductions since then meant the 2017 Global Humanitarian Appeal for 23.5 billion USD received barely 50% of the required funds.<sup>9</sup> While the sums can sound enormous, international humanitarian aid in the 20 biggest

humanitarian crises has been estimated at just 5% of all forms of overseas assistance to those countries. Elsewhere it can be as little as 0.2%.<sup>10</sup>

Unlike refugees, IDPs are not reflected as a specific tracking category within the global humanitarian financial system.<sup>11</sup> One of the few agencies able to provide figures specific to IDP spending, UNHCR is reflective of wider funding trends. While the UNHCR report the numbers of IDPs due to conflict and violence as 40 million, double the number of refugees worldwide, the funding for IDPs is 14% of their budget. Its dedicated ‘IDP Pillar’ saw a doubling of both budget and expenditure between 2012 and 2018. But while funded at 51% in 2012, the same Pillar in 2016 was funded at 46%. This is despite a **40% increase** in IDPs over the same period, from 28 million people to over 40 million people.<sup>12</sup>

The data available suggests that need is not the determining basis for funding decisions. The top ten IDP crises, some 28 million people collectively, only received an estimated 37% of all humanitarian spending: and country figures show IDPs receive variable support depending on the country.<sup>13</sup> Chronic displacement crises such as in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which has regularly seen over 3 million people displaced since 2003, struggle to raise sufficient funding. DRC’s Humanitarian Appeals since 2013 have seen an annual average of 60% funding against projected needs. Afghanistan, home to 1.4 million IDPs in 2017, has seen annual appeals funded over the same period at an average of 81%, with a 2014 peak of 90%. Iraq, similarly, has seen an average of 80% funding since 2013, with a peak of 92% in 2017. In that same year, over two million people were newly displaced in DRC, whose response plan was funded at just 57%.<sup>14</sup>

Such discrepancies, along with the exclusion of IDPs from the compact, imply that funding decisions are not purely based on humanitarian need and risk fuelling a

**SPOTLIGHT:** With 4.5 million IDPs, not only is DRC within the top ten countries with the highest numbers of IDPs for the last decade, it has frequently had the highest number of ‘newly’ displaced each year. In 2016, 922,000 people were displaced. By the end of 2017 a further 2.16 million had been displaced by conflict.

perception that donors prioritise aid for political purposes. Yet humanitarian financing must be allocated on the basis of the principle of impartiality, prioritising those in greatest need. Failure to do so can perpetuate and even exacerbate vulnerability.

## **Aid must respond to needs**

Despite reforms and initiatives to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian funding in crises, and by extension for IDPs, reaching those most in need remains a major challenge.<sup>15</sup>

Across the ten biggest IDP crises for 2016, country appeals indicate at least 22 million people to be living outside camps. This often means urban areas, and complex societies of refugees, returning refugees, economic migrants, and urban poor.<sup>16</sup> Global estimates put the proportion of internally displaced living in cities and other urban settings as high as 80%.<sup>17</sup> People often move multiple times – due to recurrent violence, as in eastern DRC, or to exploitation, abuse or poverty within their place of ‘refuge’. However, access to international humanitarian assistance is usually dependent on some form of individual or household registration.

The bulk of international assistance therefore continues to focus mainly on more ‘fixed’ IDP camps, sites, and informal gatherings where IDPs are grouped and more easily identifiable, complete with coordination structures for easy identification and inter-agency referrals often entirely independent of any state coordination.

That is not to say IDPs outside camps are not receiving any assistance. But support networks in such communities tend to be more local than international, and extremely informal. Immediate responders in a crisis are typically neighbours, local churches, mosques and local civil society organisations. These organisations often provide both immediate shelter to people fleeing, and an ongoing safety net to those trapped in long-term displacement, drawn from the very communities they aim to help.

Such structures typically have much greater access to those in need, along with far lower operating costs, but OCHA’s financial tracking for 2016 shows that local and national responders directly received just 2% of international humanitarian assistance, most of which went to local and national

governments. Local and national NGOs combined directly received just 0.3% (or just 66 million USD of over 12 billion USD) of all reported international humanitarian assistance. Meeting the WHS commitment to channel at least 25% of all humanitarian funding to local and national actors should therefore be actively pursued by donors and international partners alike as a means to directly increase assistance to IDPs living outside formal camp settings.

