Global Overview 2012
People internally displaced by conflict and violence
Cover photo: Dgbenamea Ascofare, 67, has been displaced multiple times by the conflict in Mali. Together with her daughter and other family members, she initially fled Timbuktu for the central town of Mopti. Then, as the extremists pushed south and French troops pushed north, they sought refuge in the capital, Bamako.

(Photograph: UNHCR / G. Gordon / January 2013)
With thanks
IDMC would like to thank the donors who supported its work in 2012, and thereby made it possible to produce this report.

USA’s USAID, The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the UK’s DFID, Australia’s AusAID, Sweden’s Sida, the Swiss FDFA, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Bank, the Netherlands’ MFA, the Liechtenstein MFA, and other supporters.
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Glossary

ASEAN Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU African Union
CAP Consolidated Appeals Process
CoE Council of Europe
EU European Union
IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICC International Criminal Court
ICRC International Committee of the Red Cross
IOM International Organisation for Migration
MSF Médecins Sans Frontières
NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
OCHA United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSCE Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
UNDP United Nations Development Programme
UN-HABITAT United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA United Nations Relief and Works Agency
USCR United States Committee for Refugees (United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants or USCRI since 2004)
WFP United Nations World Food Programme
Internal displacement in South and South-East Asia

Figures and causes
The decrease in the number of IDPs observed in 2011 in south and south-east Asia continued in 2012. Around 4.1 million people were internally displaced as of the end of the year as a result of internal armed conflict, violence and human rights violations, down nearly 5.5 per cent from 4.3 million a year earlier.

Pakistan, Afghanistan and India had the highest number of reported IDPs, accounting for more than a third of the region’s displaced population. In many countries, the counting and profiling of IDPs was complicated by their high level of mobility and lack of effective monitoring mechanisms. In addition, flawed registration systems also tend to exclude both IDPs outside official camps and those who do not fall within often narrow official definitions of what constitutes an IDP. Camp closures and premature deregistration also meant IDPs were often removed from official statistics and denied further assistance, despite not having achieved a durable solution. Internal armed conflict between government forces and non-state armed groups (NSAGs) was the main cause of conflict-induced displacement.

Pakistan, Afghanistan and India had the highest number of reported IDPs, more than a third of the region’s displaced in India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand, and in the region as a whole. In some of these countries, and in Bangladesh, the violence was between ethnic and religious groups or clans competing for land, resources and political power. Some countries, notably Myanmar and the Philippines, made significant progress towards the peaceful settlement of long-standing conflicts, but it tended not to end displacement.
New movements
At least 1.4 million people were newly displaced in the region during 2012. Several waves of inter-communal violence displaced up to 500,000 people in India’s north-eastern Assam state, while military operations against NSAGs in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) forced about 412,000 people to flee. In the Philippines, at least 178,000 people fled clashes between government forces and NSAGs in Mindanao and clan violence affecting mainly Muslim-majority areas. An estimated 166,000 people were newly displaced in Myanmar, most of them by inter-communal violence pitting Rakhine against Rohingya and other Muslim minorities in Rakhine state. In Afghanistan, an estimated 100,400 people were reportedly displaced, though the true figure is thought to be far higher. Most fled armed conflict between pro-government forces and the Taliban and widespread conflict-related violence.

In most cases, IDPs aimed to find safety for their families while remaining as close as possible to their property to facilitate their return. Patterns of displacement varied considerably, with the nature of the violence and the availability of protection and assistance influencing how far people fled and for how long. In most cases, IDPs aimed to find safety for their families while remaining as close as possible to their property to facilitate their return. Some sought refuge with friends and relatives or host communities and managed to return within a few days or weeks. In other cases, persistent insecurity and the loss of property and traditional livelihoods forced IDPs to remain in camps or attempt, often unsuccessfully, to integrate with their host communities.

Throughout the region, relative security and better job prospects and basic services encouraged some IDPs to seek refuge in cities, where most settled in informal settlements, often squatting on private or state owned land. Protracted urban displacement was a particular concern in Afghanistan, where local authorities were reluctant to recognise urban IDPs. In contrast, relatively well-off IDPs from Nepal’s Terai region and southern Thailand found it relatively easy to integrate in their countries’ major cities.

Over 14 million people were newly displaced by sudden-onset disasters in the same conflict-affected countries in the region. Disasters often increase the vulnerability of IDPs already displaced by conflict and violence, and in some cases it was hard to distinguish one clear cause of displacement.

