



## From the editors

**T**he striking fact that for the first time in human history there are now more people living in towns and cities than outside them is not in itself a reason for FMR to be covering urban displacement. Behind that fact, however, lies the multiplicity of reasons why people have been moving into urban environments and the reality that for many of them it is not a matter of choice.

Relatively little is known about the precise numbers of those forcibly displaced into urban settings, their demographics, basic needs or protection problems. They may choose to be displaced in cities rather than in camps but they did not choose to be displaced, and therefore they may have rights to protection and assistance under humanitarian law. For internally displaced people the situation is especially confused, as they are likely to be living among compatriots facing similar difficulties and challenges – whether city-born residents or, for example, rural-urban economic migrants.

People's reasons for moving to the city may be different but their struggle to survive with dignity is similar. How national and international providers of services and protection attempt to address their needs is therefore a wider issue than a purely humanitarian, displacement-focused one. The humanitarian system will have to engage with this reality in a way that it has previously not been so ready to do.

In their introductory articles in this issue of FMR, UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres and UN-HABITAT Executive Director Anna Tibajuka emphasise the complexity of the challenges faced by those displaced into urban areas and by those seeking to protect and assist them, and argue for the need for a radical rethinking of approaches. The articles that follow address some of the practical and policy issues that urban displaced people face and that affect providers too. They also reflect the diversity of analysis and geography that is to be expected given the global nature of urbanisation.

In January 2010, during the course of production of this issue of FMR, a major earthquake hit Haiti, causing particular damage and loss of life in the urban areas.

A large number of people have been left without homes – displaced – by this event, and we considered it appropriate to include an article highlighting the principles around which the international system should shape its response, while recognising that the immediate needs are still scarcely being met. We are also considering publishing an issue of FMR in 2011 that will have standards, principles and guidelines as its theme.

### Search FMR

We have recently added a new page to our website to help you search past FMR issues on a specific theme. See <http://www.fmreview.org/search.htm> We hope it will prove to be a useful service to our readers – and welcome your feedback.

If your organisation has an online library of resources or listings of thematic links, we would be grateful if you could add links to back issues of FMR. We also encourage you to post online or reproduce FMR articles but please acknowledge the source (with a link to our website) – and, preferably, let us know.

### Forthcoming issues of FMR in 2010

- FMR 35: feature on Disability and displacement (due out in June)
- FMR 36: feature on the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Great Lakes (due out in October). FMR 36 call for articles is at <http://www.fmreview.org/DR Congo/>; deadline for submissions is 31 May 2010.

Later this year there will also be an FMR special issue, to be distributed along with FMR 36, on HIV/AIDS, security and conflict. The call for articles is online at <http://www.fmreview.org/AIDS/>

All back issues of FMR are freely available online at <http://www.fmreview.org/mags1.htm>

With our best wishes

**Marion Couldrey & Maurice Herson**  
Editors, *Forced Migration Review*

### Cover:

This image of Earth's city lights was created by NASA. Data from 2003 courtesy of Marc Imhoff and Christopher Elvidge. Image by Craig Mayhew and Robert Simmon, NASA. NASA Visible Earth <http://visibleearth.nasa.gov/>



Back top left: Dhaka, Bangladesh. IRIN/Manoocher Deghati

Back top right: Bogotá, Colombia. <http://censura20.com/2009/10/18/ciudad-bolivar/>

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