Researching Internal Displacement:
State of the Art

Conference Report

7-8 February 2003 Trondheim, Norway

*T*his is a summary of papers presented at the conference 'Researching internal displacement: state of the art' held in Trondheim, Norway in February 2003. It highlights lessons learned by the growing body of scholars analysing the plight of the millions of people internally displaced by armed conflict and violence, human rights violations, natural or human-made disasters and development projects. It sets out answers to key questions facing IDP researchers: What distinguishes research on internal displacement? What are the main issues in research on internal displacement today? What are the purposes and consequences of research? How can research findings feed into policy, protection and humanitarian response?

The conference was organised as part of a wider network project funded by the Research Council of Norway and run by the Research Group on Forced Migration at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in collaboration with the Global IDP Project of the Norwegian Refugee Council.

The conference was the first in a series – the next will be held on 16-18 September 2004 – to support the objective of the network: to maintain and publicise a database on internal displacement that includes research projects (ongoing and completed), publications and a register of researchers. (For further details, see the back cover of this report.) We trust that the conference, and this report, will help put internal displacement more firmly on the international research agenda and create synergy between different academic disciplines.

We are grateful to Dr Francis Deng, the UN Secretary General's Special Representative on Internally Displaced Persons, not only for taking time from his busy schedule to attend the conference but also for the encouragement he has given to researchers to contribute to policy formation.

Finally, thanks to all the participants for travelling long distances in order to share ideas to enable us to improve our understanding and responses to crises of internal displacement.

The full versions of the presentations summarised in this report will be available in the NTNU Department of Geography's working paper series Acta Geographica available both in printed version and on the web: www.idp.ntnu.no/conference/

With best wishes
Cathrine Brun, Nina M Birkeland and Ragnhild Lund
NTNU IDP Network Secretariat

Front cover photo: *UNHCR agricultural programme for psychiatric patients, Sri Lanka.
UNHCR/R Chalasani*

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www.idp.ntnu.no/conference/

Opening remarks

by Oddhild Günther

Dear participants and Dr Deng,
The Norwegian Refugee Council had the
pleasure of being invited by NTNU to
co-organise this seminar, a task we accepted
with great satisfaction.

For many years NRC has made efforts to raise awareness of internal displacement and the destiny of the millions whose lives have been affected by unrest. To see all of you gathered here – dedicated to doing research on IDP-related issues and to investigate possible ways of cooperation – is therefore a milestone and a great event for NRC.

NRC has made an effort to collect information on IDP populations around the world through our Global IDP database in Geneva. This enterprise has been costly and sometimes more than we thought we could manage. However, we have overcome the challenges and today the database is a well-known and useful tool for documenting the magnitude and the scope of the IDP problem.

The high number of internet visits to the IDP database underlines its value and the need for such information. A database has, however, its limitations, being so to speak merely the first step of collecting data and knowledge of IDPs. The next steps involve the engagement of academia, universities and research institutes. You have the privilege of time for concentration, for diving deeper, being more specific and detailed. While the database struggles to be up-to-date, bringing rapid changes in displacement patterns to your attention, researchers have the opport- unity to develop a long-term perspective, to observe the impact of displacement even after several decades.

NRC is not only running a database. Our staff are humanitarian fieldworkers in 14 different countries. NGO fieldworkers are among those who stand to benefit most from IDP-related research. Our ability to work with IDPs, to understand their situation more holistically, to empower instead of creating dependency – doing no harm – will be an important result from your studies. Examples can be drawn from NTNU's research in Angola and Sri Lanka and the deeper understanding of displacement and its many facets it has brought about.

NGOs therefore warmly welcome the growing interest which is manifested by the large group of researchers present here today. NRC hopes and trusts that networking will be fruitful for us as well as for researchers in their everyday struggle for progress and results.

An example of a fruitful cooperation has been the close cooperation between the Global IDP database and Dr Deng's office and the Brookings-SAIS Project in Washington. Our common effort to disseminate information on the Guiding Principles in countries where inhabitants are suffering displacement has worked very well. We have provided arenas in which government officials, the police, the military and, last but not least, IDPs themselves have come together, acquired new knowledge, discussed, opened new initiatives and brought results. This positive experience of cooperation could inspire all of us.

I am convinced that you will all provide valuable input to the research network created here and I am grateful for NTNU's initiative and their dedication to the cause of IDPs. Let us listen, learn, discuss, enjoy wintry Trondheim, leave our mobiles and computers behind and just be here – for these two days.

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Kristin Storholt, representative of the Research Council of
Norway which sponsored the conference.
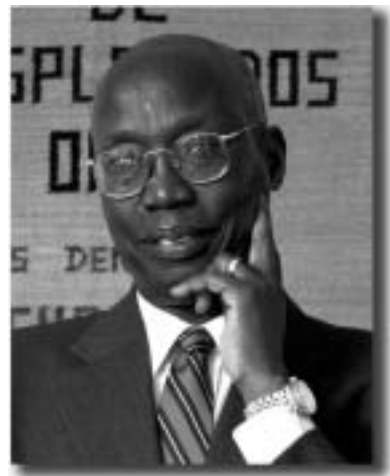
Opening remarks

by Francis M Deng

It is a great pleasure to be in Trondheim to address such an impressive gathering of scholars, academics, students and policy makers focusing on an issue that has preoccupied me since I was appointed as the Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons in 1992.

Our host country, Norway, has been in the forefront of the countries that have supported my mandate, both politically and materially.

During my country missions, I meet with the leaders, presidents, ministers and authorities at all levels as well as with IDPs. Then I come back and report to the authorities: "This is what I have found. These are the problems. This is what your people are suffering from." In one Latin American country I asked a displaced community, "What would you want me to report to your leaders?" The response I got was, "Those are not our leaders. To those people we are criminals and our only crime is that we are poor." In a Central Asian state I asked the same question. There, thinking in ethnic terms, they said: "Those people are not our people. We don't have any of our people among those people." They felt excluded or totally marginalised. In an African country, the Prime Minister complained to a UN official that they were not providing enough food for refugees who had become a burden on his country. The UN official explained, "We have limited resources and we are helping your own people who are affected by the war." The Prime Minister responded, "Those are not my people. The food you give to those people actually is killing my soldiers." These were his citizens, nationals of his country, and yet he said, "They are not my people." His people were the soldiers who were killing "those people". So, you have here a national crisis of identity which leaves a vacuum of responsibility. People who are marginalised or dispossessed fall into that vacuum. Where do they turn but to the international community? And yet, when they do so, they are confronted with the obstacle of sovereignty.

Internal displacement is defined in terms of people forced to leave their normal areas of residence as a result of violent conflicts, communal violence, gross or systematic violations of human rights and other human-made or natural disasters in which there is an element of discrimination. There are other causes of displacement which are either outside or marginal to my mandate: those caused primarily by most natural disasters, and those related to economic needs and migration to areas of opportunities, such as cities, as well as those caused by major development projects, such as dams. Some of these pose vast challenges that are not easily manageable under my mandate as defined by the relevant resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights and the General Assembly and the available human and material resources.

Among all the estimates of the displaced populations, the vast majority and the most vulnerable are women, children, the elderly and the disabled. I have been to camps where there are scores of thousands of displaced people with only a small fraction of men. Once I found only 25 men among several thousand displaced people. After addressing the whole camp community I asked for a smaller number of people to discuss in depth the needs of the camp residents. All those who came forward were men. I said: "I thought there were only 25 men in the camp?" I was told, "Well, you asked for leaders". What this example shows is that if you have such a large group of women and children and those considered qualified to discuss their problems are a handful of men then you begin to realise that you do not have anywhere near the necessary insight into the needs of the population. This raises the issue of the

power the displaced population have over humanitarian services and the fundamental question of who decides what and with what consequences for whom.

The internally displaced have exactly the same problems as refugees in terms of causes and needs but have not crossed international borders – and there is no international agency to protect them. The assumption is that, because they are within their own country, they should be protected by their own government. But here is the problem. Internal conflicts are symptomatic of national identity crises. They show the way a country defines itself and how benefits accruing from that definition favour only certain groups. The crisis for the excluded and marginalised is aggravated by the fact that efforts to find a remedy from the international community are constrained by the obstacles of state sovereignty.

The challenge of state sovereignty

Vulnerable third world countries often tend to see sovereignty negatively, as a barricade against international involvement which permits leaders to do what they want, even if this means blocking the international community from assisting those in great distress and at risk of starvation.

Sovereignty was never meant to be interpreted like this. Sovereignty is a means of giving states control over their territory and people in order to establish law and order and discipline

in trade and international relations. Sovereignty cannot legitimately be conceived as a way of closing doors to the concerns of the international community. It is, however, a very important concept in international relations. That is why there was concern over whether the UN should get involved with the problems of internal displacement – an issue that falls within state sovereignty. It also explains why it was decided by the Commission on Human Rights not to use the normal mechanisms of appointing a Rapporteur or a Working Group but to instead appoint a Representative of the Secretary-General who would be more sensitive to the concerns of governments about issues of sovereignty. Unlike other human rights mechanisms, my task is largely a diplomatic and a persuasive one in which I engage in dialogue with governments on behalf of IDPs.

I have so far undertaken 25 missions. I usually begin by indicating to a government that I would like to visit the country. Most then extend a formal invitation. Some, who do not want to expose their problems to the world, are more reluctant to do so. It took me quite a while to persuade Turkey to invite me and Sri Lanka was initially hesitant. Several others have procrastinated. Generally most countries have responded positively.

The first five minutes of each mission are crucial for trying to impress upon the President or the Minister of Foreign Affairs or whoever I am meeting that I recognise the problem as internal and falling under the sovereignty of the state, that I come with respect for the sovereignty of the state and, lastly, that I see my task as exploring how the international community can assist the government to help its own people.

Once the dynamics of interaction become more harmonious, I explain, politely but affirmatively, that I do not interpret sovereignty negatively. In this world of intense interaction and interdependence, sovereignty is a positive concept which stipulates state responsibility to provide protection and assistance for its people. If a state does not have the means or capacity, it is duty bound to call on the international community to assist. In all my missions discussions have been constructive and conciliatory. No

government has ever said to me, "This is an internal matter and none of your business." So, to some extent, this approach does work.

What should we do when governments fail to discharge their responsibilities? Are threats of sanctions or military intervention credible? I think that this is one of the weaknesses of the UN system. There are numerous instruments with standards which imply or even make explicit such threats but where enforcement is very limited or even lacking. Still, we are much better off agreeing that there are standards to keep so that when we do not meet them at least we know we have failed and will try to do better next time and never again allow Rwandan-style genocide.

By going in the name of the UN and the international community to people in desperate need, one brings hope. IDPs feel elated that the world cares and will do something. And then as you leave, you wonder, "What if the world doesn't do anything?" Hope will then turn into despair. Should one get overwhelmed by the frustration that you have come and left without giving these people what they need? Or do you do what little you can and hope that it makes a difference? I choose the latter and begin to negotiate with everyone who is in a position to do something: a colonel in the field, the local administrators, the governors, the ministers, the presidents, national and international NGOs, the civil society, UN in-country agencies and the donor community. In all the arenas in which you plead, the lower you go the more likelihood there is that there will be immediate action and effect.

Since my mandate was created, awareness of IDP issues has risen enormously. One of our major achievements has been the development of a legal framework for protecting and assisting displaced persons. After compiling and analysing existing standards in human rights law, humanitarian law and analogous refugee law, we decided to develop Guiding Principles – rather than a controversial treaty which would have taken 20 years to get approved. By restating what actually exists, but in the form of soft law, we have been able to get the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement more easily accepted. They cover all

phases of the problem, including how to prevent displacement, how to respond in terms of providing protection and assistance once people have been displaced and how to find solutions leading to their safe return with dignity, alternative resettlement and reintegration.

Within a remarkably short period of time, the Guiding Principles have been widely disseminated throughout the world, have been translated into 32 languages and been the subject of relevant training sessions and national and regional seminars and workshops. They have guided legislation, policy and even court decisions. To give a few examples:

- Angola has utilised the Guiding Principles as the basis for their 'Norms on Resettlement'.
- Georgia has revised its law on voting to allow IDPs to vote in local elections.
- Colombia's IDP law was significantly inspired and guided by the Guiding Principles and the Colombian Constitutional Court has cited the Principles in two judgments.
- Uganda is reviewing a draft national law on internal displacement, based on the Guiding Principles.
- The Sudan People's Liberation Movement and Army, after receiving training in the Guiding Principles, have developed a draft IDP policy.

We have also focused on the development of institutional arrangements. The first option we proposed was the creation of a new agency similar to UNHCR. When it became obvious that nobody wanted to create a new UN agency we suggested designating an existing agency with responsibility for IDPs. We found, however, that the problem was seen as too big for one agency. The third option, which has met with consensus approval, was for all the UN agencies to work together collaboratively. Thus the Emergency Relief Coordinator, who is also the head of the Office of Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), was given the responsibility to ensure that the internally displaced are protected and assisted. Within OCHA, there have been various experimentations with coordination culminating in 2001 with the creation of an IDP Unit to ensure

that operational agencies pull together to bring assistance, relief and protection to IDP populations.

Another important pillar of the mandate is the development of the knowledge base on internal displacement. Over time, the emphasis in our research work has shifted to looking into specific issues, themes and challenges in addressing the problems of internal displacement. Some regional research projects are carried out in collaboration with local researchers as well as international experts. Regional workshops and seminars on internal displacement offer opportunities to promote the dissemination and application of the Guiding Principles and to engage with local groups. We are shortly to publish a report on development-induced displacement.[1]

We are shortly to publish a report on development-induced displacement. The status of IDPs residing under the control of non-state actors is another area in which we are undertaking research aimed at facilitating constructive dialogue in a way not generally easy to manage within the UN system.

Addressing root causes

Displacement is a symptom of its causes – internal conflicts, communal violence, violations of human rights and human-made disasters. These causes are themselves the result of deeper structural problems, often rooted in acute racial, ethnic, religious and cultural divides and gross inequities. Not only must we address the needs of displaced people for protection and assistance and find durable solutions that will lead to their return, alternative resettlement and development but – and even more importantly – we must also address the deep structural problems behind the conflicts and human rights violations. Most of those affected by these conflicts and forced to leave belong to ethnic minorities and the rural poor. Not only are the inequities they suffer integral to their displacement but moving to urban centres and capital cities exposes them even more to injustice and marginalisation. Exposed to new opportunities and yet discriminated against in their new environment, they remain poised between a new context into which they do not fit fully as citizens and their former home areas to which they can no longer return to resume the old way of life. Displacement therefore challenges the status quo and calls for a new dispensation of justice and equality for all citizens without discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, culture or national origin.

In all my reports or statements on country missions I always end by stressing that behind each crisis of internal displacement lies an opportunity to undertake structural reforms to make all citizens feel a sense of belonging on equal footing with their compatriots. Unless this is done, these acutely divided societies can never enjoy full peace, security, unity, stability and shared prosperity.

Improved understanding of the problem of the global crisis of internal displacement is essential in order to facilitate and support improved responses. In recent years there has been an encouraging burgeoning interest in research on internal displacement. The challenge now is to build upon the developing research in order to better protect and assist the internally displaced and promote an end to displacement. This conference provides an important opportunity to take stock of the state of scholarship on internal displacement, identify areas in need of research and promote partnerships and networks.

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1. *Risks and Rights: The causes, Consequences, and Challenges of Development-Induced Displacement* by W Courtland Robinson, Brookings-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement, May 2003.

Dr Deng with some conference participants at Falstad Memorial

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The Global IDP Project:
meeting the challenge of monitoring internal displacement

by Andreas Danevad and Greta Zeender

After publishing the first volume of Internally Displaced People: A Global Survey *in 1998, the Norwegian Refugee Council – through its Global IDP Project – was encouraged by the humanitarian community to continue the research process by establishing an online mechanism to improve the accessibility of IDP information.*

The outcome was the launch of the online Global IDP Database (www.idpproject.org) in December 1999.