A second disconnect is the duration. People spend decades living in displacement, usually in abject poverty. Countries reporting conflict-related displacement do so on average for 23 years.<sup>18</sup> Yet in 2016 over three-quarters of UN-coordinated appeals were single rather than multi-year in 2016. Annual appeals can cater for immediate needs – temporary shelter, food or cash, water and health services – but such funding was never intended to overcome all the causes and consequences of displacement.

The WHS called for more multi-year humanitarian funding, and better links between humanitarian and development funds. Multi-year humanitarian funding is a good start, going some way to establish more predictable temporary support for IDPs. But to genuinely address displacement and its long-term consequences, a development response is also critical. To date, a withdrawal of humanitarian actors and budgets more often results in a withdrawal of support to IDPs. Very few state or development actors continue to monitor IDPs in the absence of humanitarian actors, meaning IDPs are usually excluded from development analysis and targeting<sup>19</sup> as explained in our third briefing *Agenda 2030: What ambition for IDPs?*

Development funding should explicitly respond to the risks and consequences of internal displacement. Both the GPID and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework for Durable Solutions for IDPs highlight the importance of development and peace-building engagement both to prevent and reduce the risk of forced displacement, and to ensure IDPs regain their basic human rights – namely access to livelihoods, education and health care; to establish or re-establish local governance structures and the rule of law; to assist in the rebuilding of houses and infrastructure.

**‘Funding to UNHCR’s IDP Pillar has flatlined as a proportion of overall expenditure since 2012, despite a 40% increase in the number of IDPs worldwide’**

Various human rights conventions require state signatories to ensure state resources are dedicated to meeting human rights obligations. The GPID explicitly call for states and international actors to invest in legal and normative frameworks to prevent displacement due to conflict, natural disasters and development projects.

The Kampala Convention is a good example, legally requiring African states to invest in prevention of and preparedness for internal displacement. States and international partners should prioritise resourcing and implementation of such frameworks at a national level, not least as a more cost-effective means of addressing the social, political and economic consequences of displacement.

Just as the world is witnessing a step change in how we respond to refugee crises, a similar shift is urgently needed in IDP responses.

## **The Grand Bargain: a fair deal for IDPs?**

The GPID lay out the humanitarian protection afforded to and the human rights of IDPs, and the obligations of national authorities. The IASC Framework for National Responsibility requires governments to devote resources to address situations of internal displacement.<sup>20</sup> Governments lacking the capacity to do so can and should seek assistance from the international donor community.

Together they must prioritise funding for: prevention of displacement; data collection before, during and following displacement; national political leadership – through dedicated institutional capacity, awareness raising and training; national legal frameworks and policies; and particularly durable solutions that support the free choice of IDPs. IDPs themselves should be involved in planning processes and decision-making, explicitly including women IDPs at all stages.

All of these are themes reflected in the WHS Grand Bargain commitments to radically change humanitarian financing. Christian Aid believes that, if applied explicitly to IDP responses, together these commitments can help states and other actors develop and implement responses that can meet IDPs' needs faster and more effectively.

## **Increase substantially and diversify global support and share of resources... to address differentiated needs... including increasing cash-based programming**

Current needs of people living in displacement far surpass the support available to them, be it humanitarian or developmental. It is critical that aid is both increased and broadened to take into account the full scope and scale of these needs. Rather than overshadowing IDPs, global aid priorities must be made to work for IDPs, reflecting and responding to their needs throughout. This in turn requires better tracking of all funding to IDPs to ensure they are receiving a proportionate share of global resources as a major part of the global displacement challenge.

Shifts to cash-based interventions would directly benefit IDPs. Cash has been proven to improve efficiency by as much as 20%, meaning 20% more funding is freed up to provide extra assistance. Providing cash not only gives IDPs greater autonomy and dignity, it can also stimulate wider market growth in the host community and help recreate livelihoods while also linking into or establishing a basis for national safety net programmes as part of longer-term poverty reduction – all of which are critical in ensuring IDPs overcome the lasting consequences of displacement.

