2017 GLOBAL REPORT ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT (GRID 2017)

HIGHLIGHTS DOCUMENT

KEY FIGURES

There were **31.1 million new cases of internal displacement** brought on by conflict, violence and disasters in 2016. This is **the equivalent of one person forced to flee every second.**

New displacements - conflict and violence

There were **6.9 million** new internal displacements by **conflict and violence** in 2016. Figures show an overall rising trend since 2003, with an annual average of 5.3 million new displacements a year.

New displacements - disasters

There were **24.2 million new displacements associated with disasters** in 118 countries and territories in 2016 - **Disaster related displacement was more than three times as high as that related to conflict**.

Total headcount

By the end of 2016 there were **40.3 million people living in internal displacement caused by conflict and violence** in 56 countries and territories. The total number of people has nearly doubled since 2000 and has increased sharply over the last five years.

Countries with most new displacements by conflict and violence in 2016

1. Democratic Republic of Congo: 922,000
2. Syria: 824,000
3. Iraq: 659,000
4. Afghanistan: 653,000
5. Nigeria: 501,000
6. Yemen: 478,000
7. India: 448,000
8. Ethiopia: 296,000
9. South Sudan: 281,000
10. Philippines: 280,000

Countries with most new displacements associated with disasters in 2016

1. China: 7,434,000
2. Philippines: 5,930,000
3. India: 2,400,000
4. Indonesia: 1,246,000
5. United States: 1,107,000
6. Cuba: 1,079,000
7. Japan: 864,000
8. Bangladesh: 614,000
9. Myanmar: 509,000
10. Sri Lanka: 500,000

WHAT ARE WE COUNTING?

The 2017 GRID presents two types of headline figures: new displacements caused by conflict and disasters during the course of 2016 and the total number - or "stock figure" - of people displaced by conflict at the end of 2016 (see figure below).

	New displacements Jan – Dec 2016	Total number of IDPs as of the end of 2016
CONFLICT	6.9 million	40.3 million
DISASTERS	24.2 million	?

THE THREE PARTS OF THE GRID

PART I: "On the GRID" presents figures and trends on the scale and patterns of conflict and disaster-related displacement worldwide during 2016, shining a spotlight on countries of particular concern.

PART II: "Off the GRID" responds to the overshadowing of internally displaced people in the 2016 policy landscape by examining the evidence on the relationship between internal and cross-border displacement.

PART III: "Inside the GRID" presents some of the methodological and conceptual challenges faced in trying to paint as complete a global picture as possible, and highlights the importance of reliable data in keeping internal displacement high on the global policy agenda.

KEY MESSAGES

1. **Significant new internal displacement associated with conflict and disasters takes place every year, mainly in low and lower-middle income countries.** Those affected join the many millions of people already living in displacement, reflecting the intractable nature of the phenomenon, and the inability of governments to cope.

2. **Some countries regularly drop off the international agenda only to re-emerge a few years later with significant numbers of new displacements**. This was the case in 2016 for the Democratic Republic of Congo, and highlights how the failure to address the underlying causes of conflict and displacement results in recurrent crises.

3. Despite the fact that **internally displaced people (IDPs) outnumber refugees by around two to one**, internal displacement has been side lined in recent global policy processes and is overshadowed by the current focus on refugees and migrants. **There is a relationship between internal and cross-border movement**, both in terms of flight and return, but its nature and extent need to be better understood.

4. There is a **need for more development spending to be allocated to reducing existing vulnerabilities and future risk and for mitigating the longer-term impacts of internal displacement**. Current humanitarian budgets are not designed to respond to the complex needs of people caught up in protracted, cyclical and repeated displacement.

5. **Displacement will continue to have major impacts unless the drivers of conflict, poverty, environmental change and state fragility are addressed.** Many more political and financial resources should be invested in conflict prevention, disaster risk management, state-building and diplomacy to address the multiple interwoven causes of displacement crises.

6. A more explicit focus on displacement risk presents an **opportunity to link policies and programmes more closely to the broader global development agenda**. This requires greater attention to displacement in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the New Urban Agenda if commitments are to be realised.

7. There have been several demands for **rigorous and transparent data on internal displacement, which is needed to establish a global baseline and measure progress toward targets**. Displacement is rarely monitored from its outset to its end, which means that global figures currently do not reflect the true scale, nature and patterns of the phenomenon.