The backbone of the database has been a set of comprehensive country profiles which provide users with frequently updated information and direct access to source documents. Initially the database covered only the largest and most acute situations of internal displacement. However, increased funding and improved capacity made it possible to gradually increase the number of countries covered. By the end of 2002 the database monitored all the countries in the world where people have become internally displaced because of armed conflicts, generalised violence or systematic human rights violations and have not – according to available information – durably returned to their homes of origin or permanently resettled elsewhere in the country. As the number of IDP-affected states has risen, the total number of countries covered by the database – including recently added profiles on the Central African Republic and Nepal – has had to be expanded to 52.

This global coverage has positioned the IDP Project to analyse internal displacement nationally, regionally and internationally and enabled the database team to undertake, without external assistance, the research and preparation of the second volume of *A Global Survey* in 2002. While the preparation of the country chapters for the 1998 volume was outsourced to a large number of writers using different methodologies, the latest edition was prepared by a unified team using a common set of variables and terminology. The book can be used as a starting point for further descriptive research on internal displacement and as a useful tool for more comparative and empirical analysis.

The global analysis by the Global IDP Project aims both to quantify the IDP population and to identify common movement patterns, coping strategies and assessing various response mechanisms. Due to its global coverage the project is now able to publish its own estimates of the size of the world's IDP population. After allowing for various methodological weaknesses, the database team reported that towards the end of 2002 some 25 million people were internally displaced by armed conflicts and generalised violence.

To generate such estimates the Global IDP Project relies on information made available by a range of public sources. In some countries lack of humanitarian access makes it impossible to compile anything but a rough estimate. In some countries where estimates vary, a median figure using the highest and lowest available esti-

Regional distribution of IDPs (2002) and Refugees (2001)

(Number of countries with IDPs in brackets)

mates is calculated. Having gained substantial experience in the politics behind IDP figures in various countries, the database team is able to critically assess the reliability of the various sources and chose in most cases the most conservative figure among available estimates.

A comparison of IDP estimates at the beginning and end of 2002 reveals large movements of people within countries affected by conflict during the year. More than three million people were newly displaced in 2002 while about the same number were able to return or resettle. In more than half of the affected countries there was movement in both directions: some affected populations were able to return, while compatriots in other regions were forced to flee.

Global analysis further confirms that physical protection remains a major concern. At the end of 2002 around

the urgent need to provide assistance with a more long-term development perspective aimed at moving people out of the poverty trap caused by their internal displacement.

How can researchers improve the availability and quality of IDP information?

The Global IDP Database provides access to about 5,500 documents from more than 1,000 different sources. Used in the project's global and regional analyses, this information base represents almost all publicly available internet-based information on IDPs produced by the humanitarian community, as well as academic research available through the Internet. As demonstrated by the graph below, humanitarian practitioners are the largest source of providers of quantitative and descriptive information on internal displacement.
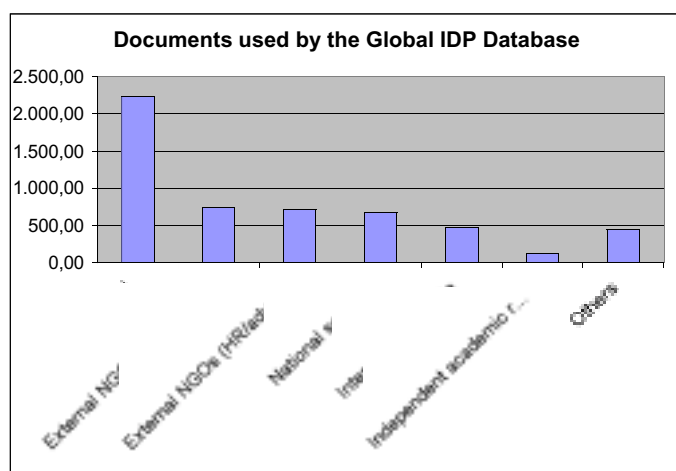
Most publicly available IDP information is generated in order to help plan and deliver humanitarian assistance, rather than for purposes of academic research. A critical assessment of available information quickly reveals that reporting on internal displacement is often fragmented and that there are major geographical and thematic information gaps. Available information is often difficult to validate with regard to origin and reliability. Daily and weekly updates prepared by field practitioners generally have no medium-term equivalents, leaving observers forced to develop analyses from daily/weekly bulletins and much more non-specific agency annual reports.

Despite the widespread promotion of international human rights instruments, terminology varies widely. Even when terms are commonly used, different actors often ascribe divergent meanings to them. How to define an IDP is perhaps the clearest example – and a reason for caution with regard to IDP numbers. But several other concepts that we often take for granted are not always clear. For example, 'return', 'reintegration' and 'resettlement' are often confused.

Documents used by the Global IDP Database

Researchers must be aware of these weaknesses. Humanitarian information often becomes the only source available and analysis based on one source only may be inaccurate. Comparative analysis may be distorted by differences in the understanding of the various dimensions being studied. Although more independent academic field research is needed, it is even more urgent to develop better conceptual and methodological tools for qualitative and quantitative analysis of internal displacement situations. This is a challenge for academic researchers but also an opportunity for joint efforts between humanitarian practitioners and the academic community.

11 million IDPs were struggling to survive in extremely dangerous environments, unable to leave zones of ongoing conflict and exposed daily to gross human rights violations which could not be observed by humanitarian workers or independent human rights observers.

More encouragingly, we can see that conflicts have stabilised in more than half of the 52 affected countries. Lower levels of lawlessness and chaos open up the possibility of finding durable solutions to displacement as long as there is sufficient political will on the part of national governments and the international community. The fact that people in these countries have on average been displaced for more than a decade underscores

The limited availability of independent academic research appears to reflect the reality that research institutions have limited resources available with which to undertake independent studies of IDP situations. It also shows that the academic world and publishers have been slow to take advantage of opportunities provided by the internet to disseminate and share research findings and publications. However, it should not be overlooked that academics are also often humanitarian practitioners and that much of the information on internal displacement produced by the UN and by non-governmental actors such as Amnesty, Human Rights Watch and Médecins Sans Frontières is of high academic standard.

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Researching transnational approaches to IDP protection: a legal perspective

by Cecilia Bailliet

The legal researcher seeks to assess the normative clarity, legitimacy, enforcement potential and empowerment function of the principles created to provide a framework for protection of IDPs.

Because the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement is a non-binding instrument deriving legitimacy from cross-referencing other international instruments within the field of human rights, humanitarian law and refugee law – there is a need to understand the value of these layers of law. In particular, each right enunciated within the instrument requires such analysis. I have assessed the rights to property, recourse (or remedy) and recovery/reparation (compensation or restitution) in order to understand whether IDPs actually have the necessary framework to assist them regain property upon return at the end of a war.

This review highlights a complete absence of clarity regarding what is meant by a right to property and to restitution. There is disagreement over whether the right to property is a civil and political right covering registered property, as opposed to a socio-economic right applicable to the customary claims of indigenous people/farmers who link the land to their rights to food, housing, work and the right to life itself.

General human rights instruments do not set forth a right to restitution of property and the soft law is vague. There is a lack of clarity between the layers of hard and soft law which render the design of protection strategies complex and leaves open the question regarding the extent to which IDPs are actually empowered. The Guiding Principles grant power of choice over the form of reparation (which may either be compensation or restitution, but without guarantee of getting land back) to the state. The Principles of the International Law Association are unclear. The International Labour Organisation Convention No. 169 grants choice over form of compensation to indigenous people.

Examination of the case law of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights reveals how an evolutionary approach to interpretation of basic human rights provides a framework for stimulating change in how states address responsibilities towards their citizens. In the Awas Tingi case the Court consulted members of this indigenous group of Nicaraguans as well as anthropologists in order to understand how to protect their property rights. The Court stated that the tribe's tie to the land formed the fundamental basis of their cultures, their spiritual life, their integrity and their economic survival. It reasoned that the tribe's relation to the land is "not merely a matter of possession and production but a material and spiritual element which they must fully enjoy, even to preserve their cultural legacy and transmit it to future generations." The Court thus elaborated an evolutionary and contextual approach to interpretation of the right to property empowering indigenous people by reflecting their own definition of property. IDPs can draw on this ruling to assert claims based on recognition of their customary holdings.

The Loazya Tamayo Case involved a Peruvian university professor who was forcibly detained by the country's anti-terrorism police, held incommunicado, raped and tortured. Forced to abandon her studies, after her release she moved abroad, remained isolated, was subject to economic hardship and suffered physical and psychological harm. She argued that this trauma had interfered irreparably with her 'life's plan', the attainment of personal, family and professional goals. Finding in her favour, the Court cited the emergence of events which "radically alter the course in which life was on, introduce new and hostile circumstances" and thereby impede personal development.

This decision is of direct relevance for IDPs in Guatemala whose 'life's plan' was in most casess intrinsically tied to the land which provided them with nourishment, identity and security. There is a need for provision of restitution of property as a way of restoring IDPs' 'life plan' and recognising the protection continuum from past acts to present and future consequences.

The duty of states to guarantee the right to live in dignity was upheld in the Villagran Morales case which involved the killing of five street children by the Guatemalan police. The Court asserted that the State was in dereliction of its responsibility to them even before their murder as it had failed to prevent the children from living in misery. It called for recognition of the indivisibility of socio-economic rights and civil and political rights in order to enable a persons to fulfil a 'life's plan'. This decision could also be used in support of calls for restitution of IDP property needed to guarantee a basic standard of living.

IDP researchers can influence policy and protection strategies. My work has helped to:

- reverse decisions of key agencies to declare an official 'end' to Guatemala's ongoing displacement problems
- get Guatemala onto the Global IDP Database
- assist UNDP to work with donors on how to improve the conciliation agency in Guatemala
- provide information for reports issued by the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE, www.cohre.org)
- stimulate further research on cessation of IDP status.

Hopefully other lawyers will also pursue a multidisciplinary approach to researching internal displacement within the field of law in order to help post-conflict states prevent second-generation displacement. We need a new instrument on internal displace-

ment to be pursued within the UN's formal law-making processes which will serve to recognise the identity of IDPs (including terms for cessation of such status) and establish criteria to comprehensively guarantee the rights to property restitution as key elements to attaining human dignity and assuring equal participation within

society. Finally, we must be aware that elaboration of emancipatory norms is meaningless if the structural context remains unchanged. No purpose is served by giving an IDP the right to reparation if there is no effective – and adequately funded – land distribution and compensation programme.

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Researching internal displacement: what is our field and what is our goal?

by Birgitte Refslund Sørensen

As researchers strive to make their work policy-relevant, is there a danger that we may inadvertently adopt the perspectives and language of international and state actors and disregard the perspectives and experiences of those people we refer to as the internally displaced?

How can we develop research problems that are grounded in the perspectives and experiences of people affected by displacement but whose findings remain relevant to policy? In other words, how do we identify not only the right solutions but also the right questions?

An immediate observation is that the main debate on internal displacement remains dominated by the actors that 'invented' the IDP category in the first place. Many international actors concentrate on sharpening their policy and legal instruments in a process that shapes the issue in a particular fashion that is both selective and biased. While such efforts must be acknowledged for their attempt to provide security and protection, one problem with the dominant language of humanitarian and human rights actors is that it generalises, objectifies and decontextualises so as to omit much of the social, cultural and historical circumstances that make events imaginable and meaningful to the actors involved. Humanitarian agencies transform the individual stories of IDPs into stereotypical accounts of the 'typical internally displaced person', devoid of his/her particular history and identity. One task for the critical researcher is to

reveal and problematise underlying assumptions such as the following:

IDPs are invariably seen as localised, a view that is reinforced by their tendency (at least in some places) to flee and settle in community-based groups and thus to re-invoke a sense of village and community. There are, however, remarkably few tests of this assumption or assessments of which kinds of networks – local, national and global – that IDPs create and mobilise in order to rebuild their livelihoods as IDPs and citizens.

Most studies evade discussion of the future and IDPs' longer-term aspirations. This may partly be explained by the limited mandate of most organisations to meet basic needs and not engage in long-term development. Clearly agencies' perspectives are at odds with how IDPs regard themselves and plan their lives.

Most programmes for IDPs are also based on the assumption that IDPs always want to go home (a badly understood notion in itself). Though many indeed do want to, we need to work against standardisation of experiences and the taking for granted of supposedly 'universal' and 'natural' strategies.

A second major influence on our way of thinking about and acting in relation to IDPs is the project discourse and practice that inform the work of humanitarian and development actors. Projects are taken for granted as the way to address problems and needs. However, one concern is that projects often de-politicise underdevelopment and convert it into a technical problem that masks power relations and patterns of inequality and exploitation. Another concern is that the project culture is also a highly bureaucratic one, and when local organisations (NGOs and community-based organisations) are selected as partners for humanitarian agencies they are altered by the partnership. Under the guise of 'capacity building', so-called partners and beneficiaries are involved in a process of bureaucratisation where they have to learn different kinds of accounting, reporting, monitoring, evaluation and regulation. One could of course argue that this enables people to attract funding for betterment of their situa-

tion but at the same time such training may also be interpreted as a means of introducing further control through standardisation of lived experiences and self-monitoring as suggested by French philosopher Michel Foucault.

A pertinent but relatively unexplored question is how the introduction of a project culture affects social relations and who assumes leadership, how do they legitimise their position and which networks and alliances do they develop and rely on. To address this is to acknowledge that humanitarian assistance to IDPs and other conflict-affected groups does more that meeting basic needs; it alters and shapes the structures, relationships and moralities of societies and communities emerging from conflict.

To summarise, researchers should acknowledge:

■ the heterogeneity of populations with different identities and positions that is obscured by the homogenous category of 'IDP'
■ that IDPs – like all other social groups – consider their options and act strategically to achieve their individual goals
■ the importance of not merely explaining 'why' and 'how' IDP populations have come to their present state but also asking 'what next?'
■ that IDPs are not necessarily rooted to home: many wish to move on to other places, other possibilities and new lives
■ the need to better understand who assumes leadership posi-

tions in post-conflict communities, how they legitimise their position and which networks and alliances they develop and rely on
■ the importance of analysing development of new leadership structures and understandings of authority and what these say about ideas of community and society
■ the need to think about differences between policy-directed research and basic research.

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Social science and forced migration:
some methodological and ethical issues

by Karen Jacobsen

There are a number of key methodological and ethical problems confronting social scientists doing field work in humanitarian situations, where the subjects of the research are directly affected by conflict and displacement – whether they are refugees, IDPs or hosts.

Is policy-driven research based on unsound and uncritiqued methodology? Could the subsequent policy conclusions which are generated therefore be flawed?

The problem of inaccurate and unsubstantiated assertions reflects a key problem in social science research in the humanitarian field, namely the methods used to conduct empirical research. Unlike more traditional social science studies, most humanitarian 'field' research has not been subjected to critique of its methods. In all sound research it is important that the methods used to obtain information and data be clearly explained in order to make it possible to replicate them and thereby validate findings. But in much humanitarian field research, key details about the approach are never revealed. Among

the missing details not generally provided are: how many people were interviewed, by whom and under what circumstances; how the subjects were identified and selected and how translation issues were handled.

Methodological weaknesses and ethical problems

■ **Too many interviews – not enough data sets**

Much of the published research on refugees and IDPs is based on data that has been collected using fairly unstructured interviews in a small-scale setting. Although in-depth interviews have given us a rich and useful store of descriptive and anecdotal data, they do not yield a sufficiently representative sample of the population to allow us to test

competing hypotheses and causal relationships using statistical analysis. Aside from camp surveys, there are currently very few data sets based on large-scale surveys conducted by social scientists of self-settled refugee or IDP populations (i.e. those living outside camps), either in rural or urban areas. Existing surveys tend to focus on public health or nutritional issues. One particularly understudied population is urban refugees and IDPs.