At least 1.4 million people were newly displaced in the region during 2012

Protection issues
Armed conflict, harassment and intimidation by NSAGs and state forces, unexploded ordnance and restricted freedom of movement put IDPs at risk of injury and death. In the Philippines, counter-insurgency operations against the New People’s Army (NPA) were reportedly accompanied by human rights violations, including the extra-judicial killing of indigenous people suspected of supporting the rebels. In Assam, IDPs living in camps in the Bodoland Territorial Areas District were reportedly at risk of attacks. There were concerns of a severe humanitarian crisis in Rakhine, where tens of thousands of displaced Rohingya had no access to health care, clean water, proper shelter or food. In Indonesia’s Papua province, people displaced by military operations in Keerom district in July 2012 reportedly hid in the jungle for months, surviving on what little food they could collect. In Afghanistan, worrying numbers of IDPs were food insecure, with more than half spending over 90 per cent of their income on food.

In Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Philippines, displaced children were at risk of child labour, trafficking and forced recruitment. Limited livelihood options, particularly in urban areas, left displaced women and girls at risk of forced and early marriage and other forms of gender-based violence. Female-headed
households were particularly vulnerable. In Pakistan, many women hold no national identity card, which is required for female-headed households to access most humanitarian assistance. The need to ensure purdah, or honour, also restricts women’s access to food distribution points, information and basic services.

In Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Philippines, displaced children were at risk of child labour, trafficking and forced recruitment

Prospects for durable solutions

Around 261,000 people were reported to have returned to their homes during 2012. The true figure, however, is thought to be higher, as people often return in small groups or individually and such movements tend to go unreported. Most returns involved people displaced for just a few weeks or months, but in the Philippines a number of IDPs living in more protracted displacement went back to their homes in Central Mindanao thanks to improved security and a government-sponsored return and recovery programme. In Pakistan, the government declared a number of areas in FATA clear of armed groups, and voluntary repatriation programmes were undertaken. Nearly 60,000 people reportedly returned in 2012, but - as was often also the case elsewhere - it was unclear whether the process was sustainable.

Persistent insecurity, damage or destruction of housing, the slow restoration of basic services and infrastructure, unresolved land and property issues and a lack of livelihood opportunities were all major obstacles to returns across the region, and in many cases prevented them outright. In Sri Lanka, the military’s ongoing occupation of land in conflict-affected areas was a case in point. Throughout the region, governments continued to largely prioritise return over other settlement options such as local integration or settlement elsewhere. In countries such as Nepal or Afghanistan, where the majority of IDPs do not wish to return to their places of origin, there is an urgent need to support alternative settlement options to return, in particular, local integration.

Peace processes, which in recent years have enabled many IDPs to return, remained incomplete in many cases, and few countries made progress in ensuring accountability for displacement-related human rights abuses. Governments in Bangladesh, East Timor, Indonesia and Nepal largely failed to follow up on their commitments to ensure truth, justice and reparation for victims of conflict, including IDPs, and their families.

Responses

Most governments made significant efforts, often with the support of the international community, to meet IDPs’ immediate needs and so avert humanitarian crises. Responses, however, were often ad-hoc and poorly coordinated, and based on a short-term humanitarian approach. Other obstacles included poor governance and a lack of state resources.

Effective humanitarian responses were hampered by access restrictions, whether imposed by governments - as in Indonesia (Papua) - or caused by insecurity, as in Afghanistan and Myan-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Number of IDPs (rounded)</th>
<th>Government figures</th>
<th>UN figures</th>
<th>Other figures</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>At least 492,000</td>
<td>492,000 (MoRR/UNHCR, January 2013)</td>
<td>492,000 (MoRR/UNHCR, January 2013)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Official figures do not include IDPs in urban and semi-urban areas and those in inaccessible rural locations, including large swathes of the conflict-affected south, east and south-east.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>667,000 (2000)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Official government information for the year 2000 states that 128,364 families were internally displaced. Calculating with an average family size of 5.2 individuals per family for Chittagong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>At least 540,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Compiled by IDMC from various available figures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Up to 170,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Compiled by IDMC from various available figures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao People’s Democratic Republic</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>There was little independent access to an estimated 7,700 Hmong repatriated from Thailand and resettled in government-controlled camps since 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>At least 450,000</td>
<td>More than 125,000 in Rakhine State; 75,000 in Kachin and Northern Shan States (UN OCHA, 31 December 2012)</td>
<td>250,000 in south-east Myanmar (IDMC interview, February 2013)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Combination of UN and other figures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In 2009, international agencies estimated that up to 70,000 people displaced by the 1996-2006 conflict had not achieved durable solutions. This figure did not include people displaced in the Terai where thousands have fled their homes since 2007-2008.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>At least 758,000</td>
<td>758,000 (FDMA, December 2012)</td>
<td>758,000 (UNHCR, December 2012)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Includes only those displaced in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and Federally Administered Tribal Areas and who meet official IDP registration criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Philippines</td>
<td>At least 1,200</td>
<td>1,200 (Protection Cluster, December 2012)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Includes people in government-recognised camps and relocation sites, displaced by armed conflict, clan violence and crime in 2012; but not IDPs living with hosts or people whose return or settlement elsewhere has not been sustainable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>At least 93,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The figure is based on government data compiled by UNHCR, with additional information integrated by IDMC. Of the more than 93,000 IDPs, over 9,800 displaced before April 2008 were living in camps; more than 700 displaced after April 2008 were in transit situations; and more than 82,000 displaced both before and after April 2008 were staying with host communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Available information suggests that up to 2,400,000 people may have left their homes in violence-affected southern provinces since 2004.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timor-Leste</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In 2010 the government reported that no IDPs remained, but the sustainability of some returns was uncertain.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Afghanistan