8. **States are not investing sufficiently in the collection and publication of credible data on internal displacement**. This severely limits their capacity to address IDPs' needs, and our ability to paint a comprehensive picture.

PART 1: ON THE GRID

INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN 2016

KEY FINDINGS

- There were **31.1 million new displacements** brought on by conflict, violence and disasters in 125 countries and territories in 2016. This is **the equivalent of one person forced to flee every second.**

- Disasters continue to bring about the highest numbers of new displacements each year, while conflict-related displacement has been on an overall upward trend over the last decade.

- The scale of internal displacement and its increasing complexity have severe implications for entire communities and societies, and must be kept high on the global policy agenda.

- Conflicts and disasters - the main triggers of forced displacement currently recorded - show no signs of abating. Nor do their many underlying drivers, which include poverty and inequality, fragile and weak governance, rapid urbanisation, climate change and environmental degradation.

- **High-risk and low capacity**: Two-thirds of the world's IDPs live in low and lower middle-income countries unable to cope with intractable conflicts. More than 95 percent of the new displacements by conflict took place in high risk countries. As a result, protracted displacement is becoming the norm rather than the exception.

- **Increasing complexity**: Clear-cut distinctions between conflict and disasters as the immediate cause of internal displacement are increasingly difficult to uphold. Separating the many underlying and interlinked drivers of the conflict and disasters that result in forced displacement is even more challenging. Examples of such complexity are the dramatic situations currently unfolding in Nigeria, South Sudan and Somalia, where drought combined with conflict and violence are fuelling displacement, severe food insecurity and famine.

- The lack of regular and updated information precludes IDMC from measuring IDPs' progress toward sustainable solutions, and to take certain IDPs off the books. This may lead to overestimates of the size of certain IDP caseloads. [1]
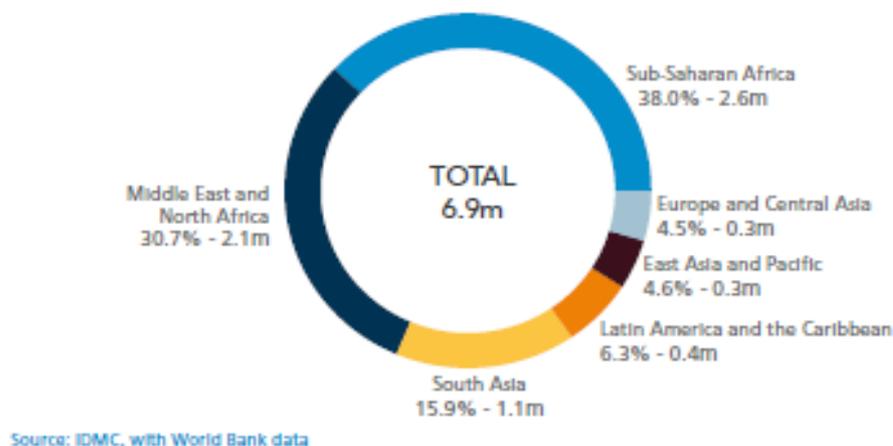
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[1] For more information on monitoring protracted displacement post-conflict, see the Colombia spotlight on page 29 of the GRID 2017.

New displacement: conflict

▪ There were **6.9 million** new internal displacements associated with **conflict and violence** in 2016. Figures show an overall rising trend since 2003, with an annual average of 5.3 million new displacements a year – the equivalent of **15,000 people forced to flee their homes every day**.

Regional breakdown:

Figure 1.3: New displacements by conflict and violence by World Bank-defined region in 2016

- Sub-Saharan Africa 38.0% - 2.6m
- Europe and Central Asia 4.5% - 0.3m
- East Asia and Pacific 4.6% - 0.3m
- Latin America and the Caribbean 6.3% - 0.4m
- South Asia 15.9% - 1.1m
- Middle East and North Africa 30.7% - 2.1m

TOTAL 6.9m

Source: IDMC, with World Bank data

Sub-Saharan Africa was the region with the highest numbers of new displacements associated with conflict, with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) overtaking Syria as the country with the most new displacements.