■ **Missing control groups**

Much social science research on refugees lacks any kind of control

group, making it difficult to assess the extent to which refugee status is the problem or whether other factors are causing the variance. For example, a common research topic is the study of security problems in refugee camps, yet few studies are designed in such a way as to compare the security problems of refugees in camps with those living **outside** camps or with those of the host community.

■ Representativeness and bias

Many social scientists in the field use a 'snowball' sample approach. Unlike a random sample, where everyone in the target population has an equal chance of being in the sample, in a snowball sample the subjects are more likely to be drawn from a particular segment of the community, and are likely to be similar in certain ways – church-goers and their friends, for example, or those who are beneficiaries of an NGO. The sample will therefore be biased.

■ The problem of bias and construct validity

Construct validity refers to the strength and soundness of the variable we are investigating. The conversation-like tone of in-depth interviews can potentially prompt particular responses, or inadvertently direct the answers, an unconscious process often difficult to avoid even by trained researchers. This potential problem is even more salient in participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques that are popular among field researchers. Many argue that PRA should be used as only one

among a variety of measures – but in much reported field research it is the only one.

■ Determining the size of the target population

Knowledge of the size of the target population is important in generating a proper sample. In the case of urban refugees and IDPs, no studies have yielded an accurate count in Africa. At best there are rough estimates.

Addressing these problems – the difficulties of studying self-settled refugees

■ The problem of access

The problem of access to refugees means that most researchers work in camps, which present a more logistically manageable area, omitting from their study those refugees/IDPs who don't live in camps yet who may be the majority. The difficulties of exploring the range of views held by the women in a community, for example, is particularly well known; this is also true for other more 'hidden' social groups, including the poor and those living in remote areas.

■ Using local researchers

Western researchers work with local researchers because it is widely believed that this yields better results. While it is likely that the use of local researchers can increase the reliability and validity of data, there may be ethical and methodological problems issues involved, such as translation inaccuracies or – when refugee assistants are used – biased responses.

Political or security problems may arise for refugee assistants/local researchers. When refugees are interviewed the information they reveal may be used against them either in the camp or in their areas of origin. In group discussions, a method commonly used by researchers, there can be no confidentiality; what may be inadvertently revealed cannot be fully controlled even by diligent researchers.

Making our work more relevant

As social scientists working in the humanitarian field, we have a duty to be honest researchers, conducting methodologically sound research while doing our best to confront the ethical problems that all fieldwork encounters. We need to:

- ■ be more careful about making claims about representativeness and about representation within the community
- ■ be more careful about construct validity
- ■ write more clearly, use less jargon and avoid over-researched topics and places
- ■ use common definitions of concepts
- ■ be aware of political realities/incentive structures.

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The Global IDP Project provides public information on conflict-induced displacement, training on the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and advocacy for displaced people. After six years of monitoring internal displacement worldwide the Project has become a leading information source and centre of expertise on IDPs. The Project was initiated by the Norwegian Refugee Council, an organisation that has actively promoted improved protection and humanitarian assistance to IDPs for over a decade. When the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator assumed greater responsibility for IDPs in 1998 he was also charged with promoting the collection and dissemination of information on IDPs. To support this function the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee formally asked the Norwegian Refugee Council to develop and maintain the Global IDP Database.

What is the place of IDP research in refugee studies?

by Howard Adelman

The search for an answer gives rise to further questions.

What political agenda lies behind the definition and the mode of institutionalising IDP studies? Why has it taken more than 20 years for studies of internal displacement to mirror the trajectory of growth of refugee studies? What power factors and research interests shape development of a discourse about displacement? Why has the UN chosen not to place responsibility for IDPs within a self-standing international regime or UNHCR-type institution but instead taken the soft option of promoting guiding principles – rather than a convention with international legal weight?

The terms 'IDP' and 'refugee' carry a weight of historical and political baggage. The interrelationship between the two terms is even more burdened. The second clause of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement defines internally displaced persons or groups as those "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 generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border." I suggest that this definition of IDPs and the restriction of the use of the term 'refugees' to individuals who cross state borders are determined by a political agenda.

The definition and the Guiding Principles applied to IDPs are intended to give citizens the idea that they have rights and to empower them. The definition is integral to a nation-building exercise to foster a nation of equal citizens in which sovereignty resides with the people and government is responsible for protecting all its members without favour. Such a liberal republican definition of a state can be used to set in place the moral and normative machinery to justify

intervention in a state in order to protect those being persecuted or relocated.

I do not claim that displacement studies should or should not be separate from that focusing on refugees. I merely point out that knowledge systems and how they are organised are part of, and often reflect, the politics and priorities in dealing with a problem. Knowledge production is not divorced from history and politics. As displacement research centres and networks are established across the globe, it should be remembered that academic development will not be independent of, and will at least partially reflect, the historical and political status of displacement in the political firmament of our time.

History shows us that we need to be aware of the forces of realpolitik behind the new soft IDP regime. It is the duty of scholars to unpack the interests and power concerns that lie behind the creation of regimes, quasi rights and moral agendas. We need to clarify the nature of the concepts in

policy approaches as distinct from, though overlapping with, research results. We must undertake research to uncover any political agenda that may be behind their development. The debate over norms may be fought over independently of group interests but can also be a reflection of disputes over power. That does not mean that the legal and moral normative debates and regime structures could be reduced to power issues but only that they may complement and reinforce a power struggle.

Current efforts to define displacement studies separate from refugee studies, while emphasising only horizontal displacement and neglecting vertical and internal displacement, may reflect similar underlying power struggles. One of the major tasks of a self-conscious research effort is to use critical theory, structural and historical analysis to try to discern what that power struggle is about.

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Howard Adelman and Astri Suhrke at conference session chaired by Nick van Hear.

Tim Morris

Reflections on regime change

How do concepts about displaced people change?

by Astri Suhrke

What are the parallels between the development of the international refugee regime and equivalent policies and support structures relating to IDPs? Why is the current IDP regime lightly institutionalised and weak in comparison with the mechanisms and processes dealing with refugee flows?

The development of the international refugee regime was a process that reflected problem-solving concerns at the state level as well as hegemonic state interests. At times, it was also an agency-driven process. In many of the major displacement crises since World War II refugee problems have been seen as problems of international order. In recent years, the first major expansion of UNHCR and its activities occurred in the 1970s, and was the result of the impact of the Indochinese refugee crisis. Here the US played the role of a hegemonic actor and was a driving force behind regime expansion. A similar surge in activity happened in the 1990s in response to crises in the Balkans.

The end of the Cold War has opened up space for new ideologies. Sovereignty is now interpreted in terms of the rights of both states and individuals. Yet, the idea of human rights and 'individual sovereignty' has its limits. As we haltingly move towards a new regime for IDPs, what is now striking is the absence of a state 'promoter': a powerful nation playing a role akin to that undertaken by the US to expand the international refugee regime in the 1970s. Yet, there have been moments of expansion.

The defining event that pushed the IDP issue over the threshold of attention and led to institution building was the Gulf War. Security Council resolution 688 authorised humanitarian assistance to all those in need in northern Iraq without any mention of whether the Kurds in need of assistance were refugees or IDPs. The US made a major breach in the wall of sovereignty by demanding that IDPs in northern Iraq should be internationally supported without regard to the government of Iraq.

While not milestones, further steps followed. In 1992, the UN Secretary-General appointed a Special Representative for Internally Displaced Persons, Dr Francis Deng. During the mid-1990s, he was instrumental in articulating a set of Guiding Principles for rights of, and support to, IDPs. In 1992 a central UN office for humanitarian affairs was established, later renamed OCHA. Although not generally an operational agency, and weak relative to the heavy UN agencies, OCHA has an over-all responsibility for coordinating assistance to IDPs. To that extent, the office represents a further institutionalisation of responsibility for this population. In these and related regime-building activities for IDPs in the 1990s, smaller states (such as Norway) and international NGOs were important actors. This new, light IDP regime has been able to be developed with the tacit permission of the US acting as a 'passive' hegemon.

Since 11 September we are facing a dramatically different situation and a new world order. What are the implications for IDPs? Two different scenarios can be envisaged.

■ Are we embarking on a protracted humanitarian interlude? As the US again becomes an active hegemon, will action on IDP issues be subordinated to the 'war on terror'? This may entail weak or strong support for IDPs, depending on how it fits in with the agenda of the US. It therefore does not entail a regime but *ad hoc* and unpredictable responses.

■ As the dust of the second Gulf War clears, will slow and piece-meal regime building again come to the fore as it did during the 1990s? In that case, are we talking about regime building proper where a range of actors work to strengthen international and state institutions for a more robust IDP regime?

Amid this uncertainty it is incumbent on IDP researchers to rigorously unpack the concepts, policies and justifications used by political actors when they define IDPs and develop mechanisms to offer them assistance and protection.

Basic questions should also be revisited. A fundamental question underlying the demand for an international regime to assist the IDPs is the assumption that IDPs constitute a particular category of persons that, by virtue of being internally displaced, have particular needs and, further, that these needs can best be met through a separate institutional structure of support, that is, a separate regime. This is not necessarily self-evident. A contrary assumption holds that the needs of IDPs can be met through the various existing agents of humanitarian assistance (such as ICRC, NGOs, WFP, UNICEF and UNHCR) in a patchwork manner and under existing human rights codes. Institutionalising a new category of beneficiaries could risk creating vested interests at the international aid level that serve to perpetuate such needs and related dependencies.

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This is a summary of an oral presentation.

House: loss, refuge and belonging

NTNU Research Network on Internal Displacement
Second conference: Trondheim, Norway 16-18 September 2004

What is the meaning of 'house' for forced migrants?

The issues of home and belonging have received much attention in forced migration studies in recent years. The house may be considered as an embodiment of these aspects.

The next conference arranged by the NTNU Research Network on Internal Displacement will explore how the relationship between displacement and house has material, cultural, social, economic, legal and political dimensions: the house as a physical structure, the house and property rights, the house as shelter and security and the house as symbol of belonging and identity.

For further details, email: idp@svt.ntnu.no

In the House of My Father by Donald G Rodney.
Photographer: Andra Nwlkie. The artist used his own skin
(removed during an operation) to produce this image.

Home here and home there:
Janus-faced IDPs in Kenya

by Roseline Achieng

Prior to elections in 1992 and 1995 ethnic cleansing initiated by political leaders left some 300,000 Kenyans homeless.

Donor pressure led the government to initiate an IDP return programme. Organisers assumed that IDPs would go home and pick up livelihoods as if nothing untoward had happened. The UN Development Programme thought it could implement its mandate to provide an enabling environment for return without analysing what had happened and without assessing the potential for rebuilding trust between IDPs and those who had displaced them.

However, as the programme got under way it was soon clear there was a lack of political will to restore security, redress injustices against the displaced and find lasting solutions to problems of land shortage and tenure insecurity. Particularly in the Rift Valley, returnees faced struggles in resuming livelihoods. A decade after their displacement women and men in some of the worst hit areas are still unable to return home or access farmland.

My research was among internally displaced Kikuyu women, from an area called Burnt Forest, who are now living 65 kilometres away in the 'no man's land' of Langas. Langas is made up of makeshift houses built in a swampy depression by IDPs from a variety of ethnic groups. Ties to home are manifest in the use of the names of Kenyan towns of origin for areas of the shanty differentiated by drainage lines. Neighbourhoods are ethnically constituted. Ethnic sensibilities are encouraged by associations that distribute news, food and music from 'home' and organise ceremonies.

For these displaced women home is here but also there – in Burnt Forest where they retain use rights to land.

Home here – the actual place of lived experience, where contestations and negotiations take place – is opposed to home there – a metaphorical space of personal attachment, exemplar of 'how things used to be' and a space for negotiating the former order. The relationship between home here and home there is trans-local. For these IDPs the construction of meaning is part of a power struggle on the meaning of places and gender relationships.

The continuation of ties to their former homes is also reflected in land-labour relations and the exchange of subsistence goods that exist between the Kikuyu women and their displacers – Kalenjin young men. Displaced women, keen to prevent their fields being permanently appropriated, access their land by renting to the Kalenjin or hiring them to till, weed and harvest. Through appealing to societal institutions, friendship ties and networks women are negotiating 'good neighbourliness' strategies that link them to their displacers.

Many IDP women are engaged in the illicit brewing and sale of alcohol. They depend on each other for contacts and support in buying off police and health inspectors threatening to arrest them. Makeshift bars are used by women to exchange news from home and to offer and seek help.

If we are to grasp the meanings that IDPs give to events, processes and places they encounter, we need to:

- adapt an interactive and generative research methodology seeking to understanding the rationality and agency of the actors

- understand that IDPs and refugees face different realities with different livelihoods options

- realise that communities in crisis re-organise, form groups or associations or provide themselves with space in which to initiate coping strategies

- stop seing IDPs as a homogenous category: some want to return, while other have found new meanings in their lives in new locales

- base support to reintegration on what IDPs themselves have initiated and want.

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IDP information mechanisms:
challenges from Angola, Colombia and Sri Lanka

by Jan Olav Baarøy

Guesstimates of IDP populations in conflict-affected countries vary enormously as many different humanitarian actors gather and present data.

How can data collection mechanisms be standardised and improved in order to obtain information on IDPs and better meet their needs with appropriate levels of assistance?

In 2001 UNICEF's Division of Policy and Planning launched a pilot project to assess the accuracy of data collection mechanisms for children affected by armed conflict. Field visits to Angola, Colombia and Sri Lanka have highlighted challenges in plugging gaps in our knowledge of how to collect information on IDPs.

There are established systems of registering IDPs in all three countries. Angola has a single registration system with aggregated numbers, whereas in Sri Lanka the government and the UN have a joint project to register all displaced persons and to gather disaggregated information. In Colombia there are various systems of registration by supply and demand of services and by means of various socio-demographic characteristics.

Quantitative estimates of total IDP numbers are generally formulated from multiple sources. In Colombia, one organisation uses a system of verified sources to estimate the magnitude of forced displacement caused by the armed conflict. In Angola, the UN monitors population movements and IDP influxes down to the communal level on a monthly basis.

In Sri Lanka UNHCR has conducted a number of assessments and small-scale household surveys. Data are collected on the number of families and individuals, their place of origin, condition of shelter and land, water and sanitation facilities, their problems and needs. In Colombia there are commissioned household surveys for IDPs in conflict zones. In Angola, the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey provides disaggregated data on a wide range of demographic and health indicators.

As there is no designated organisation responsible for the coordination of assistance to IDPs, it is inevitable that where there are large numbers of displaced people there is a multiplicity of agencies and statistics. There is no standard reporting format. Each agency has its own system of data collection and may have an organisational interest in how it quantifies and presents numerical data. International databases on population movements such as OCHA's are compiled from a variety of sources of highly variable quality.

Data may continue to be cited even though dynamic security situations may have rendered it out of date. Multiple registration systems with incompatible criteria make compilation and comparisons difficult. Health and social indicators gathered from small samples may not necessarily be representative of entire IDP populations. There is no coordinated procedure for data collection, verification, assessment and analysis. How can we work towards a better system and improved data collection infrastructure? UNICEF calls on states, UN agencies and NGOs to:

- do more to counteract risks of over- and under-estimation
- ensure that estimation is based on multiple sources, including governmental, national and international humanitarian organisations
- recognise that governments should be the main actors in registration and estimation – with support from the UN if necessary
- develop standardised reporting formats with disaggregation of data – at least by gender and age and ideally additionally by displacement history, location and living conditions, education, employment and resettlement/relocation preferences
- identify and cooperate with a lead agency responsible for coordination of data collection, management and dissemination
- strive towards distinct data on IDPs where household surveys cover areas of mixed IDPs and non-IDPs
- develop strict guidelines for accepting and analysing secondary data in consolidated databases.