**NUMBER of IDPs**

At least 492,000

**PERCENTAGE of total population**

At least 1.4%

With the drawdown of international military forces well underway, displacement continued to increase in 2012. The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) and UNHCR put the total number of IDPs at nearly 500,000, of whom at least 100,400 were newly displaced during the year. Official figures are widely recognised to under-represent the scale of displacement as they exclude IDPs in inaccessible rural locations and urban areas.

Afghanistan has experienced numerous waves of displacement since the 1970s, caused by decades of war and insecurity, natural disasters, chronic poverty and widespread human rights abuses. Following a period of relative calm after the fall of the Taliban in 2001, conflict-related displacement has more than doubled since 2008. IDPs are highly mobile, often forced into secondary or tertiary displacement or onward migration.

Armed conflict pitting the Afghan security forces and international troops against the Taliban and other armed opposition groups was the primary cause of displacement in 2012. Civilians fled from military operations, and increasingly from attacks, intimidation and other serious abuses by armed opposition groups. General insecurity, land disputes and tribal conflict were also significant factors. An estimated 75,000 IDPs have been living in displacement since before 2003.

The National IDP Task Force, which is co-chaired by MoRR and UNHCR, collates and analyses data on displacement. It found that roughly 75 per cent of IDPs were displaced in the south, east and west of the country, with many concentrated in the provinces of Herat, Nangahar, Helmand and Kandahar. In the north, displacement has increased more than five-fold since 2010, reflecting the spread of conflict across the country.

The dynamics of displacement varied significantly across the country, between urban and rural areas and within provinces. IDPs were found to be living with relatives, in camp-like settings and dispersed in host communities. Increasing numbers fled to cities and settled alongside the urban poor in informal settlements, making it harder to identify and assist them. A growing number of urban IDPs live illegally on private or state land, in substandard accommodation and at risk of eviction.

Most IDPs continue to live in extremely vulnerable situations. Many face a range of physical threats, and struggle to meet basic needs such as food, water and shelter. Half of the IDPs surveyed for a NRC/IDMC study said they spent 90 per cent of their income on food and went into debt, driven in part by larger than average households and lower income as a result of unemployment.

Female-headed households have even fewer livelihood opportunities and are particularly vulnerable. Children, who make up an estimated 64 per cent of the IDPs, are less likely to attend school and face an increased risk of child labour and forced marriage.

According to the NRC/IDMC study, less than 25 per cent of IDPs wished to return to their places of origin, even if security improved. Prospects for sustained return to rural areas are limited by insecurity, lack of employment and access to land and basic services. Urban IDPs have sought to integrate locally, but authorities have not supported them in their efforts. With few prospects for durable solutions, protracted displacement is a growing concern.

Despite increased awareness of IDPs’ plight, national and international efforts to assist them remained limited. MoRR and its provincial departments led the government’s response, but this was hindered by an unclear mandate, weak capacity and a shortage of funds. There was also a lack of coordination across different government ministries. The government announced its decision to develop a comprehensive national policy on IDPs during 2012, and as of the end of the year MoRR was in the drafting process with international support. This represents a key step forward in the protection of IDPs.

Humanitarian assistance was coordinated through the cluster system and by the National IDP Task Force and its regional offices, which were established in 2008. The humanitarian community prioritised emergency food and non-food items and winter assistance for the newly displaced and some urban IDPs. The response was hampered, however, by a lack of reliable and timely data, restricted access and a steep decline in funding during the year. Better cooperation between humanitarian and development organisations is required to meet longer term needs.

Efforts to improve coordination, promote principled humanitarian action, boost winter preparedness and improve systems for monitoring IDPs helped to address some of these concerns, but major gaps in assistance and protection remain.
No recent information was available on the number of people internally displaced as a result of armed conflict and violence in Bangladesh. IDPs are widely dispersed, and the fact that internally displaced Bengalis are not always counted also makes estimating figures difficult.

In September 2012, dozens of people were injured and more than 100 houses and shops burned down during communal violence between Bengalis and non-Bengalis in the south-eastern Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) region. Around 1,000 non-Bengali families, or 5,000 people, were reported to have been internally displaced.