Sub-Saharan Africa: the majority of new internal displacement associated with conflict occurred in **DRC**, where conflict and inter-communal clashes caused more than 922,000 new displacements in 2016, a rise of nearly 50 per cent since the previous year[2]. **DRC was the country with the highest figures in the world[3],** but its crisis received little international attention during the year.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, more than 500,000 new displacements were also recorded in **Nigeria**, as violence committed by Boko Haram and military operations against the group continued to affect the Lake Chad Basin. The humanitarian crisis in **South Sudan** deepened in 2016, with more than 281,000 new displacements. The food security situation in South Sudan was also at its most severe level since the crisis broke out.[4]

Middle-East and North Africa: despite the fact that the number of new displacements in the region decreased by 60 per cent in 2016, suffering continues unabated. Multiple displacement has become the norm in **Syria[5]**, where 824,000 new displacements were recorded despite ceasefire agreements. Almost 660,000 new displacements were reported in **Iraq[6]**, where people fled for safety during each of this year's nine major military campaigns. At least 478,000 new internal displacements took place in **Yemen** against the backdrop of a persistently dynamic and volatile security situation. Nearly 90 per cent of IDPs in the country have been displaced for more than 10 months.

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[2] For more information on DRC, see the spotlight on page 14 of the GRID 2017

[3] Countries with most new displacements associated with conflict and violence in 2016: DRC, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Yemen, India, Ethiopia, South Sudan and the Philippines (in descendent order).

[4] For more information on South Sudan and the drought crisis in the Horn of Africa, see the spotlight on page 40 of the GRID 2017

[5] For more information on Syria, see the spotlight on page 17 of the GRID 2017.

[6] For more information on Iraq, see the spotlight on page 19 of the GRID 2017.
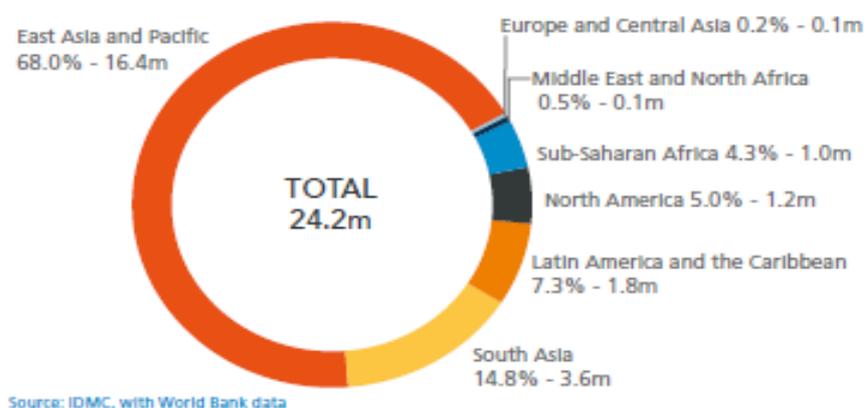
Twelve per cent of new displacements were triggered by **generalised violence**, including gang violence in Central America and post-electoral violence in Burundi and Burkina Faso. Given that people fleeing general violence are not systematically reported, it is likely that many more people are displaced globally by this type of violence than the current data reflects. In 2016, nearly 220,000 people were forced to flee generalised violence in **El Salvador[7]**, which relative to the size of its population, put the country second worldwide in terms of the number of new displacements.

New displacement: disasters

- There were **24.2 million new displacements associated with disasters** in 118 countries and territories in 2016. **Disaster related displacement was more than three times higher than that related to conflict**.

Regional breakdown:

Figure 1.18: New displacements by disasters by region, 2016

East Asia and Pacific 68.0% - 16.4m

Europe and Central Asia 0.2% - 0.1m

Middle East and North Africa 0.5% - 0.1m

Sub-Saharan Africa 4.3% - 1.0m

North America 5.0% - 1.2m

Latin America and the Caribbean 7.3% - 1.8m

South Asia 14.8% - 3.6m

TOTAL 24.2m

Source: IDMC, with World Bank data

97 per cent of new displacements in 2016 were triggered by **climate and weather-related disasters** including storms, floods, wildfires and severe winter conditions. In 2016, more than 50 per cent of the displacement - or 12.9 million new displacements - was caused by storms.