## **Predictable, multi-year, un-earmarked, collaborative and flexible humanitarian funding**

Humanitarian aid should always be based upon need, not status, meeting the needs of those in most urgent distress without discrimination. This is to align with the principle of impartiality enshrined in the Geneva Conventions. IDPs should, as a core vulnerable group, be included in all needs assessments – including within development planning – with a view to ensuring their specific protection and material assistance needs are identified and catered for in subsequent budget and programme planning. This requires investments in adequate data collection and analysis, including subsets to better analyse the needs of different groups within IDP populations, such as women. Un-earmarked and collaborative funding can better ensure IDP needs are reflected and prioritised accordingly in response plans.

**'A durable solution is achieved when internally displaced persons no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement'**

*IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for IDPs*

Given the protracted nature of internal displacement, for the most part, multi-year funding is critical, as is flexibility to allow for scale up of humanitarian assistance in the case of renewed or acute displacement in emergencies. But multi-year humanitarian funding should not be a substitute for development funding, which must look to some of the recent innovations in refugee response to engage much sooner in internal displacement contexts.

### **Broaden and adapt global instruments and approaches to meet urgent needs, reduce risk and vulnerability and increase resilience**

International aid for recovery and reconstruction to support durable solutions for IDPs is often insufficient or ineffective due to a lack of coordination between humanitarian and development actors and their respective donors. Humanitarian and development actors should systematically analyse and plan together responses involving internal displacement, and, together with the relevant state, identify mechanisms to promote integrated approaches from the early stages of displacement.

At the local and individual level, aid needs not only to respond to acute needs but, pending inclusion in development programming, humanitarian support to IDPs must address evolving risks and support their ability to prepare for, mitigate and manage those risks. This is particularly important given the extent of recurrent and protracted displacement in both conflict and disaster areas where IDPs find themselves dealing with steadily reducing individual and community resilience in the face of repeated displacement.

### **Risk management, preparedness and crisis prevention capacity**

As per the GPID and the IASC Framework for National Responsibility, along with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, states must invest before, and not only in response to, displacement. Investing in early warning and early action and national or local rapid response mechanisms are key to protect populations under threat, whether from conflict, abuse or natural disaster, and to ensuring faster crisis response. Normative and legal frameworks can reduce the risk of and actually prevent displacement. They can also strengthen the protection of individuals, building a stronger international humanitarian law and national human rights culture.

These frameworks, such as the Kampala Convention, should reflect the full scope of the GPID to ensure comprehensive guidance for all situations of displacement. They should be accompanied by investments in appropriate national structures to enable effective political leadership for implementation and awareness

raising. In many countries with high numbers of IDPs, support from the international community is critical to enable states to make such investments.

### **Empower national and local humanitarian action... and support the enhancement of national delivery systems**

The GPID and the IASC Framework for National Responsibility underline the primacy of state responsibility in preventing and responding to internal displacement, in accordance with international humanitarian and human rights law. A locally led response within a national framework and leadership generally offers better access and stronger networks with affected people, a deeper understanding of the specificities of the area and, with local actors often directly affected themselves, a firsthand understanding of what needs to be done. This is recognised in the WHS commitment to support and not replace local capacities. In urban contexts in particular, community and self-referrals are often more effective ways of identifying people in need. The presence of local structures within communities means they are generally faster to respond in times of crisis, and sustained funding allows for predictable response while building and consolidating capacity locally.

All assistance – humanitarian and development – should start with the internally displaced people themselves. Efforts to support durable solutions and to develop effective sustainable development programmes must also involve meaningful participation of IDPs in line with the WHS commitment to a ‘participation revolution’, and the Core Humanitarian Standard. This means they are not only beneficiaries of assistance, but are full partners in the design, implementation and monitoring of programmes.

### **Conclusion**

While changes to funding can have considerable positive impacts, they can only deliver so much in the absence of genuine political will and operationalising of the commitments made at the WHS, along with far greater engagement by key development actors and affected states themselves. This is key to realising the ambition of the global GP20 campaign on IDPs to prevent further forcible displacement, and strengthen the protection of and durable solutions for people internally displaced.

States have the lead role in addressing internal displacement, therefore donors and other international partners must change their terms of engagement to help them deliver for the people concerned. Operationalising the WHS commitments with explicit reference to IDPs, particularly in relation to humanitarian financing, is a step towards this.