Tensions between Bengalis, the majority community, and non-Bengali tribal people known as Jumma go back to the 1970s. After independence in 1971, Jumma living in CHT demanded greater autonomy. The government rejected their demands, and in 1973 armed conflict broke out between the national army and Shanti Bahini, the armed wing of the United People’s Party of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (PCJSS). At the same time, the government settled Bengalis from the country’s central plains in CHT.

A peace accord was signed in 1997, which provided for cultural recognition and partial self-government for the Jumma, the withdrawal of the army, an end to the settlement of Bengalis in CHT and the rehabilitation of the several hundred thousand IDPs. The agreement, however, was still to be fully implemented as of the end of 2012. Acts of violence and discrimination continued and land disputes remained unresolved. Neither the government’s task force on returning refugees and IDPs nor the country’s land commission met their objectives. The government also criticised the international community’s involvement in the CHT issue and increased its control over international donations for Bangladeshi NGOs.

Hundreds of thousands of people were newly displaced by armed conflict and violence in India in 2012, while many others continued to live in protracted displacement. As of the end of the year, at least 540,000 people were estimated to be internally displaced across the country.

In north-eastern Assam state in July and August 2012, nearly 500,000 people were forced to flee as a result of inter-communal violence between Bodo tribal people and Bengali-speaking Muslims. The IDPs took shelter in more than 300 camps set up on public land and in public buildings, including schools. Living conditions in camps were reportedly dire, with a lack of basic necessities and little access to health care and education services.

New clashes took place in the same area in November, at a time when the Assam state government was encouraging IDPs to return home. An unknown number of people set up makeshift camps near their home areas because continuing insecurity did not allow them to return. It was not clear whether more people were displaced in November.

Similar clashes in 1993, 1996, 1998, 2008, 2010 and 2011 reportedly displaced more than 800,000 people, of whom tens of thousands were still IDPs in 2012. In addition, about 30,000 Bru people who fled from Mizoram state to Tripura state in 1997 and 2009 remained internally displaced.
In central India, recurring armed conflict over land and mineral resources has pitted government forces and allied militias against Maoist insurgents since 2005, and ongoing clashes caused new internal displacements throughout 2012. There are, however, no estimates of the number of people affected. As in the north-east, many of those who fled their homes in previous years continued to live in situations of internal displacement during 2012.

In Jammu and Kashmir, many of those who were forced to flee their homes in the Kashmir Valley in 1990 and after because of separatist violence targeting the Hindu minority remained internally displaced in 2012. They were living in Jammu, Delhi and elsewhere in India. Supported by the government with public sector jobs, a small number returned to the Kashmir Valley during the year.

In Gujarat in 2002, and in Orissa in 2007 and 2008, more than 200,000 people fled inter-communal violence between the majority Hindu population and Muslim and Christian minorities. How many of those affected were able to achieve durable solutions during 2012 is not known. Thousands of Muslim IDPs in Gujarat continued to endure very poor living conditions, but their prospects of return remained dim as Hindu extremist groups expropriated their homes and land. Thousands of Christian IDPs in Orissa were discouraged from returning, as some returnees have been forced to convert to Hinduism. IDPs’ attempts to integrate in their areas of displacement or to settle elsewhere in India have generally not been supported by the government.

Estimates of the numbers of IDPs in India are conservative and include only those identified as living in camps. The majority, however, are thought to be living outside official camps, with many dispersed in the country’s cities. Many of those who moved out of camps in 2012, including returnees, are unlikely to have found a durable solution to their displacement.

India has no national policy, legislation or other mechanism to respond to the needs of people internally displaced by armed conflict or generalised violence. Authorities, whether at the national, state or district levels, often fail to meet their responsibilities to protect and assist the displaced, in some instances because they were unaware of IDPs’ rights. In cases where there was a response to a displacement situation, it generally came from state or district authorities rather than central government. These authorities were sometimes reluctant to offer support, particularly in cases where they themselves had played a role in causing the displacement.

There was no central government focal point to ensure IDPs’ protection, monitor their number and needs or facilitate durable solutions through return, local integration or settlement elsewhere in the country. Some national agencies and human rights bodies, including the National Human Rights Commission and the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, advocated on behalf of IDPs. Humanitarian and human rights organisations had only limited access to the displaced population and there was little support from international actors in the response to internal displacement due to conflict and violence.

Thousands of people were newly displaced in Indonesia in 2012. They fled renewed sectarian and inter-communal violence in East Java and Lampung provinces, and military operations targeting the Free Papua Movement (Organisasi Papua Merdeka or OPM) in Papua province. No new displacements were recorded in the provinces of Maluku, Aceh or West Timor, which were previously affected by conflict, but tens of thousands of former IDPs there faced economic and social marginalisation and only limited access to livelihoods and basic services. For many of those living in protracted displacement, the key obstacle to achieving a durable solution was their inability to assert ownership or tenancy rights over their land and property.