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The full texts of the articles summarised in this report are available online at: www.idp.ntnu.no/conference/

Between conflict & consensus:
resolving Guatemalan land disputes to prevent internal displacement

by Cecilia Bailliet

As internal displacement is often an indicator of state failure, Guatemala's ongoing displacement crisis cannot be analysed without regard to the country's legal system and the political and economic context in which it functions.

To what extent are displaced Guatemalans able to access justice, pursue the right to remedy and receive legal aid and translation facilities to do so. Is the Guatemalan legal system responsive or repressive to IDPs? Does it seek to emancipate them from marginalisation or does it maintain an inequitable political and economic structure?

Guatemala's penal code serves the landowning élite by providing them with a framework to pursue a policy of forced eviction of indigenous people and other campesinos who try to assert customary claims to land. The Constitutional Court misinterprets indigenous practices thereby dispossessing indigenous people of their landholdings. Data relating to interpersonal trust, respect for the law, equality before the law, cognisance of rights and confidence in the judiciary and other institutions shows that most Guatemalans consider that their state and its legal institutions primarily uphold economic equality rather than promote social justice.

The government of Guatemala created a conciliation mechanism (CONTIERRA) to address property disputes and to foster social capital by promoting linkages within displaced communities and with state agencies. However, it has faced serious difficulties fulfilling either function as a result of the lack of a substantive land redistribution programme or property restitution legislation. My review of conciliation cases has demonstrated that CONTIERRA was limited in its ability to stimulate trust between rural inhabitants and the state due to the lack of land reform, limited mandate of state-led land agencies, inefficiency, lack of coordination and insufficient resources.

UNHCR/R Ramirez

The Guatemalan government's elaboration of alternative dispute resolution in the land arena coincided with an increase in the number of claims for property restitution and compensation made by IDPs, landless campesinos and rural workers. The state became inundated with claims which it was unable or unwilling to redress. Remedial legal or quasi-legal mechanisms require reforms within the economic and political systems if they are to succeed. Prosecution of those who have grossly violated human rights via scorched earth tactics during the war and by illegitimate takeovers of land is essential if the rule of law is to be restored and justice to prevail in Guatemala.

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See also the author's article 'Unfinished business: the IDP land question in Guatemala', FMR7, pp16-19.

Peace in Angola: IDPs on the way home?

by Nina M Birkeland

Angolans have now lived in peace for a whole year. The official number of IDPs declined from 4.1 to 2.8 million in 2002. Has the crisis of displacement in Angola finally come to an end?

The causes of displacement in Angola are multi-complex. War may have been the most prominent cause of flight in recent decades but IDPs also cite environmental degradation and lack of access to schools, health posts, transport facilities and markets as reasons for leaving home. This interweaving of the causes of displacement must be understood. In order to minimise future internal displacement both national and international actors need to realise that the formula for causes of forced displacement is more complicated than *war = IDPs : no war = no IDPs*

Many IDPs are going home. They require not only political and military security but help with resuming livelihoods. Though the state has re-established itself in all communes and municipalities, these tiers of government are minimally resourced to initiate and assist local development. Peace has led to an increase in the rate of return. Most returnees arrive without food, seeds, agricultural tools or house-building materials. Demining is also urgently needed in many locations.

Focus on local and regional development to secure rural livelihood opportunities is essential to promote viable return for Angola's many IDPs. In recent months there has been an encouraging, albeit modest, increase in agricultural production. To maintain momentum, small farmers need access to credit to buy seed, fertilisers and draught animals. Surpluses will not be able to reach markets on any scale without rapid reconstruction of infrastructure.

Spontaneous return movements have taken place alongside new displacements. As some areas have become relatively safe once again, many of those living under horrendous conditions in regional towns have started returning home. Many families have split up, with some household members remaining close to places where international agencies and NGOs provide assistance and others returning to hamlets to rebuild houses and resume agriculture.

Peace dividend?

Peace has opened up the prospect for large-scale return of IDPs and comprehensive national development of all economic sectors – not simply oil and diamonds. Investments and access to credit are needed in all regions. However, although humanitarian and development needs have become more apparent since April 2002, funding has slowed down. As a result of the peace there has been a reduction in international assistance. The Angolan government appears indifferent to the need to increase national funding for education, health services, infrastructure and reestablishment of rural livelihoods.

Angola is a rich country. The $900m that the International Monetary Fund has identified as 'missing' from the Angolan government finances in 2000 is about three times the value of humanitarian aid received by the country in the same year.

While international donors are now rightly demanding that the Angolan government must take responsibility for humanitarian and development needs, external funding is being reduced. While the pace of change has been dramatic in the last year, the mindset of the élite has remained unchanged. They must acknowledge their obligations towards the civilian population.

Just because they travel round by air, they must not forget that their compatriots need roads, railways and bridges if they are to escape hunger and economic deprivation.

The Angolan authorities can no longer pay only lip service to the situation of the displaced and expect the international community to pick up the bill. At the same time the UN and other international actors cannot walk away from populations in need just because the government is not taking responsibility. The transition from war to post-conflict is challenging for all.

The crisis of displacement has not come to an end in Angola. Peace will lead to a dramatic reduction in the number of new IDPs. But until there is improved recognition of the multi-complex nature of forced migration in Angola and until this new thinking is reflected in the design of emergency and development programmes, the risk of future displacements hangs over Angola.

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The hidden Palestinian displacement:
internal displacement in Israel

by Nihad Boqai'

Over a quarter of a million Palestinian citizens of Israel, 25% of the country's Palestinian Arab population, are internally displaced.

Israel has destroyed, demolished and confiscated housing and land and denied IDPs the right to return to their homes. As Israel becomes more politically unstable, a significant percentage of the country's Arab minority are threatened with state-sponsored or -tolerated forced eviction from their homes.

Palestinian IDPs belong to the larger group of Palestinians displaced/expelled in 1948. After Israel's establishment some 150,000 Palestinians remained within the borders of the new state. Displacement did not end in 1948. Under the system of military rule which continued until 1966, Palestinian Israelis were forcibly relocated from areas zoned for Israeli Jews. Depopulated Palestinian villages were either replaced with Jewish settlements or razed to become part of state forests which today hide evidence of previous Palestinian settlement. In the southern Negev desert, the Israeli military forced the Bedouin to abandon their traditional nomadic lifestyle and herded them into designated zones. Military regulations were used to override decisions of the Israeli High Court supporting IDPs' rights to return to places of origin.

Some IDPs were relocated to new housing units in designated 'shelter villages' where they remain today. As a condition of being given new housing units, IDPs were required to formally forfeit housing and property rights in their villages of origin. A small number did so, many of whom were ostracised by other IDPs and Palestinian political movements. Israel does not recognise the existence of IDPs nor the right of international organisation to focus on their plight

More than 50 years after their displacement, the experience of displacement and dispossession has a visible impact on the socio-economic status of Israel's IDPs. Peasants have been transformed into marginalised unskilled workers in the Israeli economy. Many have had problems in rebuilding their lives in the villages that provided shelter in 1948. As Palestinian citizens of Israel, they face overt discrimination in employment and state provision of health, education, housing and other services. In shelter villages, Palestinian Israeli cities or in Arab neighbourhoods of mixed Arab-Jewish cities, IDPs are spatially segregated in neighbourhoods which often take the name of villages of origin. IDPs are poorer than their non-IDP neighbours. Those IDP entrepreneurs who have succeeded in establishing businesses mostly depend on an IDP clientele.

While the relationship between the generation who witnessed the *Nakba* (cataclysm) of 1948 and the village of origin was a connection of remembrance, among the second and third generations the connection to the village of origin with the second and the third generation is more romantic – at times the village of origin becomes a 'shelter' from the shelter village. However, the refugee identity of IDPs inside Israel remains as strong as it has been since 1948.

Driven by the experience of displacement, IDPs have always been more politically active at the national level in Israeli politics than other sectors of Palestinian society in Israel. This is particularly true of second and third generation IDPs. Some members of non-Zionist parties in the Knesset are IDPs. Over the last decade the campaign to highlight IDP rights has assumed new proportions as both IDPs and refugees throughout the Palestinian diaspora have felt shut out by the Oslo peace process. The exclusion of refugee rights from the negotiation process and the crisis of representation at the Palestinian national level have engendered increased interest and awareness about Palestinian refugees and IDPs. The Association for the Defence of the Rights of Internally Displaced Palestinians (ADRID) is now recognised by Palestinians as the representative forum of IDPs inside Israel. ADRID annually commemorates the *Nakba* on the anniversary of the establishment of the state of Israel and organises conferences which have generated new support for the right of return of both IDPs and refugees.

IDPs in Israel are challenging not only Israel's persistent refusal to recognise their existence or their right to return but also the social structures of shelter villages where the relationship between locals and IDPs remains one of estrangement. Palestinian IDPs remain a minority within a minority but have taken their place within the broad and increasingly vocal right to return movement.

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Permanent impermanence: dilemmas of long-term displacement in Sri Lanka

by Cathrine Brun

As researchers, one of our roles should be to challenge taken-for-granted attitudes and policies related to internal displacement.

How can we contribute to discussions about the formation of categories and definitions by deconstructing, questioning and changing their meanings and contents? My work in Sri Lanka looks at the common understandings of the IDP category and how it affects policies and the lives both of the internally displaced and their hosts.

In Sri Lanka there is a visible discrepancy between the intentions behind the IDP category and the way the displaced are labelled on the ground. The IDP category was established to secure rights and protection for those displaced who have not crossed an internationally recognised boundary but are living as displaced in the countries where they are citizens. However, ascribing someone the status of an IDP may also separate the displaced from their co-citizens and, far from preventing discrimination, may actually give rise to it.

The paper of which this is a summary explores the outcome and unintended consequences of applying the IDP category in situations of prolonged displacement in Sri Lanka. It particularly discusses the situation of the northern Muslims who were expelled from their homes in the north by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 1990 and who have since lived as IDPs in the North Western Province.

There is a myriad of institutions, committees and organisations working with displacement and assisting groups of IDPs in Sri Lanka. There are two dominant understandings of what an IDP is: firstly, IDP is understood as a 'category of need' and, secondly, IDPs are regarded as being only temporarily present at the place of displacement.

These two understandings have implications for the situation of the internally displaced and their hosts. They contribute to making stereotypes and standardised images of the people connected with the IDP category and express power relations that lead to processes of exclusion and inclusion. In contrast to many other impoverished people, those included in the IDP category are entitled to assistance.

However, host populations, who are closely affected by forced migration, are often overlooked. They may not have had to move but welcoming large groups of forced migrants may create considerable burdens and bring dramatic change to their lives. The IDP category contributes to the conceptual and actual separation of host populations from forced migration processes and their non-recognition by humanitarian agencies. The exclusion of some groups strengthens identities and consolidates differences between those who are included and those excluded from a category. Such identity formations may give rise to the kind of anti-IDP antagonism or hostility which is often expressed by host populations in Sri Lanka.

Another process of inclusion and exclusion is related to the securing of rights for IDPs. Categorising someone as an IDP tends to exclude her or him from some citizenship rights. In protracted situations of displacement the IDP status of displaced populations seems to create a state of permanent impermanence: they are out of place and only waiting to return to their home place – an attitude often advocated by Sri Lankan authorities wanting to return the displaced in order to restore the apparently pre-existing ethnic balance. However, during this waiting game IDPs are not

regarded as local citizens of the place where they live and consequently are excluded from rights enjoyed by their co-habitants – their hosts. In the case of Sri Lanka, these include rights to property, political freedom and employment.

Of the many dilemmas involved in working with protracted internal displacement, a crucial one is the making of the category of internal displacement. Clearly, we do need categories and definitions of internal displacement if we are to assist people. Categories are vital to avoid the normalisation and passive acceptance of forced migration, to distinguish between forced and voluntary migration and to highlight the injustice meted out to the millions of forced migrants in the world. As researchers on internal displacement, one of our key roles should be to discuss the unintended consequences of categories and the way labelling affects people's lives and to work to improve systems of categorisation.

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Refugees in all but name?
Should UNHCR's mandate offer protection to IDPs?

by Maria Camilleri

UNHCR's mandate does not specifically refer to IDPs per se – hardly surprising, as the IDP concept was not in existence when the agency was established.

Since the General Assembly approved UNHCR's establishment, it has on several occasions passed resolutions extending UNHCR's mandate to facilitate assistance for people displaced within the region of their own domicile.

When the then UN Secretary-General invited UNHCR in 1991 to "assist in bringing relief to needy internally displaced persons affected by the conflict" in Yugoslavia, this was justified in terms of "helping to avoid the further displacement of population." Kofi Annan subsequently noted that providing protection and development support for IDPs is "a humanitarian issue that falls between the gaps of existing mandates of the different agencies."

While the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the additional protocols of 1977 are the primary basis by which IDPs are encompassed within the sphere of international humanitarian laws, these regulations were established for people in conflict situations during an era when conventional war was the standard. Yet the current IDP crisis results from conflicts that are beyond the boundaries of previous rules and laws. Since the end of the Cold War we have seen mass displacement carried out by the very governments supposedly responsible for the protection and welfare of their citizens. Subject to harassment and human rights abuse, IDPs are often utilised in conflict as a shield for insurgent activities.

Constrained by its formal mandate, UNHCR is unable to render expeditious, long or short-term aid to IDPs without specifically receiving temporary extensions of its mandate from the UN. While its mandate is specifically of a 'non-political' nature, UNHCR's efforts to provide effective protection put the agency into direct conflict with government entities. Nowhere was this better exemplified, or the consequences so grave, as in 1995 when Yugoslavia enabled Serb forces to flout the UN Security Council Resolution establishing Srebrenica as a safe haven and to subsequently murder 8,000 Muslims.

Since his mandate was established in 1993, Francis Deng, the Secretary General's Special Representative on Internally Displaced Persons, has shown that IDP populations comprise a unique, and often marginalised, section of war-affected populations and that gaps and grey areas in international humanitarian law prevent the international community from meeting their particular requirements.

Are we any closer to moving towards the goal set out by Sadako Ogata in 1994 that we need convergence of refugee law, international human rights law and international humanitarian law in order to better protect the internally displaced? Momentum seems to have been lost. Ruud Lubbers, the current High Commissioner, has suggested that due to severe funding constraints and donor fatigue UNHCR should focus on its traditional role, rather than pursue the option of becoming the institutional focus of IDP support and protection.

In former Yugoslavia, Western governments assigned UNHCR funds to support IDP populations not from purely humanitarian motives, but to encourage containment (refugee prevention) by assisting the dispossessed within their own territory in order to stop them adding to the already heavy refugee and asylum flows. If UNHCR were to be generally entrusted with the overall care of IDPs, it would have an international obligation to render assistance prior to the fact and avoid as many refugee situations as possible. This obligation to the international community should override the lack of any formal mandate and justify UNHCR's mission within a sovereign territory.

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Internal displacement and gendered economic strategies in Turkey

by Esra Erdem, Neçet Özevin and Ceren Özselçuk

Between 1984 and 1999 continuous low-intensity conflict between Turkish security forces and Kurdish insurgents in south-east Turkey led to the evacuation of around 3,500 Kurdish villages and produced one of the world's largest IDP populations – estimated by NGOs at around three million.

Can Kurdish IDPs return from the cities to which they fled? What strategies are needed to help displaced Kurds resume disrupted livelihoods? How can Kurdish women be empowered to play a major role in reconstruction?