## Endnotes

- 1 An internally displaced person is defined by the UN Guiding Principles as, 'persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave 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 generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or man-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised border.'
- 2 There were indications of internal displacement during the 1960 Biafra conflict, but the first global estimates appear in the World Refugee Survey in 1982. See *Masses in Flight: The Global Crisis of Internal Displacement*, Roberta Cohen and Francis Deng, Brookings Institute, 1998
- 3 Figures for internal displacement as a result of poverty, land grabs and large-scale development projects are not globally available but is increasingly yet another drive of internal displacement.
- 4 Efforts to count and assist internally displaced people have improved considerably over the years. However, we still don't know how many people remain in displacement following natural disasters, and our understanding of people living in protracted displacement due to conflict remains incomplete.
- 5 For example in Brazil, where as many as 1.2 million people are reported to have been displaced by large-scale projects such as dams. See work carried out by the Forced Migration Observatory, <https://migracoes.igarape.org.br>
- 6 *Global Trends - Forced Displacement in 2016*, UNHCR, 2016
- 7 IDMC, UNHCR, UNICEF data
- 8 In South Sudan IDP camps, UN Investigators found 70% of women have been raped, typically by soldiers and police officers.
- 9 *Global Humanitarian Overview*, OCHA, 2018
- 10 'Crisis Financing' in *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2017*, Development Initiatives, 2017
- 11 Even if expenditure were to be flatlined for purchasing power, available data would not allow us to compare either refugee expenditure against IDP expenditure, or even IDP expenditure across crises. This is because IDPs are not identified as a target group within financial tracking categories. The closest comparison that can be made is using wider humanitarian expenditure in a given country as a proxy indicator of funding for IDPs, on the basis that most large-scale crises also have large-scale internal displacement. Comparisons across protracted crises, rather than 'peak' crises and accompanying humanitarian expenditure, are even more challenging. See the challenges elaborated by ODI in their 2015 report, *Protracted Displacement: Uncertain Paths to Exile*. A further challenge is the ethics of prioritising one 'group' against another. All these people need our help and have equal right to assistance and protection.
- 12 See pages 32-35 UNHCR Global Report 2017, [http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/gr2017/pdf/GR2017\\_English\\_Full\\_lowres.pdf](http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/gr2017/pdf/GR2017_English_Full_lowres.pdf)
- 13 Analysis using figures from 'Annex 2' of *Uncertain Paths to Exile*, ODI, 2015
- 14 Based on figures reported by Development Initiatives, *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2017*, using data from OCHA FTS.
- 15 The 2005 humanitarian reforms were in part intended to improve responses for IDPs. Country Based Pooled Funds, Consolidated Humanitarian Appeals, the Central Emergency Response Fund, and cluster processes have all aimed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian funding in crises, and by extension for IDPs.
- 16 Cumulative figures calculated against beneficiary target data in annual appeals for each country (see OCHA for annual humanitarian appeals per country, 2016 <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/overview/2016> showing breakdowns for IDPs in / out of camp) based on the 'top ten' countries (IDMC Global Estimates for 2016).
- 17 *Briefing note: Ten things to know about refugees and displacement*, ODI, 2016
- 18 *Protracted Displacement: Uncertain Paths to Exile*, ODI, 2015
- 19 This was the case in South Sudan's failed 'New Deal' planning process in 2013, where only 'new' IDPs were included only as an indicator of fresh insecurity despite hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese living in displacement at the time. The country subsequently deteriorated into civil war and massive forced displacement.
- 20 Human rights law requires state signatories to ensure adequate resources to respect, protect and fulfil human rights in all contexts; and the Geneva Conventions require humanitarian aid to be provided to civilians in most need during emergencies.

### A FAIR deal for IDPs

Christian Aid is calling for all countries to ensure a FAIR deal for IDPs: one that is funded, ambitious, inclusive and respects international law.

**Funded** for the long-term rather than on a short-term appeal basis.

**Ambitious** moving beyond commitments at summits to action that matches the scale of the problem.

**Inclusive** protection for all people on the move, especially those currently left behind such as the stateless and people who have been trafficked.

**Respects** international law which protects all civilians – it is rights-based, respecting the fundamental human rights of IDPs, and during war it ensures all civilians are protected by international humanitarian law, especially when governments suspend rights. The UN Summit must kick start a process for all states to integrate the GPID into national laws and policies, which if respected would ensure protection and assistance for IDPs, and help to stop them being discriminated against.

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We provide urgent, practical and effective assistance where need is great, tackling the effects of poverty as well as its root causes.

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**GP20** PREVENT  
PROTECT  
RESOLVE