In East Java, around 165 members of the province’s Shia Muslim minority were driven from their homes on Madura island for a second time in August when a mob of 500 people attacked their community. Unwilling to be relocated or to convert to Sunni Islam - a condition set by Sunni local leaders for their return - they remain living in a sports centre in Sampang district. In December government aid was withdrawn, leaving many in limbo. The community had already been displaced by similar attacks at the end of 2011, after which local authorities forced them to return even though most did not feel safe to do so.

In South Lampung regency, located on the southern tip of Sumatra island, some 2,000 people were displaced in October...
by violent clashes between local people and migrants from Bali in which 14 people were killed and scores of homes and vehicles destroyed. Underlying causes of the violence included economic disparities, social jealousy and negative stereotypes. A peace deal and the deployment of a 2,000-strong police force allowed most of those displaced to return shortly after the clashes, though most had to be housed temporarily in shelters amid simmering tensions.

The conflict in Papua showed no sign of abating during 2012. Thousands of people were displaced by violence in the central highlands, where Indonesian security forces are fighting OPM rebels. Papuans remain deeply frustrated by the policies of a central government that severely limits their freedom of expression, represses political dissent and has failed to raise the province’s development and human security indicators - the lowest in Indonesia despite its vast natural resources.

Between June and October, thousands of people reportedly fled their homes in and around Wamena town as a result of military sweeps. Human rights violations against civilians suspected of supporting OPM rebels were also reported. Most people fled into the forest or stayed with relatives. Military operations in the gold-rich district of Paniai forced thousands of people to seek refuge in the jungle in September and October. More than 10,000 people had fled similar operations at the end of 2011. Limited access to areas of Papua affected by conflict made it difficult to assess IDPs’ needs and provide assistance.

The National Disaster Management Agency is the administrative and policy-making body for people displaced both by natural disasters and “social conflicts”, while the Ministry of Social Affairs is responsible for providing relief during emergencies. In May, parliament adopted a “social conflict management” law designed to fill a legislative gap in the handling of conflicts and the provision of assistance and protection to people affected.

The law is controversial as it provides for greater involvement of the military in conflict resolution. Under its provisions, local authorities are able to declare a “state of conflict” in consultation with the presidency, and to impose measures to restrict people’s rights, including their freedom of movement.

Another concern is the broad definition of “social conflict”, which may be interpreted to include land conflicts pitting individuals against private companies. In recent years, communities at risk of losing their land have increasingly resisted the drive to exploit Indonesia’s vast natural resources. At the end of 2011, parliament adopted a law on “land acquisition for public interest”, which fails to recognise and guarantee the specific land rights of indigenous people and may therefore facilitate their forced eviction.

In recent years, the UN has mainly addressed IDPs’ needs through community-level reintegration and development projects aimed at improving livelihood opportunities for the most vulnerable members of the population. In 2012, the EU continued to fund a number of programmes supporting IDPs’ resettlement and livelihoods and the strengthening of the capacity of local authorities in a number of provinces, including Maluku, Central Sulawesi and West Timor.

Myanmar is undergoing major political reforms and has initiated a series of peace processes, but in 2012 it also continued to experience armed conflict and new inter-communal violence that led to significant internal displacement. As of the end of the year, the country was estimated to be hosting at least 450,000 IDPs.

In western Rakhine state, inter-communal violence broke out in June pitting ethnic Rakhine against ethnic Rohingya and other Muslim minorities, and forcing more than 100,000 people from both communities to flee. The IDPs took shelter in displacement camps in and around the state capital of Sittwe or with host communities. Following a new outbreak of violence in October, a further 36,000 fled, many seeking refuge in the same camps.

By the end of the year, more than 125,000 people were internally displaced in Rakhine state. Of that total, 115,000 were registered as IDPs while more than 10,000 were not. Humanitarian organisations and the government have provided assistance, but the camps are overcrowded and lack access to basic services. Health care, education and livelihood opportunities are also limited, and it was not safe for IDPs to leave the camps. As an indirect result of the violence, several hundred thousand ethnic Rohingya living in the north of the state lost access to the much-needed humanitarian assistance they had been receiving for years until trouble first broke out in June.

In north-eastern Kachin state and the northern part of neigh-
burial of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and the Myanmar military, which began in June 2011, intensified in December 2012. The military reportedly launched airstrikes on the town of Laiza, where KIA has its main base. By the end of the year, more than 75,000 people had been internally displaced. Over 40,000 were living in areas controlled by KIA, to which UN agencies had only limited access, but they also receive some assistance from local organisations.