Internal displacement in Turkey took place as a result of:

■ revenge attacks from security forces attacked by the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK)
■ flight born of fear of attack by the security forces or PKK
■ forcible evacuation for reasons of 'military security'
■ villagers escaping pressure to join pro-government village guards
■ abuses of power by village guards using violence to settle old disputes
■ state-imposed embargoes on delivery of food and medicine
■ military closure of areas needed for grazing

IDPs have neither received compensation, been allowed to return to their villages nor been given the choice of settling in a new locality of their own choosing. Given the discrimination they face, only some 20% of IDPs have thought it worth taking formal legal steps against injustices suffered and a mere 0.2% have won a ruling in their favour. The majority of IDPs – facing problems of chronic unemployment, health, nutrition, shelter, safety, discrimination, police harassment and denial of access to public services – would like to leave urban shanties and return to their villages. However, the structural reasons leading to displacement remain in place. The Turkish state is still unable to develop a democratic political response to the Kurdish issue.

Current efforts to address the Kurdish IDP problem are not meeting with success. Focused on the integration of IDPs into local economies, resettlement in model villages and the development of a modern agro-industry in Kurdish populated areas, they are derived from the dominant modernisation paradigm which views the economy in Kurdish-populated regions as characterised by rural backwardness. Conventional plans ignore gender issues and the multifaceted survival strategies employed by displaced Kurdish women before and after their flight. They can offer little more than a limited range of low-paying jobs for a skilled population who instead deserve the chance to use their capacities to become economic actors in their own development. IDPs will continue to constitute a cheap, unskilled labour force for the urban informal sector.

The centre-piece of state-led development plans is the massive Southeast Anatolian Project (GAP) to construct a series of hydroelectric dams and to open new areas for irrigation, thus supposedly encouraging the cultivation of high value, globally marketable products. GAP is controversial. The scheme has embarked on a few pilot projects to assist those newly displaced by dam construction but is completely ignoring the needs of the far greater number of local people previously displaced by conflict and discriminatory policies. GAP has led to the loss of productive fertile land and forests. The project only pays lip service to participatory rhetoric. Forced migration will continue to recur in Turkey, and cannot be reversed, until there is a decisive shift away from the authoritarian and militarist system (that finds its articulation in the 1980 constitution), the systematic ethnic discrimination practised by the security courts, draconian emergency laws, unpunished abuses of human rights and denial of the right of democratic organisation.

A participatory research project we are developing – working with IDPs in a number of urban settings – aims to make a modest contribution to political and economic democracy in

Turkey. We want to get away from narratives and practices based on powerlessness, to give IDPs in Turkey an economic voice by repositioning them as skilled economic actors operating within the context of dynamic community economies, to document their gendered capabilities and to

actively involve them in the process of developing emancipatory economic alternatives at the local level.

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Providing health services to the displaced

by Rannveig Bremer Fjær

Displaced people are vulnerable because their resources have been depleted by war, conflict or natural disasters.

During flight their health is endangered by extremes of temperature, lack of shelter, food and clean water and physical and psychological stress. The WHO principles of primary health care can be used for medical evaluation and for designing relevant health services that should be provided to displaced populations.

During a two-month stay at an ICRC referral clinic for Kurdish refugees in northern Iran in 1991, evaluation of the causes for referral of patients to second line health care produced evidence of the great strains suffered by the displaced. Before tents were distributed patients had had to remain outside for three days in cold and rainy weather. Mothers lost their milk and women had abortions during their flight.

Our team of six members – three doctors, a midwife and two nurses – ran a referral clinic for 80,000 refugees and treated 120-160 outpatients and 20-30 inpatients per day. Many of those hospitalised were severely ill. The harsh conditions caused a substantial rise in morbidity and mortality mainly caused by respiratory tract infection, diarrhoeal disease and malnutrition. In the unhygienic conditions in the camps, scabies and epidemics of typhoid fever and cholera broke out. The rise in crude mortality rate during the first weeks of displacement gradually declined.

Achieving WHO's goal of 'Health for all' necessitates provision of primary health care (PHC) which covers the basic health needs of a community at an affordable cost. PHC as advocated by the WHO, has eight elements: education; local disease control; the Expanded Programme of Immunisation (EPI); maternal and child health and family planning; essential drugs; nutrition; treatment of diseases and safe water and sanitation.

A timely and effective means of rapid delivery of PHC to displaced populations is the Norwegian Mobile Medical Aid System developed by the Norwegian Joint Medical Military Services. The aim is to expeditiously reach such vulnerable groups as women and children and reduce rates of under-five and maternal mortality. The different modules in the system – a doctor's office, surgery, maternity, rehydration/nutrition, vaccination and laboratory facilities and drugs – can provide services up to the level of hospital care. It is made available to the UN and other humanitarian organisations by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and may be prepared for departure from an international airport within a few hours.

Clearly the most vulnerable groups in a displaced population are small children and pregnant and lactating women. To reduce mortality in refugee emergencies, emergency PHC teams with specialist expertise in paediatrics, gynaecology and obstetrics should be ready to assist. We must not forget that successful emergency interventions depend on socio-geographic mapping prior to the emergency and on medical intelligence based on a needs approach in the acute and post emergency phase of a disaster.

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Obstacles to implementing the Guiding Principles in Sri Lanka

by Danesh Jayatilaka

In 2001, prior to the current cessation of hostilities, the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies in Sri Lanka, in collaboration with UNHCR and the Brookings-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement, embarked on a programme to operationalise the Guiding Principles in order to enhance protection and assistance for the estimated 0.8m IDPs in the north and east of the island.

Methods used included advocacy work at central government level in Colombo, training workshops, leaflet/poster dissemination, formation of district monitoring working groups, consultations, listening to IDP focus groups and participatory evaluation assessments. When the project began there were 492 government-run IDP welfare camps across the island. One in three inhabitants of the Northern region was displaced.

Populations at risk have got used to pre-emptive flight, reacting to warnings of attacks to come and knowing from bitter experience the conditions to expect when fighting breaks out. For some Sri Lankans in the conflict-torn sector, flight has become as routine as making a pot of rice or cup of tea. Many have been coerced into relocation – the forceful eviction of the entire Muslim population from the North by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 1990 – or fled en masse when trapped between the government and LTTE. The average Sri Lankan IDP has been displaced at least five times. State, UN and non-governmental agencies may have provided assistance to mitigate the effects of conflict but have been unable to prevent displacements from happening in the first place.

By listening to the displaced, the project's researchers produced evidence that IDPs:

■ are irked by frequent imposition of senseless and often counter-productive restrictions on movement: people feel trapped inside a cage and unable to access health, education, labour and livelihood opportunities

■ constantly live in fear: threats of death, assault and torture are common and camp managers are frequently not informed of the fate of residents who have been detained

■ are often too frightened to lodge complaints about human rights violations to the ICRC or the Human Rights Commission

■ live in congested living quarters with resultant high rates of family breakup, extramarital affairs, incest, suicide and other traumas

■ are vulnerable to having their children forcibly recruited by militias and home guards and especially by the LTTE for their child brigades

■ from Sinhala villages in border areas are frequently attacked in reprisal and ethnic cleansing raids by the LTTE: the plight of the significantly large Sinhala IDP group goes largely unnoticed by the existing humanitarian structure

■ are at considerable risk from the minefields planted by the army and the LTTE and from unexploded ordnance

■ are inconvenienced by delivery delays, irregularities and diversion of food rations

■ have to put up with water and sanitation facilities which are below Sphere minimum standards: toilets and hand pumps remain un-repaired and latrines are not pumped out due to lack of management and maintenance

■ are discriminated against by the staff of government hospitals because of inadequate facilities and difficult working conditions faced by doctors and nurses

■ are constrained from accessing services or passing through checkpoints by lack of documentation

■ have been 'encouraged' to 'return' to areas not of their own choosing by reductions in welfare provision or intimidatory troop movements

■ feel that dialogue initiated by government only pays lip service to participation and consultation.

In order to cease discrimination against IDPs on grounds of ethnicity or status, we need to:

■ encourage a radical paradigm shift in attitude to promote transparency, information sharing and collaborative management and partnership between programme administrators and recipients

■ stop preparing policies in haste

■ do more to sensitise local populations to the problems faced by IDPs

■ openly discuss how settlement projects affect the overall dynamics of the conflict in order that micro and macro perspectives feed into national systems and future policies

■ give greater attention to meeting the particular needs of elderly and disabled IDPs

■ do more to overcome procedural obstacles to providing IDPs with recognised documentation.

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Taking issue with trauma

by Ashraf Kagee and Arancha Garcia Del Soto

Do psychiatrists understand the consequences of the violence and human rights abuses suffered by IDPs? What happens when the hegemonic Western psychiatric model of traumatisation is applied to IDPs?

What methodological problems inhibit psychological research on trauma in Africa and the relevance of the meaning that the continent's 12 million IDPs individually and collectively attribute to their experience?

The experience of internal displacement is an extraordinary life experience, often shared collectively, and is capable of causing in any person a wide range of physical and psychological suffering and disability. Many researchers into symptoms of traumatisation in societies in conflict routinely diagnose post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). They use checklists or questionnaires which often produce dubious statistics suggesting states of mass trauma. A survey among a random sample of community members in Sierra Leone went so far as to suggest that only 1% were not suffering from war-related PTSD.

We should remember that:

- Endorsement of psychological symptoms on a checklist need not necessarily mean that these symptoms have a salient meaning for survivors: respondents whose trauma checklist scores are said to exceed commonly-used cut-points may, nevertheless, continue to function well in their daily lives.
- While symptoms of distress such as sadness, depressive symptoms, feelings of social isolation and sleep problems often exist, most of the time among IDPs there is a sense of resiliency and a desire to regain control of their lives.
- For some IDPs the most traumatic event in their lives is not internal displacement *per se* but subsequent changes in family functioning, inability to find employment, poverty or political frustration.
- Whereas previously IDPs might have framed their experiences in religious, legal or ideological terms, framing has become chiefly psychological due to the infusion of psychological terminology into popular discourse.
- The assumption that internal displacement not only causes suffering but necessarily results in psychiatric disturbance risks victimising and pathologising survivors by framing them as psychiatric cases passively dependent on the ministrations of mental health practitioners.
- The assumption that verbalisation of emotions is integral to the amelioration of psychological distress may be inaccurate – in Mozambique, for example, silence about the past has in some instances become an important way of coping.
- Psychological interventions that encourage cathartic expression may be misplaced and even exacerbate some psychological symptoms.
- Questions posed by an evaluator may sensitise respondents to the nature of the disorder that is being assessed, resulting in their endorsement of symptoms by virtue of what is perceived as being expected, rather than phenomenological experience.
- In many contexts where people are affected by violations of human rights, political turbulence or severe social stressors, researchers may be seen as trying to capitalise on such experiences in order to study these phenomena.

We need to move from a unidimensional psychiatric analysis of the effects of internal displacement towards a broader and indigenous paradigm. In order to be respectful, empathic and non-pathologising, researchers require new skills in order to convey empathy without projecting a sense of pathology onto the respondent. There is an ongoing need for research that takes into account local contexts through the collaborative efforts between mental health professionals, relief workers, academic researchers and, most importantly, IDPs themselves. Methodological approaches that consider local contexts and personal meanings of IDPs are likely to yield important data in determining the psychosocial needs of the displaced.

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IDPs to refugees to IDPs:
the trauma of Bangladesh's Chakmas

by Rajesh S Kharat

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), located in south-eastern Bangladesh between India and Burma, are comprised of jungles inhabited by non-Bengali ethnic minorities known collectively as Jummas. Formerly a part of East Pakistan, it become a part of Bangladesh in 1971.

The CHT, which is the single largest forest-clad area of Bangladesh, owes much of its economic value to the role given by the British to the Chakmas, the largest group of Jummas, in commercial forestry.

The first displacement of Chakmas, and tensions between the Buddhist local population and Muslim incomers, occurred when the newly-established East Pakistan Government dammed the Karnafuli river to generate hydro-electric power. Despite government efforts to provide arable land to the 100,000 people displaced, many Chakmas were unable to maintain traditional livelihoods. Chakmas lost political influence after their traditional leader supported Pakistan in Bangladesh's war of independence. The new constitution of Bangladesh made no provision for Jumma demands for autonomous rule. By recognising the rights of all Bangladeshis to free movement and settlement within all parts of the country's boundary, it encouraged migration to the CHT of Bengali-speaking Muslims from the country's overpopulated plains.

By the early 1980s migrants comprised almost half the CHT population. In response, the increasingly alienated tribals formed a rebel organisation to protect their interests. Indian media highlighting of the plight of Chakma families facing the 'atrocities' of the Bangladesh army and support given by Bangladesh to rebel tribal groups in north-east India added to tension. In 1977 the first exodus of displaced Chakma across the border into the Indian state of Tripura took place. As the plight of the Chakmas became internationally known in the 1980s, and the Chakma exiles assimilated to the cultures of the peoples of Tripura, they faced the predicament of whether to define themselves as Indians or as refugees.

In the early nineties India and Bangladesh began discussing repatriation of the Chakma refugees. Despite the goodwill and cooperation of both governments the process of repatriation was slow moving. The 1996 election victory of Sheikh Hasina's Awami League inaugurated a new era in India-Bangladesh relations and led to the signing of the CHT peace accord in December 1997. It was agreed that refugees could return and that devolution would give new powers to the indigenous residents of CHT.

This has not happened. Bangladesh's failure to honour the accord has dashed hopes of an end to the trauma of the Chakmas. Forcibly repatriated to Bangladesh, the Chakmas found themselves unable to reclaim houses and farms taken over by Bengali Muslims enjoying army and government protection. Bangladesh has unilaterally imposed its own definition and enumeration of IDPs. The army has failed to honour commitments to withdraw from tribal areas. A commission set up to investigate land expropriation grievances has become moribund as unfavourable top-down adjudication of land disputes in favour of the powerful remains the norm.

Three decades after their first displacement, more than 60,000 Chakmas and other Jummas are still IDPs. Low-intensity conflict characterised by terrorist attacks continues in the CHT. People of goodwill need to come together, supported by the international community, to end abuses of human rights and displacement in this strategic area of the Indian sub-continent on which the peace and security of other South Asian states and peoples depend.

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Gender and development-induced displacement: case studies from Zambia and India

by Renu Modi

While we are becoming aware of the impact of large dams on the lives of marginal peoples, do we know enough about the different effects on men and women?

How have women's lives, livelihoods and coping strategies changed by the inundation caused by the construction of Zambia's Kariba Dam and the Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP) on India's Narmada river? Have women benefitted from resettlement programmes and been adequately compensated for loss of access to forests, land and other common property resources? Is World Bank resettlement policy as gender-sensitive as it purports to be?

Answers are sought within the framework of the impoverishment risk and reconstruction (IRR) model formulated by Michael M Cernea. The IRR model identifies the major risk factors that cause impoverishment following involuntary resettlement: landlessness, joblessness, loss of access to common property resources, community disarticulation, marginalisation, food insecurity, homelessness and increased morbidity.

The two development-induced displacement and resettlement (DIDR) case studies are separated in time and place. The Kariba hydroelectric project, completed in 1963, is one of the earliest dams commissioned by the World Bank. Designed to exploit the region's industrial potential, the dam displaced about 56,000 people on the Zambezi River's Zambian bank and 31,000 on the Zimbabwean side. The SSP, the largest and the most expensive dam of the Narmada Valley Development Project, has displaced the residents of the valley since the mid 1980s.

The key principles driving the World Bank policy on involuntary resettlement are to:

- avoid and minimise involuntary resettlement wherever possible and explore viable alternatives

- identify trade-offs between dam height and the amount of population displacement planned

- see resettlement as an opportunity for development where living standards can be improved or at least restored to their current standards of living

- consider social factors as an intrinsic part of technical evaluation studies during the cost-benefit analysis of a project.