Low and lower middle-income countries with generally limited coping capacity and high vulnerability accounted for 12.7 million disaster displacements in 2016. Due to prevailing drivers of vulnerability and exposure, the risk of future displacement associated with disasters is significant.

More than two-thirds of all new displacement associated with disasters in 2016 took place in **east Asia and the Pacific,** where 16.4 million incidents accounted for 68 per cent of the global total. **China, the Philippines and India accounted for the highest numbers**, with 7.4 million, 5.9 million and 2.4 million respectively.

Small island states suffer disproportionately once population size is taken into account: figures show the exposure and vulnerability of **small, low-lying coastal and island countries** to tropical storms and flooding. **Fiji** and **Tonga** in the Pacific and **Haiti**, **Belize** and **Cuba** in the Caribbean accounted for five of the 10 countries with the largest per capita disaster displacements. In Cuba, almost 1 in 10 inhabitants was obliged to leave their homes during the mass evacuation ahead of **Hurricane Matthew[8]**.

S**ub-Saharan Africa**: In **Ethiopia**, heavy rains and floods displaced 300,000 people in April and May after

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[7] For more information on El Salvador, see the spotlight on page 22 of the GRID 2017.
[8] For more information on the impacts of Hurricane Matthew in the Americas, see the spotlight on page 34 of the GRID 2017.

months of severe drought and insecurity. Floods across various areas of **Sudan** displaced 123,000 people. **DRC**, which was the country with most new displacements associated with conflict in 2016, was also hit by floods that displaced around 127,000 people.
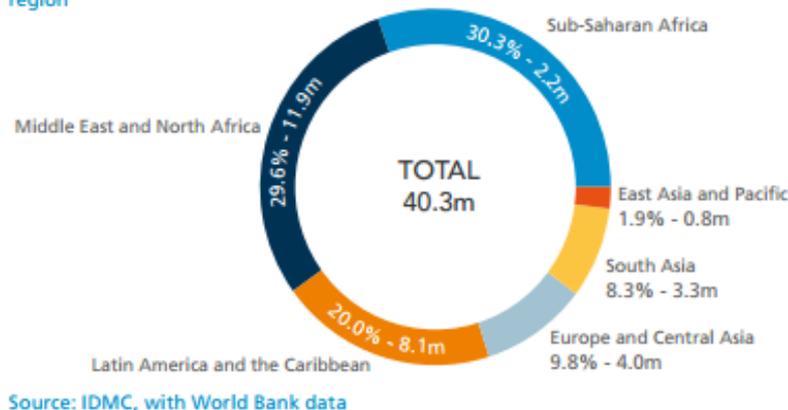
Slow-onset disasters are a hidden aggravating factor in many contexts, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities, triggering conflict and providing tipping points for displacement.

New research into displacement risk suggests that displacements by disasters in particular will continue at a scale similar to current trends. However, the impacts of **climate change** on the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and environmental degradation will only increase displacement risk further in the future.

Total headcount

▪ As of the end of 2016 there were **40.3 million people internally displaced by conflict and violence** in 56 countries and territories. The total number of people has nearly doubled since 2000 and increased sharply over the last five years.

Figure 1.10: Number of people internally displaced by conflict and violence as of the end of 2016 by World Bank-defined region

Sub-Saharan Africa
30.3% - 2.2m

Middle East and North Africa
29.6% - 11.9m

East Asia and Pacific
1.9% - 0.8m

South Asia
8.3% - 3.3m

Europe and Central Asia
9.8% - 4.0m

Latin America and the Caribbean
20.0% - 8.1m

TOTAL
40.3m

Source: IDMC, with World Bank data

Globally there are roughly **twice as many IDPs as refugees**. The gap between the two groups has been growing since 1997.

Of the total number of IDPs globally, over **three-quarters** - or more than 31 million people - **live in just ten countries**[9]. Of these, Colombia, DRC, Iraq, Sudan and South Sudan have been among the ten countries with the world's largest populations of IDPs every year since 2003.

The persistence of large caseloads across the world reflects the intractability of conflicts and crises, notably in the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, where people living in displacement face all but insurmountable obstacles in re-establishing normal lives. People internally displaced amid ongoing conflict live in flux, and are likely to become displaced again, whether within or across borders.