In the south-east, tensions between the Myanmar army and ethnic non-state armed groups (NSAGs) eased during 2012 when compared with previous years, though there were numerous ceasefire violations in the southern part of Shan state. There were no clashes in Kayah and Mon states and Bago and Tanintharyi regions, with very few isolated incidents between NSAG and Border Guard Force personalities in Kayin state that were quickly contained. As of the end of the year these areas were estimated to be hosting around 250,000 protracted IDPs who had fled their homes to escape armed conflict and human rights violations. Many among them face security risks because of the presence of landmines, and they also lack access to adequate food, clean water, sanitation, durable shelter, health services, education and livelihoods.

Efforts towards a full-fledged peace process continued as the government on either the national or state level signed preliminary ceasefire or peace agreements with the NSAGs. As of the end of the year, KIA was the only group not to have signed such an agreement. The Peace Donor Support Group and the Myanmar Peace Support Initiative were set up in 2012 with the aim of providing assistance to conflict-affected people, including IDPs, and support for the ceasefires and ongoing peace-building efforts.

The government has also initiated a process of political reform. In parliamentary by-elections in April, candidates of the formerly banned National League for Democracy (NLD) won 43 of the 45 seats that were contested. Among the newly elected NLD MPs was the Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, who also became chair of the lower house’s Committee for Rule of Law and Peace and Stability. The government continued to release political prisoners and liberalise the media, and new legislation and regulations governing demonstrations were also adopted.

In response, several countries and regional bodies including the US, Norway and the EU, have eased their sanctions on Myanmar. A number of high-level officials visited the country in 2012, including President Barack Obama, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres, and the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos.

In 2013, it will be important to ensure that peace-building efforts are matched by an end to fighting on the ground and that the views of IDPs and a discussion of issues related to internal displacement, such as durable solutions, are included in the peace process. Increased foreign investment and the exploitation of natural resources should adhere to ethical standards, including those set out in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), of which the government was intending to become a signatory.

More than six years after the government and Maoist rebels ended their decade-long armed conflict, the peace process remains largely incomplete. Widespread impunity for perpetrators of human rights violations committed during the conflict, endless political bickering, corruption and the government’s relative absence from rural areas has largely undermined state legitimacy.

Nearly all IDPs have returned, but an undetermined number, believed to be in the thousands, have been unable or unwilling to go back to their places of origin, mainly as a result of unresolved land and property issues and security concerns. Land expropriated by the Maoists has often been sold or given to landless or tenant farmers. The sustainability of returns has often been undermined by the absence of state services and a lack of livelihood assistance. Assistance provided by the government to IDPs since 2007 has mainly focused on helping them return by covering their transportation costs.

Most IDPs no longer have assistance needs related to their displacement as they have managed to integrate locally, mainly in urban centres and cities. Some, however, particularly women and children, have struggled to find proper accommodation and access basic services. They are also more likely to be exposed to a range of threats including exploitation and sexual violence.

Since 2007, episodes of violence from separatist and criminal groups in central Terai, the region south of the Himalayan foothills, have led to the forced displacement of thousands of people. Both hill-dwelling Pahadis and their wealthier Madhesi counterparts on the plains have been affected, with most reported to have moved to Hetauda, Chitwan district and Kathmandu.
Military operations against armed opposition groups, and local sectarian and tribal conflicts have caused displacement in Pakistan’s volatile north-western region for at least eight years. The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) are currently worst-affected. As of 31 December 2012, 758,000 people were registered as internally displaced by UNHCR, more than 90 per cent of whom fled FATA for Khyber Paktunkhwa (KP) province. The number of IDPs peaked in 2009, at more than three million, most of them from KP’s Malakand region.

According to UNHCR, 412,000 new IDPs from FATA were registered in 2012, while 59,000 people (12,600 families) - significantly less than in 2011 - returned to the area in voluntary repatriation projects, most of them to the agencies of Kurram, South Waziristan.

UNHCR carried out the registration process on behalf of KP and FATA Disaster Management Authorities, and those able to register as IDPs had most access to assistance. To be eligible, heads of household required a valid national identity card (CNIC) showing two addresses in an area which the government had officially recognised, or “notified” as conflict-affected.

Measures were taken to remove practical barriers to registration, but vulnerable IDPs from locations that were not “notified” were largely excluded from assistance. According to the IDP Vulnerability Assessment and Profiling (IVAP) project, a significant number in KP were unregistered as of the end of 2012.

Households headed by separated or widowed women faced difficulties in accessing assistance as many women did not hold their own CNIC. The need to ensure purdah, or honour, also restricted women’s access to food distribution points, and to information and basic services whether on or off camp. Other vulnerable groups, such as the chronically ill and elderly, experienced similar difficulties as a result of their limited mobility.

Military operations in the Bara sub-division of FATA’s Khyber agency led to a major influx of IDPs to Peshawar and Nowshera districts of KP in 2012. The Khyber displacement began in January and peaked in mid-March, when 10,000 families a day were arriving at Jalozai displacement camp in KP. By October, more than 280,000 Khyber IDPs had been registered.