Research findings highlight the marginalisation of displaced people as a consequence of these and other DIDR projects. They show that:

- those displaced are worse off than they used to be

- transforming farmers and fishermen into wage labourers cannot be described as 'resettlement'

- unequal compensation payments have violated principles of equity and divided hitherto interdependent communities

- resettlement policies have been state-driven and not involved genuine participation of those displaced

- the suffering of women in particular and families in general has not been mitigated either in the case of the SSP or the earlier Kariba project: post-Kariba World Bank's guidelines have not made much difference

- in India the worst burden has fallen on women in *adivasi* (tribal) families

- although they have evolved over the years World Bank DIDR guide

lines have failed to have a transformatory potential or a positive impact on women's lives in terms of access to improved infrastructure or land rights.

When the resettlement of the Kariba Dam took place, DIDR discourse paid little attention to concerns for gender equity and justice. By the time of the SSP resettlement this was no longer the case. However, despite growing awareness about social justice by the World Bank policy, the distributional and gendered impact was no better. Equitable outcomes to forced displacement in the name of progress can only be achieved if resettlement policies and their implementation are gender sensitive and work towards women's empowerment.

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For further analysis of development-induced displacement, see *Forced Migration Review 12* the International Network on Displacement and Resettlement (www.displacement.net) and the Friends of River Narmada (www.narmada.org).

Challenges of rehabilitation of IDPs in northern Ethiopia

by Tamirat Mulu

The border conflict that erupted in May 1998 along the thousand-kilometre border between Ethiopia and Eritrea left behind a legacy of displacement, insecurity, damaged public infrastructure and the loss of household assets and livelihoods of more than 300,000 IDPs and a further 95,000 Ethiopians forced to leave Eritrea.

How can war-affected areas of Ethiopia meet the challenges of post-war recovery at the household and community level in order to enable an effective return to productive and secure lives?

Women and children comprise three quarters of those displaced. Many are malnourished, have untreated injuries, are without productive assets and are forced to live in makeshift camps and caves. They have lost both livelihoods and dignity. Their children no longer attend school.

While around 70% of IDPs have been able to return home since the signing of the Algiers peace agreement in December 2000, full resumption of agricultural production is still limited by lack of adequate inputs, proximity to areas which have not been de-mined, unexploded ordinance and lack of shelter in communities where original housing was destroyed.

Food assistance has been provided by the World Food Programme and USAID and other donors have lent funds to enable repair of damaged infrastructure and restoration of government services. NGOs have additionally provided medicine, clothing, blankets, plastic sheeting, building materials and safe water. As food needs increase elsewhere in Ethiopia, WFP is under pressure to end food assistance to IDPs.

Among the key challenges facing displaced communities, the Ethiopian authorities and the international community are:

- painfully slow progress in clearing the one million anti-personnel and anti-tank mines planted on 100,000 hectares of land along the border

- the continuing closure of the Ethiopian-Eritrean border due to ongoing tension and failure to settle outstanding border demarcation issues

- inability of communities to resume the cross-border trade which previously constituted a major source of income on which the livelihoods of large numbers of households depended

- the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, spread throughout war-affected areas by the high concentration of military personnel and commercial sex workers and increased high risk behaviour among IDPs

- lack of alternative income opportunities for displaced women left with no choice except to engage in prostitution.

There is an urgent need to:

- increase and accelerate demining programmes

- make more rapid progress on final demarcation of the disputed border

- initiate and fund peace, reconciliation and confidence-building programmes

- provide IDPs with counselling and vocational training to help them become more self-reliant

- continue provision of food aid to IDPs until they are able to start earning an income

- address the particular rehabilitation needs of such vulnerable groups within IDP populations as female-headed households.

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Forced removals in South Africa: a thing of the past?

by Maano Ramutsindela

Under apartheid, South Africa witnessed massive politically-motivated displacements, condemned by the UN as crimes against humanity.

In recent years, the forced removal of people from their homes in black townships has resumed. This time round it is justified by a desire to improve living conditions for those affected. Could displacement of people to areas which offer a better quality of life contribute to environmental justice? Or do the rationales for removals in a democratic South Africa fail to stand up to scrutiny?

Unlike officially defined IDPs, the victims of apartheid-era removals to black 'homelands' were not eligible for any assistance, despite the heavy losses they incurred. In urban areas, policies regarding non-whites as temporary residents resulted in the mushrooming of informal settlements that today pose a serious challenge to ideals of a healthy environment.

The question of compensation to victims of apartheid-era removals has come to the fore. The post-apartheid constitution provides a right to land restitution. If the primary aim of restoring land rights is not achievable, consideration is given to providing alternative land, payment of compensation and priority access to government housing and land development programmes. However, the process is bogged down as most Africans were not registered at the time of removal. With only a handful able to return to original land, the problem of how to improve the environmental conditions of victims of forced removals remains unresolved.

Virtually every government initiative in South Africa is presented as necessary for addressing the legacy of apartheid. When it forcibly relocated people from the Johannesburg township of Alexandra in 2001, the Gauteng provincial government argued that their removal was a means of helping those neglected by successive white minority governments and creating a healthy environment in which residents would be spared risks from cholera and flooding. The fact that many were simply dumped on the veldt without facilities led critics – including the South African Human Rights Commission – to cite comparisons with apartheid-era removals. Subsequent research shows that one group of those removed feels they are now living in a healthier and preferable environment, while another resents their displacement. Such findings are typical of such cases of development-induced displacement.

South Africa is failing to sufficiently address the plight of those living in 'areas beyond repair'. As South Africa grapples with the vexed question of how to work towards improving the quality of people and their environment, we need to ask whether removing people is a viable option and to consider the implications. Progressive researchers must assist the search for policies to secure the improvement of the quality of life of those removed. The unfulfilled aspirations for justice and a better quality of life of the estimated 3.5 million people forcibly removed by the apartheid regime remind us that we need mechanisms to address the needs of IDPs long after their displacement has occurred.

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Refugees and IDPs in Macedonia: successful returns

by Aleksandar Shumkovski

Recently Macedonia has hosted large numbers of refugees fleeing conflict in former Yugoslavia while also dealing with major internal displacement generated by ethnic conflict.

The Macedonian constitution and national legislation guarantee the right to asylum and provide procedures for refugee determination. Criteria for acquisition of refugee status are in line with the 1951 Convention as well as the 1967 Protocol.

Macedonia has hosted refugees since the early 1990s when 32,000 Bosnians and Croatians sought shelter from conflict in the former Yugoslavia. In May 1999 some 360,000 Kosovars sought protection in Macedonia and were offered the status of temporary humanitarian assisted persons (THAPs). NGOs provided free legal aid to Kosovar refugees to assist them in registration and document issuance and worked with UNHCR and IOM to assist those seeking repatriation or third-country resettlement. NGOs also ran campaigns to inform refugees of their rights.

Humanitarian evacuation was initially exercised as a means of reducing the huge number of refugees who arrived in Macedonia. Resettlement to safe third countries was carried out:

- to facilitate family reunification
- to send a refugee to medical treatment abroad (if he or she could not get an appropriate medical treatment in Macedonia)
- to protect a refugee whose physical security is endangered in Macedonia

In 2001 ethnic conflict in Macedonia led to the displacement of some 140,000 people. Ethnic Albanians fled Skopje while Macedonians fled from Tetovo and Aracinovo. A considerable number of houses were damaged or destroyed. There was a danger that the country would split into two ethnic enclaves. Most IDPs sheltered with relatives and had better access to food, hygiene and medical supplies than those forced to live in collective centres. A small number – dubbed 'micro-IDPs' by the American Red Cross – continued to commute to work but did not return to their own homes at night.

After the crisis was resolved by the internationally-brokered Ohrid Framework Agreement signed in August 2001, preconditions were created for the return of IDPs and organised reconstruction of damaged and destroyed property. In April 2003 it was reported that some 137,000 IDPs had gone home, with a further 3,000 still unable to do so due to ongoing security concerns and delays in repair of housing. The Macedonian Red Cross and NGOs have provided humanitarian assistance to IDPs and the Ministry of Health free health services to IDPs. UNHCR and bilateral donors have provided funds, which have enabled returning families to receive financial and material support to rebuild their houses.

UNHCR has played a key role in facilitating IDP returns, building confidence in the peace process and encouraging a climate of trust and reconciliation. It has promoted freedom of movement in ex-conflict zones by providing bus services, supported psychosocial activities for IDPs, provided winter clothing, firewood and repairing heating systems in collective centres and administered infrastructure projects to restore livelihoods in conflict-affected areas.

The key lessons that can be drawn from Macedonia's success in facilitating the return of significant refugee and IDP populations are that:

- Adequate support must be secured from communities prepared to accept displaced people.

- Neither military action nor humanitarian assistance can substitute for political action to tackle inequities at the heart of conflict.

- Careful planning is needed to ensure successful resettlement.

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The full texts of the articles summarised in this report are available online at: www.idp.ntnu.no/conference/

The IDP problem in Africa: double standards?

by Desire Timngum

IDP debates have focused more on the nature of protection rather than on imbalance between levels of assistance and protection provided to different groups.

Why are certain categories of people excluded? How do the double standards in international refugee law affect Africa's 13.5m IDPs? Can state and non-state actors in Africa work to build a credible IDP protection regime?

The IDP problem-solution model seeks a holistic and a critical examination of issues of the internally displaced as well as participatory solutions methods. It operates on the premise that states, humanitarian agencies, NGOs, non-state combatants, policy makers, researchers and academics may be worsening the socio-economic situation of IDPs by destroying their dignity and self-confidence. Many African states deny the existence of internal displacement. The Chad-Cameroon pipeline project provides an example of how state-driven development projects cause displacement which is ignored: neither government is prepared to acknowledge the displacement it has caused and the existence of IDPs. In Zimbabwe – as in many countries – state censorship constrains media coverage of displacement for fear this encourages human rights critics and tarnishes the country's image. Aid deliveries to opposition strongholds have been hindered.

Among the many complications in protecting African IDPs or providing them with humanitarian assistance are:

- the fact that IDP conferences are organised in settings which deny participants opportunities to live the experiences of IDPs: IDPs are rarely included in conferences that concern their issues and state and non-state actors routinely speak on their behalf
- the role of donors in shaping the academic research agenda
- the absence of clear procedural mandates on the protection and assistance to IDPs

- the failure of researchers to meet the challenge of determining the numbers of IDPs in need of assistance
- the danger that concern for ethics can lead researchers not to ask relevant questions.

Burden sharing is fast becoming burden shifting. Responsibility sharing is gradually becoming irresponsibility sharing and commitment is giving way to non-commitment to protect the displaced. It is essential that:

- African states sign and respect all international human rights and humanitarian laws and incorporate them into national law
- African governments acknowledge the extent of displacement and do more to assess IDP needs and to deliver assistance requested by IDPs themselves
- regional groups cooperate to share resources and improve burden sharing

- more be done to humanise rebel groups and educate them about the human rights of IDPs
- financial support to rebels be blocked
- academics and researchers think beyond donor expectations when developing research aims
- local actors play a greater role in distribution of aid supplies
- IDPs be encouraged to speak for themselves and have input into policy formation
- support be given to programmes which draw on religious faith to promote reconciliation and reactivate a spirit of hope in IDPs.

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Internal displacement in Indonesia:
nation building gone wrong?

by Riwanto Tirtosudarmo

What are the ongoing consequences of the demographic engineering carried out in Indonesia to implement ex-President Suharto's New Order?

What ideological and political purposes were served by the transmigration policy? How has the presence of transmigrants, mostly from Java, contributed to tensions, conflict, sectarianism and displacement? As current policy reforms promote decentralisation and regional autonomy, can local governments cope with IDPs crises?

Transmigration's goals were to strengthen national security and improve social welfare through opening up new areas of land. The movement of people to outlying parts of the Indonesian archipelago from over-populated Java – and to a lesser extent from the islands of Madura and Bali – was justified in order to promote goals of assimilation and national building. National integration – an obsession of the ruling élites since independence – has resulted in viewing heterogeneity as a threat to national unity.

Transmigrasi aroused resentment as local populations found more funds allocated to transmigration settlements than to non-transmigrant areas. Expenditure on road construction, schools, agricultural offices and health facilities was disproportionately concentrated in transmigration areas. Across the archipelago locals resented the extent to which incomers dominated civil service and local business and perceived development projects as benefiting an exploitative central state.

In recent years a series of seemingly intractable conflicts involving separatism, ethnicity and religion have challenged the notion of national sovereignty and the nation state in Indonesia:

- In Irian Jaya/West Papua, migrants concentrated around the site of a major copper mine are in conflict with indigenous people opposed to a project they see as providing no benefits and as desecrating a sacred site.
- In Christian areas of Flores and West Timor, conflict has flared at alleged outrages against Christianity by Javanese migrants.
- In West and Central Kalimantan, Madurese migrants have been displaced by indigenous Dayaks protesting alienation of the land, forests and rivers on which their livelihoods have traditionally depended.
- In Ambon, ethnic and religious conflicts between local Christians and Butonese Muslim migrants developed into a wider communal conflict which soon spread to other islands in Maluku.
- In Aceh, as in West Papua, the central government has been unable to contain the latent secessionist movement.

The state has been unable to contain the economic downturn which has incapacitated the state's repressive apparatus. Since the demise of the Suharto regime in 1998 the New Order's hegemonic power to forcefully mould and unite the different aspirations of ethnic groups has collapsed as its basic economic foundation could no longer be sustained. Long suppressed latent conflicts have begun to surface. Tensions due to economic and political domination over the local populations in the regions are now beyond the state's control. The increasing incidence of return migration to Java, Madura and Bali and the more than one million dislocated persons living in temporary shelters throughout the country demonstrate that pluralism and social cohesion are currently disintegrating in Indonesia.

Tensions and conflicts between migrant and local populations are likely to greatly complicate implementation of new regional autonomy laws – flawed legislation rushed onto the statute books to bolster political support for ex-President Habibie. Amid the confusion, the move towards regional autonomy is at risk of being manipulated by contending local and national political actors and by the army which opposes the process.

Planning for regional development must take a more comprehensive approach in which the achievement of economic welfare should be accompanied by the fulfilment of the political aspirations and human rights of the local people. There is a risk, however, that enhancement of narrow ethno-territorial political identities is incompatible with the process of strengthening democracy and civil society and resolving crises of internal displacement.

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Going home or going away from home?
The dilemma of Madurese IDPs

by Sherly Saragih Turnip

Conflicts in several areas in Indonesia have displaced large numbers of people.

By the end of 2002 it was estimated that some 1.42 million had been displaced and were living scattered around the Indonesian archipelago. Women and children comprise 70% of IDPs. Almost all of them have been through a long period of forced migration before arriving at safer locations.

Sampit is the major city in the Sambas region of central Kalimantan province on the island of Borneo. The indigenous population are Dayaks. While some Dayaks are Muslim, the majority retain their traditional religion. Living alongside them are the descendants of people who migrated to Kalimantan from the distant island of Madura at the time of the Japanese invasion in 1942. Madurese came to work as labourers but the second and third generation have achieved success as traders and were comfortable living in the multi-ethnic society of Sambas. Having been born in Sambas, most Madurese regarded themselves as locals. This is not the case with the Melayunese, Muslim immigrants from the island of Sumatra.

Conflict in Sampit erupted in February 2001 and rapidly spread throughout Sambas, claiming the lives of people from all three ethnic groups. Madurese IDPs and their families have been traumatised by threats and violence from the Dayak population. Many have moved outside Sambas to other towns in Kalimantan. Some have chosen to leave the island and have been encouraged to do so by the provision of government transport to take them to the 'home' island of Madura. While resettlement in Madura seemed to be a sensible solution and the IDPs were initially welcomed, serious problems have arisen.