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[9] Colombia, Syria, Sudan, Iraq, DRC, Yemen, Nigeria, South Sudan, Ukraine and Afghanistan (in descending order).
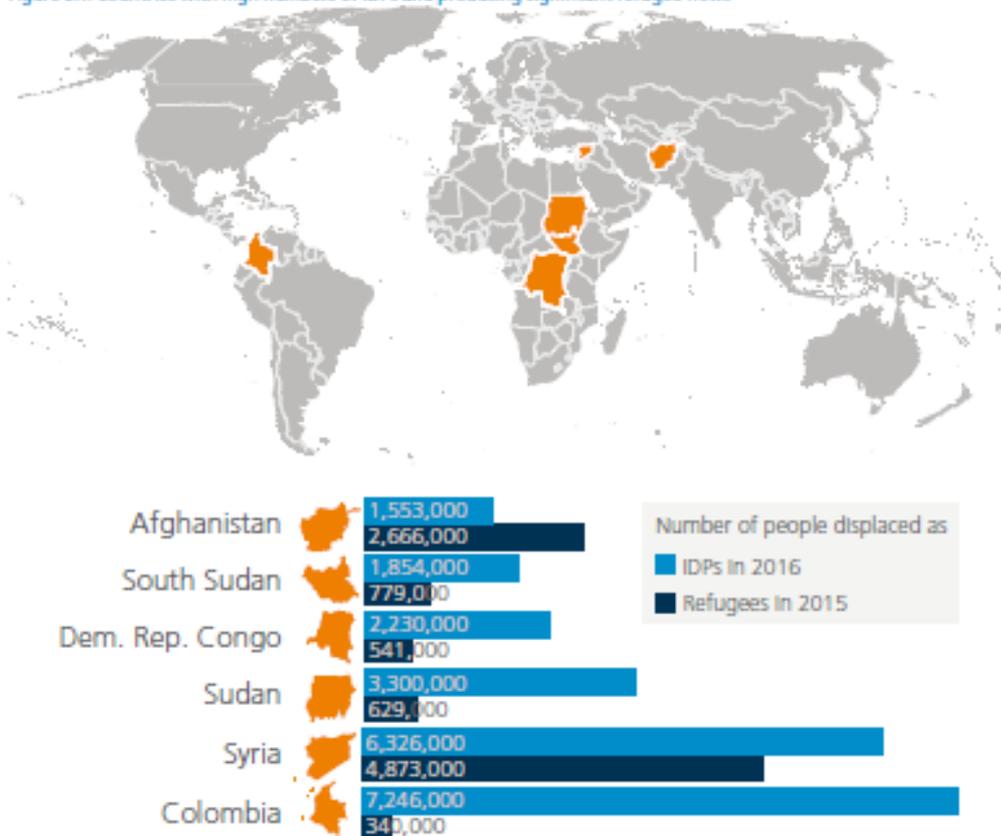
PART 2: OFF THE GRID

ARE TODAY'S IDPs TOMORROW'S REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS?

KEY FINDINGS

Despite a widely held assumption that many refugees started off their journey as IDPs, the phenomenon of IDPs moving onwards across borders is not systematically measured, and there is insufficient quantitative and qualitative data and analysis to inform policy and operational responses. [10]

Six of the ten countries that produced the most refugees in 2015 – Afghanistan, Colombia, DRC, South Sudan and Syria – were also among the ten with the largest number of IDPs.

Figure 2.1: Countries with high numbers of IDPs and producing significant refugee flows

Country	IDPs in 2016	Refugees in 2015
Afghanistan	1,553,000	2,666,000
South Sudan	1,854,000	779,000
Dem. Rep. Congo	2,230,000	541,000
Sudan	3,300,000	629,000
Syria	6,326,000	4,873,000
Colombia	7,246,000	340,000

Number of people displaced as
IDPs in 2016
Refugees in 2015

Source: IDMC, with UNHCR data

Other evidence from across the world shows relatively high proportions of refugees reporting having been internally displaced before fleeing across borders. Around 55 per cent of the Afghan refugees and 85 per cent of the Syrian refugees interviewed in Greece in early 2016 said that they had been IDPs before crossing the national border. Nearly 70 per cent of female asylum seekers from countries in Central America's northern triangle were also internally displaced before making the decisions to flee abroad.