Overall, 89 per cent of those displaced chose to live in host communities, rather than seek shelter in one of the region’s three IDP camps. Most families who were able to rented houses. That said, Pakistan’s total camp population was still substantial in 2012, with 85,000 IDPs, roughly half of whom were under 18, living in Jalozai, Togh Serai and New Durrani camps in the KP area.

According to IVAP, more than 60 per cent of displaced families outside camps live below the poverty line, earning less than 5,000 rupees ($51) a month. The rising cost of housing and competition for jobs has left IDPs in urgent need of food, rental assistance and jobs. Vulnerability has increased over time, and those displaced for longer periods have gone into debt to meet their basic needs after exhausting their other coping mechanisms. Lack of access to documentation, particularly children’s birth certificates and CNICs, remains a major protection concern.

According to OCHA, more than 3.6 million IDPs have returned home to KP and FATA since 2009. The government prioritised the return of registered IDPs to “de-notified” areas where it declared military operations over. To ensure the safe and voluntary nature of the return process, the humanitarian community and local authorities were guided by a 2010 return policy framework, though restricted access to some return areas means effective monitoring has not always been possible.

While nearly all IDPs wanted to return, tens of thousands of families were still unable to do so because of persistent insecurity, damage or destruction of their housing and lack of progress in restoring basic services and infrastructure.

With support from the humanitarian community, the government has registered and assisted millions of IDPs and returnees, providing food and non-food items, temporary shelter and essential services. That said, significant limitations remain. Provincial budget allocations were not enough to meet IDPs’ needs both in and outside camps, and the humanitarian community experienced a funding shortfall of $79 million during the year.

A much-needed early recovery assistance framework to benefit FATA’s returnees had not been endorsed by the federal government as of the end of 2012, and Pakistan was still to develop a comprehensive, national policy on IDPs. Host community and family networks played a major role in supporting vulnerable IDPs, including unregistered IDPs excluded from assistance.
The Philippines

At least 1,200

Undetermined

Displacement situation: 2008

600,000 (2008)

178,000 reported

Human Development Index

114

An estimated 178,000 people were displaced by conflict and violence during 2012 in Mindanao in the southern Philippines, where the government has been fighting insurgent groups since the 1970s. For most, displacement was short-lived, and only a few thousand people were unable to return by the end of the year.

Armed clashes between the government and Muslim insurgents and violence between local clans were the main causes of displacement, which took place primarily in the Muslim-majority provinces of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). Clashes between government forces and communist rebels of the New People’s Army (NPA) also forced people to flee their homes, in most cases in resource-rich indigenous territories in northern and eastern Mindanao.

Disasters are also major causes of displacement in Mindanao, affecting hundreds of thousands of people every year and often making groups already displaced by conflict and violence more vulnerable. Almost exactly a year after tropical storm Sendong devastated the northern cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan, typhoon Pablo struck eastern Mindanao in December 2012, killing more than 1,000 people, displacing nearly a million and affecting more than six million. The impact of both storms was made worse by environmental degradation caused by poorly regulated mining and logging activities.

IDPs and returnees in Mindanao tend to live in insecure environments prone to violence and where the rule of law is often absent. They are exposed to a range of threats, including abuses by armed groups, unexplored ordnance and gender-based violence. Military operations and counter-insurgency tactics sometimes restrict IDPs’ rights, including their freedom of movement and access to food and livelihoods. Poverty is a key driver of onward migration, with people who lost their assets and livelihoods in their initial displacement forced to move again in search of work. This increases IDPs’ vulnerability. Children in particular have to drop out of school, and they face a significant risk of falling prey to human traffickers or being recruited into armed groups.

The cycle of violence and displacement in many areas in Mindanao tends to have long-lasting effects, and displacement generally does not end when IDPs return. An assessment conducted in September 2012 in 33 municipalities across Mindanao identified more than 500,000 people, mainly IDPs and returnees, who still needed humanitarian and recovery assistance. Nearly half had been affected by armed conflict and most were located in Maguindanao, the province by far the hardest-hit.

Three out of four households in Maguindanao have fled twice or more in the past ten years. Many of those who returned to the province following the end of the 2008 to 2009 conflict between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) have struggled to access basic services and re-establish their livelihoods, the result both of recurrent flooding and sporadic fighting, mainly caused by clan feuds. Most received no assistance when they returned.

The government and its international partners have made significant efforts to address IDPs’ immediate humanitarian needs, but a lack of funding has often undermined the effectiveness of early recovery and rehabilitation programmes. Assistance has also been hampered by weak institutions, poor capacity and a lack of downward accountability by local authorities.

In October 2012, the government and MILF signed a framework agreement which provides for the creation of the Bangsamoro, a new political entity to replace ARMM by 2016. This represents a chance to end the conflict and address the underlying causes of displacement.