Although there has been considerable publicity about the plight of Madurese IDPs little attention has been paid to mental health issues and to overcoming the traumas and mistrust which impede hopes for reconciliation and mutual respect among different ethnic groups.

My research, seven months after their flight, sought to identify the sense of ethnic identity of Madurese IDPs who fled from Sambas after the riots. All of the subjects were born in Sampit, attended school with Dayaks and Melayunese and speak a distinctive dialect of the Madurese language. Despite the fact that many fellow Madurese had lost their lives, they still retained a sense of belonging to Sambas and to Kalimantan. Many hope they can return home, as they belong to nowhere else. Those who have lost relatives are more likely to be resigned to living in Madura.

Many IDPs suffer from feelings of helplessness, depression, irritability, sleep disorders, alcoholism, addiction to gambling and post-traumatic stress disorder. From being respected traders in Sampit, they have become anonymous. As one man told me:

"Now I'm not very respected anymore. People just see me as one of many IDPs and they do not know who I used to be." Children are less disciplined and less respectful of authority at home and in school.

Indonesia's unstable and resource-starved government faces great difficulties in addressing the massive problem of internal displacement and is dependent on NGO assistance programmes. Policy makers need to challenge the idea behind the Madurese 'resettlement' – that IDPs should be relocated to islands of 'origin' where returnees share an ethnic identity which will necessarily facilitate their integration with residents. We need to remember that the processes of identity formation and the manner in which values which give meaning to life are very complex.

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Coping with the metropolis:
forced migrants in Istanbul

by Bediz Yilmaz

In Tarlabasi, an inner-city slum neighbourhood of Istanbul, the majority of the population are Kurds who, in the last 10-15 years, have migrated from their villages in eastern and southeastern Anatolia.

These forced migrants are among the most destitute people in Istanbul. Why were they forced to migrate? How are their circumstances different from economic migrants? What are the forced migrants' survival strategies?

Between 1984 and 2000, armed conflict between the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and the Turkish army killed more than 32,000 people and generated great social and economic upheaval. In conflict-affected areas industrial and agricultural production came to a standstill. Significant causes of forced migration were forcible recruitment of civilians as village guards to fight the PKK and the state-sponsored depopulation of around three thousand villages and hamlets (plus burning of homes and fields) in order to deprive the PKK of logistical support. Nearly three million people have fled to the cities.

According to a report by Human Rights Watch in 1995, "the government's counterinsurgency methods have created a huge underclass of embittered and impoverished internal refugees, whose homes and livelihoods have been abruptly destroyed by the state. These refugees have moved to squatter settlements throughout Turkey's cities, providing the PKK with a potential base for future organising and presenting Turkey with a difficult social and economic crisis".

What makes this new migrant population different from previous rural inhabitants who have migrated to the gecekondu (squatter) settlements of Turkish cities is:

- the newcomers had to migrate as whole families, whereas their predecessors were part of chain-migration process, leaving the place of origin gradually as the pioneers settled down in the cities and found employment

- Kurdish conflict-affected migrants had to leave their villages with no preparation: they continue to literally arrive in the city overnight

- all contact with the villages is cut off, since either the village is destroyed completely or is, to all intents and purposes, inaccessible; forced migrants are consequently deprived of the possibility of subsistence-provision from the villages, an important resource of subsistence for rural-to-urban migrants.

The survival strategies of forced migrants in Tarlabasi consist of generating additional income by making use of additional labour – child labour. Street vending constitutes the bulk of employment in Tarlabasi and child labour is extensive. For families with no income or income-generating skills, child labour is usually the only way they can assure their own survival. Children also work in manufacturing warehouses for extremely low wages. Families struggle to minimise expenses by trying to secure maximum external assistance in terms of material goods such as food, clothing, medicines and fuel, etc.

While these are distributed by district and municipal officials (and during elections by political parties) the ability of the state to provide welfare is declining under the impact of structural adjustment. Deepening income inequity, worsening living conditions of the poorest and the spatial concentration of poverty in certain neighbourhoods of Istanbul and other cities suggest that without radical economic and political change in Turkey the traditional family, kinship, religion or ethnicity based networks of solidarity will come under unprecedented stress.

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Working children in Istanbul

GOC-DER

Refugees and IDPs: are they really so distinct?

by Priyanca Mathur Velath

Are we at risk of making artificial distinctions between different groups of displaced people? Has the category of people who may be described as Development-Induced Displacees (DIDs) been overlooked by the IDP community?

This paper locates the unique position of IDPs among other forms of forced migrants through a comparison with refugees. It draws attention to the neglected category of DIDs and uses evidence from India to argue for their inclusion within the IDP category.

Conceptually both refugees and IDPs are involuntary. Examples from the former USSR and East Pakistan show how today's IDPs can become tomorrow's refugees and refugees can turn into economic migrants, without any spatial migration whatsoever. The spheres of voluntary and forced forms of migration are often indistinct and overlapping.

Governments and inter-governmental bodies try to impose strictly defined categories. Refugee definitions have very explicitly excluded internally displaced groups. IDPs are noted to be the largest 'at risk' population in the world, yet arriving at an appropriate definition for them has been a slow and complex task. The current working definition formulated by the UN's Special Representative on IDPs is the broadest one at use at the international and regional level. But the boundaries of the category IDP are still fluid and the numbers of people within the category even more so.

Although internal displacement is not a new phenomenon we still lack a comprehensive count of IDP numbers simply because they are not documented. While worldwide refugee figures are declining, those of IDPs are increasing. The gap between them has widened such that there are almost twice as many IDPs as refugees. Since 1995 the number of countries reporting the presence of IDPs has kept increasing: often the same countries report the highest numbers of both IDPs and refugees.

Study of the neglected phenomenon of development-induced displacement in India shows the unsustainability of attempts to draw distinctions between IDPs and DIDs. DIDs in India undergo violation of human rights at the hands of their own national and state governments and deserve to be treated as IDPs. They are inadequately compensated and state agencies have been unable to deliver promised quantities of land for those whose property and livelihoods have been lost. The large number of displacees who held no formal title to the land they used to cultivate have received nothing.

While refugees have an international system of protection to appeal to, IDPs have only national laws concerning land, rehabilitation and resettlement to depend on – if they exist. On the grounds that development projects are planned and those affected are compensated and resettled, DIDs are not treated as IDPs. However, in countries such as India, the level of compensation is unjust and rehabilitation and resettlement are woefully inadequate. As the act of displacement is clearly a form of persecution those who are displaced should be treated as IDPs.

States which displace in the name of development must:

- stop assuming that displacement is inevitable
- recognise that although the physical act of displacement occurs only at one point of time it sets off a spiral of social and economic impoverishment, compounded by psychological trauma for landless, jobless and foodless DIDs
- stop granting rehabilitation as an act of reluctant generosity and start considering it an entitlement or a right
- search for non-displacing and environmentally friendly alternatives to disruptive infrastructure projects.

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When does displacement end?

by Erin Mooney

Is it too early to be asking this question? Do we need to decide when the entitlements and benefits as well as possible restrictions of IDP 'status' should end?

How are decisions currently made and with what consequences? Are common criteria needed? As we work to develop greater clarity on the criteria used to determine the end of displacement, what is the role of the IDP research community?

There is now a keen interest among IDP actors to address the issue of when, in any particular situation, the phenomenon of internal displacement can be considered to have ended. Recognising the need for a coherent response, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has asked Dr Francis Deng, the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons, for advice and guidance on this issue. Many of the papers presented at this conference have touched on this theme. The question of when internal displacement ends is an issue that strikes a chord with virtually all of the stated research themes addressed at this conference.

The Brookings-SAIS Project is currently exploring this issue in collaboration with Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of International Migration. A publicly available discussion paper, legal commentary and options paper have been circulated for discussion. There are many compelling reasons why researchers, practitioners and policy makers need to reach consensus on how to decide that internal displacement has indeed ended, including:

- Operational agencies, NGOs and governments require data on the number of internally displaced people in order to formulate programmes and policies addressing their needs.
- We need to know when national – as well as international – responsibility, attention and resources should shift from a specific focus on the needs and vulnerabilities of IDPs to a more holistic community-based rehabilitation and development agenda.

- Arbitrary decisions that displacement has 'ended' mean that some displaced populations effectively disappear as a specific group of concern.
- Perhaps most importantly of all, IDPs themselves are entitled to know where they stand.

The fact that varying interpretations currently exist as to when displacement ends leads to dramatic variations in statistics which impede a coordinated approach. Currently, decisions on when internal displacement ends are made, if at all, on an *ad hoc* basis. The methodologies used and the conclusions reached differ among actors. To give just one example: the Global IDP Database reports that estimates of the number of IDPs in Guatemala range from zero to a quarter of a million.

Three lenses

We have been looking at this issue through three different lenses: the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement which shape all our work, analogies with refugee law and practice and the realities of actual situations of internal displacement.

1. The Guiding Principles stipulate that "displacement shall last no longer than required by the circumstances" (Principle 6.3). Understanding what these circumstances are, and when displacement can and should be considered to end, is therefore vital for the application of the Principles themselves. The fact that the Principles do not contain a cessation clause was not an oversight on the part of the drafting team but a deliberate decision. It was recognised that the definition of 'internally displaced person' is not declaratory but is descriptive in nature, denoting the factual situation of being displaced within one's country rather than conferring a legal status to be granted, much less revoked. This does not preclude states or other actors from introducing administrative measures, such as registration for the purposes of prov-

ing entitlement to special assistance targeting IDPs. However, from the standpoint of international law, such registration processes have no bearing on the descriptive reality of being internally displaced.

An end to internal displacement would therefore be contingent on a change in the factual situation that the term denotes. For those displaced persons who remain in their country of origin, the Guiding Principles envisage three possible solutions to their situation of internal displacement: return to their home areas or place of habitual residence; integration in the localities where they go to once displaced; or resettlement in another part of the country. The Guiding Principles specify the responsibilities of national authorities to facilitate these three solutions and in particular to:

- enable return or resettlement to occur voluntarily and in "safety and dignity"
- ensure that those returning or resettling do not suffer discrimination as a result of having been displaced and are able to participate in public affairs and enjoy equal access to public services
- assist IDPs to recover or receive compensation for property and possessions destroyed or of which they were dispossessed as a result of their displacement

2. Refugee law contains cessation clauses – in Article 1C of the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees. Of the six circumstances mentioned under which an individual would no longer be eligible for refugee status and the international protection it affords, only one (paragraph 5, allowing for cessation if "the circumstances in connection with which [s/]he has been recognised as a refugee have ceased to exist") could be applied to internally displaced persons by analogy. However, this provision concerns the cessation of a legal status which, as noted earlier, is a concept alien to the Guiding Principles as well as to international human rights law from which they are largely derived.

Analogies with refugee law may therefore not be very helpful to the discussion of when internal displacement ends.

However, the experience of cessation of refugee status does highlight dangers that:

■ application of the cessation clauses for refugees can lead to (and often has) an automatic and unwarranted assumption that internal displacement has ended as well – this was the case when UNHCR ended refugee status for all Mozambican refugees at the end of 1996

■ cessation of refugee status may actually lead to an increase in the number of IDPs – this was the result both in Bosnia after the Dayton Agreement and more recently in Afghanistan as refugees were compelled to repatriate but unable to return home.

Clearly, we need an integrated and comprehensive approach to the issue of when displacement ends that takes into account the effects of such determinations on both groups of forced migrants.

3. Looking at experiences of internal displacement reveals that many different criteria are used for determining when internal displacement ends. To give just two examples of different approaches by governments:

■ Colombia's decision to acknowledge IDPs as such for only three months (with a possible once-off extension) and only if they are able to register with the state is a case where the duration of internal displacement is determined by the capacity or readiness of the state to provide emergency humanitarian assistance.

■ Croatian regulations allowing for revocation of IDP 'status' and benefits for those who refuse to complete household chores in state-run centres reflect a punitive approach to the issue of when displacement ends.

Clearly, less arbitrary approaches are required.

Three sets of criteria

One way to look at the issue would be to focus on the **causes of internal displacement** and consider whether the existence of 'changed circumstances' from those that had compelled flight in the first place might signal an end to displacement. Experience in post-conflict Bosnia and Afghanistan suggests, however, that even when the immediate causal factors of displacement cease to exist a durable solution to the plight of displaced persons does not necessarily follow. Georgian and Azerbaijani IDPs are deliberately kept in a state of limbo, unable to go home in the absence of a peace settlement but in the meantime denied equal rights as citizens. Basing decisions on simply cause-based criteria can end displacement prematurely or, where the original causes persist, perpetuate a state of displacement indefinitely and to the detriment of the displaced.

A **solutions-based criteria** approach focusing strictly on when IDPs can physically return home or resettle can lead to controversy. Examples include the US Committee for Refugees deeming displacement to have ended in Guatemala in 1998 and the decision by the Sierra Leonean government and international agencies that there were no longer any IDPs as of mid 2002. In both cases, critics have pointed to lack of safety in areas of return, inadequate reintegration assistance, lack of property compensation and inability of 'ex' IDPs to vote, access public services or obtain identification documents. We must question the

argument that a mere change of address is an adequate basis on which to deem displacement to have ended.

An approach based on **needs-based criteria** determines if needs and vulnerabilities specific to IDP populations no longer exist. The displaced need not necessarily have permanently resettled or returned, and may still be in need, but they would no longer have specific needs different from the rest of the population which are attributable to their displacement. The Guiding Principles are useful in pointing to needs that would be relevant in this regard.

The way forward

We are continuing work on refining and further elaborating guidance and criteria on when internal displacement ends to be presented to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee which brings together UN and other international humanitarian, development and human rights actors. We will also convene a meeting with donors and international financial institutions, together with selected countries affected by internal displacement, to get their perspective on the issue and refine the criteria as necessary. In discussing with donors the issue of when displacement ends we must safeguard against approaches that are simply resource-driven and seeking expedient exit strategies without due regard to the needs of the displaced.

The challenge will then be to apply the criteria as a benchmark as well as a basis for advocacy in support of truly durable solutions for IDPs. Supporting effective application of the criteria will open up whole new areas of empirical research for a broad range of specialists from such various disciplines as law, political science, anthropology, sociology, demography, architecture and statistics.

I have identified at least eight follow-up questions relevant to the subject of when internal displacement ends. How can researchers and practitioners work together to:

1. bolster the criteria now being developed with monitoring mechanisms?

2. additionally include criteria for

situations of displacement due to natural disasters and development?

3. more systematically analyse national legislation on the issue of when displacement ends?

4. collect and disseminate more information on what actually happens to people once they return or resettle?

5. chronicle and disseminate best practices for supporting the durability of return or resettlement as well as effective reintegration?

6. better understand and resolve the root causes of displacement?

7. consider the influence of urbanisation, whether as a mixed cause (together with conflict, for instance) for the original displacement or as a reason why IDPs decide not to return?

8. develop a more nuanced notion of 'home' which embraces perspectives of the displaced and recognises that 'home' may be more a metaphysical concept than a geographical one?

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Documents prepared by the Project in connection with its research project on the end of IDP status are online at www.brook.edu/fp/projects/idp/idp.htm.

Forced Migration Review 17, co-edited by the Project, focuses on questions around the end of internal displacement. See www.fmreview.org

Concluding discussion: whither the IDP research agenda?

chaired by Karen Jacobsen and Andreas Danevad

The concluding discussion centred on the overarching issue faced by all researchers from different disciplines and traditions: what should be the purposes of our research and how should we improve our research practices on internal displacement?