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[10] For more information on cross border displacement by disasters please see our spotlight on page 53 of the GRID 2017.

Available evidence suggests that the push and pull factors for internal displacement from areas affected by conflict are similar to those reported by refugees. **There is currently not enough research or data to understand clearly the relationship between internal displacement, cross-border movement and return. We need to develop the evidence on this phenomenon so that it is possible to meet the needs of all forcibly displaced people, regardless of whether they flee within or across borders.**

a) We need to capture more accurately the scale and proportion of IDPs who cross borders, the triggers for this, and how this varies across different context and crises.

b) We need more qualitative data on the factors that determine IDPs' onward and cross-border flight. Understanding how and when people make such decisions and the different influencing actors is a prerequisite for deciding on resources and actions.

c) we need a much better understanding of the circumstances in which people return to their country of origin, and a measure of the risk this carries of future displacement.

Efforts to understand when, how and why IDPs cross borders should not be used to legitimise the closing of borders or the creation of policies to keep them in their own country. People have a fundamental right to freedom of movement, which includes being able to move within and leave their country.

Returning refugees and migrants: tomorrow's IDPs?
While the return of refugees in their own country is often regarded as a viable and politically preferred solution, returnees may in fact return to situations of questionable security and stability and risk becoming displaced again, this time internally. The current situation in **Somalia** with returns from Kenya, and in **Afghanistan** with returns from Pakistan and Iraq, are cases in point.

PART 3: INSIDE THE GRID

OVERCOMING DATA SHORTFALLS

KEY FINDINGS

- There have been several demands for rigorous, transparent data on internal displacement. **Reliable data and analysis are central for humanitarian response, national development planning, and to the achievement of related global and regional policy processes.** These demands, however, have not been matched by the political will and resources required to meet them. As a result, the current baseline and global picture of internal displacement are currently incomplete.

- **The time-series data needed to measure progress toward global targets is not being collected through to the end of displacement. This means we do not properly understand how situations and specific IDPs vulnerabilities evolve over time.**

- Further gaps include limited geographical scope, exclusion of certain types of displacement, and disaggregation of data by age, sex, location, needs and vulnerabilities.

- **Without comparable data on different situations and how they have changed over time, there is little evidence to tell us what works.** Yet this information is critical to remove the guesswork currently involved in humanitarian and development financing. New and innovative solutions need to be deployed to fill the data gaps and establish a more comprehensive picture of displacement. New "hybrid" approaches that combine event detection with the analysis of time-series data on evolving situations are essential.

- **Detecting incidents of new displacement needs to be scaled up significantly, employing semi-automated processes that monitor displacement associated with disasters, conflict, violence and development projects. For disasters, more data that tracks the number of displaced people over time is required. in addition, more investment into probabilistic risk modelling for disaster displacement should be made and lessons applied to displacement in all contexts.**

CONCLUSION

Over the last 20 years IDMC has been calling for more data and more investment in addressing the causes of internal displacement. In light of the grim evidence we publish each year, we can only conclude the following:

1. There is a gulf between aspiration and reality. Rather than the number of IDPs halving by 2030[11], we expect displacement to continue increasing in the future, because there is insufficient attention to the underlying causes of crises.

2. The extent of international attention, resources and political will does not match the scale of displacement and human suffering. There are few meaningful signs of political will to address the global crisis of internal displacement.

3. Evidence alone is not enough. Each year, IDMC provides robust, compelling evidence on internal displacement. Each year, the evidence fails to elicit a response commensurate with the scale of the problem. Why? Because of international indifference, lack of accountability, and state failure to protect.

CALL TO ACTION

In anticipation of 2018, which will mark the **20th anniversary of the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement**, we call on all states to respect the commitments they have made to account for and protect IDPs on their territories. We call for a conscious, deliberate and sustained political effort to improve the many millions of lives blighted by internal displacement and preventing others from suffering the same upheaval and trauma in the future. States need to recognise that national sovereignty implies responsibility, both "as a national obligation and a global imperative" (Francis Deng, 1996).

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[11] UN, One Humanity: Shared Responsibility, 2016,
paragraphs 81-84, available at goo.gl/PfB8IG