Efforts to develop new legislation on displacement progressed well during the year, and in February 2013 congress enacted the Rights of Internally Displaced Persons Act. Under the new law, which provides for the protection and assistance of people displaced by both conflict and natural disasters, the Philippines Commission on Human Rights (PCHR) becomes the government’s institutional focal point for IDPs.

At the end of 2012, the UN requested a total of $100 million to fund its humanitarian and recovery programmes in Mindanao in 2013. Of the total, a third is to support its continuing operations in central Mindanao and the rest is to respond to the humanitarian needs arising from typhoon Pablo.

The UN will continue to support efforts to assist people affected by conflict and disaster in 2013, and it will also seek to strengthen its collaboration with the government and the humanitarian and development communities with the longer term aim of stabilising conflict-affected areas and facilitating durable solutions for IDPs.
Hundreds of thousands of current and former IDPs in Sri Lanka remained in need of protection and assistance as of the end of 2012, more than three and a half years after government forces defeated the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in May 2009. More than 93,000 people were still living in camps, with host communities or in transit situations. Of more than 480,000 people who had returned to Northern and Eastern provinces, many are still to achieve durable solutions.

At the end of September 2012, the Menik Farm displacement camp, where around 225,000 Tamil IDPs were interned in June 2009, was closed. Of more than 1,300 IDPs still living in the camp in September, 560 were unable to return to their home areas because they were occupied by the Mullaitivu Security Force headquarters. Instead they were relocated, many of them against their will.

Military occupation of land is preventing around 26,000 people from returning across the north and east of Sri Lanka, and it is estimated that more than 3,000 people have been relocated, in many cases involuntarily.

Many returnees faced challenges in accessing their basic humanitarian needs such as shelter, water and sanitation during 2012. Displaced and returning communities also required livelihood assistance, social support, legal assistance and psycho-social care in recovering from the effects of the conflict. The assistance provided was inadequate to meet the needs. The presence of landmines and unexploded ordinance also continued to complicate the recovery of livelihoods. As of the end of the year, clearance operations were ongoing in both livelihood and to complicate the recovery of livelihoods. As of the end of 2012. Displaced and returning communities also required humanitarian needs such as shelter, water and sanitation during 2012.

The military leadership continued to control the approval of humanitarian projects in the north through its membership in the Presidential Task Force for Resettlement, Development and Security in the Northern Province (PTF). The PTF places particular restrictions on the provision of mental health care and psycho-social activities. Because of government restrictions, no comprehensive assessment has been conducted in conflict-affected areas, and there is no comprehensive data on the needs of the most vulnerable groups. No IDP profiling has been done since 2007. The government, UNHCR and the UN Office for Project Services launched a survey of protracted IDPs in 2011, but the project was abandoned in December 2012 due to obstacles placed on it by the PTF.

At the end of the year, the UN cluster system was phased out as the international response shifted from humanitarian to development interventions, despite continuing humanitarian needs on the ground. International funding for both areas of activity was significantly reduced.
The government has been confronting Malay Muslim separatist groups in southern Thailand for more than a century, and low-level violence continued to affect the provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala in 2012. By the end of year, an estimated 5,500 people had been killed and 9,700 injured since 2004. Attacks on schools and teachers, which insurgents see as symbols of Thai occupation, intensified towards the end of the year, causing a rise in transfer applications from Buddhist teachers.

The Buddhist minority has been disproportionately affected by the violence. The number of people displaced since 2004, when the violence resumed, is unknown, but available information suggests that as many as 240,000 people may have fled their homes. This would account for around 30 per cent of the Buddhist population and ten per cent of Malay Muslims.

Some IDPs fled in direct response to the violence, but many have moved because of its adverse effects on the economy and the provision of education and social services. Most IDPs have moved to urban areas inside the affected provinces where, like the rest of the population, they remain at risk of violence. Buddhist IDPs have been more likely to leave the three provinces.

The government set up a $39 million fund in September to purchase Buddhist land in an effort to ensure that it does not fall into the hands of groups associated with the insurgency. IDPs would be able to redeem their land should they choose to return. The government has not taken any steps to assess the extent of displacement, nor has it adopted any other measures to address the issue. It has, however, provided some assistance to victims of insurgent violence and their families.

The absence of the UN in the three provinces has seriously limited its capacity to report on human rights violations committed by any of the parties to the conflict, or on the extent and consequences of the related displacement.
The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) is a world leader in the monitoring and analysis of the causes, effects and responses to internal displacement. For the millions worldwide forced to flee within their own country as a consequence of conflict, generalised violence, human rights violations, and natural hazards, IDMC advocates for better responses to internally displaced people, while promoting respect for their human rights.

IDMC is part of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
Norwegian Refugee Council
Chemin de Balexert 7–9
CH-1219 Châtelaine (Geneva)
Tel: +41 22 799 0700, Fax: +41 22 799 0701

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