The papers presented at the conference highlighted the thematic and disciplinary heterogeneity of research on the global phenomenon of internal displacement. Participants noted that although relevant and high quality analysis of IDP situations is being produced, current research tends to be fragmented and does not lend itself to cross-country studies and causal analysis.

It was recognised that researchers need to be more self-critical, accurate and open to the possibility of changing and improving methodologies and theoretical constructs. Research challenges and issues relevant for a research agenda brought out in the course of the conference were summarised.

Among the key research challenges is the **definition** of internally displaced people: should the research community agree on a global definition for analytical purposes and, if so, what should it be and how should we move towards agreement on doing so? Questions of definition are also

related to what would be a durable solution for internally displaced people and, in particular, how to determine when displacement ends.

While some participants argued that a global definition is problematic because it tends to pre-empt and circumscribe research, others stated that we need a definition to be able to compare different IDP situations and to quantify regional and global numbers of IDPs. However, definitions may not need to be fixed: it was suggested that they should be open and flexible in order to deal with specific situations of displacement. Statistics are required by policy makers, donors and humanitarian practitioners. A range of participants called for improved coordination in counting displaced populations and development of methods that enable context-specific and relevantly disaggregated information about displaced populations.

Dilemmas around definitions and enumeration are closely related to the challenge of making academic research more relevant for policy

makers and advocacy organisations. While it may not be clear exactly how to do so, it is essential that researchers do not underestimate the present impact of their research on policy decisions and operational planning.

Researchers should continue to reflect on how presentation of findings can have the greatest potential impact on decision-makers. Discussants acknowledged the need for a closer link between research and humanitarian action and called for the creation of mechanisms for more systematic interaction and communication between researchers and policy makers.

Some participants argued that as long as researchers concentrate on doing 'good' research, policy makers will listen to their advice. However, this view was contested by many of the participants who pointed to the constraints imposed by the political context many researchers find themselves in when undertaking research on situations of internal displacement. In many places research on internal displacement contests existing policies and is seen as threatening by authorities. When this is the case good research alone may not always lead to policy changes. These are questions also related to ethical issues and security – security both of researchers and the subjects and the people who assist them in the field.

We should aspire to conduct good quality research. Researchers need to apply, establish and develop more diverse research methodologies. Information has to be collected for practical and policy purposes, not just to fulfil 'pure' research goals. We need to be more concerned about issues of validity and reliability and to be able to generate much more comprehensive data sets that will allow us to test hypotheses, establish relationships between variables and conduct cross-country comparative research.

At the same time we need to be more proactive in encouraging interdisciplinary research and welcoming the perspectives of disciplines that are not currently well represented in research on forced migration. These include economics, history, architecture, urban studies and law. Issues around legal rights and entitlements need to be more actively addressed. Internally displaced people have multiple legal identities all of which are covered by other legal instruments and complementary protection regimes, and we need to take these issues into account.

In order to deal with the complex situations of internal displacement there is a need to analyse displacement in a wider context and to consider the situations of the internally displaced but also of host populations and other actors involved in the displacement situation. The conference clearly showed that research is needed to produce more knowledge about those complex issues and to make increased knowledge about internal displacement available to a wider range of donors, governments and humanitarian actors.

On an upbeat note, Dr Deng concluded the conference by calling on the research community to support his mandate by providing knowledge derived from research. Such information is required to enable him, and his colleagues, to better engage in dialogue with regimes which are responsible for displacement. This is a vital step in improving the lives of the millions of internally displaced world wide.

Webguide to IDPs

Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement
www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/7/b/principles.htm

Representative of the UN Secretary-General on IDPs
www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/7/b/midp.htm

Brookings-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement
www.brook.edu/fp/projects/idp/idp.htm

Global IDP Project
www.idpproject.org

Internal Displacement Unit, OCHA
www.reliefweb.int/idp/

NTNU Research Network on Internal Displacement
www.idp.ntnu.no/conference/

UNHCR and IDPs
www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home?page = PROTECT&id=3b84c7e23

Bibliography on the Global Crisis of Internal Displacement
www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2001/brookings-idp-13dec.pdf

Exodus Within Borders
http://brookings.nap.edu/books/0815749546/html/index.html

Masses in Flight: The Global Crisis of Internal Displacement
http://brookings.nap.edu/books/0815715110/html/index.html

IRIN Web Special on Internal Displacement
www.irinnews.org/webspecials/idp

Response Strategies of the Internally Displaced: Changing the Humanitarian Lens
www.fmreview.org/oslo/osloidp.pdf

International Committee of the Red Cross:
www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/refugees_displaced_persons

Key publications on internal displacement

Selected Bibliography on the Global Crisis of Internal Displacement
by Gimena Sanchez-Garzoli, Brookings-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement. Dec. 2001. 73pp. Free.

This bibliography of materials on IDPs contains more than 800 items. The bibliography includes various thematic categories: basic texts and sources of information, web resources, early writings on internal displacement, general overview of displacement caused by conflict and human rights violations, displacement caused by development projects, legal framework including the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, institutional framework, vulnerable groups, protection strategies, return, resettlement and reintegration, and development strategies. Geographical categories include region-specific listings for Africa, the Americas, Asia, the Middle East and Europe and 56 individual country listings. Available online at: www.brookings.edu/fp/projects/idp/resources/bibliography.htm

Please forward any items for inclusion in future editions to: Gimena Sanchez-Garzoli.
Email: gsanchez@brookings. edu

Available in hard copy (from above address) and in PDF format at www.brookings.edu/fp/projects /idp/resources/bibliography.htm
Tel: +1 202 797 6000.
Fax: +1 202 797 6004.

The Internally Displaced People of Iraq
by John Fawcett & Victor Tanner. Brookings-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement. October 2002. 54pp. Free. Online at www.brook.edu/fp/projects/IDP/articles/iraqreport.htm
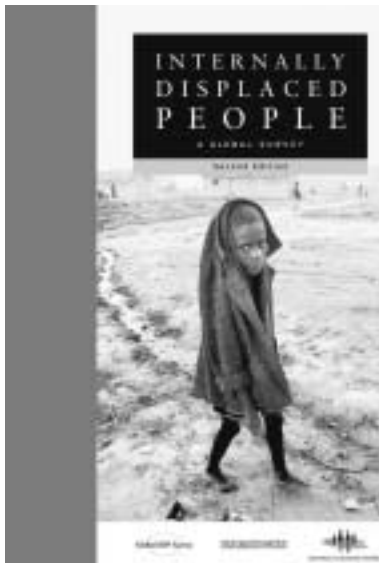
This report is one of a series of publications and activities to focus attention on IDPs in areas largely closed off from view. Numbers of IDPs in Iraq continue to grow; estimates range from 600,000 to 800,000 in the north of the country and up to

300,000 in the south. This report discusses why this state of affairs has come about, how effective attempts to help have been, and the role of the UN and the government of Iraq.

Contact: Gimena Sanchez-Garzoli, Brookings-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement. Tel: +1 202 797 6168. Email: gsanchez@brook.edu

Internally Displaced People: A Global Survey: 2nd edition
by the Global IDP Project/Norwegian Refugee Council, Earthscan 2002.

The second, updated edition of the Global IDP Project's acclaimed overview of conflict-induced displacement has information on internal displacement in 47 different countries.
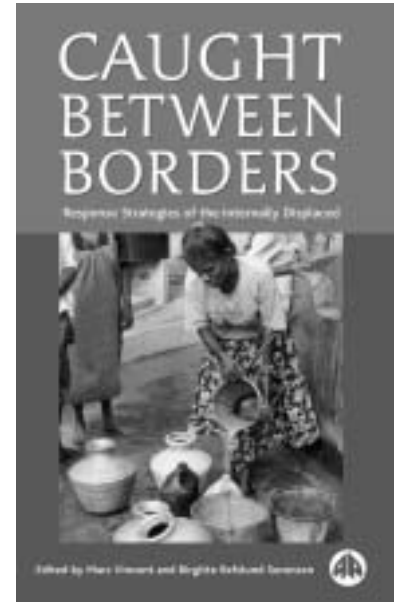
To obtain a copy, contact Andrew Lawday, Global IDP Project, 59 Chemin Möise-Duboule, 1209 Geneva, Switzerland. Email: andrew.lawday@nrc.ch. Tel: +41 22 799 0703. Or contact Earthscan Publications Ltd, 120 Pentonville Road, London N1 9JN, UK. Tel. +44 (0) 20 7278 0433. Fax +44 (0)20 7278 1142. Email: earthinfo@earthscan.co.uk Website: www.earthscan.co.uk/howto-order.htm

Caught Between Borders: Response Strategies of the Internally Displaced
Edited by Marc Vincent and Birgitte Refslund Sørensen.
ISBN: 0745318185 (paperback)
0745318193 (hardcover) 336pp
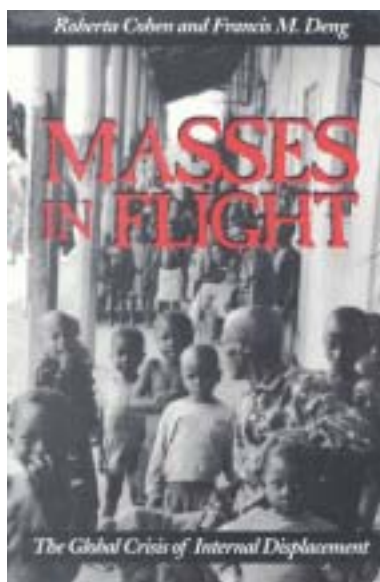*£16.99/US$23.95 (paperback)*

Draws together information on the informal protection mechanisms that enable people to cope with the experience of displacement. Drawing on case studies and testimonies from displaced people from across the globe, it vividly illustrates the methods and networks used by IDPs. The authors identify crosscultural patterns of coping strategies and examine their effectiveness. A series of recommendations urges the international community to listen to and work with IDPs and ensure that relief and protection activities build on and reinforce existing coping mechanisms.

Caught Between Borders is published by Pluto Press, 345 Archway Road, London N6 5AA, UK.
Tel: +44 (0)20 8348 2724.
Fax:+44 (0)20 8348 9133.
Email: Pluto@plutobks.demon.co.uk
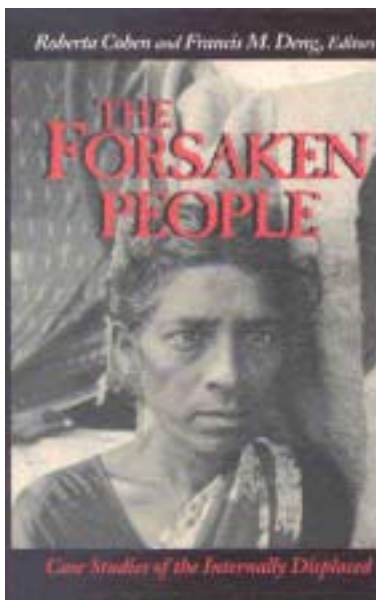*Website: www.plutobooks.com*

Masses in Flight: The Global Crisis of Internal Displacement

by Robert Cohen and Francis M Deng, Brookings Institution Press, 1998. c. 414p. Cloth, 0-8157-1512-9, $52.95. Paper, 0-8157-1511-0, $22.95.

The Forsaken People: Case Studies of the Internally Displaced

Roberta Cohen and Francis M Deng, Brookings Institution Press, 1998. c. 528pp. Cloth, 0-8157-1514-5, $52.95. Paper, 0-8157-1513-7, $22.95.

Risks and Rights: The Causes, Consequences and Challenges of Development-Induced Displacement
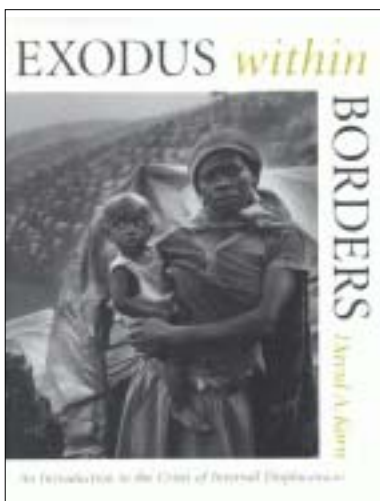
by W Courtland Robinson, Brookings-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement. May 2003. 64pp.

Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement: Annotations

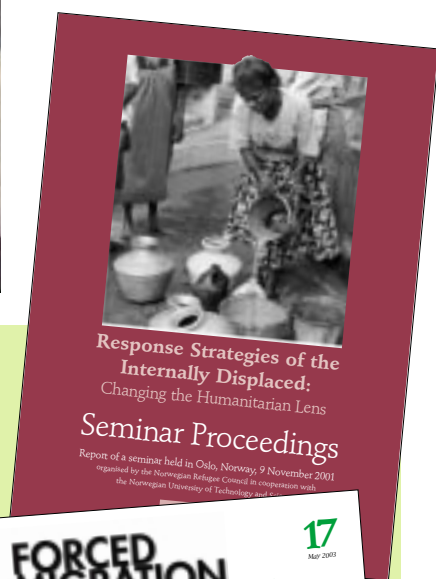*by Walter Kalin, The American Society of International Law and the Brookings Institution, 2000.*

Exodus within Borders

by David A Korn, Brookings Institution Press, 1999. c. 160pp. Cloth, 0-8157-4954-6, $22.85. Paper, 0-82157-4953-8, $22.95.

To access or download FMR 17 (feature section on 'when does displacement end?'), – FMR 1 (feature section on 'internal displacement') – or the November 2001 IDP conference report –

Please visit:
www.fmreview.org

Response Strategies of the Internally Displaced: Changing the Humanitarian Lens

Seminar Proceedings

Report of a seminar held in Oslo, Norway, 9 November 2001 organised by the Norwegian Refugee Council in cooperation with the Norwegian University of Technology and

17 Mar 2003

FORCED MIGRATION *review*

When does internal displacement end?

Plus articles on: Iraq · Mauritania · Thai-Burma border · international benchmarks

The Brookings-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement

For further information about all Brookings-SAIS publications, please contact:
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1775 Massachusetts Ave, NW Washington, DC 20036, USA. · Tel: + 1 202 797-6000
Fax: +1 202 797-6004 · Email: gsanchez@brookings.edu

NTNU Research Network on Internal Displacement

The NTNU Research Group on Forced Migration, in collaboration with the Global IDP Project, is establishing a network for researchers working on issues of internal displacement. The main activities of the network will be convening academic conferences on IDP issues and maintaining a searchable database with information about researchers, projects and publications dealing with internal displacement.

The Network's first conference, from which this report originates, was held in Trondheim in February 2003. The second conference will be held in Trondheim in September 2004.

www.idp.ntnu.no

The new database on IDP research can be accessed at www.idp.ntnu.no. After development and evaluation it will become an integrated and complementary component of the Norwegian Refugee Council's Global IDP database (www.idpproject.org).

The NTNU database will provide a meeting place for developing better links between academics, practitioners and policy makers concerned with IDP issues. The database will enable donors and aid workers to learn what research is taking place and will improve IDP information access for policy makers, advocates, NGOs and others in the IDP community. Improved access to academic information should encourage researchers to address research gaps in current understanding of displacement. We hope it will also enable researchers to tailor research findings to address the interests, priorities and needs of donors.

The Network will complement already existing databases and networks related to IDP research and forced migration in general. We also want to increase our cooperation with other research institutions working with internal displacement. In order to create the database, we need to hear from researchers and organisations working with IDPs. We ask all interested researchers to spend a few minutes of their time to register their interest. Please ask colleagues to do so.

Contact details: Research Group on Forced Migration, Department of Geography, NTNU, NO-7491 Trondheim, Norway.
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The Network is funded by the Research Council of Norway.

Main photo: Chakma IDPs, Bangladesh – UNDP Dhaka/Bangladesh
Small photo: Returnee IDPs, Sri Lanka – Muhammad Ali Mubarak